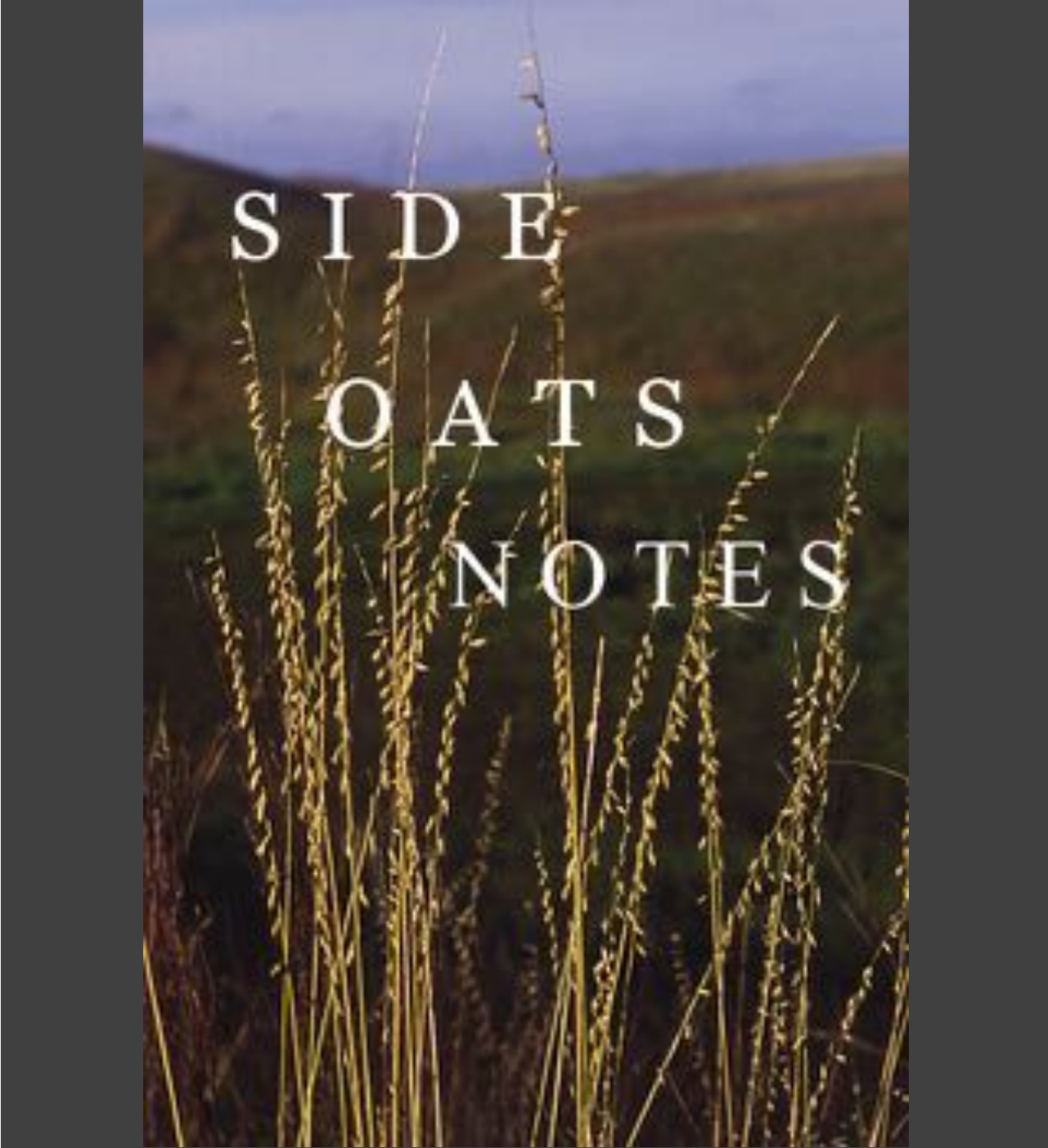


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SIDE OATS NOTES

Winter 2019



SIDE OATS NOTES

A Newsletter for the Prairie Oaks Master Naturalist Chapter
Volume 2 Issue 1

OPENING NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Indeed, time does fly when you're having fun. And what fun we've had! This year has been a wonderful year of accomplishments for the Prairie Oaks Chapter. Here are just a few of the highlights.

