



JULY 2017

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT KRISTINE RIVERS

The Texas Master Naturalist 18th Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 20th-22nd in Corpus Christi. I was surprised to learn that the Cradle of Texas chapter had never given a presentation at any of the previous state meetings, considering the wealth of knowledge that we have within our membership. So when the call for presentation proposals went out, I put together a team to come up with ideas for submissions: Phil Huxford, Peggy & Pete Romfh, Jimmy Salinas, and myself. Peggy suggested an in-depth review of the ecology, flora and fauna of the Texas Mid-Coast, and we loved that idea since it was perfect for the meeting location in Corpus Christi. After meeting to discuss and fully develop the idea, we realized that in order to do the topic justice, we would need to break the presentation into several sub-topics and structure it so that participants would have the option of signing up for some or all of the segments. We felt that it was important to include hands-on activities, as well as a field trip, and ensure that we included information on volunteer opportunities available. The call for proposals suggested having a catchy title, so we had to keep that in mind too.



We ended up submitting an extremely ambitious proposal for six hours of presentation time on Saturday, and a half-day field trip on Sunday titled, "It's a Wild, Wild Life on the Mid-Texas Coast"—Part 1: Ecology of the Coast (2 hours); Part 2: Shorebirds (1 hour); Part 3: Beach Invertebrates (2 hours); and Part 4: Sea Turtles, Snakes and Alligators (1 hour). The field trip will include seining, digging for ghost crabs, and identifying any birds, wildlife and plants seen.

The review panel stated that it was taking longer than normal for the decision process, as they had received more submissions than ever before. Just over a month later, I received notice that our proposal was approved, and our presentation had been added to the agenda! The presentation team includes Mike Mullenweg, Lisa Myers, Peggy & Pete Romfh, Jimmy Salinas, Rich Tillman, and me. We are excited about this opportunity to represent the Cradle of Texas chapter to the state and will do our best to make you proud. I hope to see you there!

Kristine Rivers is the president of the Cradle of Texas Chapter. She can be reached at rivers@tmn-cot.org.

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Chapter News is published by Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Contact us at:

Texas A&M AgriLIFE
Brazoria County Office
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, TX 77515-8903
979-864-1558 (Angleton)
979-388-1558 (Brazosport)
281-756-1558 (Alvin)
979-388-1566 (Fax)
<http://tmn-cot.org>
news@tmn-cot.org

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 socio-economic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Bryan Adams' family has established a GoFundMe account to raise funds for the "Bryan Robert Adams Memorial Educational Display": "These funds will be used to erect several permanent educational displays that align with the locations and subjects of Bryan Adams' lifelong passions." <http://tinyurl.com/GFM-Adams>

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, July 12, 2017
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Snack Team: Barbara Burkhardt, Ellis Burkhardt, Elaine Crews, Roy Morgan, Dick Schaffhausen, Carole Wenny
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	General Meeting and Nature Notes Nature Notes: Jimmy Salinas, “Oil Spills” <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour volunteer time</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: Texas Estuarine Resource Network Program (TERN) Speaker: Kari Howard, Coastal Conservation Program, Audubon Texas



Kari Howard [1]

Kari Howard’s passion for the environment began during a Hawaiian field study course that sparked a fire for coastal and marine life. After graduating Texas A&M University at Galveston with a Bachelor’s Degree in Marine Biology, she worked in various lab settings, wetland consulting and delineation, and outreach and education in environmental fields.

In 2011, Howard was the Habitat and Stewardship Coordinator for the Artist Boat, completing three grants that restored over 26 acres of barrier island dune habitat along Galveston Island and Follet’s Island as well as guiding kayak adventures around multiple bay systems. Since 2010, she has enjoyed her time as a Texas Master Naturalist for the Galveston Bay Chapter, and during her free time she is an avid gardener and encourages landscaping with Texas native plants that specifically attract birds and butterflies. Currently, Howard works for Audubon Texas, Coastal Conservation Program and brings her skills, experience, and passion for conserving wild spaces and protecting wildlife to the Audubon team to develop a new citizen science program monitoring nesting waterbirds called Texas Estuarine Resource Network (TERN). [2]

ABSTRACT

The Texas Estuarine Resource Network (TERN) is a community-based citizen science program promoting bird monitoring and conservation managed by the Audubon Texas Coastal Program. The TERN program continues Audubon’s legacy of protecting colonial waterbirds by engaging citizens in the community to gather valuable data about bird populations in foraging grounds and rookery habitats. The data collected through citizen science programs can be incorporated into management and conservation plans and influence local, state and federal policy development.

