

# LRMN News

Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalist's Newsletter



TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

TEXAS  
PARKS &  
WILDLIFE

## New Junior Ranger at Martin Dies Jr. State Park

Ranger Amy Kocurek and husband Neal are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Cora Brook Kocurek. Cora was born on February 8th at 5:18pm at Sugarland Methodist Hospital weighing 7 lbs. 5 oz. and measuring 19" in length. Amy will be on maternity leave until April and will need us to step up to fill in for her while she is out. There will be lots of opportunities for service credit during this time. Spring break, March 11th—24th, and all weekends in March and April will be especially busy in the park. Opportunities include staffing the Nature Center, providing arts/crafts activities for the Nature Center visitors, Dutch Oven cooking demos, guided hikes, etc. The necessary supplies are available at the Nature Center. Find your place of service now. For more information: [https://tpwd.texas.gov?state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park\\_events](https://tpwd.texas.gov?state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park_events)



## Texas Black Bear Alliance

Founded as a task force by the Texas Parks and Wildlife in 2005, the Texas Black Bear Alliance was renamed and reorganized in 2016 as a non-profit, citizens who seek to promote the throughout their historic range in research and habitat management.



Six of our members participated in Alliance held February 8th at the mation to be used in our education stand the importance of reintroduc- TBBA tracks black bear sightings lic to report any sightings. They of East Texas for Black Bear habi- per County's stretch of the Big Thicket, the Upper Neches River Corridor where McQueen's Landing is located, is included in the South Recovery Zone. LRMN's Keith Stephens has been appointed to serve on the Board of the Alliance For more information: [www.texasblackbear.weebly.com](http://www.texasblackbear.weebly.com). The Texas Black Bear Alliance is also on Facebook.

non-governmental organization of private restoration of black bears in suitable habitat Texas through partnerships using education,

the Winter Meeting of the Texas Black Bear Ellen Trout Park in Lufkin, obtaining infor- and outreach programs to help people under- ing the Louisiana Black Bear to East Texas. in Texas and posts signs to encourage the pub- have also identified the best geographic areas tat, designating those as Recovery Zones. Jas-

————Article partially submitted by Laura Clark

### Be a part of the newsletter and earn service credit!!!

Write up a short article about what you are doing as a Naturalist. Add a picture. Send them to me at [sherlmx@gmail.com](mailto:sherlmx@gmail.com). Keep up with your time and enter it at <https://txmn.org/tmn-vms-users> under Administration—Communication. The deadline for the March newsletter is April 3rd, 2018.

## Recertification Recipients for 2017

Sue Singletary, Keith Stephens, Clair Boutte, Mary Hamilton, Laura Clark, Sharon Lamoreaux, Joanie Kochanek, Robert Webb, Lori Horne (not pictured), and Georgia Purdy (not pictured) were all recipients of a sea turtle pin to acknowledge their accomplishments of advanced training and service in 2017. Their combined efforts totaled 220.5 Advanced Training hours and 501.5 service hours. WOW!!! Congratulations!!!



Picture submitted by Sue Singletary

## Jasper Azalea Festival

The Jasper Azalea Festival, an all-county event, occurs on March 17, 2018 at the Jasper Courthouse square and the Outdoor Learning Center on E. Water Street. This festival brings many people to the town of Jasper. While the launch for the festival is the blooming of the Azalea flowers prolific in Jasper every spring the festival itself focuses on the many vendors and goodies that we find there. The Outdoor Learning center is truly a center of activity. There are tours and a good sized plant sale is held in conjunction with the festival. All who work are served a hamburger meal at lunch. The festival is from 9:00-4:00 with possibilities of earning at least 8 volunteer hours. This year our group will set up a table at the center for the kids and adults to make the seed bombs. This is also a time for the Master Naturalist to tell about what Master Naturalist really is.

—————Article submitted by Sue Singletary

## Keep America, Texas, and Jasper Beautiful

On April 7, 2018 the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalist host the event for “Keep America Beautiful”. This is done in the form of a trash pick up all over Jasper County. It does not have to be just in the city of Jasper. It can be done near your home. The way it works is that there are dumpsters set up at the Outdoor Learning Center on E. Water Street. At 9:00 AM, we meet at the center for a picture taking session. Coffee and donuts will be provided. After that we break up into teams and go our separate ways and pick up trash. We are supplied with water and trash bags. It is good if the picker upper has one of the little mechanical grabbers to pick up the trash. It is also good if the person wears bright colored clothes so that people driving by see you. If you are in Jasper, we will come with a truck and take your trash-filled bags to put them into the dumpster. At a time near 2:00, we meet back at the dumpster to be amazed by the amount of trash that has accumulated around Jasper over the past year. This is another good way to accumulate volunteer hours.

