



Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It's safe to say that I'm glad to see the year 2020 coming to an end. Master Naturalists have undergone a lot of changes over the last 10 months, most of which have constrained us from performing our mission to the best of our abilities. Still, we've responded to the COVID challenge as best we can and wait for the pandemic to subside so that we can return to normal, or as close to normal as possible.

I hope we all understand that TPWD's and TAMU AgriLIFE's COVID-19 Guidance Directives/Updates are done in the name of protecting employees and Master Naturalists.

The last TMN-COT Chapter General Meeting of 2020 will be on December 9, and the class of 2020 interns will present their projects. Be sure to attend this virtual meeting starting at 9:00 A.M.

This 'last chapter meeting of the year' is generally when officers of the TMN-COT Executive Board are elected for the coming year. This year, the election will be virtual, and the voting process and instructions will be provided at the December 9th meeting. At that meeting, I will present the nominating committee's nominees for the four executive-board positions, and nominations from the floor will also be accepted at that time. I will not be

pursuing an elected office position this year but will remain on the board as the immediate past president.

The most recent set of guidelines TDPW and Texas AgriLIFE Extension issued for the Texas Master Naturalists have declared Brazoria County a "red" county—county of highest alert—with respect to COVID-19 virus infections. I ask is that we comply with all directives and regulations that have been enacted to protect us. It may take another six months to a year to return to some state of normalcy. I can wait—I don't want to rush it. It's like learning to hold your breath longer and longer every day until you're back in the driver's seat. There is nothing I miss more than face-to-face meetings with my fellow Master Naturalists.

For those of you who still need VT hours to certify for 2020, don't forget the Christmas Bird Counts scheduled from Dec. 14th through January 5th; register at <https://tinyurl.com/y4gbpfc5>. There are numerous other opportunities to obtain VT hours: Check the website calendar. I miss you all,
Bill

Bill Ahlstrom is the president of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at ahlstrom@tmn.com.

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<https://facebook.com/TMN.COT>

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The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by Texas A&M AgriLIFE Ext. Svce. and Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.

TMN programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo of 2-month- and 2-year-olds by Carmen Biggs at BNWR.

REMINDER ... again ...

Volunteer to do a Nature Note in 2021!

Contact Mickey Dufilho at dufilho@tmn-cot.org.

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter General Meeting and Advanced Training

Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 9 AM

Via email meeting invite to Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service's
Microsoft Teams Meeting license

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 9:00 AM – 9:10 AM | Welcome and Meeting Participation Notes |
| 9:10 AM – 10:10 AM | Class of 2020 New Class Project Presentations <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i> |
| 10:10 AM – 10:45 AM | General Membership Meeting <i>[Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting]</i> |

Here's hoping that we will again be able to gather for food
and fellowship at next year's **Hog Wild Holiday Feast!**
Until then, have a happy and safe holiday season.



NOTES:

- Stay tuned for information and instructions via email in order to “attend” the December virtual General Meeting.
- Missing meetings because of trouble logging in? We miss you too! Contact John O’Connell at john.oconnell@ag.tamu.edu.

MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Congratulations to those achieving recertification and milestones as of November 30:

Recertifications

Jerry Eppner Sherry Summers
Ed Barrios Chris Kneupper

250 VT Hours Milestone

Luanne Salinas Kyle Purvis

Impact Data YTD—30 November 2020

2,418 Adults 6,524 Youth 8,942 Total

Hours Totals YTD—30 November 2020¹

10,502 Hours VT 1,916 Hours AT

¹ November hours: 685 VT; 80 AT

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: CINDY GOODRUM, Class of 2013

By Kathy Pittman

This month's "Member Spotlight" shines on Cindy Goodrum, a member of the COT Class of 2013.

Cindy, who was born in Houston, now lives in the Bar X Ranch area, will celebrate her birthday on January 24th. She has been a homemaker and is a retired veterinarian technician.

A Master Gardner for 10 years, Cindy decided to join Master Naturalists because she wanted more volunteer opportunities: "I'm very interested in nature and have a curious mind—I want to be able to identify something I'm not familiar with."