TERN seeks volunteers to help research two main topics: colonial waterbird rookery monitoring and waterbird foraging habitat monitoring. Rookery islands cannot exist without adequate foraging habitat, and foraging habitat quality can have an effect on the production of chicks in nearby rookeries. Through our free training program, volunteers...learn how to identify local species of colonial water birds, visit rookery island and wetland foraging grounds, learn current scientific survey protocols and data collections, and assist researchers with conducting these surveys by boat and by land. [3]

[1] Kari Howard. LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kari-howard-bab7744a/>

[2] Kari Howard. Galveston, FeatherFest. <http://www.galvestonfeatherfest.com/leader/kari-howard/>

[3] TERN Citizen Science. Houston Audubon. <http://tx.audubon.org/conservation/tern-citizen-science>

Membership Report by Pete and Peggy Romfh, Membership Directors

Congratulations to those who recently recertified or reached new hours milestones in 2017. Those receiving awards in May include:

Recertification (Sea Turtle Pin)

Bill Ahlstrom	James Calvert
Anne Bettinger	Jerry Epner
George Bettinger	Georgia Monnerat
Larry Peterson	

250 Hour Pin (Bronze Dragonfly)

Ann Lange	Larry Ruhr	Jimmy Salinas
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500 Hour Pin (Silver Dragonfly)

Howard Allen	Anne Bettinger
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Impact Data—January-June

8,776 Adults	26,797 Youth	35,573 Total
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Hours Totals—January-June

10,625 hours VT	996 hours AT	115 Volunteers
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At the June 14, regular chapter meeting held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, two 2017 interns achieved initial certification, Michael Lasseter and Edward

Peebles, and five members recertified: Dave Brandes, Marlies Greenwood, Susan Safley, Carole Wenny, and Pam West. In addition, Peggy Romfh was honored for achieving the 4,000-hour volunteer milestone [see story, below]. Congratulations.



Initial certification awardees, from top, far left: Michael Lasseter and Edward Peebles.



Recertification awardees, Dave Brandes, Marlies Greenwood, Susan Safley, Carole Wenny, and Pam West; 4000-hour milestone awardee Peggy Romfh with



President Kristine Rivers.



Peggy Romfh Honored for 4000-hour Volunteer Milestone by Lisa Myers



At the June general meeting, Peggy Romfh was honored for achieving the 4000-hour volunteer mark and was awarded a polished gold dragonfly with ruby pin. The COT membership celebrated with cake and a hearty round of applause.

Some highlights from Peggy's recent interview for the TMN 20th Anniversary Celebration Project follow.

After retiring in 2011, Peggy was determined to avoid couch potato-hood, so at the suggestion of Ellis Burkhardt, she interned at the COT chapter and became a member in 2012, along with her husband Pete, as they were spending many weekends in Brazoria County taking nature photographs and were drawn to the many coastal activities there.

A native of Wisconsin and former resident of Colorado for over 30 years, Peggy yearned to know more about the Texas Gulf Coast. Since joining COT, Peggy has certainly achieved her goal, as evidenced in her impressive portfolio of nature photographs; however, she has found "networking with and learning from other naturalists...the most rewarding" aspect of membership as well as "the variety of volunteer opportunities and the consistent advanced training... It's never boring when there is so much to learn and so much to do."

Peggy has participated via a variety of chapter roles, including VP/Program Coordinator from 2013-2014, AT Coordinator from 2015-2016, and is currently Membership Co-Director with her husband, Pete. Additionally, Peggy noted many poignant moments as a COT member, most shared with Pete, among them:

- Revamping and maintaining the COT Photo Gallery since 2012. She and Pete expanded the site to over 1,000 species, including the Eastern Pygmy Blue butterfly, which they were first to report in Brazoria County
- Participating with GCBO biologist Sue Heath on boat trips to Bastrop Bayou and Chocolate Bayou to find and band American Oystercatchers
- Completing the TMN Entomology Specialist Program and photo-documenting aquatic invertebrates at BNWR, the result of which was a book, co-authored with Pete, that is used for DEEP
- Working with USFWS botanist Thomas Adams to collect and photo-document all rush and sedge species in Brazoria County; the project resulted in a reference book used by NWR staff and a pdf file accessible to COT members

Continued on Page 5

Photo Potpourri by Peggy Romfh

Whether you are captivated by the many flowered plants, the abundant insect population, the invertebrates that wash up on the Texas beaches, or just the enjoyment of being outdoors, Brazoria County provides a summertime feast for the senses in terms of color and diversity.

