



INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

July/Aug. 2014

News, events & calendar of the Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists...Serving Ellis and Navarro Counties

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From the Desk of the PRESIDENT

Eileen Berger, President ITMN

I had a great time at the Texas Archeological Field School, visiting with old friends and meeting new ones. While I was gone, the Ellis County mammoth site was publicized, giving us a chance to dig in the dirt right here at home. Whether you do any digging in the dirt, or just gaze out your window at the green plants growing in the dirt, I hope you are enjoying the somewhat cooler summer, and the wonderful rainfall that we have been experiencing. See you all at our next meeting. Eileen

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Calendar of Events, Projects & Meetings JULY

- 5 BRIT First Saturday Program: Dive in at BRIT 8-1; Farmers Market 8-12
- 7 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 12 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 21 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 21 ITMN Board Meeting 6-9:00; Ryan's Steakhouse, Waxahachie
- 28 ITMN Exemplary Project Planning Meeting 5:00 (before chapter mtg.); FUMC Waxahachie
- 28 ITMN Chapter Meeting 6-9:00: Digital Plant Press by Ricky Linex, Wildlife Biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); FUMC Waxahachie
- 30 Project WILD/Aquatic WILD 9-3:30; \$30.00; John Bunker Sands Wetland Center www.wetlandcenter.com

AUGUST

- 2 BRIT First Saturday Science Fair 8-1:00; Farmers Market 8-12:00
- 2 Friendly School Gardens 9-12:00; \$25.00; John Bunker Sands Wetland Center www.wetlandcenter.com
- 2 Classroom Recycling Made Easy 1-4:00; \$25.00; John Bunker Sands Wetland Center www.wetlandcenter.com
- 4 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday ; 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 9 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk; 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 9 Children's Activity at Waxahachie Farmers' Mkt. 8-1:00; Contact Don Happ if you can help.
- 18 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday; 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 23 Texas Bluebird Society Summer Symposium; Saturday 9-3:30, Mansfield; Volunteer opportunities are available.
- 25 ITMN Chapter Meeting 6-9:00: Native Plants by Randy Johnson, Randy Johnson Organics ; FUMC, Waxahachie

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Mockingbird Nature Park Workday; 9:00 a.m., Midlothian
- 6 International Observe the Moon Night event (Time TBA)
- 6 BRIT First Saturday; Vineyard/Orchard Day; 8-1:00; Farmers Mkt., 8-12:00
- 13 Mockingbird Nature Park Wildflower Walk; 9:00 a.m., Midlothian

Meeting generally the 4th Monday of each month at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, Waxahachie

PROJECT VIEWS

Kachina Prairie crews & views.



PROJECT VIEWS

You show me yours and, I'll show you mine. Nature walk at Mockingbird Nature Park.



March, The Geese Return

By Gerald McDonald, edited by Charlie Grindstaff

For one of the training classes Lynn assigned each trainee a chapter from A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold to read and report on at the next class. I was fortunate to attend that night and as usual, most trainees were impressed with Leopold's writing style and his ability to "write" pictures that we could easily visualize and identify with.

And then it was Gerald McDonald's turn to talk about his assigned chapter March. After his first few sentences I could hardly wait for him to finish so I could ask him to turn his thoughts into an article for The Trail Marker. He declined, but gave me his notes and said I could. With very little editing here are Gerald's words:

I think March is a harder chapter for me to summarize than the fall months would have been. March can be very subtle, and subtlety is hard for me. I don't taste subtle flavors; I can't tell subtle colors apart; and my wife says subtle hints are completely lost on me.

But Lynn said to share what I found interesting and my thoughts. Well, I think the chapter makes me aware that we are probably 10 degrees of latitude south of Leopold's farm; his March is much cooler than ours. The title of the March chapter is The Geese Return. It begins with:

*"One swallow does not make a summer,
but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a
March thaw, is the spring."*

I think that sentence sets the tone of the chapter well, and it reminds us that the geese, in starting their northward migration, are the heralds of spring. Though spring may arrive for us in half starts and stops, as we struggle with things like whether to put the tomatoes out or wait another week. As we try to decide if it is really spring, the goose leaves his winter home with the conviction that spring is here and expanding ahead of him. As he makes his journey north to the breeding grounds of the arctic, he is as sure of that as he is sure of his unerring path up the northern flyway.

