



# INDIAN TRAIL MARKER

Aug./Sep. 2017

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

701 S. I-35E, Suite 3, Waxahachie, TX 75165 | Office: 972-825-5175 | Visit our website at <http://txmn.org/indiantrail>

## *From the Desk of the* **PRESIDENT**

*Donald Happ, President, Indian Trail Chapter*

It's that time of year again - "HOT" - a time for aestivation (spending a hot or dry period in a prolonged state of torpor or dormancy). For my species that is on the couch in front of the A.C.! While we are not as busy as the rest of the year, the little things we do still count a lot, and our Chapter offers many volunteer opportunities for us to enjoy in cool, air-conditioned comfort.

Lend a hand at the weekly New Class Trainings. Join the BRIT database project and help enter data. Greet visitors or assist teachers and leaders at Dogwood Canyon or Trinity River

Audubon centers. Join the Texas Waters and Plant Family Study groups. Many other advanced training opportunities are available within a short drive. This is also a great time to ask how you could help support the different committees within our Chapter. And when you meet strangers enjoying nature, whether outside in a park or inside the halls of one of our area's many museums and education centers, let them know about the Texas Master Naturalist Program. We build our membership with one nature nerd at a time. Keep Cool and have a fun and safe summer.



Painted Bunting © JimWest

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

---

# ★ AWARDS ★

---

Congratulations to chapter members who received certification and recognition pins for their achievements in volunteer service. In June 2017, Membership Director Michaela Kral presented achievement recognitions to the following individuals

---



New Certification: Katie Christman



250 Hours: Dawn Tarpley



1,000 Hours: Patty Ozga

2017 Recertification:  
Joan Mahony, Deborah Rayfield,  
Carolyn Gritzmaker, Aaron  
Gritzmaker, Cathy Mitchell,  
Don Mitchell, Jim Patak,  
Rena Sutphin, Chris Cook



# NOTEWORTHY



## TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### Chris Cook's Garden Views

*Summer is the perfect time to entertain visitors, wouldn't you agree?*

*Photos by Chris Cook*



Fairy Ring member



Posing mid-munch

Do you lichen this photo?



Male cicada killer guarding his territory

### Lancaster Library Insect Shelter Builders

*Photo by Charlie Grindstaff*



# NOTEWORTHY

## Mockingbird Nature Park's Butterfly Garden Pollinators

Photos by Jean Kastanek



### AUGUST

- 5 BRIT Work Day (9am-12pm)
- 9 Texas Water Specialist Study Group (6:30pm)
- 17 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 18 Paws for Reflection Field Identification (10 am)
- 18 BRIT Volunteer Meeting (3-4pm; or 6-7pm)
- 21 Solar Eclipse
- 23 Texas Water Specialist Study Group (6:30pm)  
Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)
- 28 Indian Trail Chapter Monthly Meeting (6pm);  
Program (7pm)
- 31 Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)

### SEPTEMBER

- 2 BRIT Work Day (9am-12pm)
- 2 BRIT TERM Class "Monarch Migration &  
Local Pollinators: The Importance of Autumn"  
(1-3pm)

- 4 Labor Day
- 7 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 7 Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)
- 13 Texas Water Specialist Study Group (6:30pm)
- 14 Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)
- 15 Kachina Prairie Work Day (9am-12pm)
- 16 Wildflower Walk, Mockingbird Nature Park (9am)
- 20 Texas Water Specialist Study Group (6:30pm)
- 21 Plant Family Study Group (6:30pm)
- 21 Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)
- 23 Kachina Prairie Work Day (9am-12pm)
- 25 Indian Trail Chapter Monthly Meeting (6pm);  
Program (7pm)
- 28 Indian Trail Chapter 2017 New Class Training (6-9pm)
- 30 Chautauqua Assembly outreach (*check email for times*)

# Happy Retirement!

## Joanne Olsen

By Maureen Nitkowski

The Indian Trail Chapter has been fortunate to have the support of a very knowledgeable and patient guide in the person of Joanne Olsen from the time of our founding five years ago to the present day. Joanne has been the keystone in the Agrilife Extension Office of Ellis County for all her years of employment there. Her desk is first in line for all visitors to the office, and her professional and welcoming presence greets everyone who enters. She has been a true friend to our volunteer group.

