



Chapter News

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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 Department.

Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT DAVE



Fall also means our outreach and education events are cranking up. The DEEP program has begun for this school year with 4th and 7th graders visit currently visiting Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. We can still use lots of help with this fun and rewarding activity. Believe me, the kids remember these trips for a long time. We make a difference. I hope you all had a wonderful time at our 15th year celebration. I know I did. I want to once again thank Pam West and her crew for making everything happen so well. Of course, one of these things was recruiting our pit crew of Ellis Burkhardt, Roy Morgan and Marty Cornell. What a great brisket they cooked for us. Thanks guys! We also had a commemorative gift for active members, so if you didn't make

the luncheon be sure to pick yours up at our general meeting. We also said goodbye to our TPWD chapter advisor Connie Stolte. Connie retired and can no longer serve in this capacity. However, she did not retire from us and we will see even more of her as she volunteers with us. It's always nice when there's a silver lining. I received a thank note to all of us from Connie. There it is at the bottom of the page.:

On a final note, elections for next year are coming up and Mike Mullins is chairing the nominating committee. We will be electing the Executive Committee in December. These are the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The new president will then appoint the other board positions at the first board meeting in January. Check "Contacts" on our chapter website for these appointed positions. Their duties are described in our operating guidelines if you are interested. Just let Mike know The Executive Committee slate will be published next month.

OK, see all of you Wednesday.

—Dave

Dave Brandes is the president of Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. He can be reached at brandes@tmn-cot.org

Dear TMN-COT members,
 Thank you for the wonderful tribute you gave me at the COT 15-year celebration. I was very honored by all the well wishes, and kind words, and generous gifts. It has been a pleasure to serve the Chapter as advisor and I am continually impressed with it's accomplishments. I plan to see you at future events!!! Thanks again,
 yours, Truly, Connie

**Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, October 12, 2016
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903**



8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Refreshment Team: Brazoria County Library Team TMN-COT members who signed up for this month please sign up for January 2017.
9:00 AM – 9:50 AM	General Meeting <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour Volunteer Time.</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker: Edward D. Craven, Chair, Armand Bayou Nature Center Volunteers • Topic: Search for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker (working title)



Edward Craven is the Chair of the Volunteer Board at Armand Bayou Nature Center and a member of the Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Texas and studied the ecology of fishes at the Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas prior to earning an M.B.A in finance at USC

John James Audubon wrote about the Ivory-billed Woodpecker more than any other bird and noted that they were most numerous along Houston's forested bayous than anywhere in the Southeast.

In 2005, Craven, was selected by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to join the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Recovery Team. His duties included collecting data throughout the Cache River and White River Wildlife Management Areas in Arkansas. Craven subsequently conducted additional searches working alongside some of the world's top woodpecker experts. While searching, he encountered bears, large alligators, quicksand, cottonmouths, as well as six-foot timber rattlesnakes.

Craven will share some of his experiences as he searched for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker across three states and will summarize and discuss the history, behavior, and ecology of Ivory-billed woodpeckers and where they lived and may still live

—TMN Gulf Coast Chapter



John James Audubon. Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*), male (left) and female ^[1].

Painting by John James Audubon published in *Birds of America*; republished by Wikipedia commons. Public Domain,

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4055655>

Editor's Note: The May-June 2016 issue of *Audubon* magazine contains an article about the search for the Ivory-bill in Cuba. "Delusion is the Thing with Feathers" by Mac McClelland with photography by Greg Kahn.

Audubon, May-June 2016, p. 26 ff,

A copy of this issue is available at the Chapter's Media Library.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Jerry Eppner, Membership Coordinator

As of the end of September, 108 COT members and interns have entered 11,672 hours of VT for 2016 and 1271 hours of AT.

At the October general meeting, we will be recognizing some milestones. Members recertifying for 2016 include: George Bettinger, Betty Bouley, Phyllis Gerdes, Michelle Hague, Ken Sluis, Andy Smith, Larry Kirby, Georgia Monnerat, Robert Salzer, Denis James, Pam Peltier, Leo Novak, Sheree Muzny, and Lorna Witt. Congratulations to all.