Cindy's favorite activity is the bus tour at DEEP because she very much enjoys being able to expose kids to experiences they haven't had before and hopefully, get them interested in nature. Another favorite activity is par-

ticipating in the Christmas Bird Counts every year.

Being a Master Naturalist has inspired Cindy to keep learning new things and to become a better birder thanks to all the excellent mentors we have in in COT. Her "short-term" goal is to achieve 1000 volunteer hours. Cindy is also currently working, along with several other Master Naturalist members, on the Loggerhead Shrike Tracking Project in the Quintana Beach and Surfside Beach areas.

"I have lots of hobbies I enjoy," says Cindy, "I always like to be working on something. I garden, sew, make jewelry, crochet and do mosaics."

Cindy's advice to new members is to volunteer in lots of different areas until you find some things that interest you the most.

Hopefully, this will be easier to do in the coming year.



TPWD ASKS PUBLIC TO REPORT RABBIT MORTALITY EVENTS

TPWD News & Media, 20 November 2020



AUSTIN — In April, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) received test results confirming that Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV) was found in several species of wild rabbits in Texas.

Since June, TPWD, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Texas Animal Health

Commission (TAHC) have not confirmed any new cases in wild rabbit populations in Texas. However, TPWD is seeking input from the public, especially hunters, asking that they [report](#) any dead rabbits found this fall and winter.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV) is a highly contagious viral disease that can affect both domestic and wild rabbit species. [The disease] has been known to exist in all biological tissues and fluids within rabbits. In addition, RHDV has been known to survive on the landscape for more than 120 days and can withstand freezing temperatures. This disease is nearly always fatal and primarily affects adult rabbits.

The disease can spread between rabbits through direct contact with other infected rabbits or carcasses, contact with their meat or fur, contaminated food or water or other contaminated materials. These factors make disease control efforts extremely challenging.

As deer, waterfowl and quail hunting seasons are in full swing, TPWD asks that hunters report

any rabbit mortality events, especially in areas of the Panhandle and Trans Pecos regions where previously positive cases were confirmed by both the USDA and TAHC.

To date, counties with known mortality events include the following: Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Gaines, Hale, Hockley, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Lubbock, Pecos, Potter, Presidio, Randall and Ward counties. Reports of dead rabbits should be made to a local biologist in the county in which they were found. Biologist contact information can be found on the [TPWD website](#).

RHDV appears only to affect rabbit species (lagomorphs). It is not known to affect humans, livestock or pets other than rabbits. However, pets, such as hunting dogs, should not be allowed to consume dead animal carcasses. Often the only clinical sign is sudden death. In less acute cases, clinical signs in rabbits have included the following: dullness/apathy, not eating, bleeding from the nose and eyes or watery, congested eyes. Some may also exhibit neurological signs such as [lack of] coordination, excitement, or seizure-like episodes.

TPWD advises all rabbit hunters to voluntarily clean rabbits in the harvest location and discard non-consumed carcass parts in the same area. Hunters can also minimize the spread of this disease by reducing the movement of biological materials and carcasses across Texas. TPWD also requests that hunters thoroughly clean coolers containing rabbits with a 10% bleach solution after use.

More information on RHD can be found on the [USDA](#) and [TPWD](#) websites.

For more information about domestic rabbit RHDV2 cases and reporting, visit https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/rabbits/.

WHAT HAVE OUR 2020 INTERNS BEEN UP TO?

The November 21st field training on **URBAN ECOLOGY**, presented by Cullen Ondracek of the City of Pearland, took our interns to the Shadow Creek Ranch Nature Trail and Wetlands.

On November 14th, the intern class enjoyed Clint Lacy's virtual training session on **ARCHEOLOGY** and a field trip at Varner-Hogg Plantation led by Catherine Jalbert.



For the field training at the beginning of November, interns studied **AQUATIC SYSTEMS** at Chocolate Bayou. The trip was led by John O'Connell.



Photos by (from top) Kyle Purvis, Mary Schwartz, Mary Schwartz, and Kathy Pittman.