The beginnings of our chapter required a lot of paperwork and communication between us and our sponsoring



agencies, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Agrilife Extension. Joanne was the contact person at the center of it all who helped unravel the red tape, and save us from ourselves more often than not! After Indian Trail received its charter, Joanne continued to take time to advise us on office matters, relaying phone inquiries from the public, keeping our roster up to date, and making certain supplies mailed to the office reached the intended recipient (Master Naturalists receive some unusual supplies for teaching- Joanne never faltered!). Somehow in her busy day she found time for our needs and to ask about us on a personal level. We will miss Joanne, but do wish her good health and happy adventures in retirement.

## New AgriLife Extension Secretary

By Anne Marie Gross

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Becky Britten, who will be assuming Joanne Olsen's responsibilities as of July 31. Becky started at the Ellis County Extension Service in October 2016 as the FCS/4-H Secretary. She grew up in the Panhandle and moved here with her husband Terrell in 2011. Becky told me that her background is in Plant and Soil Science. Please be sure to swing by the AgriLife office to welcome her and help her to get to know our wonderful group!



**“When a man is tired of Dragonflies,  
he is tired of life...”**

*Samuel Johnson*

# Bat? Bull.



*Text and photos by Jim West*

Neither actually. This is about the common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), sometimes referred to as bull bats. In fact, chasing bats is where I first encountered one. The genus name *Chordeiles* is from Ancient Greek *khoreia*, a dance with music, and *deile*, evening, *minor* is Latin for *smaller*.

One of my favorite birds, as a kid I thought their wings were in two pieces as the white patch on the wings is hard to discern in the dim light of dusk. Their erratic flight pattern just added to their mystique for a young boy.

Found throughout North America, nighthawks function pretty much like flying whale sharks, cruising the evening (and morning) sky, scooping up small insects. They also have one of North America's longer migrations, wintering in South America.



# Notable NATURE

## Common Nighthawk

By Jim West

While they prefer open country in general, they are often seen in the air over cities and towns. They tend to inhabit any kind of open or semi-open terrain, including clearings in forest, open pine woods, prairie country, farmland, suburbs and city centers.

The bounding, erratic flight, white wing patches and angular wings of the Common Nighthawk make it unmistakable. Their nasal cries and “booming” display dives may be heard over many cities.

On summer evenings, keep an eye and an ear out for the male Common Nighthawk’s dramatic “booming” display flight. Flying at a height slightly

above the treetops, he abruptly dives for the ground. As he peels out of his dive, he flexes his wings downward, and the air rushing across his wingtips makes a deep booming or whooshing sound, as if a racecar has just passed by. The dives may be directed at females, territorial intruders, and even people.

Nighthawks are declining seriously in numbers in many parts of North America. Causes may include changes in land use and overuse of pesticides. In some areas, nighthawks nesting on gravel roofs have been targeted by increasing urban populations of crows, which eat the eggs.

### Species Profile

**Common Name:** *Common nighthawk*

**Genus:** *Chordeiles minor*

**Family:** *Caprimulgidae*

**Size:** 9.4" long with a wingspan of up to 23"

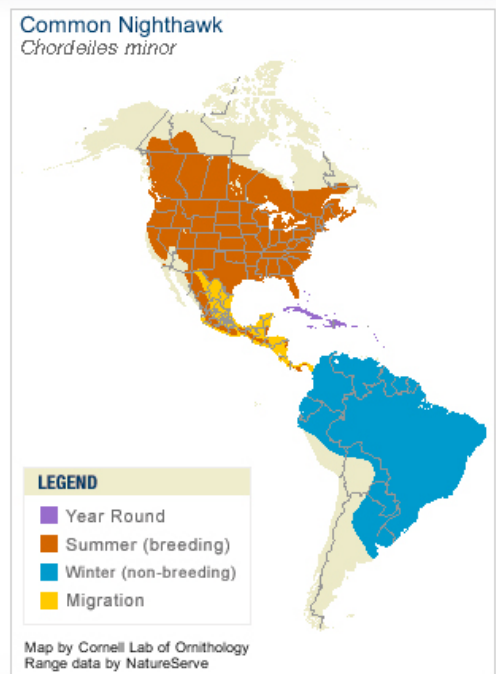
### Key identification Characteristics

- Slender body with large head and notched tail
- Heavily barred underside
- Heavily marked camouflage pattern above
- Long, pointed wings with white patch visible
- Very small bill
- White throat visible but less obvious on perched birds
- White bars near tips of wings