'Peas' be with You...



Of the hundreds of plants in the Pea Family (*Fabaceae*) that bloom and then form fruits in the shape of pods, some of our favorites in Brazoria County are (clockwise from top left): Coastal Indigo (*Indigofera miniata*), seen on Follet's Island; Amberique Bean (*Strophostyles helvola*), seen at Quintana Beach County Park; Least Snoutbean (*Rhynchosia minima*), seen at Hanson Riverside County Park; Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*), seen near Surfside and Quintana; and Multi-bloom Hoary Pea (*Tephrosia onobrychooides*), seen on Nash Prairie Preserve.

FACT: The Pea Family (*Fabaceae*) is the third largest land plant family in terms of number of species.

All photos by P&P Romfh

The Eyes Have It...



..or maybe it's those huge, biting, mouth parts on deer flies (*Chrysops brunneus*) commonly seen on the Texas Mid-Coast Wildlife Refuges in the summer.

Sea Nettle—Golden Armament



"FACT":
Chrysaor was the brother of *Pegasus* and son of *Poseidon* and *Medusa*.

The long tentacles that hang from the notches of this gelatinous, bowl-shaped jelly called a sea nettle (*Chrysaora quinquecirrha*) are often not seen when the jelly washes up on the beach. However, its sting is moderate to severe, so it's best to look but not touch! Many sea nettles washed up on the beach at Follet's Island in mid-June.

GCBO Announces Native Plant Nursery by Chris Kneupper

Martin Hagne, the new Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) director, had the idea of converting the old plant nursery area, just behind the main GCBO building, into a retail nursery focusing (mostly) on Texas native plants. As mentioned in a recent edition of the GCBO e-newsletter and a special web page launched to jump-start sales [see <http://www.gcbo.org/community-engagement/gcbo-native-plant-nursery/>], a special focus of the nursery will be locally-adapted (usually perennial) plants useful for home landscaping, backyard habitat, etc., for example, those useful as nectar plants for hummingbirds or butterflies, or larval host plants for butterflies. The new web page also includes links to an existing plant list and a "want list."

In response to Martin's concept, several changes have already occurred at the nursery:

- Local volunteers built some sturdy, narrow, display tables and installed these to use the existing drip irrigation system on the "bayou side" of the nursery
- Two Eagle Scout projects have created four, wider, display tables and two sitting benches
- The nursery area has been somewhat cleaned up, with useful plants recovered from overgrown pots or found growing in the ground
- Empty plastic pots have been organized and staged near the existing potting bench
- A delivery area for "potting mix" was created and a six-yard load was delivered for use in propagating new plants
- A small compost bin was added to recycle nursery refuse
- Hundreds of seedling plants have been grown in small pots and are now ready for "moving up" into larger (usually one-gallon) pots.

However, for this concept to truly blossom, GCBO needs additional help with a few items:

1. Master Gardeners and members of local garden clubs: Please spread the word about this new development.
2. We are thinking of holding regular **come-and-go working periods on Saturday mornings (say, 8:30-11:30am)** during the summer (through the end of August) for interested folks to work together as a team and continue the conversion of the nursery, especially propagation of new plants. One goal is to ready the nursery for some sales by the Xtreme Hummingbird Extravaganza (XHX) in September. It's extraordinarily hot and humid, but work time is authorized as VT, under VMS Code RM: Managing Natural Resource Areas and Wildlife!
3. If you have favorite/extra native or naturalized plants, please consider bringing in seeds, cuttings or even small plants. Also, as the season progresses, please harvest useful seed as it ripens. Uncommon or useful natives are especially desired. Unneeded standard-size black plastic pots can also be dropped off for use in this project. The best time to bring in plants and pots is Saturday mornings (see item 2).
4. We also need to create/organize the nursery propagation areas, separate from the retail space, and figure out how to water these, perhaps with an automated sprinkler system.



From top: A view of the nursery entrance, which shows a variety of recently-potted plants ready to place onto the new tables made in a recent Eagle Scout project. Photos by Chris Kneupper.