Above photos by Kyle Purvis.

FOBWR & BOBCAT WOODS TRAIL UPDATES

By Oron Atkins, FOBWR Project Manager

In November, Dick Schaffhausen built storage for Migration Celebration signs; organized FOBWR's Morgan Storage Building at San Bernard NWR; and cleared out the resident wasps. Tom Taroni (pictured below) and Oron Atkins built long-needed steps at the entrance to the building and using surplus supplies.



Above photos by Dick Schaffhausen

Bobcat Woods

Trail, November 3—

Tom Taroni, Oron Atkins (pictured right), and Chip Sweet added a "tidbit" to the trail: A 4' x 8' deck adjoining the Moist Soil Unit sidewalk to make room for a bench.



Photo by Chip Sweet

Bobcat Woods Trail, November 16—Lisa Myers, Marty Cornell, Don Sabathier, Chip Sweet, Tom Taroni and I began installing interpretive signage. By the end of a long workday, we installed a majority of the 29 signposts (16 supported and secured to the boardwalk structure plus nine ground posts concreted in along the sidewalk).



Bobcat Woods Trail, November 18—Don Sabathier, Chip Sweet, Tom Taroni and I completed the trail sign installations today. Minor tweaks were made to the sign map provided by Mickey Dufilho.

Another "out of scope" mini-project: The crew is planning to construct and install a bench on the Wolfweed observation platform. The six-foot composite benches purchased for the project are comfortable because the seats are contoured and the back rest is angled. Using one of those composite-bench support legs as a template, Chip constructed a prototype. We'll construct a 10-foot bench seat using four support legs and overlay with composite 2x4's (that we have on hand) for both seat and back rest. If Chip really puts his mind to it, he could design a recliner bench...



Photo by Oron Atkins

OUT IN NATURE DURING THE PANDEMIC—PART V

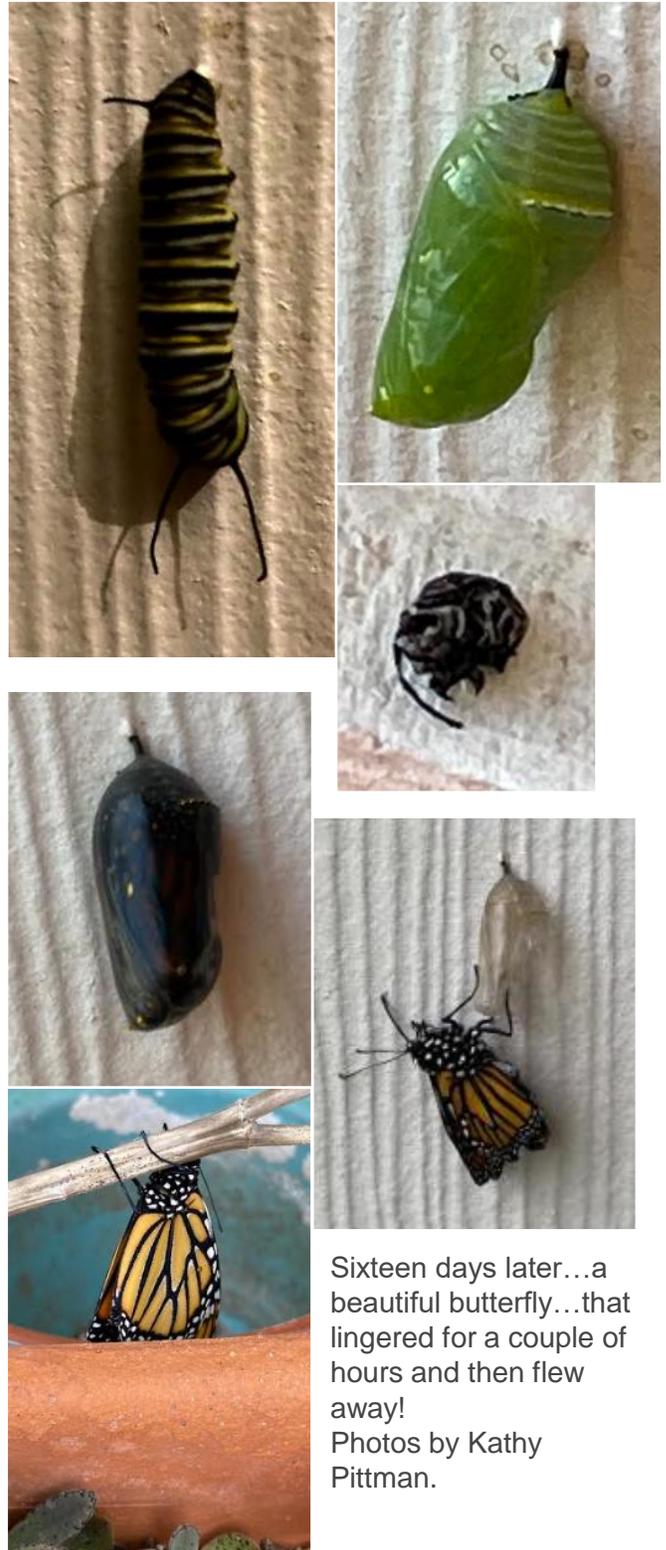
Apple snailing at Hudson Woods on November 25.