Also, Dick Schaffhausen has reached the 1000-hour service milestone. AND at the October meeting we will finally be recognizing two significant service milestones:

- **Jim Calvert**, who spends a great deal of time improving habitat and eliminating invasives at Brazos Bend State Park, has reached the 4000-hour service milestone. This milestone also qualifies Jim to receive the President's Call to Service Award. He will receive a certificate and pin to recognize this achievement. See page 4 for more about Jim and the award.
- **Dave Brandes**, who has reached the 5000-hour service milestone. Dave has spent many hours just this year participating in, among others, the DEEP program and Nature Camp at Camp Mohawk County Park, as well as providing support for our 2016 intern class and, of course, leading our chapter in fulfilling its mission. Well done, Dave.

The VMS time entry error rate continues to improve, but is not perfect. Not picking the correct opportunity code is still the "dog whistle" to generate an email from your friendly, but persistent, timekeeper, gently providing redirection. Remember, there is a cheat sheet for opportunity codes versus COT examples to help you with code selection on the chapter website under VMS info. And if you really want to take the easy route, just look up your event on the COT calendar found on the website. If your event is there, it almost certainly has the correct code delineated. Piece of cake.

See you Wednesday.

DAVE BRANDES HITS 5000-HOUR VT MILESTONE

By Neal McLain



That's right folks – our Distinguished President, Mr. David Joseph Brandes, has reached the 5000-hour milestone of volunteer time. He will be suitably honored at our October meeting with the presentation of a 5000-hour dragonfly pin. It's a gold pin with a diamond inset.

Dave is a Dow Chemical Company



retiree and a member of the TMN-COT Class of 2006. He served as Chapter Training Director in 2007 and by the end of his current term he will have served as Chapter president for more than four years:

- Full term January 2008 to December 2009
- Partial term April to December 2010
- Full term January 2015 to December 2016

Dave has served on the GCBO Board of Directors and now serves on the organization's Advisory Board

Dave has been an active volunteer in numerous Chapter activities and environmental education programs.

- *BCLS EE*, an EE program at County Libraries.
- *DEEP*, an EE program at the Discovery Center.
- *Nature Camp* at Camp Mohawk County Park
- *Bird Camp* at GCBO in Lake Jackson.
- *XHX* at GCBO in Lake Jackson.
- Tour guide at Sea Center Texas since 2006

Dave also participates in the Brazoria County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, the Citizens Emergency Response Team, and the Medical Reserve Corp. As an amateur radio operator he holds Call Sign W5DJB. You may have seen that call sign on the license plates of his car and truck.

MINNESOTA ARTIST WINS 2016 DUCK STAMP ART CONTEST

By U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

CHASKA, MINNESOTA, September 10, 2016. Artist James Hautman is the winner of the 2016 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. The announcement was made today by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Director Steve Guertin at the annual contest, held at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

Hautman's acrylic painting of Canada geese will be made into the 2017-2018 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or "Duck Stamp," which will go on sale in late June 2017. This is Hautman's fifth Federal Duck Stamp Contest win, tying him with his brother Joseph, whose art appears on the 2016-17 stamp.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service produces the Federal Duck Stamp, which sells for \$25 and raises about \$25 million each year to conserve and protect wetland habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of visitors..



Canada geese by Minnesota artist James Hautman. Image: USFWS.

JIM CALVERT TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD

By Judy Green



Jim Calvert, having logged over 4,000 hours of volunteer service at Brazos Bend State Park, has earned the prestigious President's Call to Service (PCTS) Award. Jim figures he averages 12–20 hours per week working at BBSP, his favorite place to volunteer since 2006. When queried about his favorite activity at the park, Jim didn't hesitate at all

when he replied "eradicating the Chinese Tallow Tree. He was inspired after being introduced to the tree by his uncle, who lined his driveway with the fast growing tree, when Jim was a boy. He estimates that he has personally killed close to 50,000 of the trees in his ten years of park service! He also figures there are still close to 250,000 of the trees at BBSP.

Jim then fondly reminisced about what a beautiful prairie Angleton had been prior to the

spread of the invasive Chinese Tallow and Chinaberry Trees. Before settling on tree eradication Jim spent time trapping feral hogs and trimming existing trails at the park.

Jim retired from Shell Oil as a computer programmer/operator and joined TMN-COT in 2004. Jim also volunteers for Sea Center Texas about 100 hours a year. Besides the PCTS Award, Jim is proud to have received several conservation awards from BBSP.

I asked him about the biggest change that he had witnessed during his tenure at BBSP. "The three floods without a doubt changed the landscape the most." Jim is also a member of the Texas Archaeology Society which he joined in 1968 and speaks with pride as he mentions being allowed to participate in field digs. Jim also enjoys fishing in the surf at the beach and listening to the Big Band Albums from the 1940's – 1950's.

