



# Chapter News

May 2026

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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.

Cover Photo by Patty Brinkmeyer  
Carpenter Bee on a Passionflower

## President's Message



**“Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission: to be of service to them whenever they require it.” - St. Francis of Assisi**

From the “we can learn something new every day” files..... Did you know there is a patron saint of Ecology? I was catching up on mail and newsletters and came across an article in the Catholic Herald on the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis.

I always knew St. Francis as a lover of animals and that we always have a day in the fall where church members can bring their pets to the church for a special blessing. In 1979, Pope John Paul II named Francis the patron saint “of those who promote ecology.” As I read more, I could see how the life of St. Francis mirrored the life of any ecologist. He had a love of God’s creation and considered all creatures as his equals. In his writings, Francis referred to many things as “brother” and “sister.” Francis spent much of his time out in nature and was said to have cared deeply for the care of all creatures around him, such as bees, worm, birds, wolves and livestock. All creation was sacred in Francis’ heart. What a great role model for a Master Naturalist!

As Master Naturalists, we understand the importance, the “sacredness”, of all species around us. The forests, the land, the air, the water, and all the inhabitants of Brazoria County are all part of the great creation we all call “home.” By educating others on what is unique and special to our area, we help protect our home and preserve it for future generations.

And on the subject of “future generations,” we are moving into our very busy summer season! Volunteers are needed at several youth education events at BCPD Nature Camp, Gulf Coast bird Observatory, Sea Center Texas and at our Library programs. PLEASE make time in your busy schedules to help out with our volunteer programs! Our next meeting will be May 13th, at 6 pm at the AgriLife building. Debbie Griffith, TMN Mid-Coast Chapter will be speaking on Shell Middens along the Coastal Bend. 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**

# May Chapter Meeting

**The May 13<sup>th</sup> 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. Odd months are held in the evening. Even months are held in the morning.

<b>5:30 – 6:00 pm</b>	<b>Social Time and Refreshments</b>
<b>6:00 – 6:15 am</b>	<b>Welcome and Awards</b>
<b>6:15 – 7:15 pm</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Debbie Griffith, Texas Master Naturalist Mid-Coast Chapter <b>Topic:</b> Shell Middens - An Open Time Capsule into the Lives of Archaic Native Americans along the Coastal Bend Discover how Shell Middens preserved tools, weapons, and jewelry used by Native American's as far back as 4,000 years
<b>7:15 – 8:00 pm</b>	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>(Hours for Volunteer Service (VS) and Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)</i>



Originally from San Antonio, Debbie spent her career in Houston managing Employee Benefits and Environmental Health & Safety programs for major corporations. In 2018, she and her husband, Steve, moved to Rockport, drawn by a deep connection to the area, a love for the outdoors and a more nature-connected life.

Since becoming a Texas Master Naturalist in 2019, Debbie has been an active volunteer in Aransas County, dedicating her time and energy to conservation and education. Her training led her to join CoBALT (Coastal Bend Archaeological Logistics Team), where she spent five years participating in Paleo-Indian artifact excavations (digs) near Victoria, Texas.

Deeply committed to preserving both natural and historical resources, Debbie also serves on the Board of the History Center for Aransas County and leads the Aransas County Tree Committee. Known for her enthusiasm and willingness to connect with people and nature, she frequently volunteers and supports community initiatives throughout the Rockport-Fulton area.

June Speaker: Patty Brinkmeyer – Pollinator Gardening

# Outreach Opportunities

**DEEP – Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge** – 5/12 ; contact [Lee Gaston](#)

**BCPD Nature Camp**- 6/1 thru 6/5, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm; contact [Nathan Murphy](#) 979-864-1152

**Pollinator Academy** – Partnership BCMG and TMN-COT, 6/27, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm; contact [Patty Brinkmeyer](#)

Click here to sign up as a student/attendee [Sign up](#) Space is limited.

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

# Volunteer Opportunities

**Beach Sweep** – Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am Quintana Beach – Location TBA

Contact [Jimmy Salinas](#) 979-824-4008 or [Luanne Salinas](#)

**GCBO Summer Bird Camp 2026** – 6/10 thru 6/14, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm – contact [Celeste Silling](#)

**BCLS Summer Reading Club – Texas Reptiles** – Dates below ↓ contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

JUNE	JULY
4 <sup>th</sup> West Pearland Library 10:30, 12:00, 2:00, 3:30	7 <sup>th</sup> Angleton Library, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00
9 <sup>th</sup> Freeport Library 2:00, 4:00	8 <sup>th</sup> Lake Jackson Library, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00
15 <sup>th</sup> West Columbia Library 2:00, 4:00	16 <sup>th</sup> Sweeny Library, 2:00
16 <sup>th</sup> Alvin Library, 11:00, 2:00	21 <sup>st</sup> Manvel Library, 2:00, 4:00
18 <sup>th</sup> Clute Library, 2:00, 4:00	23 <sup>rd</sup> Danbury Community Center, 11:00
24 <sup>th</sup> Pearland Tom Reid Library 12:00, 2:00, 4:00	28 <sup>th</sup> Brazoria Heritage Foundation Gym, 2:00

## ONGOING:

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

**Camp Mohawk Pocket Prairie** – workdays TBA; contact [Dick Schaffhausen](#)

**Resoft Park Pollinator Gardens** – workdays TBA; contact [Kate Harris](#)

**DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays** – Saturday, 5/9 and Thursdays 5/14 and 5/21 , 8 – 11 am; Contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

