



CONTRIBUTED BY DEBRA HALTER

A yellow-collared scape moth samples the nectar from a North Texas flower.

Moths are now nature's masters of disguise — and for good reason

Everyone loves butterflies! But what about the lowly moth?

Butterflies and moths belong to the same order, Lepidoptera, but it is the butterfly that gets most of our attention, even though 90 percent of the known Lepidoptera species are moths. Worldwide, scientists have discovered well over 135,000 species of moths, with 11,000 of those species recorded in the U.S.

I have been guilty of ignoring those drab, brown insects that flutter around my porch light, assuming they are dark denizens of the night. I discovered that although most moths are nocturnal, many more fly during the day and are mistaken for butterflies, bees or even hummingbirds. Some moths camouflage themselves to look like twigs on a tree branch, pieces of bark or wasps to ward off predators. Some

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moths even look like bird droppings.

There is good reason for moths to hide: They and their caterpillars are a major food source for many animals, including birds, bats, lizards and frogs. When everything in the world is intent on eating you, you have to be creative.

Many more moths are actually interestingly patterned and colorful. They are a world of sphinxes, hawks, owls, tigers and scary eyes. What better way to discover them

than during National Moth Week, July 24-31? National Moth Week offers everyone, everywhere an opportunity to become a citizen scientist and contribute scientific data about moths. It is as easy as gathering the kids on the front porch and watching the insects that swarm your porch light.

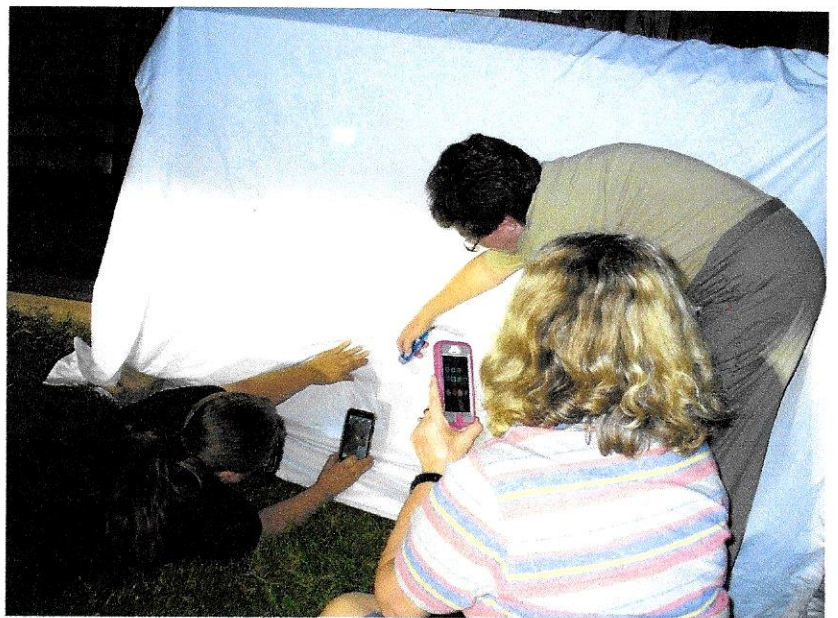
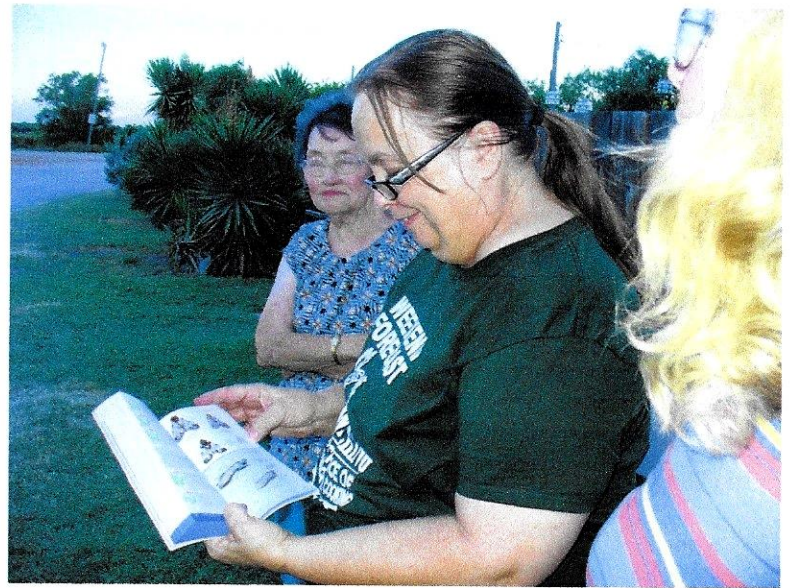
Or you could join the Rolling Plains Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist members as they meet from 8-10 p.m. July 30 in the parking lot beside Wild Bird Rescue, 4611 Lake Shore Drive. Bring your flashlights and help us explore the variety of moths in our area. You may gain a new respect for night life!