### Material for this article was gathered from the following sources:

- *All About Birds*, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
  - *Audubon Field Guide to North American Birds*
- [www.birds-of-north-america.net/nighthawks.html](http://www.birds-of-north-america.net/nighthawks.html)

### Range map



# Outdoor Classrooms

By Cindy Largent

Growing up in Illinois, my siblings and I played outside every opportunity that was afforded to us. We had a garden, made mud pies, dug in the dirt, caught bugs, picked dandelions and clover and found endless things to do. We wanted to be outside. My yard, my neighborhood, my school and trips to Texas provided a rich learning environment. Who knew that 40 years later this would be called an outdoor classroom and children would need to be taught how to play outside?



Over the years, I have witnessed the change in the way kids play. Play has moved indoors and has become technology and toy driven. Children at my center had no interest in playing or exploring outdoors. Many didn't want to get dirty. Richard Louv discusses in his book "Last Child in the Woods", how children have become disconnected with nature. This was evident when I took my preschool group on a hike. The children complained because it was hot and there were bugs. After walking several hundred yards, they complained they were too tired to go on. My school-age summer camp children were the same, and

some were more fearful of the bugs. Research has shown that playing in nature is necessary for the healthy development of children. I felt it was time for an intervention.

I incorporated more field trips to parks and nature centers. We are so fortunate to be in this area. Dogwood Canyon, Cedar Ridge Nature Preserve, Ashgrove, our local parks, and more recently Mockingbird Nature Park are part of our outdoor classroom. At the center, we spend time outdoors observing and exploring. Tree cookies, biscuits, branches and twigs are scattered on the tables and ground. Bamboo sits under a tree waiting to be used as building materials or marble runs. Plants in pots are scattered about being cared for by the children. We are in the process of converting a small area into an eleven-month blooming paradise for bugs and birds.

The outdoors is also brought inside with nature bowls (carved by Indian Trail Chapter member Paul Grindstaff) which are filled to the rims with "treasures", bug catchers are filled with specimens being examined with magnifying glasses, and we have a bird of the month area.

In six years, the children have gone from dreading their time outdoors to being upset when we are unable to be out more. They have gone from being fearful to being in awe and filled with wonder. They have learned that any place outside is an outdoor classroom.





# WANTED: Armchair Volunteers for the BRIT Digitization Project

By Sue Frary, Photos by Joe Lippert, Botanical Research Institute of Texas

For years, I frittered away my time during the hot summer months with online gaming, piloting my space ships in a massive digital universe. But happily, I have found a way to kick back this summer, logging volunteer hours at the same time. No more frittering, for me! I'm volunteering with the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in Fort Worth, but from home, in my recliner, with my laptop ... any time I have a couple of hours to spare. No need to go out in the summer heat (or fortify against chiggers)!

The BRIT Digitization Project is a massive one. BRIT has a bazillion (my count, not theirs) physical dried plant specimens, called "vouchers", collected from the middle 1800's to the present day. They all have labels with the name of the collector, the date and place of collection, and botanical identifications, called "determinations". The labels are printed, typed, or hand-written. The Digitization Project relies on volunteers to enter key information from the voucher into a spreadsheet for subsequent entry into BRIT's research database along with a high resolution digital image of the voucher. When this effort completes, botanical researchers worldwide can work on these "virtual vouchers" without having to travel to Fort Worth.