Leopold speaks of a lack of awareness in the cycle of the seasons. That many of us have given away or traded this awareness for a more civilized place in the

world. That the migration is a gift the geese give us on their twice a year journey over our heads, that possibly we have traded that gift for something of a lesser value.

Four years ago, about 2:30 on a damp gray afternoon I watched a fall flock of mallards over Padera Lake, the small lake on the north side of 287 just west of Midlothian towards Mansfield. They were maybe 200 feet off the ground; I saw them from the highway and pulled over to watch as they flew over. Maybe 20 or 40 ducks, heading south, flying really fast. I'm no ornithologist, but it was easy to see this group had been making some miles. The lead duck looked tired, his head and neck were moving in an exaggerated manner with every beat of his wings. Just as they were about to finish the crossing of the lake, the lead duck flared out and set his wings and pointed back into the north wind towards the lake. The second duck moved into the point position to take over the lead duty, but faltered when he realized the lead duck was heading to the lake, he then flared and set his wings and followed the first duck down. Then in singles and pairs the whole flight flared wings and extended their flat feet and floated for what seemed to be minutes before touching the surface of the lake. Within seconds of that touch-down they were paddling about, bobbing for a snack, quacking about who knows what...maybe a recap of the day's journey, or a discussion of what's on the menu as my wife and I do on motorcycle trips, sitting tired in a corner booth of some small town diner where the days ride may have covered 600 miles and 14 hours in the saddle. Through mountains and plains, watching the world slide by, the ducks like us are sure to have had something to talk about.

Next morning was cold and stinging, the kind where you don't feel the moisture, but feel pin pricks on your cheeks, and your eyes water when looking into the wind. I drove back by the lake that morning, just as the sky was turning dishwater gray, and they were gone. I was disappointed to see them gone, but watching them for the few moments the day before had brightened the day considerably. So I think I understand the value Leopold sees in his March geese. I also think if we see a drab and dreary March, maybe that it's our own fault.

Leopold knew the science of the geese; he knew the cold potato mathematics, as he put it, of what he was seeing. But I feel he chose a sentimental and somewhat romantic view to remind us, that while we share our world with geese, we are also a part of their world.

The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History by Elizabeth Kolbert

Strap yourselves in for this first review folks. It's a long one but the subject matter trumps brevity. –Ed.

According to Elizabeth Kolbert, for thousands of years we humans have been resourceful enough to move across the globe when it suited our needs, conquering different terrains, climates, predators, and prey. We've reproduced at unprecedented rates, razed forests to feed ourselves, and shifted organisms from one continent to another. We possess power over the earth and all other living beings. It would follow that we can rest peacefully in the knowledge that we are at the top of the food chain, the kings and queens of our domain---or can we?

In *The Sixth Extinction*, Kolbert questions whether or not we are too powerful for our own good. We are able to change the composition of the atmosphere and alter the climate and the chemistry of the ocean. No creature has ever altered life on the planet in this way before. She hypothesizes that man's influence on the environment, resulting in a huge decrease in biodiversity, is leading us towards another mass extinction. With a fellowship to finance her travels, she sets out to find evidence to support her hypothesis.

She begins her story by exploring the history of extinction. Experts describe mass extinction as "substantial biodiversity losses that occur rapidly and are global in extent". We now know that five ancient events, called the Big Five, were catastrophic enough that the diversity of life on earth plummeted. These mass extinctions occurred during the following periods: Ordovician, Late Devonian, Permian, Triassic-Jurassic, and Cretaceous-Tertiary. The Permian mass extinction is also known as The Great Dying, in which 96% of species died out. All life today is descended from the 4% of species that survived (from www.bbc.co.uk).