Our third cohort of members-in-training completed their initial training in the spring. This was our second time running the training not only for community members, but also for Tarleton State University students as an official course within the Department of

Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystem Sciences.

The Chapter Board met in a retreat format in June to discuss the “big picture” questions for the chapter. A question that has been posed literally since the first few meetings of the chapter is if we should start the process of becoming a 501(c)(3), so we tackled that topic during the retreat. After much research and discussion, the board decided not to move in that direction at this time. I am thankful to have such dedicated volunteers who are not only concerned with the “fun stuff,” but also the things that will keep our chapter going for a long time to come. (Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the board’s decisions and/or have some burning questions you want us to discuss.)

In September we were able to complete one of the goals that we set way back when the chapter was only a dream. Thanks to the wonderful leadership of Doris Hasten, we were able to use the Texas Wildlife Association’s curriculum and present it to the students at Lingleville ISD. This was a large undertaking that required many of our members to prepare and implement the program. It was a huge success! The students, teachers, and chapter members had a wonderful day. Thanks to all who helped! We will start discussing our next one soon.

In mid-October fifteen of our members traveled to Rockwall, Texas to join our fellow chapters at the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting. We worked, we learned, and we played! Gail and Bruce Bradshaw helped present a session on how chapters can get involved with the state science fair. Ashley Medeiros and Karen Aho sat on a roundtable to discuss chapters who are affiliated with a college or University. Among the winners of the various contests were Lynn and Linda Wood; each won an award for their nature artwork. Next year’s annual meeting will be held October 15-18 in Houston. Save the date!

Our last big event of the fall was our inaugural Nature Fest, led by the amazing Katie Moses and her team of volunteers. This was another HUGE success for the chapter, with over 100 attendees from the public and other organizations who participated. We are excited to make this an annual event and keep sharing our passion and knowledge with the community!

Just this past Thursday we closed out our year with our annual holiday celebration. Thanks to Marsha Stephens for putting together a fun nature "show-and-tell" show for us, and a huge thanks to all who brought food, helped plan, and to those who helped setup and cleanup. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and sharing time with each other. See you next year!

Gratefully,

Karen



CALENDAR

NOTE: The Holiday Party on December 12 was in lieu of the December Chapter Meeting. There will be NO chapter meeting on December 19.

January 9, 2020: 6:00p POTXMN Board Meeting, Agrilife Conference Room, Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension Center, 1229 N. US Highway 281, Stephenville, TX.

January 15, 2020: Spring Training class begins

January 16, 2020: 6:00p Chapter Meeting, 7:00p "Trade-Offs and Triumphs: Natural Resource Management at Multi-Use Projects", Kyle Watter, Park Ranger/Natural Resources Specialist, US Army Corps of Engineers at Proctor Lake. Texas A&M Research and Extension Center, 1229 N. US Highway 281, Stephenville, TX.

February 20, 2020: 6:00p Chapter Meeting, 7:00p "Hummingbirds: Jewels of the Sky", Bob and Ann Wood, POTXMN Chapter members. Texas A&M Research and Extension Center, 1229 N. US Highway 281, Stephenville, TX.

October 15-18, 2020: Texas Master Naturalist Annual State Meeting in Houston, TX.

More Good News About Our Newest State Park!



As you know, after almost eight years, the Texas Legislature earmarked funds for Palo Pinto Mountains State Park. Before the park can open to the public, the park will need to raise \$8-\$12 million in private funds to complete the funding. This process is ongoing.

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 will provide both recreational and volunteer opportunities.

Our forward-looking community has created an auxiliary organization called
PALO PINTO MOUNTAINS
STATE PARK PARTNERS



The purpose of the PPMSP is to help supplement the funds and support provided by the State — to provide small items and services that would otherwise be unavailable, e.g. lawnmower, clippers, etc.