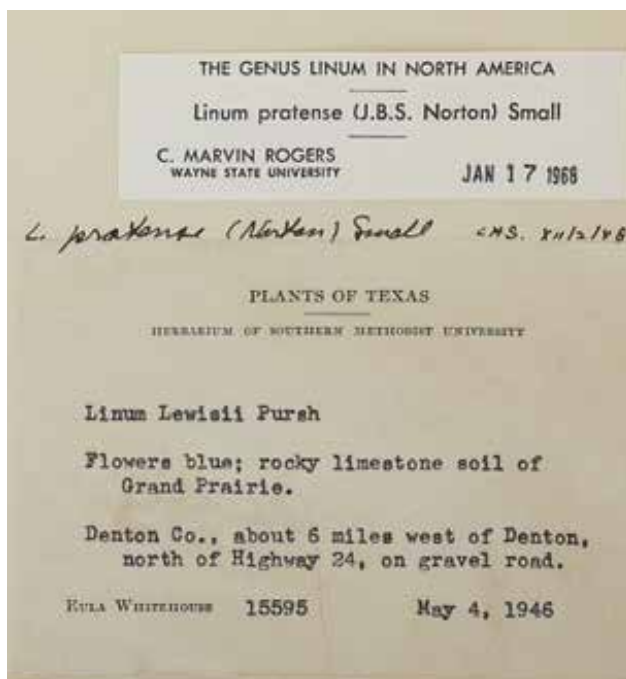
Below is an image of a voucher from one of my favorite botanists, Eula Whitehouse. This particular specimen is *Linum pratense* (meadow flax), collected in 1946 in Denton County. In the digitization project, you simply transfer the information on the label to a BRIT-supplied spreadsheet. BRIT will send you a link to a set of about 200 voucher images, and you enter the data from each image label into the spreadsheet ... all at your own pace, from your own computer. When you are done, you return the

spreadsheet to BRIT, book your hours, and they will send you another link to more vouchers images.

A while back, Charlie Grindstaff wrote an article for the Indian Trail Marker about how much she enjoyed "time travelling" while working on this chapter-approved project. I agree with her wholeheartedly; I have so much fun doing this work for BRIT. I get to see the original collections of Ferdinand Lindheimer, Emil Dapprich, and Julien Reverchon from the 1800's, as well as collections from giants of Texas botany, including Barton Warnock, Billie Lee Turner, Eula Whitehouse, Lloyd Shinnery, Victor Cory, or Donovan Correll. Sometimes I get so caught up in exploring the images, I'll take a break from logging volunteer hours and follow the many biographical and botanical "bunny trails," wherever they may take me.

This project is a win for Master Naturalists who get service hours, a win for BRIT who gains much-needed volunteer labor, and a definite win for botanical research. All good. With a bazillion vouchers in the collection (there's actually just over a million specimens), there are definitely volunteer hours to be had for anyone handy with a spreadsheet.

This is air-conditioned ITMN service, on your own schedule, no actual travel required, and volunteer time much appreciated by BRIT. If you're interested in serving on this project, contact Debbie Pierce, our BRIT liaison.





BOTANICAL  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF  
TEXAS



24ColorCard

HERBARIUM  
Southern Methodist University  
DALLAS, TEXAS



THE GENUS LINUM IN NORTH AMERICA

*Linum pratense* (J.B.S. Norton) Small

C. MARVIN ROGERS  
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

JAN 17 1968

*L. pratense* (Norton) Small C.M.S. 2412.188

PLANTS OF TEXAS

HERBARIUM OF SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

*Linum Lewisii* Pursh

Flowers blue; rocky limestone soil of  
Grand Prairie.

Denton Co., about 6 miles west of Denton,  
north of Highway 24, on gravel road.

ELLA WHITEHOUSE 15595

May 4, 1946

IMAGED  
25 JAN 2017

BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
OF TEXAS



BRIT565246

## Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting

Registration opens the first week of August for the Texas Master Naturalist 18th Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Omni Corpus Christi October 20-22, 2017. Over 117 different presentations and field sessions have been planned, with a variety of topics and speakers from around the state. Several of our chapter members are planning to attend ... join us, and let's enjoy the weekend of comradery and learning together!



**T E X A S**  
MASTER NATURALIST™  
*18th Annual Meeting*  
OCTOBER 20-22, 2017  
OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL

## Texas Waters Specialist Certification Program

*By Charlie Grindstaff*

Last May, eleven members from our Chapter attended the Texas Waters workshop, a volunteer training program that aims to inform the citizens of Texas about the most precious natural resource Texas possesses, its water. Through this program, volunteer specialists will provide education, service, and outreach dedicated to the beneficial management of aquatic resources and aquatic habitats within our community.

