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SIDE OATS NOTES

Summer 2019



A Newsletter for the Prairie Oaks Master Naturalist Chapter Volume 1 Issue 3

OPENING NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

When people ask me what I do for a living the easiest way to explain it is by telling them that I am, “the thank you person.” It’s true. It’s my job to ensure that anyone and everyone who donates to the organization I work for feels appreciated. While it might seem like a simple thing and can be easily overlooked, it is extremely important.

So, today I’m going to put on both my work and volunteer “hats” and say THANK YOU.

Thank you to the Education Committee members who have been making preparations for our first in-school programs this fall.

Thank you to the Hospitality Committee members who ensure that chapter members and guests alike feel welcome and comfortable during our monthly gatherings.

Thank you for the Communication Committee members who put together this wonderful newsletter, ensure that our Facebook account is full of helpful and enjoyable information, perform maintenance on our website, and are working on a streamlined weekly email to help “unclog” our inboxes.

Thank you to our Outreach Committee and all those who have taken valuable weekend time to represent Texas Master Naturalists and our chapter in our communities.

Thank you to our board who has been meeting and communicating regularly, and has taken on the work of asking the hard questions and finding innovative solutions that will continue to strengthen our chapter.



CALENDAR

June 20

Chapter Meeting
6:00-7:00p
AgrLife Research and
Extension Classroom
AT: program:
Hummingbirds: Jewels of
the Sky, Ann and Bob
Wood, POMN chapter
members
7:00-8:00p

July 18

Chapter Meeting
6:00-7:00p-
Agrilife Research and
Extension Classroom
AT program:
Environmental Ethics, Dr.
Karl Aho, TSU
7:00-8:00p

August 15

Chapter Meeting
6:00-7:00p
Agrilife Research and
Extension Classroom
AT program: Answering the
Question "SoWhat?" to Create
Those "A-ha!" Moments,
David Owens, Lake

initial training program.

A BIG thanks to Marsha and Rebecca for leading the new training class and for Barbara who has been working diligently behind the scenes to ensure our new members are on track for certification.

October 18-20, 2019
TXMN Annual Meeting
Rockwall, TX

And the BIGGEST thanks goes to all of you! Thank you to our community for supporting us and encouraging us. And thank you to our members who volunteered over 1,000 hours just in the first quarter of the year. That deserves a round of applause!

And thank you to all those I have forgotten to mention. There are so very many moving parts in this amazing organization and I am truly thankful for each one of you.

Gratefully,

Karen

Good News....with one tiny condition!



After almost eight years, the Texas Legislature has earmarked funds for Palo Pinto Mountains State Park. There is more work to be done, however, before the park can open to the public. The State appropriated \$12.5 million, but the park will need to raise \$8-\$12 million in private funds to complete the funding.

The 4,400 acre park, near Strawn in Palo Pinto County is within the territory served by the Prairie Oaks Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists. It should provide both recreational and volunteer opportunities.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Stephenville Farmers' Market—June 1 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Commanche Farmers' Market—June 1 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Dublin Farmers' Market —June 8 from 8:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth

Bosque Nature Center Community Tour—June 22 at 9:00 followed by Workday from 10:00-12:00

Commanche Farmers' Market—July 6 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Stephenville Farmers' Market—July 6 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Dublin Farmers' Market—July 13 from 8:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth

Comanche Farmers' Market—August 3 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Stephenville Farmers' Market—August 3 from 9:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth
Dublin Farmers' Market—August 10 from 8:00 to 12:00—Outreach Booth

For more information or to volunteer, contact Katie Moses or Emily Moore.



Prairie Oaks Texas Master Naturalist Class of 2019. Congratulations!



Another Noteworthy Honor as Seth Hamby is recognized as Outstanding Graduate Student for Department of Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystems Sciences.

Naturalists Reaching Out

Texas Master Naturalists are dedicated to volunteer service, and one category of activities that many Prairie Oaks Chapter members enjoy is manning educational display tables at public events. For example, last year Prairie Oaks was represented at the Comanche PowWow, the Dublin Farmers Market, and in Stephenville at the Farmers Market, Native and Heirloom Plant Sale, and Fall Arts and Crafts Show. Typically two to four members are present to greet event attendees and offer an opportunity to learn about selected natural resources. The opportunities are a function of the expertise and experience of the participating volunteers. Sometimes, when families with children stop by, the kids can do a fun activity to learn about the water cycle while learning the “Water Cycle Boogie” song, and making a bead bracelet to help with remembering the parts of the cycle. Or they may learn to identify several native birds and make a bead bracelet with bead colors representing each type of bird. At other times there might be a collection of common local rocks and minerals, and visitors can examine the samples and learn about their properties, to understand how they contribute to the soils and groundwater of this region. Other displays and exercises may include a life cycle demonstration of the monarch butterfly, or track casts of common local mammals.

