



AUGUST 2017

Chapter News

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT KRISTINE RIVERS

The statewide Texas Master Naturalist program recently issued a press release about upcoming fall and winter training sessions, seeking applicants interested in becoming involved in the program. I was surprised to note that of the 17 chapters included, only one other chapter charges the same \$100 registration fee as our chapter. All the other chapters charge \$150 to \$200 per person. Does this mean that we need to increase our fee? No! We already know that our intern training is an incredible value, and if we are covering our costs (which we are), there's no reason to change our fee.

Those chapters are filling their classes despite the higher rates, however, which suggests to me that we need to do a better job of getting the word out about our classes and what a great value they are. We can do this in a variety of ways: word of mouth, news articles, social media, speaking engagements, etc. At last week's Board meeting, we also discussed the need to provide the public with more information about *all* the great work that we do, so that we paint a more accurate picture of the broad range of volunteer activities we participate in to support our mission. We plan to do this by being more focused in our public relations efforts, in the news articles distributed to the media, and in the information posted on the webpage and on Facebook.

I'm asking all of you to help, as well. Do you have friends or family members who love nature or are concerned about conservation and want to get involved? Please let them know about the TMN

program, give them a link to our chapter website, and encourage them to consider registering for our intern class now. We've opened up registration to make it easier to reserve a spot, so it's no longer necessary to wait to register until the end of the year, when money is often tight due to the holidays.

Do you belong to another organization, such as the Lions Club, Rotary, or Garden Club, that invites people to speak at meetings? We would love to come tell them about our TMN chapter and what we're doing! Just let Jimmy Salinas know, and he will follow up to work out the details.

Do you have photos from a recent volunteer effort that would be great for a story about what our chapter is doing? Send them to Richard Schaffhausen with some information about the work that was done, and he will put together an article for the local newspaper or for a Facebook post. Lisa Myers would also like to include those stories in the chapter newsletter.

We have five months to spread the word about our next training session that starts in January 2018. I would love to see it filled to capacity with a new group of interns who are excited about everything that they are going to learn and do in the Cradle of Texas chapter. Let's get out there and recruit some great people!

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



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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 Department.

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 P&P Romfh.

Texas Master Naturalist Program
Cradle of Texas Chapter
Chapter News – August 2017

SAVE THE DATE!! The Great North American Solar Eclipse is on August 21. See Page 5 for details and information about viewing at the BASF Planetarium.

Texas Master Naturalist Program—Cradle of Texas Chapter
General Meeting and Advanced Training
Wednesday, August 9, 2017
Texas AgriLife Extension Building
21017 County Road 171
Angleton, Texas 77515-8903

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Fun and Fellowship Snack Team: Jim Calvert, Marty Cornell, Lisa Myers, Larry Ruhr, and Robert Salzer
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	General Meeting and Nature Notes Nature Notes: Tom Morris, “Birds of Prey” <i>This meeting is approved for 1.00 hour volunteer time</i>
10:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Program: Hurricanes and Hurricane Hazards Speaker: Dan Reilly, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, National Weather Service Houston/Galveston



Dan Reilly

Dan Reilly has been with the National Weather Service for the past 23 years, the last nine years as the Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Houston. He has also worked at forecast offices in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Montana.

Dan holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics from the University of Virginia and a Master's degree in Meteorology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Hurricanes and Hurricane Hazards

Dan will discuss the science of hurricanes including what causes them to form, their energy source, and challenges in forecasting their track and intensity. He will also provide links where you can keep updated on the tropics and read discussions of these aspects for individual storms. Additionally, Dan will touch on impacts of hurricanes to coastline, vegetation, etc.

The National Weather Service is a component of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an Operating Unit of the United States Department of Commerce.

Mission: Provide weather, water, and climate data, forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property and enhancement of the national economy.

Vision: A Weather-Ready Nation: Society is Prepared for and Responds to Weather-Dependent Events

History: Explore various milestones in the history of the National Weather Service and its predecessor agencies, dating back to the 1800s.

Organization: The headquarters of the National Weather Service is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, with regional headquarters located in Kansas City, Missouri; Bohemia, New York; Fort Worth, Texas; Salt Lake City, Utah; Anchorage, Alaska; and Honolulu, Hawaii. With some 4000-plus employees in 122 weather forecast offices, 13 river forecast centers, 9 national centers, and other support offices around the country, NWS provides a national infrastructure to gather and process data worldwide. Each year, NWS collects some 76 billion observations and issues approximately 1.5 million forecasts and 50,000 warnings.

