



AUGUST 2020

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

When will we ever get back together? I'm virtually getting tired of not seeing everyone! I guess it's for the best that we stay virtual and stay safe.

Our new intern class starts August 26, and Mary Schwartz will probably need some help every now and then, so if you're able, pitch in when you can.

Registration for the Texas Master Naturalist State Meeting opened August 5 and runs through October 2, and the virtual meeting runs from October 14 through October 17. The registration fee is a flat \$55.00, and there are many great presentations available this year, so I hope everyone decides to take advantage of the opportunity. All presentations will count as AT, so if you still need training hours to certify, this will be your best opportunity between now and the rest of the year to get the hours.

Our chapter is hosting the State Meeting Photo, Art & Media Contest, and entries can be submitted online, September 1 through 11:59 PM on September 30. Rules can be found at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2020-photo-art-and-media-contest/>.

Since October 14, the opening day of the State Meeting, is also the date of our General Meeting, the board voted not to hold a meeting in October. Sue Heath, scheduled to present a Nature Note summarizing the 2019-2020 Shrike Project, has been rescheduled to present at the September General Meeting. She will also be recruiting volunteers for the 2020-2021 continuation of the project. This means that there will be two Nature Note presentations

in September, so to accommodate the main presentation and two Nature Notes, the business meeting will be abbreviated.

The next Chapter Presidents' meeting is scheduled for August 10. On the agenda will be a continuation of the Diversity and Inclusion discussion in which the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are participating. Again, the intent of the initiative is for TMN to have chapter memberships be representative of the communities they serve. Paul Cason is providing our chapter with Sea Center Texas' policy for the board's review. The presidents' meeting may also provide updates on the number of VT hours required for 2020 recertification and directives for return to service.

Kathy Pittman, our New Class Representative, has done a great job readying our chapter's takeover of the State TXMN Facebook page in order to tell the world what we're all about. Be sure to watch for her posts from August 9 through 15.

As always, be safe. Beating COVID-19 is all about taking *personal responsibility* for our actions, always wearing masks, socially distancing ourselves, washing our hands, and staying home.

That's all I have for now. Hope to see you all very soon.

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 the Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Masthead photo by Carmen Biggs, RV Volunteer at BNWR.

REMINDERS

1. Registration now open for State Meeting; p3
2. Enter the State Meeting Photo, Art, and Media Contest; p3

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – August 2020

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

Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 9 AM

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

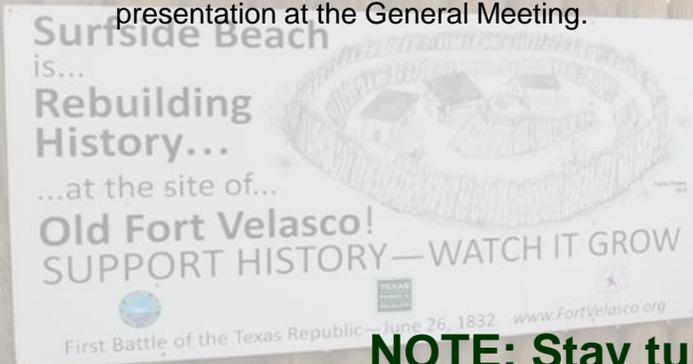
9:00 AM – 9:10 AM	Welcome and Meeting Participation Notes
9:10 AM – 10:00 AM	Advanced Training Speaker: Chris Kneupper Topic: "History of the Forts Velasco" <i>[Hours for Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting]</i>
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	Nature Notes Speaker: Mickey Dufilho Topic: "Pollinator Citizen Science Results"
10:15 AM – 10:45 AM	General Membership Meeting <i>[This meeting is approved for 1.00-hour volunteer time]</i>



Chris Kneupper is a retired chemical engineer who has lived in Brazoria County for over 40 years. A charter member of the Brazosport Archaeological Society and long-term member of the Texas Archeological Society, Chris has participated in many excavations in the county and around the state.