The concept of extinction wasn't known until sometime in the 1700's. Prior to that time, it was believed that animal life was static over time. The French paleontologist, Jacques Cuvier, traced the origins of mastodon fossils found in France and upstate New York. It was originally thought that these were the bones of an American elephant, but he dispelled that notion and eventually built up a library of extinct animals, many of whose fossils remain intact at the Paris Museum of Natural History. In this way he convinced others that there were species of animals from the past that no longer existed.

As the years went on, there was still the question of what caused entire species to die off. Were mass extinctions caused by asteroids, rivals, disease, an inability to adapt to a changing environment, or a combination of all of these? Did the extinctions occur gradually or suddenly in one cataclysmic event?

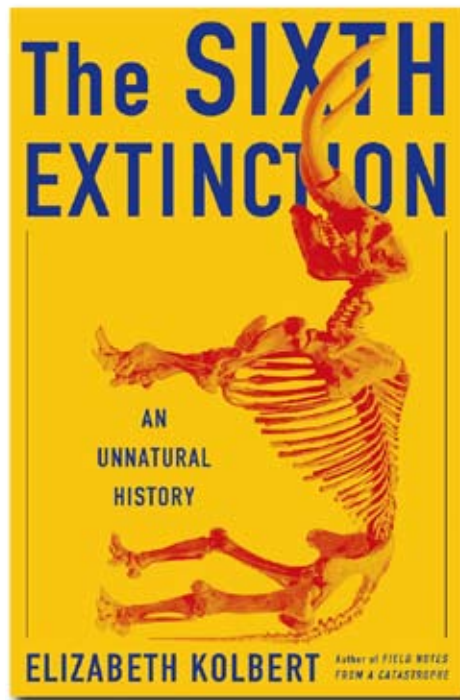
The author's first stop in her travels was the town of El Valle de Anton, Panama, the site of the cataclysmic disappearance of the golden frog. It was discovered that the frogs were killed by the chytrid fungus. The fungus has spread to other parts of the world and appears unstoppable.

Kolbert uses the golden frog as an example of "background extinction". In ordinary times, extinction takes place only rarely and occurs at what's known as the background extinction rate. The background extinction rate for amphibians is roughly one species becoming extinct every thousand years or so. The odds of an individual witnessing such an

event should be zero. Today, scientists have already observed several amphibian extinctions.

In Australia, the author observed experiments being conducted on the Great Barrier Reef to measure and document the deterioration of the reef, which stretches for over 1500 miles. One of the hallmark characteristics of the reef is that it serves as a home for dozens of sea creatures, which in turn form a food chain and an ecosystem of their own.

The experiments being conducted involve altering carbon dioxide levels to study ocean acidification. High carbon dioxide levels lead to low pH levels. Evidence collected by the scientists conducting the



experiments indicates that ocean acidification will cause the reef to become extinct and start dissolving by the end of the century. Experts believe that agricultural runoff and overfishing threaten the reefs nearly as much as the low pH level.

In Manu National Park in Peru, there are over 1,000 species of trees. These species, because they are located close to the equator, are more vulnerable to climate change because the range of changes they can survive is narrow. In different climactic conditions, trees will slowly migrate over generations, moving toward optimal conditions. The wildlife they support tends to go with them.

According to Kolbert, evidence shows that climate change has wreaked havoc on this ecological pattern. The problem is the pace of change. Kolbert provides an in-depth analysis of the possibility that over the long term, a warmer world would be more varied. However, in the short term, i.e., on the human timescale, it's a different story. Many of the current species in the Manu National Park survived the last Ice Age, but they are unable to adapt to the increased amounts of carbon dioxide and the current rapid warming of the environment. How fast will this cause species extinction? Initial forecasts predicted as many as 25-50 percent of the species pool becoming extinct sometime in this century. More conservative estimates are around 10 percent.