Individuals can join for \$10; families for \$20 or you can make a donation of any size. The address is:

State Park Partners
P.O. Box 201
Strawn, TX 76475

Direct any questions to PaloPintospartners@gmail.com.

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Build hours at your convenience and increase your knowledge of native Texas plants. The pollinator garden at the Bosque River Nature Center is divided into plots. You can have your own plot to be maintained according to your schedule. Mentoring is available. Contact Peggy Tolboom at 254-445-3436 or equest@dairysolutionsinc.com to sign up.

December 15, 2019: POTXMN National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. Contact Ann Wood if you have interest and haven't signed up yet. 214-957-2838

January 4, 2020: Proctor Lake National Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Contact Kyle Watter for information. KyleJWatter@usace.army/mil or 254-879-2424.

February 8, 2020: 8:30a at Brazos River Nature Trail birdwalk led by Bob and Ann Wood. Possum Kingdom Lake.

KUDOS



500 hours and still smiling —and still volunteering. Barbara Salter was recognized at the State Annual Meeting for logging 500 volunteer hours. Kudos and big thanks!



The State Fish Hatchery at Possum Kingdom Lake had an appreciation luncheon for volunteers. These included POTXMN members Sue and Bob McCormick and Ann and Bob Wood.



They are Winners! POTXMN's own Linda and Lynn Wood won art and photography awards at the State Annual Meeting in Rockwall.

VOLUNTEERING

On Sunday, October 27th, our chapter hosted the first annual Nature Fest! From 3:00 - 7:00 pm, visitors to the Bosque River Trail Nature Center had the opportunity to experience hands-on learning about a variety of topics at stations led by chapter members. We were also joined by Chance Robinson, USDA-NRCS, Colten Nolen, TPWD,

and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from Lake Proctor. Once the sun went down guests gathered around the campfire and enjoyed some “s'mores” while learning about moon phases. David Owens, with Lake Mineral Wells State Park, led the last portion of the evening and after some delightful storytelling he gave us a closer look at the night sky.

Over the course of the day, we had close to 100 people of all ages come out to enjoy Nature Fest! Thank you so much to Katie Moses, the planning committee and chapter members who worked hard in preparing for the event and to the volunteers that set up, welcomed guests, and led stations during the day. And thank you to our sponsors that made the event possible: Sherrie Barton, Realtor-Dickerson Real Estate, Alisa Terrell Starbird, H.E.B., and Texan Restrooms.

Nature Fest



Groundwater Demonstration for Lingleville Schools



Lingleville's third through sixth graders were welcomed to the "Water is Wonderful" event by our own Marsha Stephens, a Lingleville HS alumna herself.



Gail Bradshaw and Katie Moses demonstrate the different stages of the Water cycle.

Other members helping on this project included Doris Hasten, Ed Johnson, Peggy Tolboom, Barbara McKnight, Linda Wood, and Lynn Wood.

Member Spotlight Ashley Medeiros



Where were you born? Raised?

I was born in Chino Hills, California in 1989. At the age of 4, my parents moved me and my three sisters to Erath County to start a dairy farm. I still call California my home even though I've been in Texas most of my life.

How did you choose Tarleton?

Tarleton was always down the road from me. My parents are very patient and supportive so I wanted to stay nearby during my academic career. I am the first of their daughters and second in my family to obtain a college degree.

Tell us a little about your family.

My paternal grandfather immigrated to California from Portugal in his twenties. My maternal grandparents grew up in the Netherlands and came to the U.S. in the 60's. My parents met in California and had four girls.

What is/has been your course of study? Major?

I started at Tarleton in 2007 as a music major because I really enjoyed band in high school. I didn't enjoy going to college, mainly because I wasn't prepared and needed a little time to grow up. I enrolled into Tarrant County College in 2013 and completed my Associate of Arts Degree. At that time, I was working at Walmart and I soon wanted to pursue a degree in sustainability after seeing the dumpsters behind Walmart filled with perfectly edible food left to rot. I now have a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystem Sciences with a Minor in Nutrition and am currently working on a Master's of Science in Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences. My thesis work involves aquaponics research; I'm comparing Rex Butterhead lettuce in a few different growth methods.