He is also a member of the Sons of The Republic of Texas and the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter, and he sits on the board of the Cradle of Texas Conservancy. This latter entity has a long-term goal of financing and managing the building of a replica of the 1832 Mexican Fort Velasco, or "the first Fort Velasco." An organization that preceded the conservancy held land for the project for about 50 years.

Based on Chris' overlapping interests, he has recently done extensive research into the history and archaeology of the several forts that were placed at the original mouth of the Brazos River, in what is today known as Surfside Beach (formerly old Velasco). He has produced a lengthy historical report and worked with TMN-COT web page personnel to make the report and some obscure primary references available via the "Cultural History" web page. An "executive summary" has also been prepared as an MS-PowerPoint presentation, which will be used to make his presentation at the General Meeting.



**NOTE: Stay tuned for information and
instructions via email in order to "attend" the
August, virtual General Meeting.**

MEMBERSHIP DATA REPORT by Dave Brandes, Data Manager

Congratulations to those achieving recertification as of July 31:

Recertification

Denis James	Kenneth Sluis
Brenda Martin	Linda Sluis
Candace Novak	George Valadez
Lawrence Ruhr	Rose Wagner

4,000 VT Hours Milestone

Oron Atkins

Impact Data YTD—31 July 2020

1,886 Adults 6,111 Youth 7,997 Total

Hours Totals YTD—31 July 2020¹

7,290 Hours VT 1,194 Hours AT

¹ 650 VT hours in July; 111 AT hours in July

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST 2020 ANNUAL MEETING—*Registration Now Open!*



It's Time To Register!

The Texas Master Naturalist Virtual State Meeting will be held online from Wednesday, October 14th through Saturday, October 17th. The meeting provides an opportunity to receive all your Advanced Training requirements for the year within one extended weekend. It's also an opportunity for program participants and supporters to network, share new ideas and projects and to learn from one another. For more information about the meeting go to: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2020-annual-meeting/>

On the agenda this year are four, daily, featured speakers, and 92 sessions in all—ranging from stewardship, entomology, citizen science, to backyard naturalist tips and plant ecology! This year's virtual sessions will be held over four days from approximately 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an hour break at lunch each day. Six sessions will run concurrently as in years past, but most sessions will be recorded for viewing afterwards. Information on recorded sessions will be announced later. During registration, you will pre-register for technical sessions, but with this year's virtual format, attendees *will* be able to switch sessions. Registration opened on August 5, 2020, and the fee is \$55.

To register for the meeting, go to: <https://cvent.me/5VDPlq>

...and... THE PHOTO, ART AND MEDIA CONTESTS NEED YOU!

Given the large number of talented photographers and artists in the COT chapter, several of you should take home some prizes! The link to access information, rules and registration is below. There is also a Project Fair contest and Chapter Advisor Award.

Photo, art and media contest: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2020-photo-art-and-media-contest>

TEXAS WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTERS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO A FAVORABLE 2020-21 SEASON

Texas Parks and Wildlife Press Release, 14 July 2020

AUSTIN—Well distributed and timely precipitation across much of Texas in the spring, along with positive long-term growth among the state's white-tailed deer population, has set the stage for a favorable 2020-21 hunting season. Spring rains allowed many regions of the state, including South Texas, Edwards Plateau and areas west to recover from last year's very dry fall and winter, leading to an abundance of quality forbs and shrubs, both of which are critical for deer nutrition. These conditions have led to a good start to antler growth and positive outlook for fawn recruitment numbers.

"With any luck we'll receive another rain or two in July, solidifying the good conditions and setting the stage for another favorable hunting season," said Alan Cain, White-tailed Deer Program Leader at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

The TPWD biologists estimate that the state's deer population is around 5.5 million deer, or a density of 49.25 deer per 1,000 acres. However, that density is not uniform across the state, and those areas with better habitat tend to support higher deer populations. TPWD data suggests that the hunter success rate in 2019 was estimated to be 60% and similar trends can be expected for the 2020-21 season. The Edward's Plateau and the Cross Timbers regions of Texas are forecast to have the highest deer populations.

