

Texas Master Naturalists ROLLING PLAINS CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10, No. 8

<http://txmn.org/rollingplains>

August 2018

Presidents Report

by Terry McKee

Even though we are in a drought and blooming plants are difficult to find, we are still holding a plant show and tell for this month's meeting. Members can pick a plant and share their knowledge about the plant with the rest of us. We have done this in the past and everyone has learned something new about native and invasive plants in our area from this meeting. Your talk doesn't need to be long, and if you don't have a live plant, you can bring a photo. It's a lot of fun and we encourage everyone to participate.

Summer is finally starting to wear down and with fall comes more opportunities for volunteering. The chapter's next project is the Sikes Lake Cleanup on the MSU campus, Saturday, September 8 starting at 9 am. This is a community-wide project in association with Midwestern State University. Volunteers are needed to pass out bags and grabbers, cook hot dogs, and help students as we clean the lake. Save the date!

Star Party Lake Arrowhead State Park

Everyone had fun at the Star Party at Lake Arrowhead State Park, July 14. Debra Halter discusses constellations, while June McKee and Lynn Seaman learn about the telescopes used by 3R Foundation to scan the skies for stars and planets.



E LOCALS

AUGUST 7: Rolling Plains Chapter monthly meeting is *in Bolin Science Hall room 209 at Midwestern State University* Time: 7:00 PM. **The program:** Members plant share.

AUGUST 10: Sounds of the Night Copper Breaks State Park. Find out what you can expect to hear that night!

AUGUST 11: Bird Walk at Lake Arrowhead State Park - 8:00 am.

SEPTEMBER 8: Sikes Lake Clean-Up on the MSU campus starting at 9 am.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Laura "L" Clepper on having certified as a Texas Master Naturalist. L is the first of our 2018 class to achieve certification. Well done L! Also receiving certificates of class completion are Stephen Honkomp, Russel Taylor and Lee Williamson.

Congratulations James Masuoka, Carol Lunsford, Joy Parsons, Megan Sternadel and Jane McGough on having recertified as a Texas Master Naturalist.

Registration is Now Open!



Join us for our Texas Master Naturalist Program Annual Meeting to gather, learn and celebrate our 20th Anniversary. This year's event will kick off Friday October 26th and run through the weekend to October 28th, and is being hosted at the Sheraton Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center.

This year's agenda is **PACKED** with over 150+ sessions – more than we've ever had before! The Annual Meeting Agenda is linked below. Please note, all agenda items are tentative at this time, except for meal times. As in years past, registration includes signing up for technical sessions and field session attendance as many of the classrooms and space available on the field sessions is limited. Please prepare before registering with your preferred attendance at sessions. Our field sessions typically fill up very quickly!

As an added **BONUS** this year, we have 30 – **THIRTY** – off site field sessions throughout the Georgetown and surrounding county areas. These are all in **ADDITION** to our typical concurrent technical session happening on site at the Sheraton Georgetown throughout the weekend. These field sessions are scattered from Thursday through Monday and we have developed a "Get Outside Guide" to be used for learning about these unique opportunities. All sessions contained in this guide will require pre-registration through the event registration page once live. Highlight your preferences now!

All hotel room reservations for the meeting dates (Friday night & Saturday night) will be made through the TMN Annual Meeting Registration Page. Please **DO NOT** call the Sheraton Georgetown. <https://txmn.org/2018-annual-meeting/>

Aquatic Monster?

Snakeheads are native to Africa and southern Asia. About 28 species have been identified.



Equipped with accessory breathing organs, these fish can gulp air and survive in waters with low dissolved oxygen levels. They can also live out of water for several days if they are kept moist. All snakeheads are aggressive predators and may eliminate other fishes in waters they invade. They have even been known to bite humans who got too close to

a guarded nest. The northern snakehead (*Channa argus*) is fairly cold tolerant, and could probably survive winters in many parts of the United States. This species also has the ability to cross land by wriggling or "walking" on its pectoral fins. Snakeheads have been imported to North America for the aquarium trade, and may be sold live in Asian-style fish markets. No snakeheads have been found in Texas waters to date, but the threat exists.