In closing Jim Calvert, a former Boy Scoutmaster, wanted to add... "I want to personally invite other TMN members to join me in eradicating the Chinese Tallow Tree at BBSP or upon any other Texas prairie lands."

Jim will officially receive the award at the October General Meeting..

WHAT IS THE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO SERVICE AWARD?

By Neal McLain

On January 2003, President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order creating the *President's Council on Service and Civic Participation (The Council)* within the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The mission of The Council, as set forth in the Order, is:

- To encourage the recognition of outstanding volunteer service and civic participation by individuals, schools, and organizations and thereby encourage more such activity, especially on the part of America's youth.
- To facilitate awareness of the ways in which Americans throughout our history have helped to meet the vital needs of their communities and Nation through volunteer service and civic participation. [1]

The Council has established several award levels. The *President's Call to Service Award* recognizes 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service over the recipient's lifetime. Persons of all ages are eligible to receive the award.

The *President's Call to Service Award* includes a lapel pin (left), a Personalized

Certificate, and a Congratulatory Letter from the President of the United States,



All awards are ordered through official "Certifying Organizations." These organizations verify the hours of each nominate, nominate qualified volunteers, and distribute the Awards locally.

The Council created an awards program known as the *President's Volunteer Service Award* program as a way to thank and honor Americans who, by their demonstrated commitment and example, inspire others to engage in volunteer service. The awards recognize individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard measured by the number of hours of service over a 12-month period or cumulative hours earned over the course of a lifetime.

The Texas Master Naturalist State Office is the registered and approved Certifying Organization for the Texas Master Naturalist Program. The State Office nominates Certified Master Naturalists for recognition and administers procedural matters. Local Chapters present the awards. In the years since the Cradle of Texas Chapter was founded in 2001, seventeen members (or former members) have received the award. [2]

[1] Office of the President of the United States. *By the President: Executive Order*. The White House, Washington, 29 Jan 2003.

<http://tinyurl.com/20030130-5>

[2] TMN-COT website, Scrapbook. President's Call to Service <http://tmn-cot.org/Scrapbook/index.html#pctsa>

CELEBRATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR CHAPTER

By Jean Britt and Peggy Romfh
Photos by Richard Schaffhausen and Neal McLain

Eighty two members and eleven guests were in attendance at the Lake Jackson Civic Center on September 14th for the 15-year anniversary celebration of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. After a welcome to all that attended, Chapter President Dave Brandes gave a special thanks to Roy Morgan, Marty Cornell, and Ellis Burkhardt for cooking the barbecue and to Pam West for creating the table and room decorations and for organizing the food for the event. Side dishes, desserts, and drinks were provided by members attending the anniversary feast.

Jerry Eppner, Pam West, and Dave Brandes presented Connie Stolte a plaque and a gift for her years of service as Chapter Adviser from 2001 to 2016. In addition, the Board of Directors presented her with the gift of a paid Lifetime Dues Membership.

Peggy Romfh presented a *Chapter Recognition* slide show [<http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-15th>]. She first recognized the founding members of the chapter followed by a 'shout-out' to active members that have reached each of the award levels. The chapter's 15 year contribution to volunteer service represents 175,000 total hours of service. These significant contributions from our members as well as those members who held leadership positions, advisers, trainers, outreach programs, publications, and chapter hosts have all contributed to the success of the Texas Master Naturalist-Cradle of Texas Chapter.

Justina Dent and Rich Tillman spoke of interesting stories from previous years. Pam West recited Chief Seattle's speech which encouraged everyone to help take care of our environment. Jim Renfro was recognized for his many hours of service and contributions, and Neal McLain was recognized for his contributions to the Chapter website. Oliver Osborn, COT member emeritus, spoke of the early days of the chapter and his memories as a master naturalist. Past President Mike Mullins announced that there was a gift for active members.

Chapter President Dave Brandes, Master of Ceremonies



Membership Coordinator Jerry Eppner presents an award to Ed Johnson



Chapter President Dave Brandes presents certification certificates to Jimmy Salinas and Chip Sweet.



Chapter President Dave Brandes presents a plaque to retiring TPWD Chapter Adviser Connie Stolte; Rich Tillman rewards her with a hug as Pete Romfh, Peggy Romfh, and Jean Britt applaud.



