

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST-ELM FORK CHAPTER

Naturalist News

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2020



Roadrunner—Dale Meyer



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VOLUME 21 ISSUE 8

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"Innocent eyes"—photo from Jonathan Reynolds

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:


- *Monthly features Science Corner & Meet a Master*
- *Features*

And the Work Goes On—Hours Accomplished

From Mary Morrow



And the Work Goes On—Hours Accomplished



2020 Elm Fork Chapter
Awards - JULY Chapter Meeting
EFC members accomplished the following as of
June 2020

250 Milestone Hours
Leonard Chochrek, Class of 2019

1000 Milestone Hours
Mindy Anderson, Class of 2015
Elise Spain, Class of 2017

1500 Milestone Hours
Jean McMeans, Class of 2005

And the Work Goes On—Hours Accomplished

2020 Elm Fork Chapter
Awards - JULY Chapter Meeting
EFC members accomplished the following as of

June 2020

2000 Milestone Hours

Linda Cox, Class of 2005

2500 Milestone Hours

Diane Wetherbee, Class of 2000

4000 Milestone Hours

Vin Merrill, Class of 2011

4500 Milestone Hours

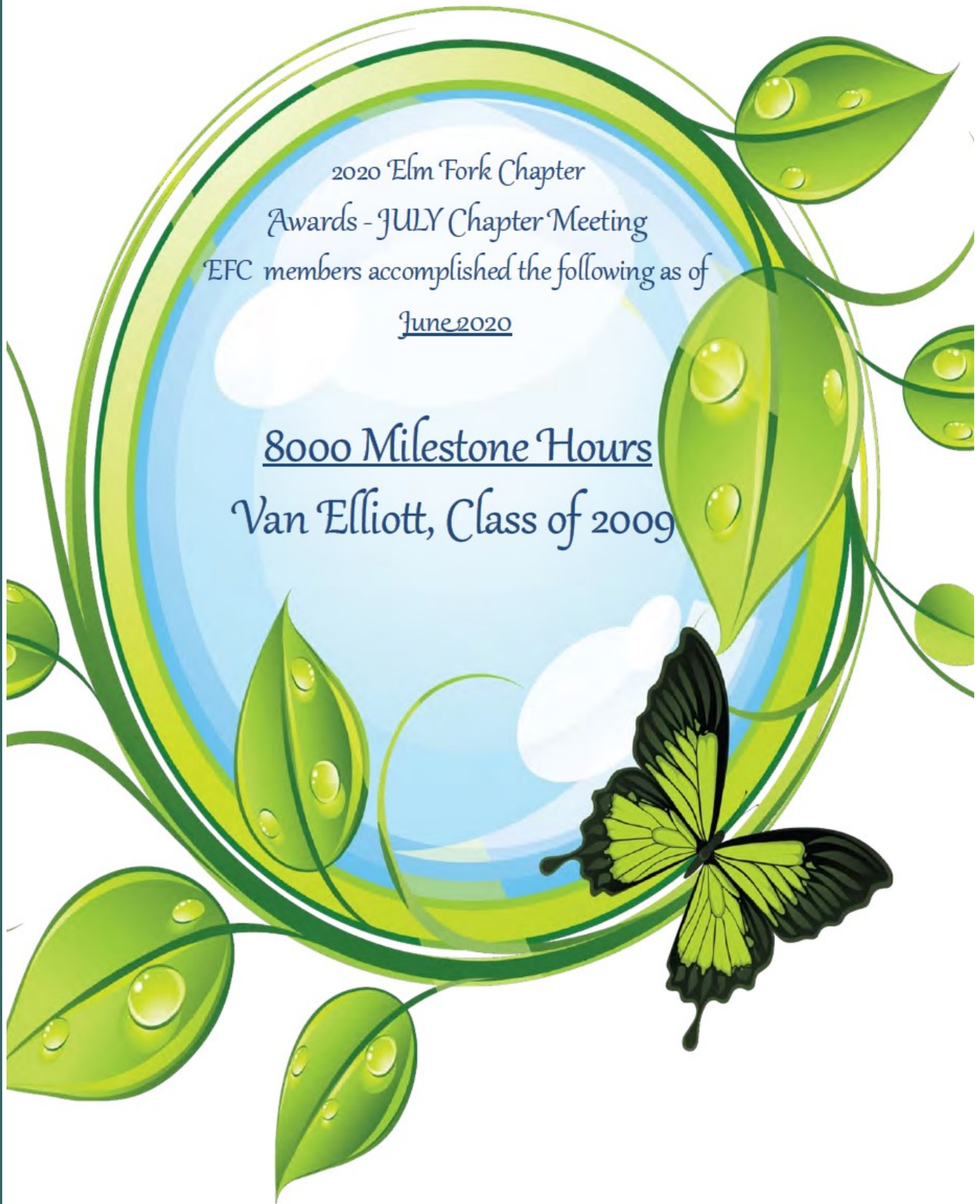
Mary Morrow, Class of 2014



And the Work Goes On—Hours Accomplished

2020 Elm Fork Chapter
Awards - JULY Chapter Meeting
EFC members accomplished the following as of
June 2020

8000 Milestone Hours
Van Elliott, Class of 2009



What's Next

This comes from Rita Lokie

August Monthly Meeting Speaker—Zoom presentation

Michael Fox, a well-known local nature photographer, will do a presentation on Odonates (Dragonflies and Damselflies) at our next chapter Zoom meeting on August 20, 2020. Mr. Fox has lived in North Texas all his life and spent much of his youth in Fannin County. He began photographing nature in 2011 at LLELA and was drawn to Dragonflies and Damselflies through iNaturalist. He has since photo-documented over 80 species of Odonates, most of them at LLELA. When he can break away from Dragonflies, he manages to find time to earn a living in the global IT market.

