

LRMN News

Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalist's Newsletter



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President

Sharon Lamoreaux
sherlmx@gmail.com

Vice-President

Lori Horne
lori.horne1965@gmail.com

Treasurer

Joanie Kochanek
4joanick@gmail.com

Secretary

Laura Clark
lauralucillemorgan@yahoo.com

Advisor

Brock Fry

COMMITTEE HEADS

Chapter Programs

Lori Horne
lori.horne1965@gmail.com

Siecke Signage

Laura Clark
lauralucillemorgan@yahoo.com

New Class Director

Sharon Lamoreaux
sherlmx@gmail.com

MDJSP Service Projects

Lori Horne
lori.horne1965@gmail.com

Newsletter

Sharon Lamoreaux
sherlmx@gmail.com

On May 4th, rain only slightly delayed the start of The Big Sit, an annual event used to raise money for Texas birds and birding conservation project grants. The Big Sit is a category in the biggest, longest, wildest birdwatching tournament in the U.S.

This was the 23rd annual Great Texas Birding Classic and the 5th year for our Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalist group. In this category we stay in one area, the observation bridge at Martin Dies Jr. State Park, to count as many different species of birds as possible. Leading the pack of bird spotters was Claire Boutte and her husband, Doug. Participants were Janette Johnson, Don Fralick, Sue Singletary, Georgia Purdy, Fred and Elke Lyons, Joanie Kochanek, Laura Clark and Sandy Brent.



The Big Sit!



The watch began a little after 8am due to the rain, but the rains relented for a beautiful, sunny afternoon and ended at sunset. Most observers stayed for at least one of the three shifts: morning, afternoon or evening.

32 different species were seen, heard and recorded for this year's event. Species that had not been seen before included the Mississippi Kite and the Boat-Tailed Grackle. Over the years, we have seen or heard a total of 62 different species in this area.



UPCOMING EVENTS

June —

4th—LRMN Class meeting 6pm-9pm, Ranger Amy Kocurek—**Herpetology** / Ranger Chuck Hubbard—**Mammalogy**
 6th—LRMN Board meeting—Agrilife office—10am
 8th—Training Class Field Trip #4— **Fish Hatchery**
 11th—LRMN Class meeting 6pm-9pm, Amanda Haralson—**Land Stewardship** / Neal Kocurek—**Laws, Regs, Ethics**
 18th—LRMN Class GRADUATION !!!!
 22nd—Watson Preserve—Mushroom walk—10am
 25th—Jasper Chamber of Commerce Open House for Sandy Creek Park Expansion (service credit)

July—

4th— LRMN Board meeting—Agrilife office—10am
 6th— **Big Thicket Preserve**— Guided Canoe trip—10-2 Register at 409-951-6700
 9th—LRMN Chapter meeting - 6pm MDJSP Dining hall— Program — Texas Water Resources, Sylvia Holmes
 25th—**Big Thicket Preserve**— Guided Canoe trip—10-2 Register at 409-951-6700



Congratulations to Chuck Hubbard on his new promotion to Superintendent at MDJSP. Also to Pablo Ramirez on his advancement to Head Ranger.



Head Start—Contact Claire Boutte - fdclaire@gmail.com
 Martin Dies Jr. State Park - Contact Ranger Amy at amy.kocurek@tpwd.texas.gov
 MDJSP Spring service projects—Contact Lori Horne—lori.horne1965@gmail.com



FREQUENTLY USED WEB SITES

Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalists web site..... <https://txmn.org/llr/>
 Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalists FaceBook....<https://www.facebook.com/LongleafRidgeMasterNaturalists/>
 Martin Dies Jr. State Park events.....https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park_events
 Watson Preserve.....http://watsonpreserve.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network
 Big Thicket National Preserve.....<https://www.nps.gov/bith/index.htm>

Send your favorites to me at sherlmx@gmail.com



May's Training Classes



Our May training classes started off with a great buggy presentation by Robert Webb on Entomology. He shared information on native bees and their help with pollination. With approximately 1800 volunteer hours, Robert really loves learning about our East Texas outdoors and best of all, he loves to share what he has learned.

Robert was back the following week paired up with Laura Clark to talk about Citizen Science, describing how, although we are amateurs, there are opportunities to help gather data to help the scientists of the world. Laura shared her experience with the iNaturalist app. It has helped her identify the flora and fauna in her yard and beyond. Her photographs on the website have also helped others across the world in their studies.



