TEXAS Master Naturalist™
Cradle of Texas Chapter
2001-2026



Chapter News

November 2026

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

Cover Photo:
Julia Heliconian Butterfly
- Patty Brinkmeyer

President's Message



*"**I am not a teacher, but an awakener.**' –Robert Frost*

***"People learn while they teach."** – Seneca, Roman Philosopher*

Whew! October was a whirlwind of learning opportunities! I hope you had a chance to participate in at least one training event last month. First off, many thanks to the AT committee and their successful Fall Field Day held at Brazos Bend State Park. From all the pictures I saw, it looked like members were engaged and having a lot of fun! The Bracken Cave Preserve was a treat and not a trick – seeing millions of bats emerge and learning about the work being done to preserve the cave was very inspiring. Bamberger Ranch was also a wonderful learning experience on how intervention can improve overgrazed and over used ranch land. Thank you to Mickey Dufilho and Dick Schaffhausen for arranging those visits.

Ten of our members traveled to the Annual Meeting, held in Waco. My brain was on overload by Friday afternoon. We might have been inconvenienced by an over productive AC system and some food service issues, but the sessions certainly did not disappoint. I learned about species conservation efforts at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, creating a native garden program for home and property owners, mammoths, creating water features for birds, and methods for dealing with difficult topics and conversations. A few of us took a side trip to the Gault Archaeological site in Florence. There, we learned about how artifacts and a building site "older than Clovis," dated 16,000 to 20,000 are helping to redefine what we know about the arrival of humans to North America. Truly mind-blowing to consider!

We can always learn new things and in learning, we ourselves can become better teachers. We improve our knowledge which helps us to better impart our love and respect for nature to the public we serve. Whether it's participating in DEEP programs, or building a pocket prairie, we have the opportunity and responsibility to teach.

Continued page 2...

Another part of learning is ”required training.” Many of us likely have dealt with this in our workplaces, and we might not like to deal with it, considering it unnecessary, repetitive, and several other terms that can’t be printed. By now, all of us should have seen a list of videos on the VMS website. TPWD has put together several training videos that **all employees and volunteers are required to view**. Please take the time to view these. These videos contain good reminders about how to be more effective, more welcoming and a better volunteer in general. Let’s all get those completed before the March 31st deadline. TMN members are allowed to record up to 1.5 hours AT under the opportunity “**AT: TPWD Waiver Review and Training Videos.”** Dave Brandes, our VMS administrator, will be setting this up for us shortly.

I hope to see many of you at the Anniversary Luncheon on the 14th at the Dude Payne Event Center in Angleton!

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



Outreach Opportunities

City of Pearland "Outdoors for All" – Saturday, Nov 7th. Set-up 9 am – 10 am, event time 10 am - 2 pm at Independence Park, Pearland (3449 Pearland Pkwy, Pearland TX) Contact Kathy Pittman or Cris Tobola

DEEP – Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge Discovery Center. Tues/Thurs - 11/10, 11/12, 11/17, 11/19; Contact Lee Gaston Office (979)964-4011 Cell (979)236-8954

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) – 12/14, 12/15, 12/16, 12/17, 12/18, 12/20 & 1/2/2027 (see volunteer calendar for contacts and count details)

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

Volunteer Opportunities

Beach Sweep – Monday December 7th (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am Quintana Jetty or Quintana Beach TBA Contact Jimmy Salinas 979-824-4008 or Luanne Salinas.

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) – 12/14, 12/15, 12/16, 12/17, 12/18, 12/20 & 1/2/2027 (see volunteer calendar for contacts and count details)

Apple Snails and Fishing Line Removal – **Resoft County Park** TBD after nesting season.

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 – Contact Kathy Pittman Thursday 11/12 and 11/19, Saturday 11/21. TIME MOVES TO 9 am - 12 pm

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





Cradle of Texas Chapter was represented by 8 members; Kathy Pittman, Dick Schaffhausen, Kristine Rivers, Angela Griffin, Mickey Dufilho, Sara Castillo, Hugo Martinez and Lisa Martinez. Word is, the Annual State Meeting was awesome!

Our President, Kathy Pittman was recognized for 2500 hours of volunteer service, and our Communication Director, Patty Brinkmeyer was award first place for her photo in the Detail/Macro category. Next year the meeting will be held in San Antonio. The 2027 Certification Pin with be a Pecan Tree branch.



















FIELD TRIPS & SHENANIGANS









Are you participating?

Texas Master Naturalist
Cradle of Texas Chapter's
25th Anniversary Challenge!

We're challenging all chapter members to participate in 25 activities in celebration of our 25th Anniversary. Each time you participate in any *chapter-sponsored activity**, you will receive a sticker to add to your book.

Each chapter member who completes the challenge will be recognized as a
25th Anniversary Challenge Superstar
and receive a special commemorative decal.

Pick up your record book at any General Meeting.

Kristine Rivers - 25th Anniversary Committee Chair

Check this dedicated Google Calendar for detailed information on each event.