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

## Citizen Science:

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

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

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

**Yellow-Legged Hornet Project (TBA)** – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

It's Spring...  
**LOVE IS IN THE AIR**  
Observations from the Backyard

Contributed by Patty Brinkmeyer



# Certifications April 2025

## Congratulations to all!

### Recertifications

Charleton, Dennis	Nance, Jim
Corona, Alyssa	Peltier, Pam
Daugherty, Nannette	Peterson, Larry
Gabehart, Amanda	Salinas, Jimmy
Kirby, Larry	Salinas, Luanne
Kirby, Vicki	Townsend, Robin
McKey, Mel	Wagner, Rose
Morris, Thomas	Yoder, Barbara
Nance, Debbie	

### Milestones

**Charleton, Dennis (250)**  
**Martin, Brenda (500)**  
**Salinas, Luanne (1000)**



### **Initial Certification**

Jimmy Salinas; Vice President,  
Larry Curtner, Barbara Whaley; Training Director

March certifications recognized at the April meeting:



### **Recertifications**

Chris Kneupper, Jimmy Salinas; Vice President, Melanie Hollenshead, Anna Loonam, Phil Huxford, Janet Townsend, David Dungan, Betty Skweres, David Skweres, John Boettiger; Membership Director, Mickey Dufilho, James Calvert, Paula Hanson, Herb Myers, Betty Taylor, Regina Tippet, Ed Barrios, Mary Schwartz, Liesa Glover, Angela Griffin, Donna Rich, Barbara Whaley; Training Director

# BLACKLIGHT MOTTHING

## BioBlitz at DFNC Mothing Event

On April 17<sup>th</sup> the COT Chapter, alongside the Gulf Coast Chapter hosted a black light mothing event across the street from Delores Fenwick Nature Center in Pearland.



Photos by Richard Schaffhausen and Angela Griffin



# MIGRATION CELEBRATION

The 2026 Migration Celebration featured new activities, including a popular rock-climbing wall and speakers. Our own Barbara Whaley gave her fun presentation on The Art of Eating Insects

We had 585 visitors on Saturday and 352 on Sunday. Nearly 80 volunteers worked the event, many over multiple days.



*Photos by Kim Bennett*

# MIGRATION CELEBRATION



# IN MEMORIAM

## David Plunkett



David passed on April 8, 2026. He was in the COT Class of 2014; however, he was one of the many people active with the chapter for years before becoming a member. David was a past Chairman of Migration Celebration onward of 15 years, as well as an Outreach Director for the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. He was instrumental in the partnership with KBR for outreach done at KBR Kids Day. He had a passion for birding and wildlife photography. You could often find David handling the reptiles at outreach events.

TMN-COT 2026 Impact Data		April*	YTD
Hours	VS	2,464	6,095
	AT	113	1,039
	Total	2,577	7,134
Impact Data	Adults	2,153	3,271
	Youth	5,460	12,753
	Total	7,613	16,024

\*will not be considered final until mid-June 2026

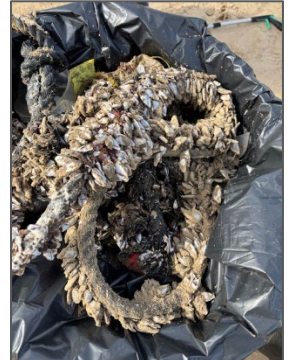
*Dave Brandes, Data Manager*

# April Beach Sweep

**Contributed by Jimmy and Luanne Salinas**

Holy Cow! Spring has sprung! And so are the number of visitors to our Quintana Beach/Jetty area! There was plenty to pick up and plenty of nature to admire and enjoy! It was a great day for being in the "Spring Season" moment and as you'll see in the photos ya better hurry if you don't want to miss it! We had some increase in beach generated pollution by our users of this wonderful resource, and with the spring currents there was added debris and trash from the offshore contributors. You can always distinguish the two by the gooseneck barnacles that implant themselves on the offshore stuff. The north-east wind was kinda chilly, but it didn't deter the volunteers (This is Volunteer Appreciation Month) and with that said we want to thank our loyal platoon of volunteers and all the others (18 total) that showed up to lend a helping hand. Thanks are in order for Adam Valadez and his group that always assist with people and breakfast and Joel Cobb (COT TMN Class of 2019 and new Quintana Park Manager) who helped and provided the roll-off box for disposal of the wastes.

185 lbs of  
TRASH COLLECTED



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/iccl/>. (Reprint courtesy of Ocean Conservancy)

## Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Donna Rich, Angleton
Treasurer	Amanda Smith, Angleton
State Representative	David Skweres, Houston
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
Spring Training Director	Melanie Hollenshead, Brazoria
Fall 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 2025	Betty Skweres, Houston
Training Class Representative 2025	Nannette Daugherty
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
<b>Non-voting positions:</b>	
Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Jimmy Salinas Luanne Salinas, Kim Bennett, Richard Schaffhausen, Angela Griffin, Patty Brinkmeyer
Website	<a href="https://txmn.org/tmncot/">https://txmn.org/tmncot/</a>
Facebook	<a href="http://facebook.com/TMN-COT">http://facebook.com/TMN-COT</a>
E-mail Listserv	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail">http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail</a>

## Texas Master Naturalist Email Lists

### **TMN-COT Chapter list**

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to COT members [TMN-COT@googlegroups.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:news@tmn-cot.org).

Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