An offering that is popular with adult visitors is free seeds of native flowering plants. Chapter members have collected and packaged seeds of local native plants that make attractive additions to landscaping and bedding. These seed packets are made available to interested adults, along with plant photos, information about each plant’s characteristics, traditional use by Native American and early settler cultures, and reference sources for seed germination directions. Other crowd pleasers are containers with various native insects, such as butterflies and bees that serve as important pollinators, and mysterious local inhabitants like the doodlebug (antlion) that builds sand traps for its prey, or robber flies that look like bumblebees to disguise their predatory role.

Depending on the time of year, members may display fresh samples of native grasses, flowering forbs, and common shrubs, so they can show others what can be observed in local grasslands and woodlands. In the fall, this might include a plate of wild persimmons and Mexican plums, a container with Indian grass and little bluestem, or a bouquet of purple gayfeather and Maximilian sunflowers. In the spring, the display might feature sandhill plum and redbud branches, or a vase of blue-eyed grass, prairie larkspur and wine-cup flowers. The training and study of Master Naturalists allows them to both show others the beauty of these native species and reveal their roles in their natural ecosystems.

Marsha Stephens, Prairie Oaks Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists

A first person account of this kind of volunteer experience follows:



SPRING WING DING AT DINOSAUR VALLEY STATE PARK

By Dayna Inbody

Spring has sprung and Dinosaur Valley State Park celebrated the return of our spring migrants with an event for all park guests. This was a great opportunity to reach out to park visitors and share a bit about nature with them.

Prairie Oaks Master Naturalist Chapter was well represented with our chapter booth and a fun activity. POMN members/trainees Katherine Hood, Dayna Inbody, Linda Wood, Lynn Wood, Genet Kleppinger and Tom Richey manned the booth and children's bird beak activity that Gail Bradshaw created for part of our educational trunks. We had approximately 120 visitors stop by the booth and fun was had by all.

In addition to POMN being present there were other groups like the Audubon Society, Wild Birds Unlimited, Rio Brazos Master Naturalist Chapter and TPWD to name a few that shared information and children's activities to educate about nature, celebrating especially those harbingers that we welcome each Spring.

Our chapter booth and educational trunks are easy to set up and share in our communities. They come with "cheat sheets" and easy to follow instructions so anyone can do it. No homework and no heaving lifting necessary. It's a fun way to get to know each other as we volunteer together and to share with our communities about the state Texas Master Naturalist program and our wonderful POMN chapter in particular. So watch for upcoming opportunities to take the booth out. Katie Moses has stepped up to lead the outreach program now that Katherine is moving away, so make sure you get her contact information. Grab a partner and enjoy some time together sharing about who we are and what we do for our great state as Texas Master Naturalists.





Our Spotlight is on Doris Hasten. Here she is with her Chicago Cubs fan grandson, Davisson Dale Hasten, named for both of his great-grandfathers. Doris answered our questions so fully and artfully that we took the easy way out and let the interview speak for itself.

1. **Where were you born? Raised?** Born in San Antonio. Raised in Carrizo Springs, TX
2. **Where do you live now?** 18 months ago, we built our home on property we had purchased five years earlier...on HWY 8 between Lingleville and Desdemona
3. **Would you care to share with us about your family?** Our daughter, Kellie, and her husband, Kevin, live near Burluson and have two girls. Macie will be a Senior this Fall, and Maggie will be a Freshman at Joshua High School. They are, of course, beautiful and talented. Macie is a barrel racer and a very active member of the Joshua FFA judging teams. Maggie is a cheerleader and an outstanding soccer player. Our son, Jay and his wife, Meg, live in Benbrook and have three beautiful boys who are 2, 4, and 7 and bring incredible joy, mixed in with a little mayhem wherever they go. Needless to say, their parents have their hands full! My husband, Jerry, is semi-retired from the oil-field, and still makes frequent visits to west Texas and southwest New Mexico as his skills and experience are needed.
4. **What is/has been your career? Education?** I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from TSU in San Marcos and a Master of Arts in Multidisciplinary Studies from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. I have taught in Carrizo Springs ISD (English, girls basketball coach and elementary PE), Alamo Heights ISD in San Antonio (5th and 6th grade Science), and Comal ISD in New Braunfels (Instructional Technology Facilitator working mostly with teachers). After selling instructional technology software and tools for the past 10 years, I am completing my 36th year of teaching this year as the English teacher for Lingleville HS.
5. **Hobbies?** Working in the yard!!!

on their 500 acre ranch in Dimmit county. After breakfast was cleaned up, we spent most of the rest of the day outside. Hoeing weeds, stringing beans, feeding cows, chasing rabbits out of the garden with the noise and dusting of sand from Gram's 410 shotgun kept us entertained and too tired not to succumb to an afternoon nap. If the weather was not too hot after nap time, we would often head out with a couple of cane poles and a couple of Mason jars of ice water for a mile walk to the fishing tank. Along the way, we would catch grasshoppers to put in Gram's apron pocket for bait. As we neared the tank, with its muddy banks and mesquite-shaded escape from the heat, we found an abundance of crickets and young frogs to add to her pockets. I don't really remember catching anything, but it was definitely an adventure. On the return trip back, after Gram had shown us how to make miniature darts by pulling the pistil from a prickly pear flower, then breaking off a thorn to stick in one end, we threw darts at each other the rest of the way back. One of these dart making adventures was my first close encounter with a rattlesnake when I stepped a little too far into the cactus patch to reach an extra long thorn. Luckily, his rattle was all it took for me to get out of there quickly. My Gram was definitely my greatest influence in showing a love of and respect for Nature.