"From a statewide perspective, hunters might expect to see a higher proportion of bucks in the 6.5- to 8.5-year age classes as a result of above-average fawn crop in previous corresponding years, while other age classes reflect a more even distribution," Cain said. "While doe harvest has been down slightly in the last couple of years, which is likely contributing to a widening ratio of does to bucks, the good news for hunters is that there should be plenty of carryover from previous years."



Photo credit: TPWD

Hunters looking for a place to hunt or a change of scenery this fall are encouraged to apply for one of TPWD's many drawn public hunt opportunities.

TPWD wants to remind hunters that mandatory harvest reporting is required when taking an antlerless deer during archery, youth-only, muzzleloader or the four-day doe days during general season in the following

counties: Austin, Bastrop, Caldwell, Colorado, Dewitt, Fayette, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Waller, Washington and Wilson. Counties also included are Goliad, Jackson, Victoria and Wharton counties north of U.S. Highway 59 and Comal, Hays and Travis east of IH-35. Harvests must be reported within 24 hours of taking an animal via the free [My Hunt Harvest](#) app. Public land hunters can also use the My Hunt Harvest app to complete their on-site registration electronically.

All season dates by animal, along with regulations, harvest means and methods and more, can be found online in the [Outdoor Annual](#). The 2020-21 Outdoor Annual will only be available digitally for the upcoming hunting and fishing season. Hunters will have the ability to print copies of relevant portions of the Outdoor Annual before heading to the field. Hunters can also download the free Outdoor Annual mobile app on [iOS](#) and [Android](#).

White-tailed deer and Mule Deer are Chronic Wasting Disease-susceptible animals. As such, prior to hitting the field, TPWD asks that hunters review CWD information to find area testing requirements and carcass movement restrictions in CWD Containment and Surveillance Zones. New for the 2020-21 season, a CWD zone has been established in Kimble County. Additional information about CWD can be found on the [TPWD website](#).

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/20-21deer-season>

DEER NOTES FROM AN AVID OUTDOORSMAN: VELVET ANTLERS

By John Boettiger

The “velvet” that covers a deer’s new antlers is essentially skin that provides nutrients and blood flow to the growing bone (antler). Each male (and female caribou) of the *Cervidae* family of mammals (deer, elk, moose and caribou) grows a new antler following a cartilaginous bone-stage each spring and summer as a precursor to “the rut,” which is breeding season, generally from October into January in Texas. This “velvet” antler covering is the fastest growing tissue in any mammal and is a complex matrix of nerves and blood vessels.

Antlers are honeycombed, calcified structures that are shed annually following the breeding season.

Horns are permanent and found on animals including cattle, goats, sheep and bison and are generally grown in matched pairs.

Annual antler growth is initiated by a decrease in the photoperiod (length of day), which stimulates the two primary hormones responsible for antler growth:

testosterone and IGF (insulin-like growth factor). It is believed that diminishing light corresponds to a decrease in melatonin production, which initiates antler development. Antlers grow outward from the pedicle, a bone segment located on the frontal structure of the skull. Hardened antlers are 60% phosphorus and 40% protein.

When developing, the growing antler is both delicate and sensitive; an injured antler will develop abnormally. A buck is aware of his sensitive head-gear, but as many as 50% of antlers are injured in some way and develop abnormally each year. However, if the pedicle is not damaged, normal antlers could develop the following year. A damaged pedicle will result in “unusual antlers” occurring for the balance of that animal’s lifetime.