During his presentation, Mr. Fox will discuss the history and anatomy of Odonates and talk about the differences between Dragonflies and Damselflies. He will also provide tips on how to observe them, including the best times and locations to see them as well as the best binoculars, spotting scopes, and cameras to use to get a better view. In addition, he will go over some of the field guides you can use to identify them. Given that the Texas Master Naturalist logo is the Dragonfly, this will be an interesting and informative presentation.

Projects in and around the community

Summertime Abundance at Green Acres

Jean Mason

Once again, nature is abundantly sharing her summer beauty with us. This is the story for the summer at Green Acres: collecting seeds and deadheading, and removing invasives (dallis grass seed heads, curly dock, bermuda grass, and saplings). We are continually weeding, mulching, and watering. In addition to our Tuesday workday, we have a Friday watering team, Jean M and Karen J. And Green Acres flourishes due to the work of many willing hands.

On the prairie, our little bluestem rescues from Harlington Park are doing very well. We also rescued Indian grass, bushy blue stem, green milkweed (which is coming back from the root), silverleaf nightshade, and we have the thorny cousin, western horsenettle, too. Big thanks to those who helped on the Harlington Park plant rescue: Becky B, Brenda T, Caroline F, Cindy V, Dale D, Irene H, Jean M, Jim G, Karen J, Kathy W, Linda C, Lisa R, Mary S, Nancy M, Randy C. We created 4 new beds on the Green Acres prairie.

The Monarch Station has a continual parade of blossoms, and we've added clammyweed and made a teepee for some passionvine that has come up. In the wetlands area, we have marsh fleabane, from a start from LLELA in 2017. The edible native garden has frogfruit, chile pequin, gayfeather, prickly pear cactus, beautyberry.

Projects in and around the community—Green Acres cont'd

We have wonderful new signs at the Monarch Station – thank you, Jim! We are making progress on the two interpretive signs for host and nectar plants. Russell Tyson is building the rebar frames, and Mary Morrow is collecting photos to make the pages that will be printed.