Learn more about the Rolling Plains Master Naturalists at: <http://txmn.org/rollingplains> or contact chapter President Terry McKee at dgm59@aol.com

**Moth Watch
July 30, 2016**



American Lotus Borer



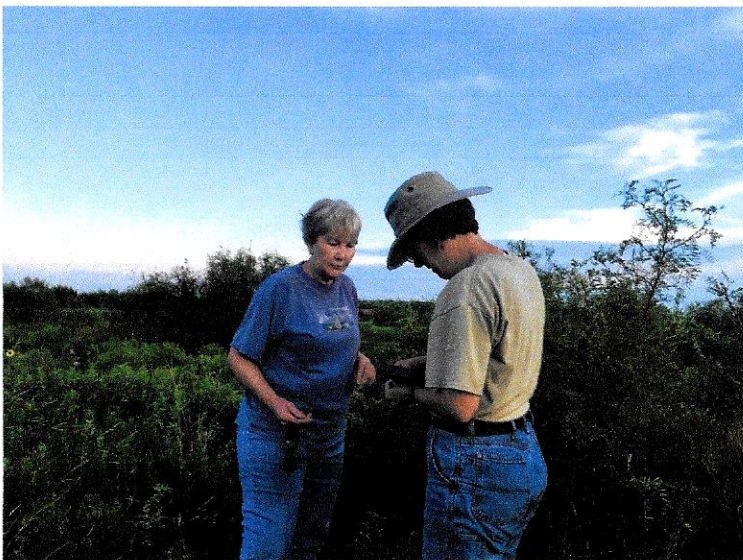


Quail Research Wilbarger County





Quail Queens conduct research in Wilbarger County.