In Upstate New York, the author observed bats dead and dying from a fungus classified as a psychrophile. The fungus was accidentally imported to America from Europe, a situation all too common today, due to the ease with which modern humans can travel. She cites other examples of imported species, such as the Japanese beetle, earthworms, zebra mussels, cane toads, and the chytrid fungus mentioned earlier.

The author also traveled to Scotland, Italy and Brazil. In Brazil she observed one of the world's largest and longest-running experiments, the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project, which covers a collection of several Amazonian islands. The project, collaboration between cattlemen and conservationists, has been the site of ongoing studies by botanists, ornithologists, and entomologists for more than thirty years. Bird studies here reveal a steady demise of bird species after over 25,000 species of birds were banded and released. The role of army ants in this ecology is also discussed. A number of species rely on them for survival, including butterflies and birds that live exclusively on their droppings.

In the final chapter of *Sixth Extinction*, Kolbert explores the efforts to save species from extinction or revive them once they are gone. The location for this chapter is the San Diego Zoo. The story revolves around the black-faced honeycreeper, a bird native to Maui that became extinct in 2004. Efforts to save the bird failed, but it could be revived. Cell material from the last bird's eyes was saved and kept "alive" using liquid nitrogen. These cells are stored with many other cell remains in the "Frozen Zoo," with the hope that one day it can be used to clone the birds. There are many other "frozen zoos" in zoos around the world. Significantly saved species before they became extinct. She mentions Rachel Carson, whose book, "Silent Spring", led to DDT being banned from widespread use, as well as Congress for passing the Endangered Species Act in 1974, and all of the scientists and volunteers whose efforts are examples of what humans can accomplish when they focus on conservation efforts.

The author clearly found evidence to support her hypothesis that humans will be the cause of the next mass extinction, regardless of when it occurs. While praising the efforts of many, she describes humans as the most dangerous species on earth to other species, citing examples of poachers carrying AK-47's or loggers swinging axes in the Amazon.

For more information on this book and its author, see www.news.nationalgeographic.com/elizabethkolbert for "A Conversation with Elizabeth Kolbert." Kolbert is also known for her 2006 book, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*.

A Sting in the Tale – My adventures with Bumblebees

By Dave Goulson Picador Press, ISBN 978-1-250-04837-0 (hardback)
ISBN 978-250-04838-7 (e-book)
Book review by Carolyn Gritzmaker

When we picked up this book at the book store the other day, it was because of the bumblebee on the cover. We love bumblebees. So I was very pleased when reading the book to find that it is very well written, humorous at times, but a serious book none the less. I found it fascinating.

"*A Sting in the Tale*" tells us of the lives of bumblebees, and looks in to how changing land practices over the years in the UK and other causes

have brought about their slow disappearance from the British countryside and describes the efforts and adventures to bring them back.

Dave Goulson is professor of biology and environmental studies at the University of Sussex. In 2006 he founded the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, a UK based charity. Established because of growing

concerns about diminishing populations of bumblebees in the UK, the trust is funding ground-breaking conservation efforts to try to save and bring back the native bumblebees by creating flower-rich habitat across the British countryside. Written in the



form of a memoir, informative without being boring, I highly recommend this book.

Now I'm off to our native flowerbeds out back to look for our own bumblebees!

Some Bumblebee Links:

<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/> is the website for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust

For information about US bumblebees:

<http://www.pollinator.org/>

<http://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/PrairieParklandSubtpr.rx3.pdf>

<http://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/BumbleBeeGuide2011.pdf>

<http://www.pollinator.org/PDFs/BeeBasicsBook.pdf>

<http://texasbumblebees.com/>

<http://www.beautifulwildlifegarden.com/guide-to-attracting-native-bees.html>

<http://www.xerces.org/pollinators-south-central-region/>

TOO POOR TO ENJOY NATURE?

by Don Happ

We've all been there. We've joined a school, church, or community group, hoping to broaden our horizons and participate in some activities that interest us. When I joined the Indian Trail Master Naturalist organization, I met many like-minded individuals who love and appreciate nature as much as I do. There was ample opportunity for me to participate in outdoor activities—hiking, bird-watching, and community events, to name just a few.

