

Chapter News

December 2025

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Cradle of Texas Chapter

Texas A&M AgriLife
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The Texas Master Naturalist program
is coordinated by Texas A&M
AgriLife Extension Service and Texas
Parks and Wildlife Department.

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

2026 Proposed Officer Slate

Voting will take place at the
December General meeting

President	Kathy Pittman
Vice President	Jimmy Salinas
Secretary	Donna Rich
Treasurer	Amanda Smith

Committee Members: Mickey
Dufilho, Melanie Hollenshead,
John O'Connell, Jordan Kieffer

President's Message



"Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth." ~ Henry David Thoreau

The calendar page has been flipped and here we are in December. I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends. With the shorter days and now cooler days, I find myself slowing down and spending more time indoors. We took advantage of these last few rainy days and cleaned out a couple closets and rearranged the pantry shelves. I had been feeling guilty about working on several outside projects and letting these chores slide. Isn't it amazing how we can allow things to accumulate until we can't stand it anymore and do something about it? Now I feel like I'm ready to start decorating for Christmas. Having those areas taken care of also means I can go back to working on outside projects, leading hikes and planning for spring. How will you spend your time at the end of the year?

Plan on spending some "down time" with family and friends over the next month. We'd love to see you at the **20th Annual Hog-Wild Holiday Feast**, hosted once again by Ed Barrios and assisted by several TMN-COT and FOBWR members! It's a wonderful opportunity to have a meal and visit with our USFW, BCPD, GCBO and other partners and with TMN-COT members. See details on page 6 here in the Newsletter.

Our next meeting will be on December 10th, at 9 am at AgriLife. Member Mary Schwartz will speak on vultures. We will also have officer elections for 2026. I hope you will join us!

Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, OUTSIDE!!!

Kathy Pittman

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. ~ Clarissa Pinkola Estes

December Chapter Meeting

The December 10th General Meeting will be a hybrid:

Attend in person at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite. Visitors and guests are welcome.

The Annual Hog-Wild Holiday Feast will follow immediately after. See [page 6](#) for details.

8:30 – 9:00 am	Social Time and Refreshments
9:00 – 9:15 am	Welcome and Awards
9:15 – 10:15 am	Speaker: Mary Schwartz Advanced Training: Vultures – Birds with a Purpose Mary will share information and characteristics on the two types of vultures we see every day.
10:15 – 11:00 am	General Membership Meeting (Hours for Volunteer Time (VT) TBD at close of meeting)



My name is Mary Schwartz. I'm originally from Ohio where I still have family. I graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Chemical Engineering and went to work for The Dow Chemical Company in Midland, Michigan after graduation. I transferred to Lake Jackson in 1994 and currently live in Clute. I retired from Dow in August 2017 after a 36-year career. I became a Master Naturalist in 2018 and was the Intern Training Director from 2019 through 2022.

I'm the current President of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (FOBWR). I volunteer at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge during the Spring Break and Christmas Open Houses, focusing on birds and teach birding to 4th graders as part of the Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP).

I also run the photography contest for the Migration Celebration which is a free event held the last full weekend of April at the San Bernard Wildlife Refuge.

mschwartz97@comcast.net

Outreach Opportunities

Holiday in the Park – Brazos Bend State Park – 12/13, 10 am – 2 pm; Contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

Volunteers needed to assist with the Wingspan activity.

BNWR Discovery Center Open House – 12/26/2025 thru 1/1/2026, 11 am to 4 pm; Contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

Various activities are planned. Volunteers are needed to both serve as docents and meet and greet the public. Please contact Ruby for details on when/where you can assist.

TMN-COT Calendar <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events>

Volunteer Opportunities

Beach Sweep – Monday, January 5th (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am, *NEW MEETUP LOCATION* Meet on the beach at the 16th Street entrance, directly across from Freeport LNG Headquarters.

Contact [Jimmy Salinas](#) or [Luanne Salinas](#)

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's)

12/14, 12/15, 12/16, 12/19, 12/20, 1/3/2026

See [calendar](#) for event locations and details.

VOLUNTEER!

START where you are.
USE what you have.
DO what you can.

~ Arthur Ashe ~

ONGOING:

Exploration Green Workday – every Wednesday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm; contact [Christie Taylor](#)

Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed; [BCPD](#)

Nurdle Beach Patrol – self-directed; <https://www.nurdlepatrol.org/app/>

Brazoria County Comprehensive Spider Survey – self-directed; contact [Melanie Hollenshead](#)

Adopt-a-Loop for TMN – self-directed; contact [Cris Tobola](#).

DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays – December 18th and 20th, 8:00 am – 11:00 am
3rd Saturdays and preceding Thursday, Contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

Upcoming Construction Projects (TBA) – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

TMN-COT iNaturalist Data Collection Project; contact [Amanda Gabehart](#)

Time to Restore Project – self-directed; contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

TMN-COT ECO FUND PROGRAM

The purpose of the TMN-COT ECO Fund Program is to provide support for specific projects that will enhance the chapter's mission to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the Brazoria County community.

TMN-COT will grant up to \$1000 in 2026 for ECO Fund projects to be completed during the upcoming calendar year. Grant recipients will be announced at the January chapter meeting.

Deadline for grant applications is December 31, 2025.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Applicant must have been an active, dues-paying TMN-COT chapter member and achieved certification for the previous two calendar years.
- If the planned project involves work with a chapter partner, applicant must receive approval in advance from the partner before submitting application and include the name of the person within that organization who will oversee the project.
- Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- Previous recipients of the grant are ineligible to apply in consecutive years.

Acceptable uses of the grant include:

- Implementation of a new project with a chapter partner.
- Expansion of a current project with a chapter partner.
- Development of educational materials for a specific project.
- Development of materials to be used for outreach events.

Responsibilities of recipients:

- Provide documentation of all grant project expenses to Chapter Treasurer.
- Report on project progress to the Board of Directors at the July Board meeting.
- Present an overview of the completed ECO Fund Grant project to membership.
(Coordinate with Program Chair by December to confirm and schedule chapter meeting presentation.)
- Grant award must be refunded to TMN-COT if the project has not been completed within 18 months of the award date.

APPLICATION

Send questions regarding the TMN-COT ECO Fund Grant application to [Kristine Rivers](#).

Certifications November 2025

Congratulations to all!

Recertifications

Ed Barrios
Ruby Lewis
Nicole Lochmann
(September)
Georgia Monnerat
John O'Connell



2025 Pin
Roadrunner
*John Boettiger,
Membership Director*

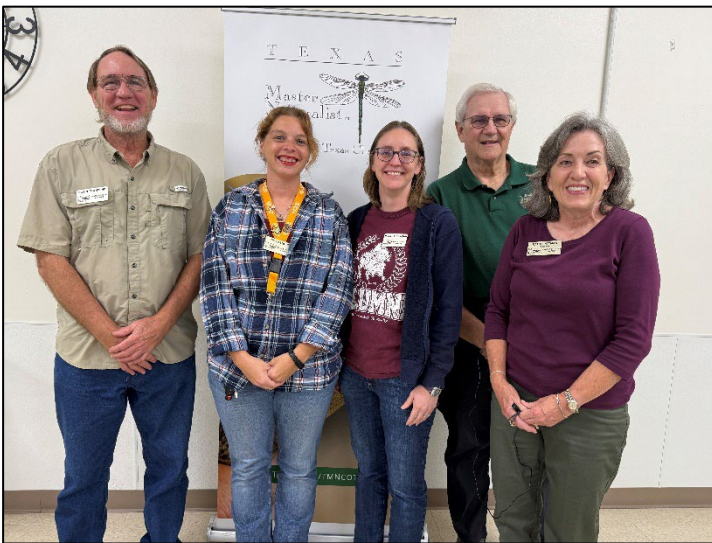


Milestones

Kyle Purvis
500 Hours

Cris Tobola
1000 Hours

October Certifications recognized at the November Meeting



Recertifications:

Robin Townsend, Kimberly Calhoun, Nicole Lochmann
John Boettiger; Membership Director, Kathy Pittman; President



1000 Hour Milestone:

Kathy Pittman; President, Kathy Purvis,
John Boettiger; Membership Director

20TH ANNUAL HOG-WILD HOLIDAY FEAST

(Let's make it a big one!)



~MENU~

Appetizer Medley

Cheese and Sausage Dip
Other appetizers, provided by guests

Featured Main Course

(Serving 2:00-6:00 pm)
Smoked Wild Hog
(Marty Cornell & Crew)
Borracho Beans (Ed Barrios)

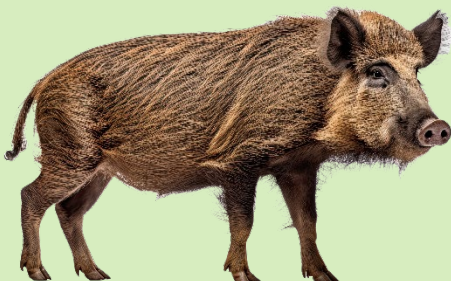
Dessert Medley

Desserts provided by guests

Featured Beverages

Red & White Wines
Bottled Water

& BYOB



WEDNESDAY

DECEMBER 10

10:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Host Ed Barrios
325 Timbercreek Drive
Lake Jackson, TX

MAP

Significant others
are welcome!