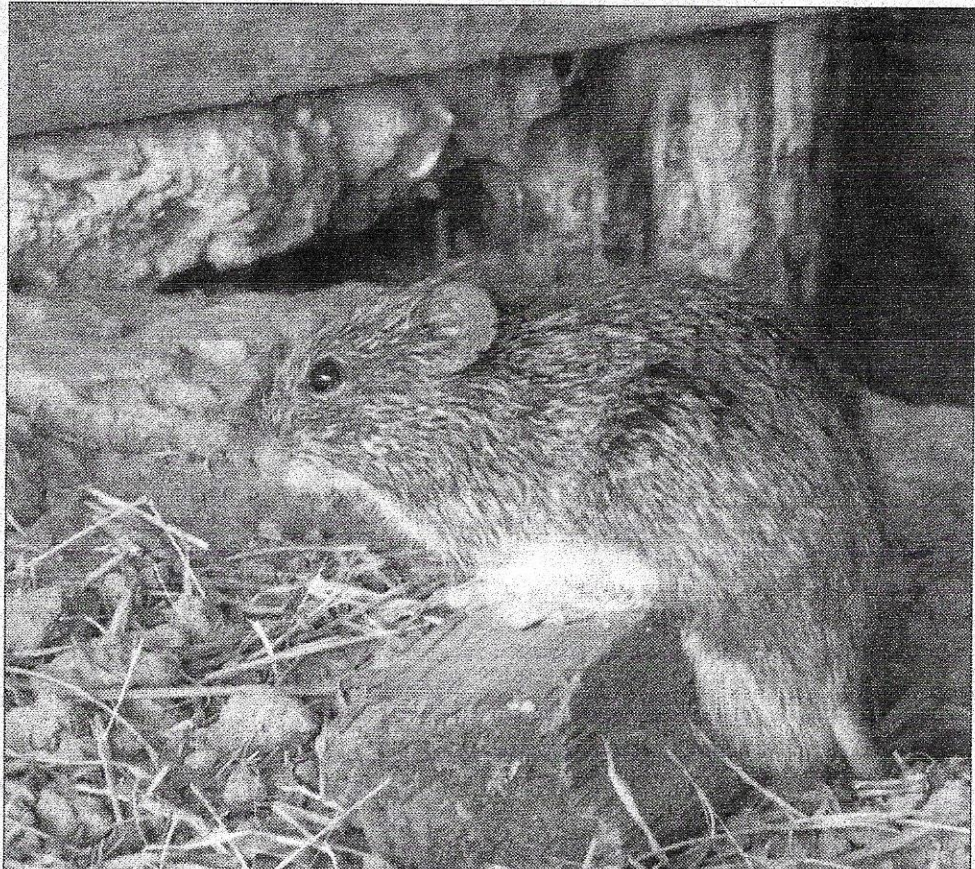
Rat poison can pose risk to house pets

One recent morning, about sunrise, I was looking out my kitchen window at the crepe myrtle bush we had planted to shade the west side of our house. The middle branch was moving rapidly. I had already been outside and knew it was not windy. I eagerly anticipated seeing some wildlife, such as a bluejay, mockingbird, cardinal or squirrel.

Then, to my surprise, I saw the beady eyes of a rat — not the kind of wildlife I enjoy! It had climbed up the crepe myrtle and was staring at me! I was eyeball to eyeball with a four-legged, even long-tailed, large, gray rat as I stood unsuspecting at my kitchen sink. That's not how I like to start my morning.

I watched in amazement as the unwelcome rodent reached to the next branch and wrapped his tail partially around one as he went from one branch to another. He looked at the adjacent crepe myrtle, thought about it a minute, and made it to the next bush. I was surprised that he could maneuver that well in a bush, when 6 feet above ground.

Recent TRN articles and TV news stories have stated that our area has a bad rodent problem this year. Pest control services have had difficulty keeping rat poison in stock. It's nice to know that some pest control companies sell pet-friendly poison in case pets eat the dead rats. You can also purchase T-shaped poison holders



CONTRIBUTED BY DIAN HOEHNE

Rats spread both fleas and disease, but poisons used to kill them can filter through the food chain to house pets.

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DIAN HOEHNE



to let rodents in and keep pets out.

My husband has trapped 52 rats this year with the old fashioned wood and spring traps! At first, ants ate the peanut

butter bait before the rats could. Now, he uses dry cat food for bait. He is competing with a friend to see who can eliminate the most rats. Where are the natural predators of rats? There seem to be less coyotes, bobcats, feral cats, snakes, hawks and owls around.

Rats do more harm than just scaring us. They carry fleas and germs. The plagues that killed thousands in Europe during the Middle Ages were spread by rats and mice. They eat food in our gardens and tender plants in

our landscape. Their very sharp teeth can chew holes in wood and make their own doors into your house. They can climb up into your car engine bay and chew your car wiring. You won't even notice until you try to start your car.

I hope I don't have many more close encounters of the rat kind.

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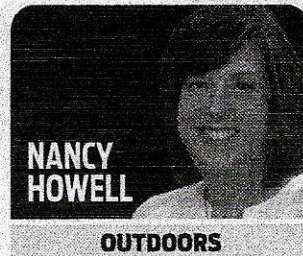


**Spotted Skunk Survey
September 2016**



**Installing game
cameras at Lake
Arrowhead State
Park**

Outdoor activities set for Saturday



Weekends are a great time to slow down, get the family outside and enjoy the outdoors.