COMING UP: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BRAZORIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

By Jennifer Sanchez, Team Leader, Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex

In 1968, the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge was established to provide habitat for wintering waterfowl. Fifty years later, the refuge continues to provide essential habitat for wintering waterfowl, but more importantly for all migratory and resident wildlife as a naturally functioning ecosystem and as a place for people to "Get Outside" into nature. From the initial 6,000+ acre acquisition, which today includes much of the Big Slough Public Use Area on the refuge, the refuge has grown to more than 45,000 acres.

Thanks to two years of above average rainfall, the Refuge's marshes are in great condition and above average wintering duck populations are expected this winter. Along with the marshes, freshwater impoundments, and farm fields are ready for the arrival of winter waterfowl. The refuge manages more than 800 acres of shallow freshwater habitats for waterbirds. Capturing rainfall and runoff from through the natural sloughs as well as drainage ditches enables the refuge to provide feeding areas for sandhill cranes, geese, ducks and even shorebirds and herons. Some of the best opportunity to view winter waterbirds is in the fields near the intersection of FM2004 and CR 227 as well as in the big Slough Public Use Area



Over the past decade, the Brazoria Refuge has targeted invasive species, including Chinese tallow and Macartney rose, as a part of restoring coastal prairie habitats on the refuges. The 16,000 acres of coastal prairie on the Brazoria refuge is one of the largest acres of contiguous prairie managed for wildlife. Prairie birds including wintering sparrows, loggerhead shrikes, and even bobwhite quail are diminishing. The once wide-spread prairies along the Texas and Louisiana coast were extremely diverse, boasting over 1,000 floral species. Efforts to increase species richness including the use of

prescribed fire, and the introduction of native species are essential to establish a functional community well represented by both native flora and fauna throughout the year.

On November 12, 2016, the public is invited to celebrate the refuges 50th anniversary with historical presentations and environmental education activities for the family. Throughout the years, the refuge has had the support of many different organizations, industry and individuals that have helped the refuge conserve and restore habitats as well as develop public use opportunities. The 50th anniversary is dedicated to these Partners in Conservation.

FAMILY EVENTS

- *See raptors in flight.*
- *Target shoot with air rifle... or bow and arrow.*
- *Encounter butterflies close up.*
- *Practice casting for fish.*
- *Catch crab, and shrimp, and minnows.*
- *See small critters close up.*
- *Get muddy. Make seed balls.*
- *Go fly a kite.*
- *Find treasure in a sand pile.*
- *Pet a gator, touch a snake, hold a turtle.*
- *Tour wetlands full of birds.*
- *Help a fireman hose a target.*
- *Kayak Salt Lake Creek.*
- *Geocaching*

REFUGE HISTORY

The early history of the land before the refuge was founded:

- *Native Americans* by Brazosport Archaeological Society,
- *Austin Colony* by Stephen F. Austin re-enactor Stanley Murray.
- *Brazoria Historical Militia* by members of the Militia.
- *Maddox Homestead* by Percy Beacroft of the Maddox family.
- *Railroads and Sulfur* by Brazos Valley Railroad Society.

CONSERVATION PARTNER RECOGNITION CEREMONY

2:00 pm at the Pavilion

VAN TOURS AROUND THE REFUGE

- *Special 1½ hour tours for birders at 9:30, 11:00, 12:30, and 2:00*
- *Shuttles to exhibits on Cross Trail Loop depart every 20 minutes with stops at Estuary, Maddox Farm, and Prairie stations.*

FOOD SERVICE IN THE PAVILION

Dogs, sandwiches, chips, and drinks. Open 10-3.

Download flier <http://refugefriends.org/BNWR-50/Flier-101016.pdf>

PHOTO GALLERY POTPOURRI

By Peggy Romfh, Photo Gallery Editor

As summer turns to fall, Brazoria County is replete with migrating birds, but moths and butterflies are in plentiful numbers among all the fall-blooming plants.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

White-tipped Black Moth (*Melanchroia chephise*)



P. Romfh 2016



Susan Conaty 2016

A visit to Bryan Beach is always full of surprises, and early October provided a particular delight when large numbers of lesser black-backed gulls were observed among the more-often-seen laughing and herring gulls. Lesser black-backed gulls are more common in Europe but are seen in Eastern North America and the Gulf Coast. They are a large gull with dark gray back and yellow legs (unlike the herring gull's pink legs). A close look at the bill and eyes shows their distinctive yellow bill with a red spot near the tip of the lower mandible and also their yellow eyes with a red orbital ring.