At the workshop, we learned about the curriculum program and the requirements to receive Texas Waters Specialist certification. There is an emphasis on interactive training and service. Members must complete 8 hours advanced training to receive your pin, then 10 hours in service. You do not have to have attended the workshop to become a Texas Waters Specialist. The ITMN attendees decided to create an interactive Texas Waters Study Group to go through

the Texas Waters Manual together to complete the advanced training requirements. Another option for earning some of the advanced training requirements for Texas Water Specialist certification is to attend a live, interactive webinar (there is one on August 22). To view the manual online:

<http://tpwd.texas.gov/education/water-education/texaswatersprogram/texaswatersspecialist>

Members can earn the service hours through some of the current ITMN projects, such as CoCoRaHS; the L.A.N.D.S. Trinity Waters field investigation days; and some volunteer work at John Bunker Sands Wetland Center.

It's not too late to join our Texas Waters Study Group, which meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm, twice a month, at the Waxahachie Parks & Rec Building. Be sure to check the calendar and your emails to verify upcoming dates. We'd love to have you join our study group and help us protect and conserve Texas Waters and promote water awareness. If you have any questions, email me or Rena Sutphin.



# NATURAL reads

Book Review by Dawn Tarpley

## *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*

By Peter Wohlleben, Copyright 2016, Greystone Books

Trees use the Wood Wide Web daily. They live surrounded by their children and even help sustain them. And they are able to smell and taste. The research behind these findings and many others is found in German forester Peter Wohlleben's book, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*. Here are a few of the author's insights.

Trees are connected to each other by what the author calls the "Wood Wide Web." Underground, the tips of roots are connected to and surrounded by microscopic fungi that in turn connect with the roots of other trees. This allows trees to share nutrients, water and filter out heavy metals. In exchange for helping trees, fungi receive sugar and other carbohydrates.

Without the WWW, trees do not live as long. But there are exceptions, an oak tree living isolated in a pasture may have a very long life because it has other protective features like tannin in its leaves which is unattractive to insects and, of course, it will have no competition from other trees for sunlight.

An ancient tree is usually surrounded by its own children. But the mother tree shades the younger trees preventing them from making a lot of food in their leaves. The WWW comes to the rescue as fungi move

sugar and other nutrients from the mother tree to the young trees. Despite this assistance, the saplings will grow very slowly and be much older than their circumference indicates. They can live 80 plus years waiting for their turn. When the mother tree finally dies, the trees-in-waiting suddenly have sunshine and take off growing at a rapid pace, competing with their siblings. Later, their many decades of slow growth will be a great advantage to them.