This Saturday, Sept. 10, several options are on the picnic table outside — take a look and see if one fits into your household's schedule.

First up, at 9 a.m. Saturday, is the annual fall Sikes Lake clean-up. This little lake, located near the mall, south of Midwestern State University's campus on Midwestern Parkway, gets a lot of use.

There's a concrete trail around its perimeter, making it a favorite of bikers, runners, walkers and families in general. People love to fish along its banks, as well as feed the ducks and geese that make the pond their home.

Although public use of such a gem is a wonderful thing, one of the downsides is that we humans litter. Trash accumulates. A few years back, the Rolling Plains chapter of Texas Master Naturalists, together with Texas Parks and Wildlife, MSU and American National Bank and Trust decided to sponsor a clean-up, a "blitz," if you will, to take out the trash, literally.

If you're interested in lending a hand, dress appropriately and head out to the east side of the lake near the MSU Outdoor Education Center a few minutes before 9 a.m. There will be a crowd. Trash bags, grabbers and gloves should be provided. Volunteers will be treated

to a hot dog lunch after finishing.

You will be surprised how quickly the job can get done when several folks pitch in. The best part of participating in an event such as this is the instant gratification of seeing an appreciable change in the lovely landscape of the lake's edge.

Another annual event occurring from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Saturday is Wichita Falls' annual Stroll 'n Roll. Sixteen area museums, galleries and city attractions will be open to the public, free of charge. Free trolley shuttles to the downtown locations will be provided. Just head over to the Multi-Purpose Events Center (MPEC) to park and ride. Maps will be available if your bunch wants to explore at your own pace.

The open venues are too numerous to list in this space, but include the new Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame, as well as old favorites such as the Kell House, Kemp Center for the Arts and River Bend Nature Center. For a complete listing, check out the event at <http://wichita-falls.org/events>.

If taking a hike Saturday morning is more your cup of tea, head out to Lake Arrowhead State Park, where the Texas Ornithological Society sponsors a monthly birding field trip. It's always the second Saturday of the month and begins at 8 a.m. The walk lasts around an hour, covering approximately a half mile

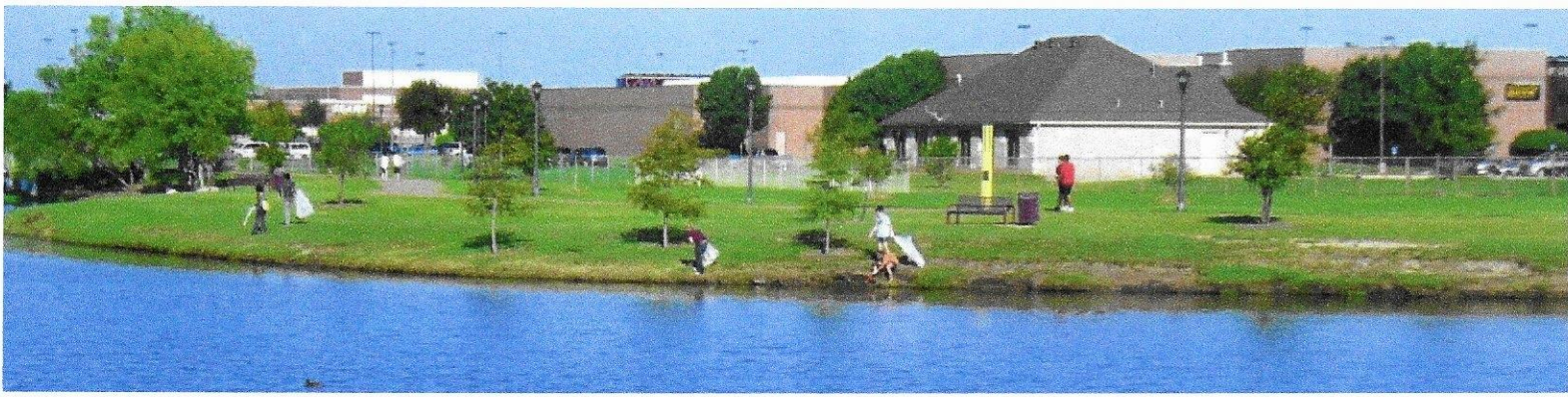
— easy for most to do.