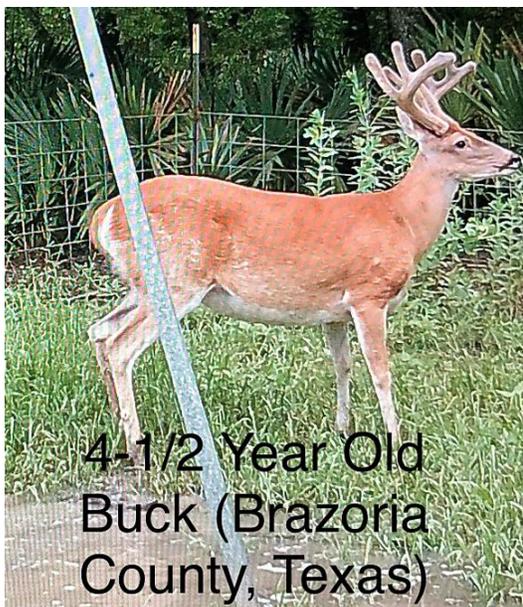
The game-camera photos below show antler development in June, July and August in central and southeast Texas.



ANTLER & HORN



New Antlers are developing
June 26, 2020 (Blanco TX)



4-1/2 Year Old
Buck (Brazoria
County, Texas)



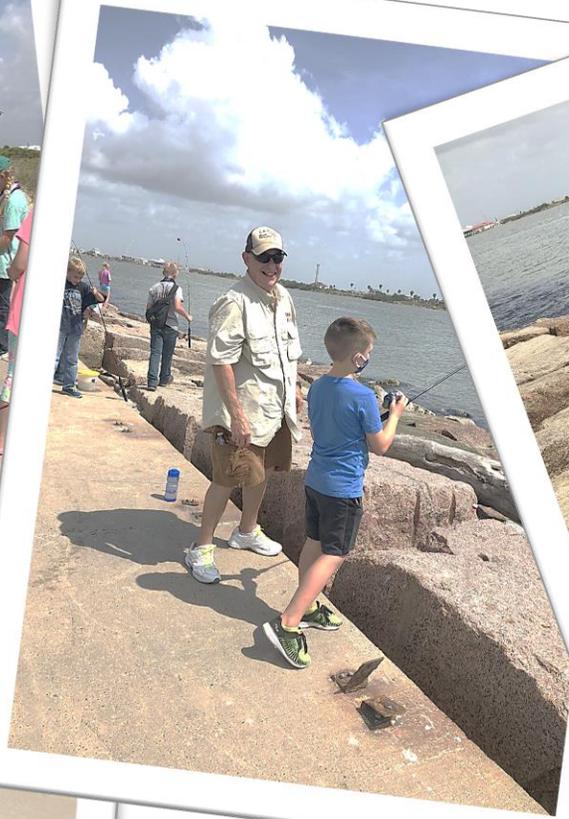
All photos by John Boettiger

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BRAZORIA COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT NATURE CAMPS

The numbers were scaled back due to COVID-19, but campers and volunteers had a blast!

This year's Brazoria County Parks Department (BCPD) camps at Camp Mohawk and Quintana Beach county parks were certainly impacted by the pandemic. Camper numbers were scaled back to no more than 10 per camp session and masks and social distancing were observed. But for those lucky campers who attended the June and July four-day camps, BCPD Lead Interpretive Ranger (and COT member) Mike Mullenweg, along with a BCPD intern (at Camp Quintana), two high school volunteers (at Camp Mohawk), and COT volunteers Herb Myers, Jo Myers, Lisa Myers, and Pam Peltier, made the most of the lovely but very hot weather.



HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN OPENS SEPTEMBER 18



<http://hbg.org/>

Save the date! Starting Friday, September 18, Houston Botanic Garden will be open 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What's growing on until then? This is an exciting time at Houston Botanic Garden as we prepare to greet visitors this fall.