I chose sustainability because as humans, we must realize our effect on the natural world, specifically the food we eat. Agriculture contributes a huge chunk of global greenhouse emissions, not to mention the vast areas of land needed to grow food for livestock and ourselves. With the human population growing exponentially, I'm worried about how we will feed everyone without destroying the last bit of wildlife we have left.

What has been your favorite class?

I couldn't pick a favorite class. Anything involving science, culture, or philosophy! My mind is an eternal sponge so I'll absorb anything that keeps me intrigued.

Hobbies?

To stay sane in a small town, I've had to develop several hobbies. Right now I am adding a few finishing touches on my backyard aquaponics system. I can/preserve produce from the

Hydrotron, take photos, make art from trash, collect oddities from flea markets/garage sales, among many others.

To what do you attribute your love of Nature?

As a kid, I used to hike around my parents back pasture and make flower bouquets for my mom with native plants/flowers. I would be gone for hours walking through the trees and feeling at peace, away from my noisy sisters. It was then I knew nature was my church.

What was it that interested you in the Master Naturalist program?

To be honest, I didn't originally sign up for the spring training class. The course I had signed up for was no longer offered so I had to replace it. I ended up really enjoying the class with the other chapter members. Even though my focus is in sustainability, I love wildlife and this program allows me to exercise my love for nature through outreach.

What has been your greatest takeaway from POTXMN experience?

It's one thing to read about the horrors of the sixth largest extinction going on in our lifetime. It's another to actually make an effort to do something about it. The world is ginormous and some might think, "I'm just one person. What difference can I make?" With anything, start small and work your way up. This is what being a Texas Master Naturalist means to me. We are a real grassroots movement filled with people who genuinely care and can make a change.

Describe what would be your perfect bucket list natural science encounter to experience.

Before I die, I'd like to hike at least one trail in every national park in the U.S. and work my way around the world.



Nature in Poetry

There is a strong affinity between the natural world and poetry. Even the most urbane poet cannot resist the natural world, even if only to poke fun at our cliches.

The Butterfly Effect

The one resting now on a plant stem
somewhere deep in the vine-hung
interior of South America
whose wings are about to flutter
thus causing it to rain heavily
on your wedding day
several years from now,
and spinning you down
a path to calamity and ruin
is—if it's any consolation—
a gorgeous swallowtail,
a brilliant mix of bright orange
and vivid yellow with a soft

dusting of light brown along the edges.

What's more, the two black dots
on the wings are so prominent
as to make one wonder
if this is not an example of mimicry,
an adaptation technique whereby one species
takes on the appearance
of another less-edible one,
first brought to light,
it might interest you to know
and possibly distract you from
your vexatious dread
with regards to the hopelessness of the future,
by two British naturalists, namely,
H. W. Bates in 1862 and A. R. Wallace in 1865.

Billy Collins



Billy Collins is America's favorite poet. He is the author of ten collections of poetry, my favorite of which is *Aimless Love*. As Poet Laureate of the U.S. from 2001-2003, he initiated the project that became [Poetry 180](#), which provides students, teachers and anyone who signs up, a poem for each day of the school year. This is a wonderful free subscription and a great introduction to modern poets and poetry. I urge you to try it.

Member Spotlight Edgar Johnson.



Ed with POTXMN member Genet Kleppinger at NatureFest.

Where were you born? Raised?

I was born and raised in Hackberry, Louisiana, in the southwest corner of the state, with wide estuaries, ponds, lakes, marsh, bayous, and a lot of ducks and fish. Graduated from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana, then went to work at Dow Chemical in Freeport, Texas. I have been in Texas ever since.

Where do you live now?

We moved to Brownwood, Texas, in July, 2018.

Would you care to share with us about your family?