Jerry Eppner, who participated in the 21st Annual Brazos Bend State Park Butterfly Count on October 2nd, reported sighting both caterpillar and adult white-tipped black moths. Susan Conaty, who took the photo above on the Nash Prairie Preserve in early October, also reported that the moth is common there. This species is abundant along the coastal plains of Texas and Florida. The caterpillar hosts include Euphorbs such as snow-on-the-prairie.

Hispid Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*) and Fire Ants

Goldenrod vs. Ragweed



Many master naturalists have spotted small hispid cotton rats scurrying about on the trails at Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary during spring migration. Recent research by Texas A&M (reported in the September *TexasInvasives.org* IWIRE), noted that red fire ants can have complex ecological effects on small mammal populations, tick loads, and pathogen presence in southeast Texas. The researchers found that small mammal size was almost two times more prevalent on plots treated for fire ants. Although they found no difference in tick populations for the hispid cotton rat, they did observe that for other species such as the fulvous harvest mouse, the tick population was 27 times lower for mice found in the fire-ant treated plots. So, though it appears that the number of rodents and ticks (and thus pathogens such as *Rickettsia parkeri*) are lower when fire ant levels are high, fire ants still represent a huge invasive presence in Texas.

Canada, twisted and seaside goldenrod are all blooming in Brazoria County in October. Several species of ragweed, including the Great Ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida*) pictured above are also in bloom. Goldenrod pollen is often blamed for causing hay fever; the true culprit is ragweed. Both plants bloom from late summer to early fall. Ragweeds produce large amounts of pollen freely into the winds. Goldenrods produce far less pollen because they are both wind and insect-pollinated.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/gp46jd8>

MOTUS WILDLIFE TRACKING SYSTEM

TEXAS COASTAL MOTUS TOWER NETWORK EXPANDS TO ASSESS THE STATUS OF WESTERN GULF BIRDS

By Susan Heath and Jennifer Wilson



The Motus Wildlife Tracking System (Motus) is a coordinated hemispheric tracking system for all migratory bird species whose purpose is to facilitate landscape-scale research and

education on the ecology and conservation of migratory animals. It is a program of Bird Studies Canada in partnership with Acadia University, Western University, the University of Guelph and over 50 other collaborating researchers and organizations. It enables researchers to track animal movements at local and regional scales and over vast distances using a combination of miniaturized radio transmitters (nano-tags) placed on birds and an expansive growing network of receivers dispersed through the environment.

Nano-tags are placed externally on the bird either by gluing them to the bird's back or by using a harness to hold them in place. The batteries typically last less than a year and the tag will usually fall off the bird within that time so the bird doesn't have to carry the tag for life.

Motus towers are antenna arrays that pick up nano-tag signals using VHF technology. Antenna arrays can consist of two to six antennas and must be mounted above obstructions in the environment such as buildings and trees because they use a line-of-sight method of receiving signals.

The Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program has installed three towers south of Corpus Christi to pick up signals on tagged shorebirds and last spring Bird Studies Canada donated three more towers which were installed at High Island, Port Bolivar, and Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary. Almost immediately after installation, the High Island tower picked up a migrating Canada Warbler that was tagged in Colombia. One of the south Texas towers picked up a Swainson's Thrush that had also been banded in Colombia. Exciting stuff!

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, in conjunction with the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, has received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to expand the Texas Coastal Motus Tower

network by adding approximately 15 towers along the coast from High Island south to Rockport. Ten of these towers are paid for through the grant and the other five will be paid for by refuge Friends groups as match for the grant.

We are still finalizing the details of several of the exact antenna array locations. Three will be installed at Trinity River NWR, one at the Scenic Galveston complex, one on Follett's Island, one at Brazoria NWR, three at San Bernard NWR (headquarters, Big Pond and Sargent), one at the mouth of the Colorado river, one near Palacios, one in Port O'Connor, one at Aransas NWR, and possibly one on a tugboat that travels the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway between Houston and Victoria several times a month.

Also as part of this project we will be deploying nano-tags on American Oystercatchers so we can learn more about their movements on the Texas coast. Although our adult oystercatchers are resident, band returns show that they move about the coast during the non-breeding season. Additionally, young oystercatchers that aren't old enough to breed yet, a period of three to four years, can make significant movements. It is important for us to understand these movements, likely related to food resources, for conservation purposes for this iconic bird.

This Motus system has the potential to monitor thousands of birds as they move through our environment and has tremendous potential to fill gaps in our knowledge concerning bird movements. Once the array has been established we can not only support our own research needs but support that of hundreds of researchers located worldwide.