Please RSVP
to Ed Barrios
or evite

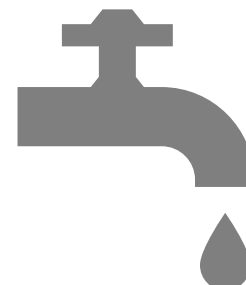
\$5 Donation per
person appreciated
\$10 if you drink
house wine



Looking Ahead to 2026

2026 Spring AT Day!

- We need **YOU** to help plan the event and make it a success!
- Tentative theme for 2026 will be focused on **WATER** and include hands-on activities. Any ideas?
- Contact [Kristine Rivers](#) if you'd like to help with planning, or, SAY YES if we ask you to help!



2026 February Intern Class

- New intern class starting soon!
- Tell your friends!
- Contact [Melanie Hollenshead](#) for information

TMN-COT November 2025 Impact Data		November*	YTD
Hours	VT	520	11,824
	AT	50	2,055
	Total	570	13,879
Impact Data	Adults	204	5,159
	Youth	376	13,406
	Total	580	18,565

*will not be considered final until mid-January 2026
Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Keep Pearland Beautiful 21st Annual Plant Thyme Fall Luncheon



Kathy Pittman, Patty Brinkmeyer

On November 7th, President, Kathy Pittman and Communications Director, Patty Brinkmeyer represented TMN-COT at the 21st Annual Plant Thyme Fall Luncheon, hosted by Keep Pearland Beautiful.

They shared information on attracting pollinators to your yard.

Brazoria County was well represented as we shared the space with Brazoria County Horticulture and Brazoria County Master Gardeners.

The speaker for the event was AJ Olson of Hippiie Fertilizing who shared advice on sustainable lawn care. There was also a native plant sale, which we took advantage of!



Kimberly Mayer, Brazoria County Horticulture Agent



Shiela and Jon Pierce, Master Gardeners



COT Chapter Advisor John O'Connell; AgriLife Extension Service, led the annual Captain Shishka Bob Agriculture Awareness Day activities during the November 18th and 19th program for Brazoria County 4th graders. Chapter members assisted with the Interactive - Water Cycle station. The event focuses on teaching children about agriculture in Brazoria County and where their food comes from.



Photos by Paula Hanson



November Beach Sweep

Holy Mackerel! I never thought I'd say this but there wasn't that much trash to be collected on the Q-Beach. It really required some effort from everyone, In fact some of us ventured over to the jetty parking area, and of course that's a story in itself. We had some interesting finds (like a message in a bottle, an abandoned puppy, and some unfortunate observations that drives our efforts.

The weather was picture perfect and of course we were "fueled" by the City of Quintana with donuts and pigs in a blanket! Thank you , Adam!

Our next Beach Sweep is scheduled for TUESDAY (note the date change) December 2nd. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate with us. Enjoy this beautiful weather and get outside if you can.

Mother Nature is fun to watch!!!

God Bless All of You!

Jimmy & Luanne



The message in a bottle was illegible.

An unfortunate gull had its leg stuck through a plastic bowl, but was able to fly, so could not be rescued at the time.



Your cleanup makes a difference! Thank you for being part of a global community, identifying ocean trash and helping find solutions. Check out what others are cleaning and more ways to get involved at <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/icc/>. (Reprint courtesy of Ocean Conservancy)

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Kathy Purvis, Richwood
Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	David Skweres, Houston
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
Training Director	Barbara Whaley, Alvin
Membership Director	John Boettiger, Lake Jackson
Advanced Training Director	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Volunteer Service Director	Oron Atkins, Lake Jackson
Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Hospitality Director	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Training Class Representative 2024	Donna Rich, Angleton
Training Class Representative 2025	Betty Skweres, Houston
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
Non-voting positions:	
Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Oron Atkins, Ruby Lewis, Kristine Rivers, Jimmy Salinas, Luanne Salinas, Patty Brinkmeyer, Ed Barrios, John O'Connell, Paula Hanson
Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT
X	https://x.com/tmncot
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail

Texas 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 the weekend following the monthly Board Meeting (first Wednesday of each month) by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Thursday before the last weekend of the month preceding the newsletter. Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