I met a Goldthwaite gal, Danna (Thorne) in the Freeport area soon after going to work at Dow and we married and have two daughters and five grandchildren, some in Texas and some in New Mexico.

What is/has been your career? Education?

With a bachelor of Science degree I worked in polyolefin research a while then became the procurement agent for new capital construction and equipment for BASF Corporation. Early on I served in the U. S. Army. I am a part-time Real Estate Broker. After retiring from industry I taught High School Chemistry for five years.

Hobbies?

Photography; Wood Craft; Leatherwork

To what do you attribute your love of Nature?

I grew up in an intimate relationship with nature, hunting and fishing, gardening, and raising farm animals.

What was it that interested you in the Master Naturalist program?

It sounded like a way to get back more involved again with nature and to be able to share that, especially with children!

What was it that interested you in the Prairie Oaks chapter?

By already being an active TMN for ten years prior to moving to Brownwood I wanted to transfer my membership, however, there is no chapter in Brownwood. I visited Prairie Oaks Chapter and found extremely friendly folks and a very active atmosphere of activities! I felt very welcomed and was encouraged by several to become involved right away.

What has been your greatest takeaway from the POTXMN experience?

The great enthusiasm and participation by many in such a new chapter and the connection with Tarleton University and many rural public parks and WMA areas and such.



We are asking all of our members to consider this proposition:

Describe what would be your perfect bucket-list natural science encounter or experience.

Please share yours with us by emailing it to bob@abwoodpk.com. Each issue we will include some of these, reserving some for future issues. You can be as brief or as thorough as you want. We will edit, if necessary. Thanks in advance for yours and thanks to these contributors. Here's this batch:

- My bucket list would consist of
 1. Continue research on the history of my place and of its land use over the last 150 years. I believe you have to know what your place has been through, to know what it needs.
 2. Hopefully by learning what habitat has been altered the most, I can continue to improve restoring those affected areas, and see a return of quail, golden cheeked warbler, black capped vireo, and others
 3. Keep trying to figure out what native wildflowers can compete with coastal Bermuda . Instead of using roundup for several applications I hope to see if some natives can be planted along the edges and slowly work their way into the field over time.
 4. Get my first beehive established this year
 5. Retire soon and get to be more active in POMN — **Lance Trinque**
- Australian Dream Time
I want to dawdle my way across, around and over Australia, re-tracing the 6 months of travels of naturalist Ed Kanze and his wife Debbie, recounted in the 2000 book “Kangaroo Dreaming: An Australian Wildlife Odyssey”. Not as a tourist, but as a sincere, likely often bewildered seeker of directly experiencing the biodiversity of the sunburnt land. I see myself astride a capable SUV to serve for car-camping from place to place, no matter where I land, providing they would have me for a year or so. I long to see and see again, the wildlife of greater and lesser fame, and spend time experiencing each in its full ecological setting. Really, I don't need to see every one of those species, even if they do still exist in the wild, 20 plus years later. I just want to be there where they are, make that connection with their places. Well, I DO want to hear and otherwise experience the courtship of koalas, and Lord knows I DO want to eyeball a cassowary. Beyond that, I would be thrilled with tracks; that would perhaps be the prudent plan with the crocodiles, given a certain decline in agility at my age. There is just this attraction to stay in one spot long enough to savor the daily cycles of curious places, the breathing of forests and reverberation of deserts, the transits of unfamiliar constellations. Might I have a chance to see the wild distant brethren of my two energetic budgies, lending their flashing colors to an oasis? Okay, I admit sharing space with any kind of kangaroo, much less many kinds, would be breath-holding adventure. Did I mention a great fascination with termite mounds, the kind that tower above the observer? Did I mention there are some lizards of interest? Parrots? Honey gliders anyone? I'm ready, mate.
— **Marsha Stephens**
- I would like to see a moose in Maine, an elk in the Rockies, and a manatee in Florida. — **Peggy Tolboom**

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem.
Unless we solve that problem it will avail us little to solve all others.

— Theodore Roosevelt

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