Volunteer Opportunity

Christina Stephens from 3Rivers Foundation sent us this message:

3 Rivers Foundation has an upcoming opportunity for Master Naturalists on our Comanche Springs Astronomy Campus.

The opportunity is building a native wildflower and pollinator garden.

I wrote a grant to the Bring Back the Monarchs program to purchase native plant seed for the garden. I've also tried desperately this year to collect seeds from plants on the campus. I've collected a few, not many. We desperately need rain.

Master Naturalists can help with this garden by assisting in its construction, planting seeds, transplanting shrubs (e.g., feather dalea), collecting and cleaning seeds. This is also an opportunity for training. I was trained by Dr. Willa Finley, who co-authored the Lonestar Wildflower book, when it comes to seed collecting, cleaning, and planting. I'll gladly share my knowledge to help with training.



The time frame for this project will be late August into September to probably about mid-October.

Do you think any of your Master Naturalists would be interested in volunteering for this project?

If there is interest in this project and training, we can arrange a time for me to meet with the group.

Thank you,
Christina

Contact Lynn Seman if you want to help with this project. I think we could do some car-pooling to the site and help out. Rlynnseman@gmail.com

FUN FACTOIDS

Male Bronze Frogs court females with a distinct call. Researchers agree that the love song of the bronze frog sounds like someone plucking a loose banjo string. In fact, another common name for the bronze frog is the “banjo frog.”



The Yellow Mud Turtle is capable of emitting a strong odor. When alarmed, it responds by secreting this odor from the musk glands that are found on each side of its body.

The Mexican Ground Squirrel is not an especially social animal. Their diet is composed of green vegetation and by summer the diet shifts to insects. They are also quite fond of meat. They can often be seen feeding upon small animals killed on the highways. In captivity they exhibit a cannibalistic tendency and kill and eat their cage mates.



23rd Annual Birding Classic



The biggest, longest, wildest birdwatching tournament in the U.S.!

**2019 Tournament Dates:
April 15 - May 15, 2019**

What is the Birding Classic? Who can join the fun?

- All levels and ages of birders are welcome to join this Texas birdwatching event during the amazing spring migration.
- There’s a tournament category for everyone - from the beginning backyard birder to the competitive lister!
- Registration fees raise money for Texas bird and birding conservation project grants.
- Gather your team, register, and go birding - it’s truly that simple.

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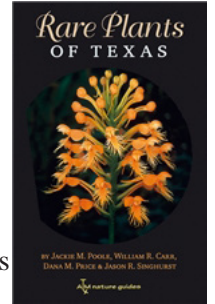
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RESOURCE CORNER

Rare Plants of Texas

by Jackie M. Poole and William R. Carr
Flexbound: 656 pages
ISBN- 978-1-58544-557-8
Price: \$35.00 on Amazon



Since 1987, when Texas Parks and Wildlife Department botanists published their first in-house summary of Texas’ threatened plants, more than 225 species have been identified and described as endangered, imperiled, or declining. Because most of these plants are too rare to be mentioned, much less pictured, in standard field guides, only a handful of botanists have known what these plants or their habitats look like.

Complete with photographs, line drawings, and county maps, this book describes the officially listed, candidate, and species-of-concern plants in Texas. Individual accounts include information on distribution, habitat, physical description, flowering time, federal and state status, similar species, and published references. The authors also provide brief introductory chapters on the state’s vegetation regions; the history of plant conservation in Texas; federal, state, and other ranking methods; threats to native plants; recovery methods; and reporting guidelines.

With the growing recognition that native plants support wildlife, conserve water, promote biodiversity, and exemplify our natural heritage, we must also recognize the need for greater understanding of endangered plants, the threats to their existence, and the importance of their survival. *Rare Plants of Texas* is highly recommended for professional botanists and advanced researchers, conservationists, students, range managers, and others concerned with preserving the ecosystems of Texas and the Southwest.