After the first few Master Naturalist outings, however, I felt I was in dire need of more appropriate outdoor clothes and equipment. I told myself this was necessary in order to more fully experience the activities. Of course, these items would also enhance my learning capabilities.

I saw a nice camouflage raincoat at the big-box store, but I had to buy food instead. I wondered if the birds and animals would mind if I wore a hoodie. My headgear is an old truck-stop ball cap, not very cool to the butterflies. My binoculars are generic and weigh a ton. They work best under the front seat of my car.

I don't own a fancy backpack, so my field guides stay in the trunk.

I bought a spotting scope to look at birds. They wouldn't sit still for the forty-five minutes it took me to focus on them. Only vultures cooperate by just sitting there. I saw a cool bug but didn't have a loupe (jeweler's lens), so I used my dollar-store magnifying glass (which didn't magnify it much). I had to let the bug crawl away without further examination.

I don't have an IPAD or the apps to go with it—my fingers are too fat to use one anyway. By the way, how do you get the lens cap off a camera, and what is the f-stop?

I remember a simpler time when all you needed to enjoy nature was to sit in the grass and poke bugs with a stick. Oh wait, it is still that way. You don't have to dress like a National Geographic photographer, nor do you need all the new gadgets to fully appreciate and experience Nature's gifts. Just get out in the yard and look around. Even in the dead of winter there is a lot going on. Mockingbirds are chasing the snowbirds and cranesbills are blooming. With spring come the butterflies. Even if you don't know the genus and species they are beautiful.

On hot summer days look at the clouds. Fall is a great time. How do the trees know how to paint such beautiful foliage? Then comes winter and it all starts again. Remember, nature is not just for specialists but for everyone to enjoy. Put on your old sneakers and go outside. No annual contract is needed.

JAY! JAY!

is not a Nickname in the Wild

By Travis N. Edwards

Have you ever been outdoors enjoying the tranquility of the day when suddenly it is overshadowed by a chorus of birds screaming, “Jay!Jay!”? At first it seems innocent enough with one or two outbursts by one or two birds. But gradually the chorus grows and the cacophony continues until all you can hear is an unsynchronized round of “Jay!Jay!” It sounds awful, and rightly so. It sounds like an angry mob. In fact, “mobbing” is the term used for this behavior.

The birds I am describing are Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata*) but they are by no means the only suspects in this impromptu symphony of angry outbursts. Blue Jays are one of the first birds to lead the charge in this behavior. If you are fortunate, often times you can quickly find the recipient of their anger.

Blue Jays, as well as other birds, mob as a way of encouraging a predator to leave a location. In some cases the Blue Jays will aggressively fly towards the predator as if to attack it. It is hoped the threat of attack will cause the predator to leave the area. The loud noise of the angry mob is also a warning to other birds in the area to take cover. It is best if the predator goes to another location since the element of surprise has now been compromised. In some cases the Blue Jays give up on trying to move the predator and they go on about their day. I have had the opportunity to watch Blue Jays mob predators in my yard. On one occasion I noticed the Blue Jays were angrily scolding something on the ground in my front yard. One of the birds was on the ground near the intruder. I did not understand what all the panic was about until I realized a snake was hiding under the shrubs in my front yard. At first glance, I thought it was a 10 foot snake! After I calmed down I noticed it was only 3 feet long. I like to believe that I am not afraid of snakes, I just intensely respect them. On another occasion I heard the telltale signs of a mobbing in progress in my backyard. I quietly went outside to find that about 10 Blue Jays had surrounded a Red-Tailed Hawk in my neighbor’s pecan tree. The hawk eventually flew away with an escort of Blue Jays following it along the way.