**JOIN US FOR KEEP JASPER BEAUTIFUL!**

—————Article submitted by Sue Singletary

More information

More information

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March—

- 7th—HeadStart program—Planting w/ Joanie Kochanek—help needed—email [fdbclaire@gmail.com](mailto:fdbclaire@gmail.com)**
- 10th—Soils and Pasture Management meeting—8am—Newton Feed Store—taking soil samples**
- 13th—Chapter meeting @ Martin Dies Jr. Park dining hall—6pm Program—Pollinators by Robert Webb**
- 14th—Eagle Hike @ Martin Jr. Park 10am—12pm Leader—Gerald Langham—TMN Orange TX**
- 17th—Azalea Festival 10am—4pm Courthouse square Volunteer to promote LRMN at our booth**
- 21st—HeadStart program—Friendship rocks w/ Claire Boutte—help needed email [fdbclaire@gmail.com](mailto:fdbclaire@gmail.com)**
- 24th—Caddo Mounds 10am—3pm, Raptor show—11am Owl show—2pm \$4 person, crafts and activities**
- 31st—E. O. Siecke State Forest field trip— 9-2 Bring a picnic lunch**

### April—

- 4th—HeadStart program—Light Catchers w/ Laura Clark— help needed—email [fdbclaire@gmail.com](mailto:fdbclaire@gmail.com)**
- 7th—Great American/Keep Jasper Beautiful Trash off**
- 10th—Chapter meeting @ Martin Dies Jr. Park dining hall—6pm Program— TBA**
- 11th—HeadStart program—Earth Day w/ Claire Boutte—help needed—email [fdbclaire@gmail.com](mailto:fdbclaire@gmail.com)**
- 15th—May 15th Great Texas Birding Classic**
- 22nd—Earth Day - Theme— plastics pollution**

*Joy in looking and comprehending is nature's most beautiful gift.— Albert Einstein*



LRMN was well represented when Dr. Larry Beran spoke at a Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) meeting on February 15, 2018. The water quality of Sandy Creek, which runs through the city of Jasper and flows in B.A. Steinhagen Lake (Dam-B), and then into the Neches River, has been identified as having higher than acceptable levels of E. coli, an indicator of pathogens which are of concern in waters used for fishing and swimming. The state agency which conducts the monitoring, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, is asking for local help to come up with a plan to reduce those levels of bacteria. They have contracted with Dr. Beran and Texas A&M Agrilife Research to conduct public education and outreach to identify stakeholders in the local community that have the capacity, influence, and interest to help develop a strategy. LRMN's Terry McFall, who is also on the SWCD Board, was one of two board members appointed to work with Dr. Beran to identify stakeholders and conduct meetings with them to determine the steps that need to be taken to ensure that Sandy Creek and several other impaired streams that flow into the Neches River are always safe for recreation.

———Article submitted by Laura Clark

*Attended a meeting? Worked at the MDJP Nature Center, Arboretum, etc.? Don't forget to enter your hours at <https://txmn.org/tmn-vms-users>. There is a 45 day window. Enter it or lose it!!!*

### Staffing the Nature Center at Martin Dies Jr. State Park

———Article Submitted by Janette Johnson



Where are the alligators? What is that red bird that's not a cardinal? Why do I have to pay a fee if I'm just driving through the park? Can we rent a canoe here? Do you sell bug spray? Do you know where my family reunion is? Who is Martin Dies Junior? Do you rent fishing poles? Where do I go to buy bait? Do I need a fishing license? Why are some of the hiking trails closed?

These are just a few of the questions you might be asked if you operate the Nature Center at Martin Dies Junior State Park. Don't worry if you don't know the answer to the question asked. Park Ranger Amy Kocurek will help you or you can call the main headquarters. There is also a comprehensive library of books and field guides to reference.

In addition to being an 'information desk', you will have the opportunity to interact with the park visitors as they tour the exhibits in the center. You can also participate in the programs offered such as fish prints, Monarch mobile, Zombie Apocalypse Hike, lake dipping, leaf prints, eagle watch hike, animal tracking, and (if qualified) guided canoe trips. These programs are offered to individual families visiting the park as well as organizations such as scout groups and school groups ranging from elementary school to high school.

The Nature Center at Martin Dies Junior State Park is not only an opportunity to earn service hours but a learning experience as well.

Janette has been volunteering at the nature center since becoming an LRMN graduate in March of 2017 and usually volunteers for half-days, twice a month.

MEMBER'S

CORNER