Strategic Plan: In 2011, NWS unveiled its new Strategic Plan, based on the concept of building a Weather-Ready Nation. This Strategic Plan is NWS's effort to anticipate service needs over the next couple of decades, project what science and technology could allow, and establish meaningful outcome-oriented goals and objectives as we seek to build a Weather-Ready Nation.

Source: National Weather Service <http://www.weather.gov/about>

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 August include:

Recertification (Sea Turtle Pin)

Marty Cornell	Leo Novak
Cindy Goodrum	Pam Peltier
Jerry Krampota	Ken Sluis
John Minkert	Linda Sluis
George Valadez	

500 Hour Pin (Silver Dragonfly)

Karen Leder	Lisa Myers
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Hours Totals—January-July

11,869 hours VT 1,156 hours AT 115 Volunteers

At the July 12, regular chapter meeting held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, one 2017 intern achieved initial certification, Bob Whitmarsh, and eight members recertified: Bill Ahlstrom, Anne Bettinger, George Bettinger, James Calvert, Jerry Eppner, Georgia Monnerat, Andy Smith, and Larry Peterson. In addition, Ann Lange, Larry Ruhr, and Jimmy Salinas reached 250 hours, and Howard Allen and Anne Bettinger reached 500 hours. Congratulations.



Pictured (above left) with President Kristine Rivers is Bob Whitmarsh, who earned initial certification; Kristine also poses with 250-hour milestone awardees Jimmy Salinas, Ann Lange, and Larry Ruhr. Photos by Dick Schaffhausen.

Loblolly Loop Trail Gets a Refresh by Lisa Myers

A diligent group of TMN-COT Master Naturalists is almost finished with the project to replace decayed signage throughout the Brazoria County Parks Department's Loblolly Loop Trail at Camp Mohawk County Park in Alvin. Numbered posts, which correspond to the updated interpretive guide, were placed on July 20 by committee members. Led by park employee Mike Mullenweg and with the assistance of other park employees, who dug the post holes and transported materials, 24 sign-posts were placed.

Committee members include: Sylvia Buenrostro, Elaine Crews, Bryan Frazier, Jerry Krampota, Ellen Lasseter, Mike Mullenweg, Herb Myers, Jo Myers, Lisa Myers, Pam Peltier, Lynne Ray, Kristine Rivers, Robert Salzer, and Richard Schaffhausen.

The revised brochure, which will be available soon, informs visitors that "the land at Camp Mohawk consists of a combination, unusual in Brazoria County, of alluvial clay and deep sandy loam soil regions. The park is intersected by Chocolate Bayou, which has carved a deep channel as it meanders toward the Gulf... Elevation above the bayou and oxbow lakes determines wetter and dryer regions. The multiple combinations of soil type and moisture content in turn have made Camp Mohawk attractive to an

uncommon diversity of trees and other plants. For example, nowhere else in Brazoria County can be found together the six species of oak that thrive here, nor the loblolly forest, a remnant of the great Southern pine forest that shrank eastward during drier and warmer times at the end of the last Ice Age. The park is also surrounded by patches of the Gulf Coastal Prairie; thus, prairie grasses grow here in open areas." Most of the new brochure's identified trees and plants are native to the area.

The original trail and signage were a 2006 project of COT Chapter members and County Parks employees. They were building on an earlier plant census conducted by COT members in 2002 or 2003 and a trail created by the park developer. Jerry Krampota led a team that included Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Dave Brandes, Laura Brandes, Justina Dent, Phil Huxford, John Marshall, Kirby Rapstein and others along with kiosk, sign and bench-building help from numerous Boy Scouts.

According to Krampota, who admitted to a somewhat fuzzy memory on exact details, the Loblolly Loop Trail

project was entered in the State Conference Project competition and won second place. Current project members also plan to update the trail head's large map, originally designed by Laura Brandes.



(Top) A 2006 photo shows Jerry Krampota, Jeri Stanton and other project members on Loblolly Loop Trail. (From above left) Jo Myers securing numbers to posts; Pam Peltier and Herb Myers place a trail marker; Lisa Myers and Mike Mullenweg search for a dropped nail. Bottom row photos by Dick Schaffhausen.

Photo Potpourri – by Peggy Romfh

If it weren't for the summertime heat and humidity, we could cheerfully spend every day outside along the Texas Mid-Coast. No matter where you look, there are interesting plant and animal species to observe or learn about. Here are some we have found so far this summer.

Floating to Shore...



The small, deep water Ram's Horn Squid (*Spirula spirula*), is a Mollusk-like gastropod and bivalve, but like other Cephalopods, it has a remnant of a shell located internally. The chambered, coiled structure of the Ram's Head shell functions as a buoyancy device.