Not all Blue Jay cries of “Jay!Jay!” are followed by an angry mob of birds. Blue Jays are considered a sentinel species giving their warnings when they notice danger in the area. They have been recorded as giving

warning cries when they notice snakes, hawks, owls, cats, and humans. I bet Blue Jays tell themselves that they are not afraid of humans, they just intensely respect us. Hunters have lost the element of surprise because of the Blue Jays announcing their presence in the woods. John K. Terres in his book, *Songbirds in Your Garden*, records the story of a time he and his wife were watching the birds in his backyard. Several White-Throated Sparrows were feeding on the ground near some shrubs in his yard. A couple of Blue Jays were at the feeder when one of them quickly flew to a shrub near the sparrows and began screaming, “Jay!Jay!” Immediately the sparrows flew away from the shrubs. When Mr. Terres went to investigate what caused the Blue Jay to get upset, he noticed a black cat leaving its hiding place near the sparrows.

So the next time you are outdoors and you hear the alarming sounds of “Jay!Jay!” you should get excited as well. Although the Blue Jays are warning each other of impending danger, you are receiving a reminder about the workings of the natural world around you. And if you are lucky, maybe you will get to see a hawk as well!

OK, baby, I got to go. Those darn Blue Jays are back. We can talk about this later...



LET ME COUNT THE WAYS

By Charlie Grindstaff

Volunteer projects may be a series of short experiences such as serving on a speaker's bureau - or they may involve the long-term efforts of an entire volunteer team. Either way, for a master volunteer, the opportunity to do meaningful and interesting work is the reward. There are few constraints, except that volunteer service must meet the program mission by being dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our communities. All volunteer service projects must be pre-approved to ensure that volunteers are covered by the program insurance available.

Sometimes we can't make it to the scheduled work days, but there are more than 40 other ways to get your 40 Hours of Volunteer Service Hours. Let me count some ways....**1-3.** write an article for the newspaper, newsletter or briefing notes; **4-13.** volunteer to be on any of our 9 committees; often you can work at home at times convenient to you; **14-25** get involved in a citizen scientist project watching birds, turtles, dragonflies, fauna survey, checking water quality, etc.; **26.** our Chapter Operating Procedures need to be updated; **27.** work with Sara to produce a "plants in our butterfly garden" manual including a list with care instructions; **28.** write a book review for the newsletter; **29-32.** organize a public event, like a night hike, International Observe the Moon Night event (Sept. 6 this year), Earth Day or National Get Outdoors Day (June 13, 2015); **33-34.** volunteer at BRIT or Dogwood Canyon; **35.** I would bet Sharon could use help with the website; **36-37.** work at Mockingbird Nature Park or Kachina Prairie other than on scheduled workdays...just ask the chairperson what you can do; **38.** teach or team teach a nature related class at Waxahachie's Lighthouse for Learning (contact Eileen); **39.** make a presentation to a scouting group or other civic group; **40.** design your own project & present it to the Vice President, Projects; **41-44.** lead, co-lead or assist with a nature walk (we have 4 more scheduled at Mockingbird this year and we'd like to have one at Kachina Prairie in the fall); **45.** help with the exemplary project exhibit for the Annual State Meeting in October (planning begins July 28 at 5 pm); **46-47.** volunteer to help at the Annual State Meeting - there are usually a couple of projects scheduled you can work on, or help with the registration table, or in classrooms; **48.** the list just goes on and on.

Looking forward to seeing you become certified or re-certified.



What's Your Sign?

Christine Cook and Linda Almes unveiling the new information graphics boards they created for Kachina Prairie. Well done.



MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM MISSION:

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

INDIAN TRAIL CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Outreach/Publicity Co-Chairs: Pam/Joe Mundo	<i>Information@itmnc.com</i>
Website Support: Sharon Lane	<i>Webm@itmnc.com</i>

PROJECT CHAIRS

Box Turtle Survey	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Texas Turtle Watch	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Mockingbird Nature Park	Aaron Gritzmaker
Stream Team	Tina Hendon
Kachina Prairie	Peggy Bailey
Project Wild	Rebecca Schumacher
CoCoRaHS	Carolyn Gritzmaker
Wolf Creek Park	Sharon Lane

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY LIASONS

Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center	Rex Reves
Botanical Research Institute of Texas	Debbie Pierce
John Bunker Sands Wetland Center	Maureen Nitkowski

The mission of this newsletter is to inform, educate and entertain Indian Trail Master Naturalists and their circle of friends.