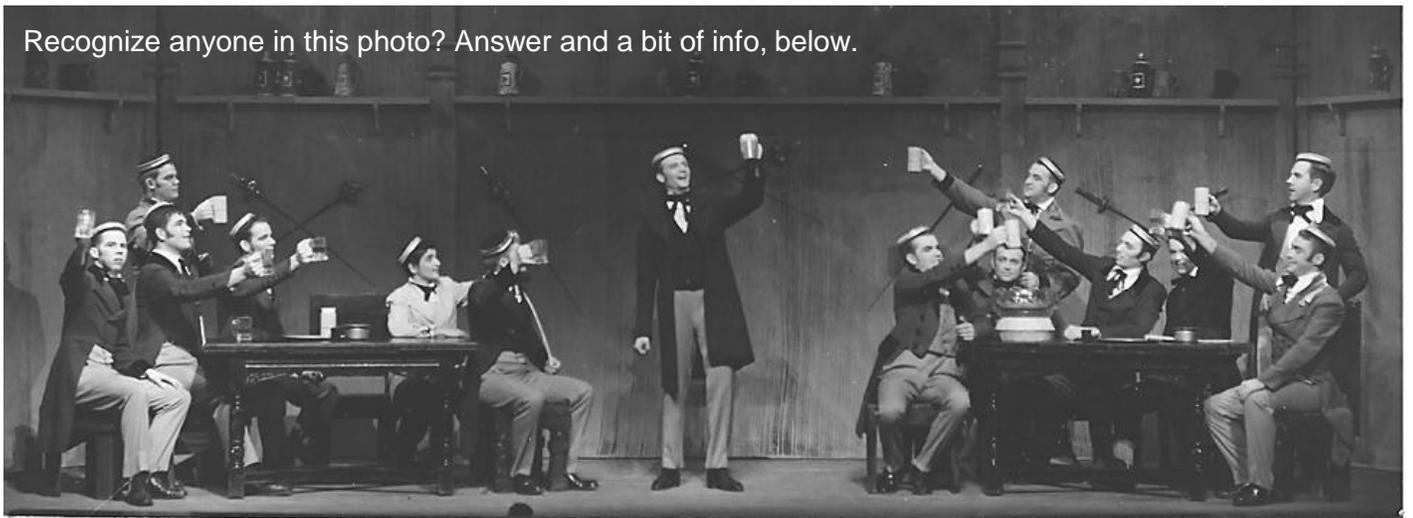
- The construction crew is getting the Culinary Garden ready for planting.
- Our Horticulture team is putting the final touches on the colorful, seasonal beds in the Susan Garver Family Discovery Garden.

- Our Education & Public Programs Director is planning special opening programs with the Steering Committee.
- The Director of Communications & Community Engagement is putting the final touches on our new website (launching soon) and building momentum for opening.
- The Development team is working diligently to fundraise for our 2020 Annual Operating Fund and launch exciting new programs like Giving Circles and Membership.

P.S. Memberships go on sale August 18!

FROM THE SECRET LIVES OF COT MEMBERS FILE...