On November 14th, Luanne and Jimmy Salinas led a beach cleanup (recording trash collected on the Clean Swell App) at the Quintana Beach County Park jetty. The team focused on trash and debris deposited from recent storm surges. Over 400 pounds of trash were collected by 12 COT members within two hours. Patty Brinkmeyer and staff provided materials and trash transport.



Kathy Pittman shared these shots from her yard. From Monarch caterpillar to chrysalis overnight (discarded skin at bottom)...



Sixteen days later...a beautiful butterfly...that lingered for a couple of hours and then flew away!
Photos by Kathy Pittman.

Continued next page

OUT IN NATURE DURING THE PANDEMIC—PART V

Continued from previous page

John Boettiger continues to capture intriguing shots on his game camera in Blanco, Texas. John says, “Look at this deer’s ‘pot belly’ and thickness in the brisket (chest)... also, as a whitetail buck ages, its antlers (not horns) tend to have extra points, resulting in an “unequal” rack

According to John, on November 22, “This three-and-a-half-year-old whitetail buck is in rut and scent trailing a “hot doe.” The middle picture is from a watching and photo blind.



The closeup, below, was taken on Halloween afternoon this year.



(25Nov20)



Also in November, a gorgeous, young, eight-point buck “posed” for this great shot.

BRAZORIA COUNTY HISTORY: WHAT IS "AGRI LIFE"?

By Neal McLain, Class of 2004



Listen up, interns... this message is for you!

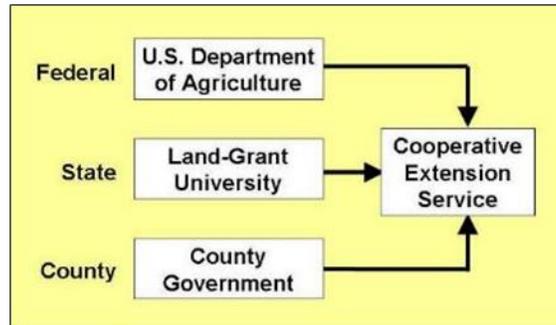
So, what is "AgriLIFE"?

It's Texas's name for what is called the *Cooperative Extension Service* in every state except Texas, where it was known as the *Texas Cooperative Extension Service* until 2008. In 2008, it was renamed the *Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service*.

Cooperative Extension Service agencies exist in every state in the United States, most offshore territories, and the District of Columbia.

Cooperative Extension Service gets its name from its origins: it's a *cooperative* venture supported by three levels of government:

- United States Department of Agriculture
- States' Land-Grant Universities
- County governments



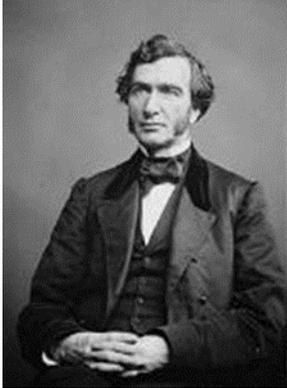
Ok... so what is a "Land-Grant" University?