Wildlife Biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Randall Kroll, joined us to present information on Wet Land Ecology. He shared the types of trees, plants, and wildlife that can be found there and why their protection is important. Randall hopes to begin monthly educational programs for the public soon.

Dan Ashe, a fisheries biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department since 2005 joined us for a night of Ichthyology and Aquatic Systems studies. Dan shared the differences in the types of fish and the kinds of fish that we can expect to see at Rayburn Lake. He also reported on what they do as biologists at the Rayburn fish hatchery to reproduce the types of fish needed for our area and across Texas.



Sharon Lamoreaux, Chapter president, presented encouragement for the new students to become Volunteer teachers. By exhibiting instances of past experiences and examples of opportunities that are on-going, she showed that with proper preparation and interest, anyone can be an effective interpreter in many different scenarios, thus carrying out the mission of the Master Naturalist program.

Brock Fry was also on hand to extend his praise for what the students have accomplished and to cheer them on to becoming certified members of LRMN.

On May 10th, our Chapter hosted an Invasives of Texas course with Dr. Hans Landel, the Invasive Species Program Coordinator from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, leading the program. We had 19 participants in the program.

We learned that the top ten invasive plants of Texas are: Mimosa trees, Chinaberry trees, Wisteria, Nandina, Elephant Ears, Japanese Climbing Fern, Japanese Honeysuckle, Golden Bamboo, Chinese Tallow Trees, and Common Water Hyacinth. We were shown prevention and management treatments for these invaders and learned how to report their locations through the Texasinvasives.com website and phone app.

Dr. Landel will be back for our October chapter meeting with more information.



An "invasive species" is defined as a species that is non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. ([Executive Order 13112](#)).

EDUCATION

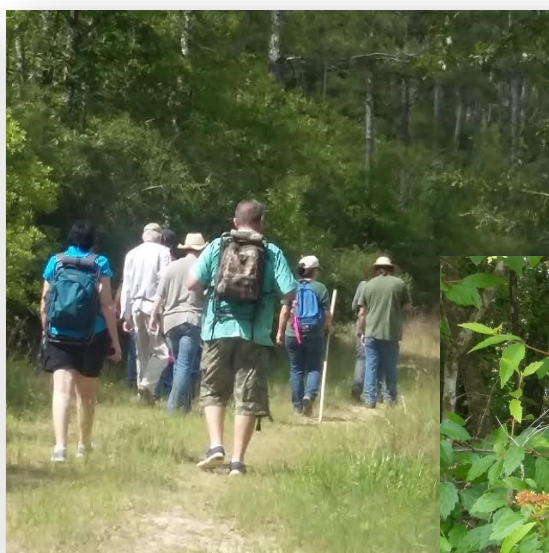
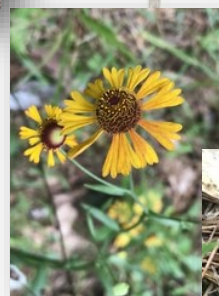
We had eleven hikers for the field trip to the historical E. O. Siecke State Forest on May 25th. Originally called State Forest #1, the original 1,722 acres were acquired in 1924 and much of the property was cut over and severely burned. Reforestation began immediately. An additional adjacent 100-acre plot was purchased in 1946 for tree improvement and silviculture (the growing and cultivation of trees) research.



(Read more about E. O. Siecke State Forest here: <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/siecke-state-forest/>)

In 1926, the first fire lookout tower in Texas was constructed by TFS personnel; the first pine seedling nursery in the state was established; the agency began a silvicultural research program; and the first operational planting of slash pine was also conducted. The tower and remnants of the first slash pine plantation exist today.

We walked the trail that Forester Ben Plunkett has designated to be a future nature trail for public use. We have been asked to scout the area and design informational trail signs to educate visitors about the sights that they are encountering along the trail. A convergence of ecosystems, the trail, rich in flora and fauna, incorporates hardwood bottomland, piney wood savannahs, and sundew bogs. It will be an awesome location for family outings. It's an honor to be a part of this plan and to become a segment in the impressive history of E. O. Siecke State Forest.



Identify these photo specimens and see more at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?>