Some of our bluebird boxes are working on a 4th group of fledglings. LeeAnn W has faithfully monitored the 8 boxes since February.

In our bee boxes, we think we have mason bees, leafcutter bees and perhaps, beneficial wasps. We appreciate all of Bob Bender's good work on this!

We now have two rain gauges. One is on the prairie, and we have a 2nd one in the monarch station where we record the rain amount by using a QR code, a little similar to Jim G's new project, P200611 CoCoRaHS Precipitation Monitoring.

If you'd like to join us, please contact Becky Bertoni. There is always something to be done and lots of space to spread out!

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul alike."

John Muir



Becky & rosinweed



Becky, Jim, Nancy behind the great growing of little bluestem.



Linda,
Becky,
Caro-
line,
Jim

Projects in and around the community— Green Acres cont'd



Kathy & rattlesnake master

Irene Hanson among little blue stem



Little Blue Stem



New signs



mantis



Polistes dorsalis



Monarch Station
in June

Steel blue cricket hunter



Wheel bug

Projects in and around the community

My goodness with the advent of the Covid pandemic and hot weather causing us all to social distance and remain at home when possible, I have done more house projects in the last 90 days than in the past 5 years. It is often quoted when “one door of opportunity closes another opens”. Hoping you have had the same good fortune as me and found ways to be productive while enjoying hobbies, writing, reading from home.

Late the afternoon of July 6th, [Tuesday] Nikki, in the AgriLife office, emailed Betty Mullenweg to request “spur of the moment” assistance from the Master Naturalist Information Specialists [MNIS]. The mission was to distribute Personal Protection Equipment [PPE] to day care workers in Denton County. The service times were July 7th, Wednesday from 9 am to 12 noon and July 8th, Thursday from 4 to 7 pm. For sure not much lead time. Betty issued an email request for service; Karen Dreger and John Carpenter were quick to respond and represented our chapter very well, while working in less than desirable conditions. They masked up and rose to the occasion. Thank you much, Karen and John.



The Texas Department of Emergency Management helped procure PPE supplies for childcare providers around the state. Texas A&M AgriLife district offices distributed PPE to the county offices for distribution to the local centers. Denton County had 81 childcare providers who signed up to receive supplies. Each center was given a box of masks, box of gloves, and bottle of hand sanitizer. Janet and Nikki were very appreciative of our help and know they can call on us when needed.

The volunteer future schedule is who knows when? There will be no P160211 service for August. Nikki will let us know when we have been cleared to return to duty and most likely will continue this way for awhile.

Stay safe, be kind to one another, have a good attitude and look forward to better times.

Van Elliott

Project Manager P160211 – AgriLife Office Services

Monthly Special Meet a Master

Meet a Master: Clay Thurmond

by Sue YOST, class of 2017



Where are you from? All over Texas. Born in Wichita Falls, formative years spent on a citrus farm in Rio Grande Valley then back to North Texas and Graham.

Marital status? Married for life to Judy who I met in junior high.

Kids, Grand kids We have one son, Lee, & one delightful granddaughter, Naiyah, who will be in second grade next year, & hopefully out to Clear Creek for DISD School Days.

Pets Can I include the plants, rat snake, and possums we harbor in our yard?

Aside from them, we have downsized to one 11 year old Jack Russell cross, Sadie. This from a one time high of 13 dogs, 4 cats, 3 birds, and assorted rodents.

Work history Presbyterian Hospital (Albuquerque) - Unit Secretary and Cardiac Monitor Tech; Albuquerque Ambulance Services - EMT; Dillards - Support Manger. Dillards was supposed to be a temporary job, but it took 33 years to attain escape velocity.

Schooling Two years at Stephen F. Austin University, ultimately graduating from the University of New Mexico. Also Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute, now, Central New Mexico Community College. I'm a big fan of technical vocational education.

What class year? Class of 2016

How long a long a MN? four years now. I must say this was totally not on my retirement radar, but I am thrilled to be part of this organization.