Call for Training Workshops & Session Presentations
15th Annual Statewide Texas Master Naturalist Meeting & Advanced Training
October 24 -26, 2014
Mo Ranch, Hunt, Texas
(Proposal Abstracts deadline EXTENDED to June 30th, 2014)

Meeting Overview

The TMN Statewide Annual Meeting and Advanced Training is geared toward Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers, their Chapters, Agency Advisors, representatives of partner organizations and supporters of the Statewide TMN Program. The meeting provides an opportunity for our volunteers and affiliates to receive all of their Advanced Training requirements for the year within one weekend. It's also an opportunity for program participants and supporters to network, share new ideas and projects and to learn from one another. As a workshop presenter, you would have the opportunity to inform and train TMN members from across the state on various natural resource topics providing more in-depth information than their initial core training and curriculum. You are also encouraged to make this an opportunity to enlist and train our program volunteers to assist you, your program, and your work as part of their annual volunteer service commitment.

Annual Meeting & Advanced Training Workshop and Themes

Proposals for workshops are being requested for the 15th Annual Statewide Texas Master Naturalist Meeting & Advanced Training. All training workshops relevant to the Texas Master Naturalist mission will be considered. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address one or more of the following themes:

- **Special topics for 2014 include** – *Developing and Utilizing Social Media resources, Nongame diversity, the importance and implementation of the Texas Conservation Action Plan, the value of nongame regulation and the importance of the TWW Coalition and diversified funding for nongame wildlife. How-to workshops on developing short educational social media videos.*
- **Citizen Science programs**—*hands-on train the trainer type workshops strongly encouraged. Workshops covering iNaturalist, other apps and technology resources for volunteer monitoring programs also strongly encouraged.*
- **Program and Chapter Management topics--** *including marketing, branding, local program evaluation and assessment, building and maintaining effective partnerships, leadership skills, volunteer and group management techniques and educational technology relevant to natural resource conservation, education and outreach.*
- **Interpretation and communication--** *including working with diverse audiences, techniques and developing interpretive programs for all ages.*
- **Traditional disciplines of a naturalist--** *botany, entomology, ornithology, mammalogy, herpetology, paleontology, geology, etc.*
- **Ecological concepts and/or Eco-regions of Texas**
- **Management of natural systems and systems management tools--** *including forest, rangeland, wetland, aquatic and urban ecology & management and hunting and prescribed fire and other management tools.*
- **Historical perspectives of naturalists in Texas**

-continues-

TMN Advanced Training (AT) Workshops:

Advanced Training workshops provide training on a specific skill, technique, or process and may involve one or more instructors. Workshops are intended to emphasize learning through participation, discussion, and “hands-on” and field activities where possible. AT Workshops should also aim to provide participants with new skills to apply in their area of service or better prepare them to provide service in the topic area you are teaching. Training workshops typically are scheduled to run concurrently with other conference sessions. Training workshops may range from just 2 hours in length to a total of 12 hours in length spanning the course of the weekend. Typical workshop attendance ranges from 15 to 50 while the conference attendance ranges between 300 and 400 total registrants.

TMN Advanced Training Short Sessions (1 to 2 hours):

Short Sessions may include presentations introducing a natural resource topic or program to solicit the interest of TMN volunteers or to present resources and partnerships that may assist Master Naturalist chapters in their communities. They may also be very short, hands-on and interactive presentations on natural resource topics that model good interpretive methods. Short sessions are scheduled to run concurrently with other conference events and topics and are open to all meeting registrants on a walk-in basis. Typical attendance at short sessions can range from 10 to 50 registrants.