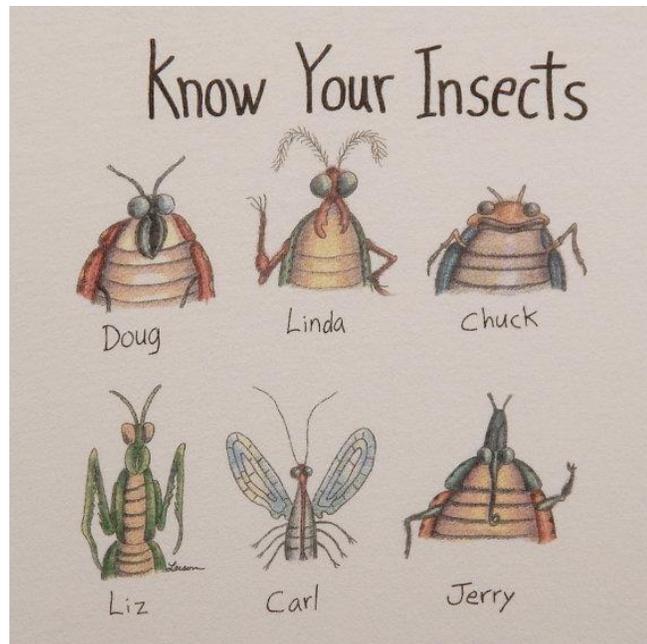
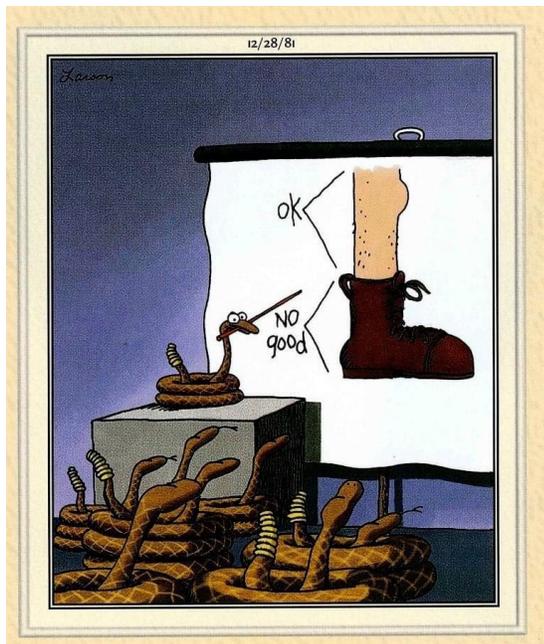
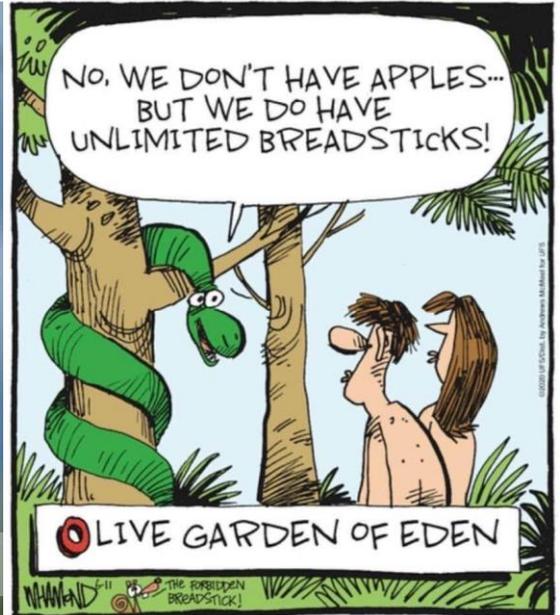
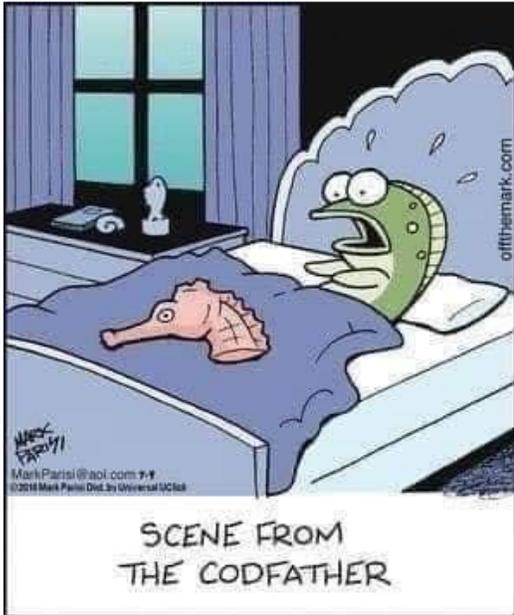
Recognize anyone in this photo? Answer and a bit of info, below.



TALES OF HOFFMANN -

Yes, that's Neal McLain on the far left in a 1953 University of Michigan School of Music production of Offenbach's opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

A NOTE OF NATURE LEVITY



Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

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Website	http://tmn-cot.org
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Twitter	https://twitter.com/tmncot
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail





Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions http://tmn-cot.org/Email_Lists/index.html
- 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.