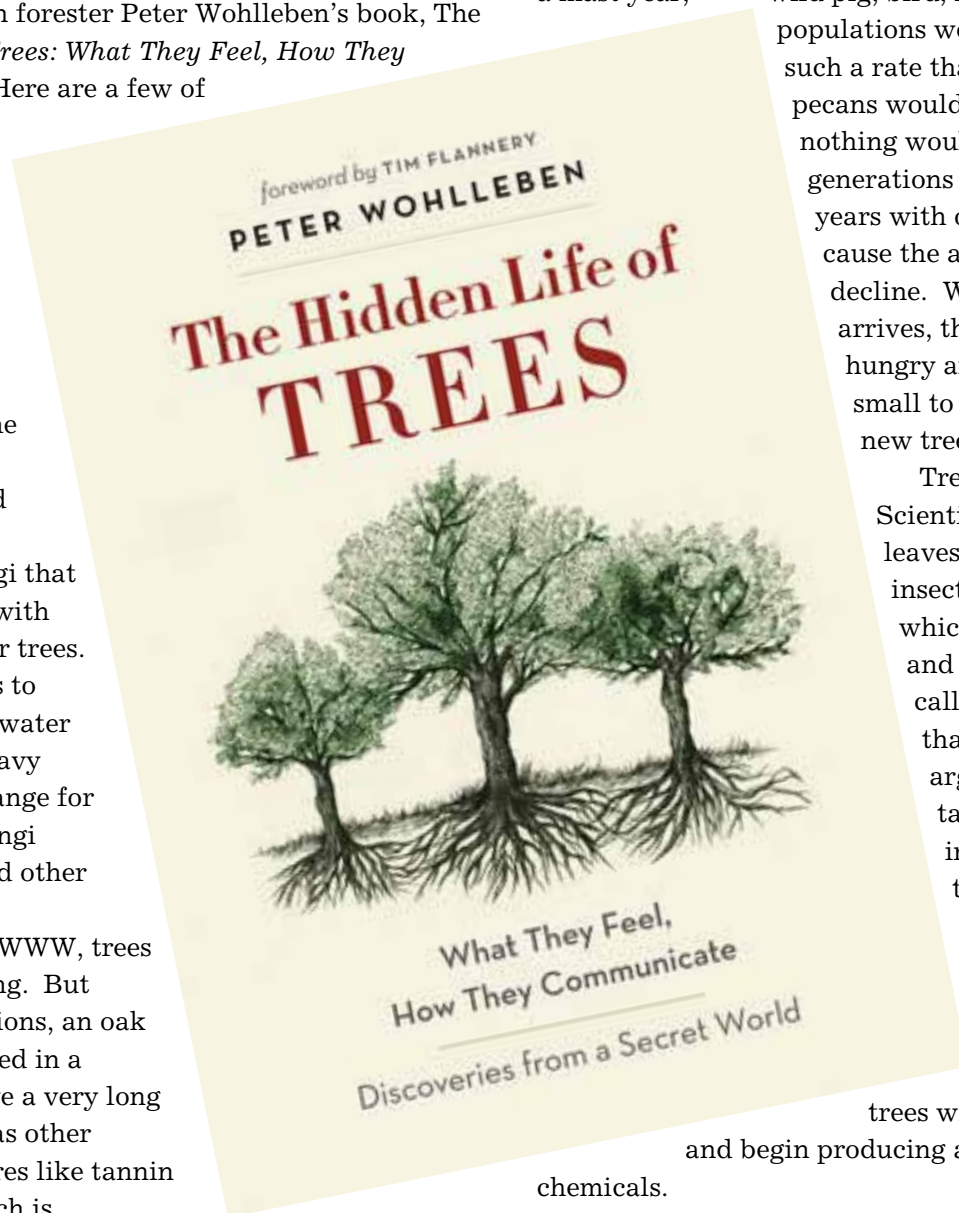
A mast year (an above average year for production of nuts) is not directly caused by environmental factors. Instead it is an adaptation. If every year was a mast year,

wild pig, bird, mice and squirrel populations would soon grow at such a rate that all of the acorns or pecans would be eaten and nothing would be left for future generations of trees. Instead, years with only a few nuts will cause the animal populations to decline. When a mast year arrives, the population of hungry animals will be too small to eat all the nuts and new trees will sprout.

Trees are able to taste. Scientists know that when leaves are bitten by an insect the tree will know which insect's saliva it is and send out a signal calling the predator of that insect. You could argue that the tree has tasted the specific insect saliva and taken steps to ward off attack. Also, a tree can send out a signal that it is under threat to other trees. Other trees will "smell" the signal

and begin producing appropriate toxic chemicals.

The book seems to be written specifically for master naturalists everywhere. I listened to the book on Audible. The narrator sounds like Ian McKellen who played Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*, so it is both authoritative and charming. Highly recommended.



**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

---

President: Don Happ ..... [donnahapp.happ@gmail.com](mailto:donnahapp.happ@gmail.com)  
VP/Programs: Elaine "Muffi" Ruby ..... [elaineruby@wgfhc.com](mailto:elaineruby@wgfhc.com)  
Treasurer: Denise King..... [kdeniseking2223@gmail.com](mailto:kdeniseking2223@gmail.com)  
Secretary: Anne Marie Gross ..... [annetgross@gmail.com](mailto:annetgross@gmail.com)  
Past President: Charlie Grindstaff..... [pcgrindstaff@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pcgrindstaff@sbcglobal.net)