Additional Characteristics of TMN Advanced Training Workshops & Short Sessions may include:

- Promotes continued learning and development of naturalist skills
- Provides Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts
- Directs trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services
- Provides practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts
- Takes advantage of state and local partnerships
- Provides TMNs with an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics
- Builds on the core curriculum initially provided by the program and the local chapter
- Provides natural resource management issues and information applicable to Texas
- and for the statewide annual meeting—applies to and addresses a broad range of TMN volunteers (geographically, etc.) across the state.

Examples of Past TMN Annual Meeting Advanced Training Workshop Titles

- Monitoring Habitat for Quail and other Upland Birds, Monitoring Invasive Organisms
- Become a part of the TPWD Dove Banding Program
- Riparian Area Assessment & Management, Ecology of Healthy Forests and Woodlands
- Leopold Education Project, Project WILD and Flying WILD Facilitator Trainings
- Bryophytes: The forest beneath your feet.
- Marketing & Identity for Master Naturalist Chapters, Becoming an Effective Messenger
- Providing Interactive & Experiential Programs and Junior Master Naturalist Activities
- Wind Development, Transmission and Texas Natural Resources
- Introduction to Wildlife Tracking, Establishing White-tailed Deer herd composition and population estimates and trends on your land
- Introduction to Climate Change in TX, Project BudBurst, & the National Phenology Network
- The Texas Master Naturalists role in implementing the Texas Conservation Action Plan
- How to Establish a Land Management Assistance Program in your chapter
- Natural Resource Laws, Regulations and Ethics for Every Master Naturalist
- Feral Hogs: Friend? Foe? or the Ultimate Survivors?
- Planning and facilitating effective meetings for your chapter
- Partnering with Youth & Schools through Service Learning
- Prescribed Fire, Geospatial Technologies and Photodocumentation Trainings
- Bird Feather ID, Bird Blinds: Design and Management Considerations for your TMN Project.

Submission Requirements

The Texas Master Naturalist Program welcomes your training workshop contributions to our agenda! Individuals wishing to present are invited to email a proposal abstract with the following information **by June 30th, 2014** to mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu or michelle.haggerty@tpwd.state.tx.us A notice of receipt will be sent by e-mail. If you do not receive notification of receipt within 10 days or have any questions about proposal submission, please contact Michelle Haggerty. Proposals received after the deadline and before registration opening may be considered if space is available. Trainers/Participants may need to bring their own presentation equipment (laptop, projector, etc.). However, screens will be provided in each meeting room.

Please include the following in your proposal abstract:

- Session Type: (either AT Workshop or 1 hour Short Session)
- Length of time needed (in hours)
- Session Title
- Will an enclosed classroom be required? (or can the session be held entirely outdoors?)
- Will an internet or wifi connection be required for you? And/or for the participants?
- Contact of primary presenter/training team lead (mailing address, phone, cell phone, email)
- Trainer(s)/Presenter(s) names, titles and organization(s)
- Your preferred and maximum class sizes:
- A short description of the session--3-5 sentence paragraph (~100 words) describing the session, what volunteers will learn, what they will need to wear and/or bring with them, etc. (This information will be included in our registration materials to describe your session)

Proposal Evaluation and Notice of Decision

All training proposals will be considered and evaluated on timeliness of the subject, importance of the training to a broad range of TMN volunteers and their further contribution to our program mission. Applicants will be notified whether their proposals are able to be accepted or not.

About the Texas Master Naturalist Program

The Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer program is sponsored statewide by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The program, celebrating its 16th Anniversary, has the mission *to train volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas*. The program currently supports 9,000+ volunteers in 42 local chapters across the state. Last year, TMN volunteers provided over 325,000 hours of service. Many communities and organizations rely on these citizen volunteers for implementing youth education programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are required to receive 40 hours of basic training, obtain a minimum of 8 hours of advanced training and perform 40 hours of volunteer service prior to being certified as a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer. To keep their certification current each year, TMN's are required to obtain an additional 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training. For more information visit our statewide website at: <http://txmn.org>