Bring along a bottle of water and dress for the weather forecast. Normal park entry fees apply. Afterwards you may want to wet your line at the fishing pier. With the lake almost full and free fishing within park boundaries without a license, it's a no-brainer.

Finish up your Saturday with a little hunting. A long-standing Northwest Texas Field and Stream Association tradition, the youth dove hunt, is back after a few years' hiatus. Open to both boys and girls ages 11-16; please call the NWTFS office for more details. Their number is listed in the calendar on this page. The hunt will begin at 3 p.m., lasting until sunset. Slots for youth and for adult guides may still be available.

These opportunities are just a few ways you can connect with the outdoors this weekend. Never let it be said there's nothing to do in this city. Whether you choose to pick up litter, explore some of Wichita Falls' venues via trolley, hike at the local state park or dove hunt, get outdoors. Life's definitely better there. Hope to see you outside.

TRN outdoor writer Nancy Howell can be reached at njhowell415@gmail.com with story ideas, outdoor calendar items or pictures for this page. Pictures of children hunting, fishing, or just enjoying the outdoors are particularly welcomed.



**What are you doing to keep Texas beautiful?
If the answer is "not enough", now is your chance!**

Join the Sikes Lake Cleanup Saturday, September 10

**Volunteers will meet at 9:00 AM
on the east side of Sikes Lake.
Free lunch after the cleanup.**

Event sponsors:

Rolling Plains Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist

Midwestern State University

American National Bank & Trust

Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.