Peggy Romfh Honored for 4000-hour Volunteer Milestone *Continued from Page 3*

- Working with USFWS biologist Jennifer Wilson on a project to determine whether the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth is found in the BNWR
- Volunteering for Spring Fling at QNBS, including coordinating the volunteer schedule and data collection at the host station from 2016-2017
- Building a whooping crane migration game for Bird Camp at GCBO and volunteering from 2013-2015
- Coordinating the photo contest for Migration Celebration from 2012-2016 and volunteering to support the effort this year
- Volunteering for Texas Stream Team since 2015, currently monitoring water quality on Oyster Creek and assisting Pete at three other sites.
- While she mourns the continuing loss of coastal nesting habitat for oystercatchers, terns, plover and other animals, Peggy hopes that she and "the chapter will continue to play a vibrant role in sharing...knowledge of nature with the area youth (and adults!) and for the continued participation in citizen science efforts that provide knowledge that supports the ultimate understanding and preservation of natural resources."

Further, Peggy "would like to see more interpretive signage added to plants or key environmental areas in parks and wildlife refuges. When you start out trying to learn, there seems to be an absence of information. The [COT] training program is merely the tip of the iceberg... A Master Naturalist must become a true, self-directed learner to really succeed."
Hardly the words of a couch potato...

Invasive Zebra Mussels Discovered in Lake Travis

AUSTIN—Zebra mussels have been positively identified for the first time in Lake Travis in the Colorado River Basin in Central Texas, just weeks after biologists confirmed the aquatic invasive species had also spread to the Guadalupe River Basin.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) biologists confirmed the presence of zebra mussels in Lake Travis June 22 after an observant staff member at a local marina reported the sighting of a single zebra mussel attached to the outboard motor of a moored boat on the lake.

On-site, biologists found the mussels attached to other nearby boats and on submerged marina infrastructure. Additionally, they found several size classes of adult and juvenile mussels at two different sites in the lake, indicating the lake is infested with an established, reproducing population. "...It's two new river basins with infestations this year," said Monica McGarrity, TPWD Aquatic Invasive Species team lead...

Brian Van Zee, Inland Fisheries regional director, said the next step after discovering a new infestation is to educate the public and local marinas to help prevent the zebra mussels from spreading further to nearby lakes... "This is a battle we cannot give up on—the cost of these infestations is large and affects so many people..."

The rapidly reproducing zebra mussels, originally from Eurasia, can have serious economic, environmental and recreational impacts on Texas reservoirs and rivers. Zebra mussels can cover shoreline rocks and litter beaches with treacherously sharp shells, clog public-water intakes, and damage boats and motors left in infested waters.

Lake Travis is a 19,297-acre LCRA-managed reservoir on the lower Colorado River located 20 miles northwest of Austin. McGarrity said, while there is an inevitable risk of zebra mussel larvae dispersing downstream to Lake Austin and Lady Bird Lake, the more immediate risk is that zebra mussels could hitch a ride to these locations on recreational equipment traveling from Lake Travis or other infested lakes. "...A boat can take a ready-made colony to another lake at any time—so preventing the spread within these newly infested basins is still really important."

In Texas, it is unlawful to possess or transport zebra mussels, dead or alive. Boaters are required to drain all water from their boat and onboard receptacles before leaving or approaching a body of



Photos of zebra mussels from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

fresh water...to prevent the transfer of zebra mussels. The requirement to drain applies to all types and sizes of boats whether powered or not... "Cleaning, draining and drying really doesn't take much time—it's a few simple steps that boaters can take to prevent these infestations," McGarrity said. "There are more than 1,500 boat ramps in Texas and we can't be everywhere, so we have to rely on boaters, marinas and concerned citizens to help in this fight."

McGarrity said the discovery and reporting of both new infestations by marina staff this year reinforces the important role marinas play as gate keepers that can help prevent boats with attached zebra mussels from entering their lakes... "We want marinas to inspect or work with TPWD to have boats inspected so we can prevent new infestations. We ask that they contact us whenever they have an incoming boat that's of concern so that we can help evaluate the risks or assist with the inspection."

Since zebra mussels were first found in Texas in 2009, eleven lakes in five river basins have been infested, meaning they have an established, reproducing population—Belton, Bridgeport, Canyon, Dean Gilbert (a 45-acre Community Fishing Lake in Sherman), Eagle Mountain, Lewisville, Randell, Ray Roberts, Stillhouse Hollow, Texoma and now Travis.