---

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

---

Advanced Training Chair: Jack Dunaway ..... [jackdsr@hotmail.com](mailto:jackdsr@hotmail.com)  
Historian: Carol Adams ..... [adamscarols@gmail.com](mailto:adamscarols@gmail.com)  
Host/Hostess Chair: Celia Yowell ..... [celiayowell@gmail.com](mailto:celiayowell@gmail.com)  
Membership Chair: Michaela Kral..... [michaelarkral@gmail.com](mailto:michaelarkral@gmail.com)  
Office Manager: Patty Ozga ..... [plozga@gmail.com](mailto:plozga@gmail.com)  
Newsletter Editor: Anne Marie Gross ..... [annetgross@gmail.com](mailto:annetgross@gmail.com)  
..... [newsletter@itmc.com](mailto:newsletter@itmc.com)  
Newsletter Designer/Publisher: Jim West..... [jrwest901@gmail.com](mailto:jrwest901@gmail.com)  
Outreach Chair: Eileen Berger ..... [eileenberger@att.net](mailto:eileenberger@att.net)  
Publicity Co-Chair: Pam Mundo..... [pmundo@mundoandassociates.com](mailto:pmundo@mundoandassociates.com)  
Publicity Co-Chair: Joe Mundo..... [joe@mundoandassociates.com](mailto:joe@mundoandassociates.com)  
State Representative: Rebecca Schumacher ..... [reccaschumacher@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reccaschumacher@sbcglobal.net)  
Training Chair: Lynn Wisakowsky ..... [lynnwisakowsky@gmail.com](mailto:lynnwisakowsky@gmail.com)

---

## SUPPORT

---

Webmaster: Sharon Lane ..... [sharon@smrtexas.com](mailto:sharon@smrtexas.com)  
Social Media: Michaela Kral ..... [michaelarkral@gmail.com](mailto:michaelarkral@gmail.com)

---

## PROJECT CHAIRS

---

Projects: Don Mitchell ..... [dm1100d@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dm1100d@sbcglobal.net)  
Kachina Prairie Chair: Jim Patak..... [jpatak@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jpatak@sbcglobal.net)  
Mockingbird Nature Park: Elaine R., Terry J., Rebecca S., Gwen E  
Stream Team: Maureen Nitkowski ..... [maunitka@att.net](mailto:maunitka@att.net)  
Project Wild: Rebecca Schumacher ..... [reccaschumacher@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reccaschumacher@sbcglobal.net)  
CoCoRaHS: Carolyn Gritzmaker ..... [cgritzmaker@gmail.com](mailto:cgritzmaker@gmail.com)  
Bullard Heights Neighborhood Park: Don Happ..... [donnahapp.happ@gmail.com](mailto:donnahapp.happ@gmail.com)  
Cerf Park Butterfly Garden: Linda Almes ..... [almesli@hotmail.com](mailto:almesli@hotmail.com)

---

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY LIAISONS

---

Botanical Research Institute of Texas: Debbie Pierce..... [debbiekpierce@att.net](mailto:debbiekpierce@att.net)  
Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center: Michaela Kral ..... [michaelarkral@gmail.com](mailto:michaelarkral@gmail.com)  
John Bunker Sands Wetland Center: Maureen Nitkowski..... [maunitka@att.net](mailto:maunitka@att.net)

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



**Monday – August 28, 2017**  
**“FASINATING WORLD OF PLANT GALLS”**

**Location: First United Methodist Church**  
**505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie, TX**  
**Family Life Center - Gathering Room**

**Indian Trail Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist**

- **6:00 PM - Business Meeting**
- **7:00 PM - Program by Lisa Dolliver - Trinity River Audubon Center**

**“FASINATING WORLD OF PLANT GALLS”**

Do your Oak trees ever sport strange spherical growths? Have you noticed donut shapes on your Hackberry leaves? These are the entrance points for the fascinating world of galls, a plant insect interaction with all the drama of the Game of Thrones!

Lisa Dolliver has been working to get kids to appreciate nature in their everyday environment at zoo's, nature centers and natural history museums for the last twenty years. Lisa's family which includes geologists, naturalists and an astronomer, spent most summers in her family's ranch outside of Cody Wyoming. While Lisa's has a BFA in theatre from SMU it was only a matter of time before Lisa returned to her family's science roots. Lisa currently works in the Trinity River Audubon Center's Education Department.

Indian Trail Chapter is part of the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Program of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

*The 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.*

This program is part of a series of “no cost” “open to the public” Master Naturalist programs offered the fourth Monday (generally) of each month, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Please bring a friend! For more information, please call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at 972-825-5175 or email: [information@itmnc.com](mailto:information@itmnc.com)