Occasionally, the Ram's Horn Squid shell washes ashore. This specimen was found on Quintana Beach in mid-June.

Doddering Along...



Dodder (*Cuscuta sp.*) is an annual seed-bearing parasitic vine in the Dodder Family. In Brazoria County, it is common to see masses of the thin, thread-like yellow or orange stems entwining host plants, such as the Dodder on Marsh Elder plants (*Iva frutescens*) along the auto-loop route at Brazoria NWR (see above).

Dodder seeds germinate in the soil, but when the seedlings find a suitable host, they insert **haustoria** (modified roots) into the stem of host plants. The Dodder connection to the soil is severed, and the dodder then depends on the host plant for survival.

We usually see Dodder's tiny clusters of white flowers in late summer; however, this year, flowers were present in late June.

Both native and introduced species of Dodder can be found in Texas.

Singing a Song...



The male breeding **Dickcissel** (*Spiza americana*) looks like a cross between a sparrow and a meadowlark with a rusty brown shoulder patch. Dickcissels migrate from their winter habitat in South America to much of the central section of the USA. This Dickcissel was one of many spotted at Brazoria NWR in June.

Hopping Around...



This two-inch **Gray Treefrog** (*Hyla versicolor*) obligingly hopped onto the top of a gray picnic table at **Hudson Woods**, providing the Refuge Junior Naturalist class a perfect opportunity to practice nature photography on June 19th.

The Gray Treefrog can change its color in seconds. While mostly gray, this frog has some pale green coloration on its abdomen. It also has large, sticky toe pads that help it cling to tree bark and other surfaces.

FACT: Due to high levels of glycerol and thus glucose that act like anti-freeze in the blood, the Gray Teefrog can freeze in winter and then thaw out in the spring.

Beetling About...



This Flea Marsh Beetle (*Ora discoidea*) was seen near Cross Trails pond during the late June moth trap event conducted as part of the Louisiana Eyed Silkmoth project for Jennifer Wilson, USFWS Biologist.

Slightly larger than a typical Lady Beetle, this small beetle is a member of the Marsh Beetle Family (*Scirtidae*) in the Order Coleoptera.

There are only four Flea Marsh Beetle sightings reported in <http://BugGuide.net>. All were found in South Texas.

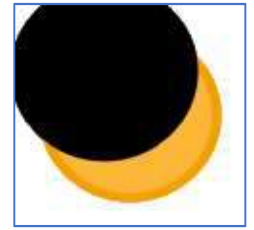
Photos by P&P Romfh



AUGUST 21, 2017, PARTIAL ECLIPSE SAFE VIEWING at BASF Planetarium



Moon



Sun

Our view of the
Sun at maximum
68% drop in light

The Great North American Solar Eclipse on August 21, 2017

In Brazosport, we will see **a partial solar eclipse**.
**Special, safe, solar viewers are required to avoid
eye injury and are available at the planetarium.**

Begins at 11:46 am; Ends at 2:45 pm
Best Viewing at 1:00 pm–1:30 pm
Maximum at 1:16 pm

**Safe Viewing, NASA Feed,
Demonstrations**

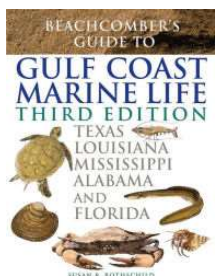


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<http://tinyurl.com/MAP-BCFAS>

Beachcomber's Guide to Gulf Coast Marine Life, A Book Review by Judy Green



If you are looking to expand your knowledge of Gulf Coast marine life, I highly recommend reading *Beachcomber's Guide to Gulf Coast Marine Life* ("Beachcomber's") by Susan B. Rothschild and Nick Fotheringham, which is among numerous other fascinating titles in the AgriLife Volunteer Media Library. This overlook-

ed resource gem houses books donated by past and present TMN members along with some titles from Master Gardeners.

Published in 2004, the 179-page "*Beachcomber's*" includes a general overview and details on the marine life

of Texas as well as Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Twelve chapters are devoted to life on or in: jetties, beaches, shrimp grounds, salt marshes, mud flats, oyster reefs and shell habitats. Of particular interest is the chapter on life in artificial reefs. Chapter 12 provides specifics on our beloved sea turtles, five species of which are found along the Texas Gulf Coast, including the smallest sea turtle, the Kemp's ridley.

Filled with nicely rendered black and white drawings, the book will not disappoint readers used to seeing color photographs. The author also includes a useful index, bibliography and phylogenetic list. I found the work's vocabulary and terminology generally accessible; however, the included glossary proved helpful.

Cradle of Texas Chapter Officers

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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 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.