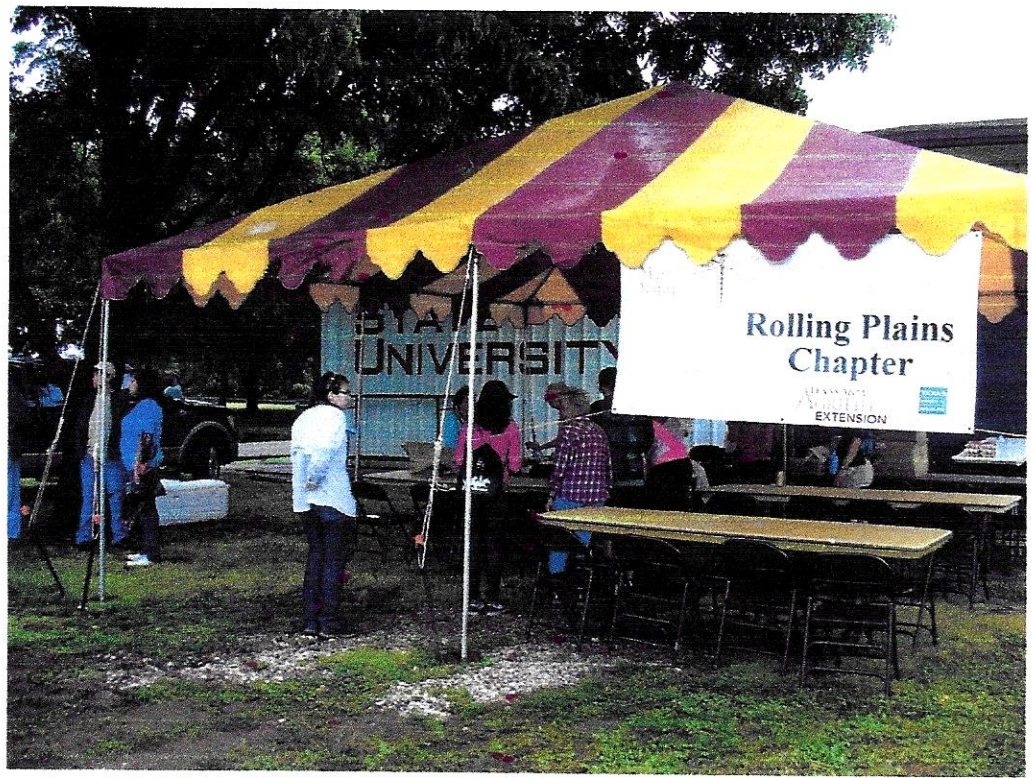
Outdoors calendar

ANNUAL SIKES LAKE CLEAN-UP: It's time again for the Sikes Lake cleanup on Saturday, Sept. 10, beginning at 9 a.m. Volunteers can gather at the east side of the lake. After the clean-up, free lunch will be served to those helping out. Sponsors for this Keep Texas Beautiful event include the Rolling Plains chapter of Texas Master Naturalists, Midwestern State University, American National Bank & Trust, and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

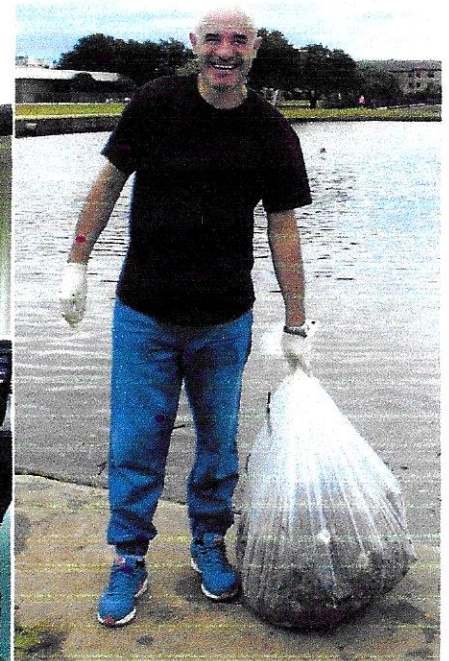
Sikes Lake Cleanup set for Saturday

Hundreds of volunteers will descend on the shores of Sikes Lake Sept. 10 for the annual Sikes Lake Cleanup, sponsored by the Rolling Plains Master Naturalists, American National Bank and Trust, and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

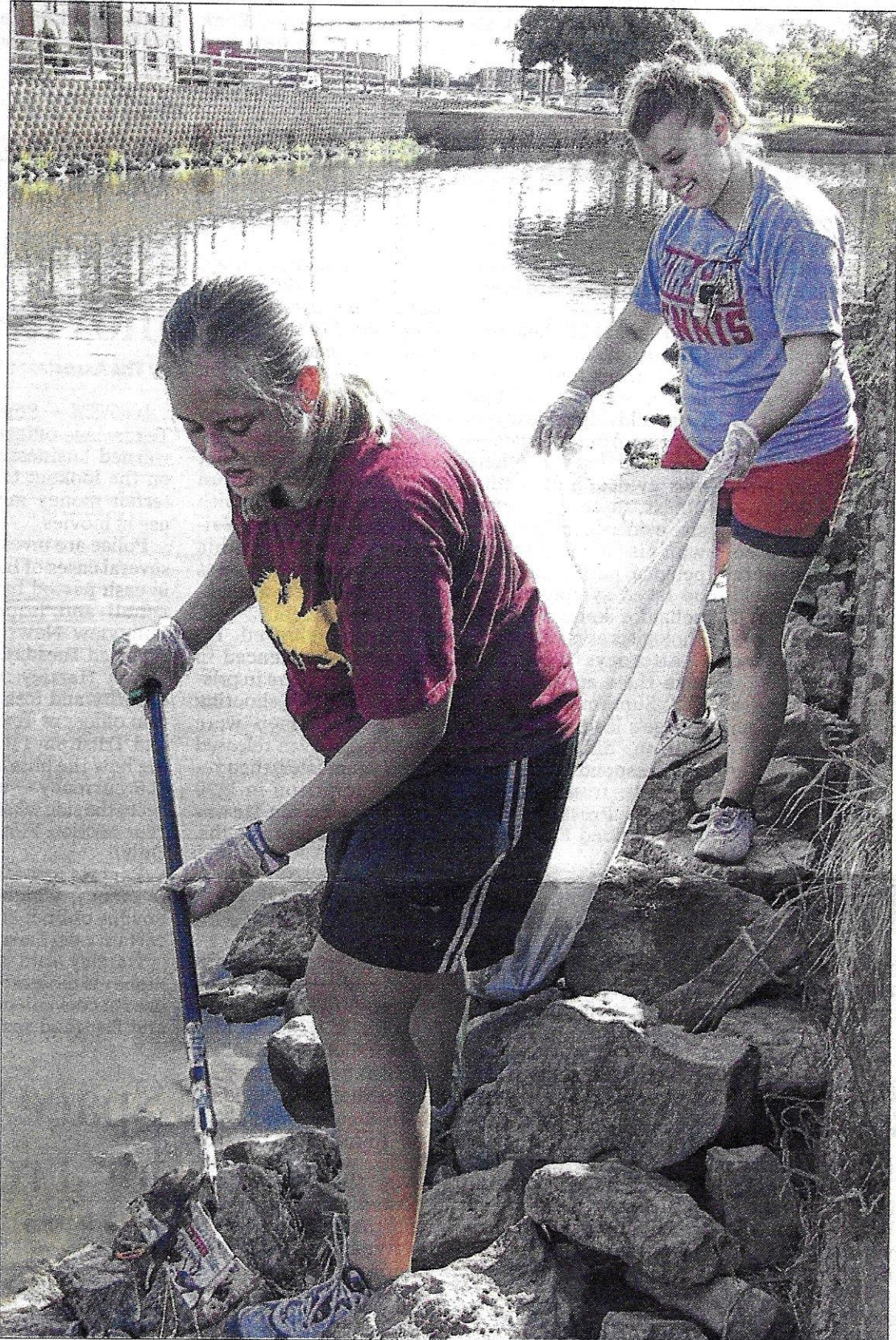
Bags, trash grabbers and gloves will be provided. The cleanup will start at 9 a.m. on the east side of the lake and run until about noon. Hot dogs will be served to all volunteers after the event.