7. **What was it that interested you in the Master Naturalist program?** Need to learn the differences between the plant life in this north central Texas cross timbers area as compared to the south Texas brush country ecoregion.
8. **What was it that interested you in the Prairie Oaks chapter?** New chapter forming just as we started building our house.
9. **What has been your greatest takeaway from the POTXMN experience?** This is a question that cannot be answered with a single response! The education and subsequent certification was definitely what drew me into the POTXMN program. However, it is the members and their collective knowledge, friendship, work ethic, and sharing souls that have been the takeaway that makes us stay.
10. **Describe what would be your perfect, bucket-list natural science encounter or experience.** Quail and horny toad (as we called them in Carrizo) sightings on our property.



Brian Doyle (1956 – 2017)

Brian Doyle was a novelist, essayist, poet and editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland. He had an enduring connection with and love of Nature, which, like Mary Oliver, he used to deliver observations of universal truths. His poetry often appeared in an uncategorizable form of a story, wrapped in a prayer, inside a poem. His novels include the wonderful *Martin Marten*, which chronicles the parallel coming-of-age of a boy and a wild Pine Marten. This poem is from *The Kind of Brave You Wanted to Be: Prose Prayers and Cheerful Chants against the Dark*.

Doyle died of a brain tumor in 2017.

Owls Are the Bears of the Sky

Owls are the bears of the sky, a small boy informs me the other day. I think they are cousins. They don't say much, and they have really Thick coats, and no one picks on them, and they like to live around Trees, and they don't care if it's cold, and they have claws. It could Be that they have dinner together sometimes. *You never know*, says My mom. *You just never know*. She says that all the time about lots Of things, but especially animals. We talk about animals all the time. *She* gets tired of reading about them, but *I* never ever get tired, there Are so *many* animals, and so many *kinds* of animals, and there's not One person in the world who knows everything about animals, even *God* does not know everything about animals, because God said Let There be animals, and then even *God* was startled at what happened! That's what my mom says, and when I ask her about more stories of

Member Spotlight Kenneth Nalley



“Not all who wander are lost.”— J.R.R. Tolkien

“You Can’t Go Home Again”— Thomas Wolfe

Kenneth Nalley would agree with one of these authors and disagree with the other. Born in Houston, raised in Fort Worth and spending his young adult years in Stephenville, Kenneth came early to nature. His favorite thing to do growing up was to go down to the creek near his house and catch crawdads. This beginning brought him to Stephenville and studies in the Department of Wildlife, Sustainability and Ecosystem Sciences, but not before an introduction to the Texas Master Naturalist Program through Fort Worth’s Cross Timbers Chapter.

Hobbies? Hiking, birding, anything outdoors. Rio Brazos TXMN Chapter in Granbury provided training and certification and Kenneth was involved in the founding days of the Prairie Oaks Chapter. Despite the obvious common features and programs, these three chapters are also quite different. Cross Timbers is an older and larger chapter— more institutionally mature and established in its traditions and operation. Rio Brazos seemed to have a wonderful core of people basically teaching themselves and learning together and Prairie Oaks has all the challenges of a new organization while benefitting greatly from the guidance and support inherent in its relationship with the University.

From Tarleton, Kenneth went to the Houston Zoo for an internship and then, in a kind of a reverse Davy Crockett, to Tennessee. But proving Tolkien right and Wolfe wrong, Kenneth came back as a naturalist for the Fort Worth Nature Center. And further ignoring Wolfe’s incantation, he has been reinstated as a member of Prairie Oaks Chapter TXMN.

Kenneth’s experiences can serve as a reminder to all of us that there are TXMN chapters pretty much all over the state. Wherever in Texas life leads you there is likely a TXMN chapter nearby that you can join to find like-minded people with a love of nature and a volunteer spirit. If there is no chapter in your area, then just start one!

Consistent with both his job and his hobby, Kenneth says his perfect, bucket-list natural science experience would be to see, in the wild, an Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

(Ed. Note: I would wish to be standing shoulder-to-shoulder with him when he does and to identify his bird’s mate in the next tree over.)



A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

You cannot begin to preserve any species of animal unless you preserve the habitat in which it dwells. Disturb or destroy that habitat and you will exterminate the species as surely as if you had shot it. So conservation means that you have to preserve forest and grassland, river and lake, even the sea itself. This is not only vital for the preservation of animal life generally, but for the future existence of man himself -- a point that seems to escape many people. -

Gerald Durrell, naturalist and author (Jan 1925-1995)

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