Marinas should contact TPWD at 512-389-4848 for assistance if zebra mussels are found on incoming boats—or for coordination when boats are leaving marinas on infested lakes.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/zmussels>; see also "How to clean your boat" <http://www.texasinvasives.org/cleandraindry/> and <http://www.texasinvasives.org/zebramussels/>; "Stop Zebra Mussels" video: <http://youtu.be/E4Y5lLzKqHg>.

Meet Stephen Brueggerhoff, Brazoria County's New Horticulture Extension Agent by Neal McLain



You've probably seen Stephen Brueggerhoff at AgriLife or up at BEES...he's the tallest guy in the room and the new Horticulture Agent at the Brazoria County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Stephen's official resume notes, "As horticulture agent, Stephen offers horticultural consultation and green industry educational programming to home and business owners in Brazoria County. He also manages and supports the Brazoria County Master Gardeners Association, providing coordination for local and regional programs."

Holding a B.S. degree in Horticulture from Sam Houston State University and an M.A. in Forest Resources from the University of Washington, Stephen has over 15 years of experience in supporting the environmental community as lecturer, instructor, administrative organizer and collaborative partner.

Stephen is also a member of several professional development and community service organizations such as Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, Texas County Agricultural Agents Association, Epsilon Sigma Phi, Texas Extension Specialists Association and National Association of Interpretation.

Additionally, Stephen is a certified instructor for the Native Plant Society of Texas Native Landscape Certification Program. Welcome to Brazoria County, Stephen!

In Memoriam: Bryan Adams by Neal McLain

Bryan Adams passed away on July 1, 2017, at CHI St. Luke's Health hospital in Lake Jackson.

As the environmental education coordinator for the Texas Mid-coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, based in Brazoria, Bryan administered the Discovery Environmental Education Program ("DEEP") at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge and Hudson Woods Environmental Education Program ("HWEPP") at Hudson Woods Unit of San Bernard NWR.

Always an energetic advocate for environmental education, Bryan spoke to our chapter many times, always emphasizing the same theme: Get kids outside! As he once noted...

- Ask a 4th grader to look a flower. Uh...ok.. it's a flower. So what?
- Ask a 4th grader to take a photo of a flower. Oh...ok. How's this?
- Ask a 4th grader to take a photo of a flower and tell him we'll have a contest for the best photo. Wow...you can't hold that kid back!

Bryan was a true friend and an inspiration to all of us. We will miss him.



From top left, **Row 1:** Bryan Adams official mugshot; Bryan Adams. USFWS Volunteer Recognition Dinner, Freeport Community House, 2009. Photo: Neal McLain; Vicky Adams, Bryan Adams, Mary Holler, Barbara Burkhardt. Eighth Annual Hog Wild Holiday Feast, Lake Jackson, 2011. Photo: Neal McLain. **Row 2:** Tom Schneider, Bryan Adams. Dow Woods Unit Grand Opening Celebration, Lake Jackson, 2011. Photo: Neal McLain; Barbara Burkhardt, Jerry Eppner, Bryan Adams, Ed Barrios. Scholastic Bowl, Center for the Arts and Sciences, 2011. Photo: Justina Dent; Bryan Adams, John Boettiger. Sixth Annual Hog Wild Holiday Feast, Lake Jackson, 2009. Photo: Neal McLain. **Row 3:** Bryan Adams. Ever Green: Protecting the Columbia Bottomlands, Hudson Woods Unit, 2008. Photo: Neal McLain; Bryan Adams, Neal McLain. Bryan Adams 70th Birthday Celebration, Lake Jackson, 2011. Photo: Vicky Adams; Bryan Adams. TMN-COT Tenth Anniversary Celebration, Lake Jackson, 2011. Photo: Neal McLain. **Row 4:** Vicky Adams, Bryan Adams, Bill Brown, Torry Tvedt. Retirement Party for Rich Tillman and Sandra Smith, AgriLife Building, Angleton, 2010. Photo: Neal McLain; Kerry Magee, Bryan Adams. TMN-COT Tenth Anniversary Celebration, Lake Jackson, 2011. Photo: Neal McLain; Ed Barrios, Carl Dodson, Bryan Adams, Carolyn May-Monie, AgriLife Building, Angleton. Photo: Neal McLain.

Cradle of Texas Chapter Officers

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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 Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter. Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Friday 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.