Installation of the towers requires some physical man power so if you'd like to lend us your muscles for a few days, please let us know!

Susan A. Heath, Ph.D., is Director of Conservation Research at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson, Texas sheath@gcbo.org

Jennifer Wilson, Ph.D., is a Wildlife Biologist at the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Brazoria, Texas. jennifer_wilson@fws.gov

Images © Bird Studies Canada,



NATURE CONSERVANCY ESTABLISHES TWO NEW PRESERVES

By The Nature Conservancy

WEST COLUMBIA, TEXAS — The Nature Conservancy has received an \$8 million gift from BHP Billiton [1] to establish two new preserves in Brazoria and Ford Bend Counties:

- **Brazos Woods Preserve**, a 176-acre parcel on east side of the Brazos River a few miles upriver from Brazoria city
- **San Bernard Woods Preserve**, a 1,656-acre parcel located on the west side of the San Bernard River some 30 miles upriver from the gulf coast.

The Conservancy plans to manage the land and restore river frontage, grasslands, bottomland forests and wetlands on both preserves.

Ongoing wildlife surveys and water quality monitoring in the San Bernard and Brazos rivers will measure how our work helps mitigate the impacts of encroaching development. The Brazos Woods Preserve houses an open-air educational pavilion for surrounding communities and visiting groups from Houston.

The Conservancy is committed to collaborative, whole-system conservation within the Columbia Bottomlands, to safeguard and restore 70,000 acres of this critical ecosystem and ensure the natural systems that help support one of the country's fastest-growing regions can survive and thrive.

—The Nature Conservancy: *Columbia Bottomlands*
<http://tinyurl.com/NewPreserves>

Further information:

- **Nature Conservancy preserving Brazoria ecological haven thanks to unlikely ally.**
Houston Chronicle, September 30, 2016, C1.
<http://tinyurl.com/Chron-160930-C1>
- **Land Stewardship in the Columbia Bottomlands of Texas: A Guide for Landowners.**
The Nature Conservancy, n.d.
<http://tinyurl.com/Guide-landowners>
- **Brazos Woods Preserve Open Day**
October 29, 2016 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
<http://tinyurl.com/BWP-Open-Day>

A \$14 million donation has allowed The Nature Conservancy of Texas to purchase 1,900 acres of forestland in a region known as the Columbia Bottomlands, a critical migratory bird stopover. The group and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hope to protect 70,000 acres in this region.



Source: The Nature Conservancy [2]

Houston Chronicle

Visit the Brazos Woods Preserve

October 29, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

<http://tinyurl.com/BWP-Open-Day>

[1] BHP Billiton is an Australian mining and oil company. It might seem like an odd choice to step up to save a swampy plot of forest land in Southeast Texas. But company officials, however, said they wanted to make a donation that would benefit land conservation in a state where they worked. BHP is drilling in two Texas fields - the Permian Basin and the Eagle Ford Shale.

[2] Source: The Nature Conservancy. Map © Houston Chronicle

This issue of Chapter News contains one Attachment

<http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-15th>

CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER OFFICERS

President	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Vice President/Program	Jill Carroll, Pearland
Secretary	Jean Britt, Lake Jackson
Treasurer	Donald Sabathier, Pearland
State Representative	Ed Barrios, Lake Jackson
Past President	Mike Mullins, Sweeny
Training Coordinators	Carolyn May-Monie, West Columbia Laurel Owen, Brazoria
Membership Coordinator	Jerry Eppner, Lake Jackson
Volunteer Service Coordinator	Pete Romfh, Houston
Advanced Training Coordinator	Peggy Romfh, Houston
Outreach Coordinator	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Chapter Host	Pam West, Freeport
Publicity Coordinator	Richard Schaffhausen, Alvin
Publications Coordinator	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Class of 2016 representatives	Kristine Rivers, Pearland Larry Ruhr, Lake Jackson
Chapter Adviser	John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension Service)
Newsletter Editor	Neal McLain, Brazoria
Newsletter Writers	Dave Brandes, Jerry Eppner, Judy Green, Susan Heath, Neal McLain, Peggy Romfh, Jennifer Sanchez, Jennifer Wilson
Website	http://tmn-cot.org
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN.COT
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail

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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 Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome. Submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Saturday before the General Meeting. Submissions should be sent by email to *Chapter News* Editor at tmn.cot@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.