To answer this question, we go back to the year 1862, when Vermont Congressional Representative Justin Smith Morrill sponsored the [Morrill Act of 1862](#). In this act, the purpose of Land Grant Colleges was stated as follows:

"...without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactic, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

Note the following words from the act: *"agriculture and the mechanic arts."*

The first land grant college in Texas adopted these words in its name: *The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas*.



Justin Smith Morrill



The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas

Continued next page

BRAZORIA COUNTY HISTORY: WHAT IS "AGRILIFE"?

Continued



Texas A&M University campus.

Today, this land-grant university is known as Texas A&M University.



PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY

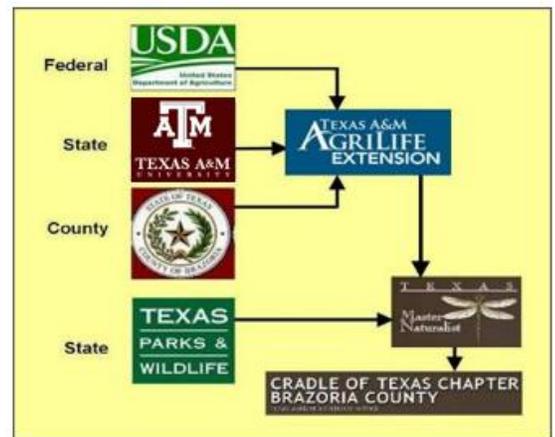
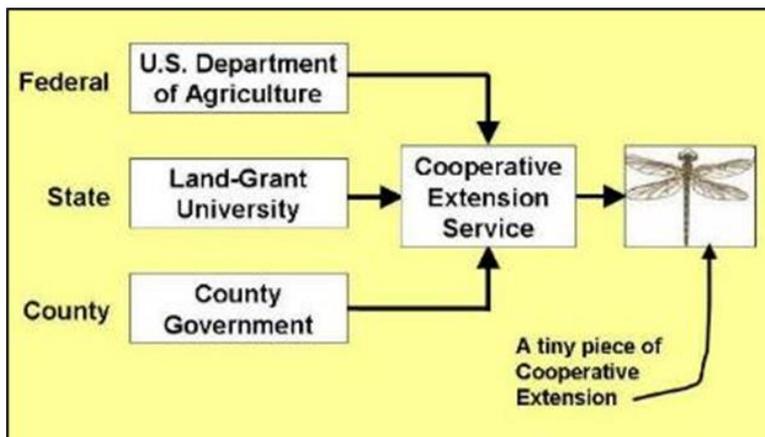
In 1890, the Morrill Act was amended as follows: If a state's land-grant university was not open to all races, a separate land-grant university was to be established for each race. This led to the creation of separate universities for blacks (now known as "historically black colleges") in segregated southern states.

In Texas, Prairie View A&M University is a historically black college. Originally known as the *Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Benefit of Colored Youth*, Prairie View is the second oldest public institution of higher education in Texas. Although no longer segregated, Prairie View's student body is still predominately Black.



The *Cooperative Extension Service* was created by another Congressional Act, The Smith-Lever Act of 1914. This act specified that Cooperative Extension agencies would be administered by the land-grant universities. The curricula were largely left to the universities, but one objective was "to inform people about current developments in agriculture, home economics, and related subjects." In most states, the educational offerings included agriculture and food, home and family, the environment, community economic development, youth, and 4-H.

The Texas Master Naturalist Program is one of dozens of educational programs sponsored or co-sponsored by Cooperative Extension Service Agencies (left):



Here in Texas, the Master Naturalist Program is jointly sponsored by Texas A&M University, the AgriLIFE Extension Service, and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. The Texas TMN State Office is in Kerrville, Texas, and our chapter fits in as shown above, right.

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

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Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.

Chapter News is published monthly on Monday before the General Meeting by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Thursday before the General Meeting. Send submissions by email to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.