EVENT CALENDAR (updated regularly)

Anniversary Events at a glance…

Butterfly Walk DONE!	**Hike & Seek** DONE!	**Abigal Arias Community Planting** DONE!	**Foraging Walk** 11/17/2026	**Native Plant Propagation** 12/5/2026
Whooping Crane Trip (Registration closed) 12/11/2026	**Beach Sweep** 1/9/2027	**Chapter Project Tree Planting** 1/30/2027	**Advanced Training Day** 2/27/2027	**Nature Art Day** 3/2/2027
Family Picnic 4/3/2027	**Evening on the Prairie** 5/1/2027	**Coastal Watershed Game** 6/5/2027	**Mothing Night** 7/19/2027	**The Next Twenty-five…** 8/11/2027

*Regularly scheduled chapter meetings, volunteer activities, outreach events and advanced trainings count toward the 25-activity requirement.

Fall Intern Training- November Schedule

For full training schedule and info CLICK HERE

Current COT Members may sit in on training classes. If tagging along on a field trip, please notify Barbara Whaley in advance, due to possible restrictions or requirements.

Class	Day	Date	Time	Topic	Text Unit#	Location	Comments
Required Class (IT)	**Wed**	11/4/2026	12 noon – 3:00 pm	Aquatic Systems Ecology Class and Field Trip – John O'Connell	#18	AgriLife Extension Service Building– Auditorium	Notebook, Pencil/Pen, Snacks, Drink, Mosquito Spray, Sunscreen, Water, Water, Water
Required Class (IT)	**Sat**	11/7/2026	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Ornithology Class and Field Trip – Kristine Rivers	#12	Tarpon Room at San Luis Pass County Park; field trip at various locations nearby	Notebook, Pen/Pencil, Snacks, Lunch and Drink, Camera, Binoculars, Mosquito Spray, Sunscreen, Water, Water, Water
Required Class (IT) **(VS/AT)**	**Wed**	11/11/2026	9:00 am – 3:00 pm 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Herpetology Class and Field Trip – David Heinicke Chapter Meeting	#15	Brazos Bend State Park – Nature Center AgriLife Extension Service Building– Auditorium	Notebook, Pen/Pencil, Snacks, Lunch and Drink, Camera, Binoculars, Mosquito Spray, Sunscreen, Water, Water, Water
Enrichment Class (AT)	**Wed**	11/18/2026	**10:00** am – 3:00 pm	iNaturalist Training – Mary Spolyar TMN Gulf Coast Chapter		Gulf Coast Bird Observatory – Lecture and Field Trip	Notebook, Pen/Pencil, Snacks, Lunch and Drink, Camera, Binoculars, Mosquito Spray, Sunscreen, Water, Water, Water
Required Class (IT)	**Sat**	11/21/2026	**10:00** am – 3:00 pm	Columbia Bottomlands Class and Field Trip – Chris Kneupper	#17	Angleton Library Field Trip to Hanson Riverside County Park	Notebook, Pencil/Pen, Snacks, Lunch and Drink, Camera, Binoculars, Mosquito Spray, Sunscreen, Water, Water, Water







Certifications October 2026

Congratulations!

Recertifications

Sarah Castillo
Kate Harris
Malcom Mosis



2026 Pin
Bobcat

https://www.facebook.com/groups/tmncotmembersonly

60 members strong so far! Stay in the loop!

This is a TMN-COT members only page where you can share pertinent information to the group, share your nature photos and adventures, event photos, volunteer opportunities, recruit volunteers, etc.
Think of it as a community of friends.

Recently, member Angela Griffin returned from The National Butterfly Center with their recipe for butterfly feeders! Obviously, divide recipe for home use.

NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Banana Brew

8-10 ripe bananas
1 lb. brown sugar
1 - 16 oz beer (dark, non pasteurized)

Liquify bananas – leave no lumps
Add remaining ingredients, blend well
Pour into VENTED glass or plastic container (vented to allow gases to escape)
Refrigerate



October 19, 2026
COT members watered, weeded, and prepared the Pocket Prairie 2nd phase and sowed seeds at the Camp Mohawk gardens and prairie .





L to R,
Becky Blaylock, Kathy Pittman, Ronald McLaughlin, Kate Harris, Dick Schaffhausen, Pam Peltier

TMN-COT 2026 Impact Data		September	October*	YTD
Hours	VS	938	429	11,975
	AT	117	159	1,800
	Total	1,055	588	13,775
Impact Data	Adults	163	102	4,324
	Youth	10	3	15,130
		173	105	19,454

*will not be considered final until mid-December 2026

Dave Brandes, Data Manager

October Beach Sweep

Contributed by Jimmy and Luanne Salinas

Holy Moly!!! We had a great turnout of volunteers, and boy did it show in the amount of trash that was removed from the Quintana Beach and Jetty area!
We had to use my Clean Swell App and Luanne's to keep up with the collections! So thankful for the efforts by our TMN members, the City of Quintana and some new participants. Le Madeline Restaurant in Lake Jackson discovered some of the "strangest" finds. We had a nice breeze that nullified any mosquito attacks, and it was a great tribute to Chrisopher Columbus Day. I'm certain he would have appreciated the effort by all.
Our next Beach Sweep will be held Monday, November 02,2026 at the 16th St. entrance. 8-10 am











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	Donna Rich, Angleton
Treasurer	Amanda Smith, Angleton
State Representative	Position unfilled
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	Nannette Daugherty
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Morgan Degner, 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, Jimmy Salinas, Luanne Salinas, Barbara Whaley, Patty Brinkmeyer

Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT,; https://www.facebook.com/groups/tmncotmembersonly
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/tmncot.brazoria
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 COT members 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.