Sikes Lake Clean Up September 10, 2016







LAUREN ROBERTS/TIMES RECORD NEWS

Amanda and Sadie Perez (from left) balance themselves on the rocks as they pick up trash during the 10th annual Sikes Lake Cleanup in 2015. This year's cleanup, organized by the Rolling Plains Chapter, Texas Master Naturalists, will be Sept. 10.

Local

Sikes Lake gets a trash cleanup

■ People to help rid the lake of the junk on Sept. 10

By Bridget Knight
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940-763-7535

Hundreds of students, joggers and nature lovers will

descend on the shores of Sikes Lake Sept. 10 to rid the small lake of a year's worth of trash.

The annual Sikes Lake Cleanup will get started at 9 a.m. and go until the last of the trash is removed. A hot dog lunch will be served for all participants when the job is done, usually about noon.

The fall cleanup is an annual event organized by the

Rolling Plains Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist and Midwestern State University, which owns the land around the lake. American National Bank & Trust and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department are additional sponsors.

TMN organizer Terry McKee called the event a "fun day

See LAKE, 2B

LAKE from 1B

being outside and meeting people who have a like mind" where everyone comes away with a sense of accomplishment.

Between 100 and 200 trash pickers usually participate, including joggers on the trail who stop to join in.

"It's a good feeling you get from doing something good that helps the environment," she said. "People see us cleaning and pitch in."

Gloves, trash bags and grabbers are provided, and staff members from the MSU physical plant circle the trail in vehicles picking up the trash bags as volunteers fill them.

McKee said Styrofoam

takeout containers make up the majority of the trash around the lake, likely from the many restaurants and hotels located in the area. The lightweight containers frequently fly out of trash dumpsters when winds get up, settling into the low areas around the lake.

But just about any type of trash can be found, from plastic water bottles and

broken pens to fishing line.

The lake's popularity as a PokemonGo hot spot has also contributed to the trash problem this year, especially cigarette butts in the area around the Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU, according to reports from the museum. Pokemon players have noted the need for additional trash barrels along some parts of the lake trail.