Favorite pastime Hiking and taking photos at Clear Creek.

Favorite food so many! I don't get it often enough, but Korean is a favorite. New Mexican style cooking is a favorite. Enchiladas and tamales are always a winner.

Favorite place to visit Any place new

Favorite animal Well that would have to be Sadie. Aside from her, the generations of possums that call our place home.

Favorite MN volunteer opportunity Clear Creek, what else?

Share a funny story /antidote about being a MN. I don't think there is an antidote to being a MN - once you've caught it, you have it for life. Probably the funniest is how I fried, or rather, drowned my phone while helping with benthic monitoring. I was out in Hickory Creek looking for a mid-stream location to pull samples from. Adelaide advised me to not go any further, but using the net as a walking stick, I thought I was ok. That is, until I stepped into a hole that sent me underwater. I hadn't zipped the pocket on my waders where I had my cell phone and it fried. Of course, everyone on the bank was laughing hard.

Tell us something we'd be surprised to know about you. Playing the 6 degrees of Kevin Bacon, I figured out that I am two degrees removed from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Monthly Special—Citizen Science Corner by Jim Gerber



Project Squirrel



Project Squirrel is calling all citizen scientists of all ages to count the number of squirrels in their neighborhoods and report their findings. The goal is to understand tree squirrel ecology. Some neighborhoods may have grey (and “black” squirrels, which are almost always grey squirrels!), fox, and red squirrels while a nearby town only has one species. In many places, it seems one species or another is becoming more common. Learn how to identify these three tree squirrels then report your observations about their presence or absence and some of the ecological conditions of your neighborhood.

Anyone can participate in Project Squirrel. No matter where you live, city or suburb, from the Midwest to the East Coast, Canada to Mexico, The U.K. to Italy, if tree squirrels live in your neighborhood, you are encouraged to become a squirrel monitor.

The scientists at Project Squirrel will also use this project to understand the effect that participation in citizen science has on participants and data quality. By contributing to Project Squirrel and documenting your experience, you can provide valuable information that will eventually be used to learn how valuable citizen scientists are to the advancement of scientific knowledge as a whole.

How do I sign up?

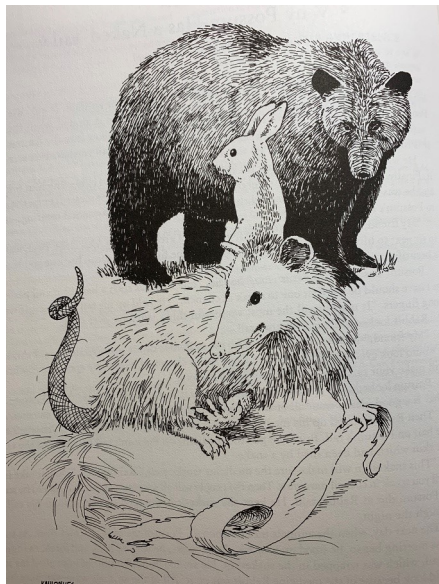
Go to <https://scistarter.org/project-squirrel> and click the “Participate” button (you will need a SciStarter account, also).

If you have an idea for a future Citizen Science Corner, please send it to Jim Gerber (jvgerber@gmail.com).



Features

From Sue Yost



Why the Possum Has a Naked Tail

One of the many stories from
 “Keepers of the Animals Native American Stories”
 by Caduto & Bruchac Cherokee-Southeast

In the old days, Possum had the most beautiful tail of all the animals. It was covered with long silky hair and Possum liked nothing better than to wave it around when the Animal People met together in council. He would hold up his tail and show it to the Animal People.

“You see my tail,” he would say. “Is it not the most beautiful tail you have ever seen? Surely it is finer than any other animal’s!”

He was so proud of his tail that the other animals became tired of hearing him brag about it. Finally Rabbit decided to do something about it. Rabbit was the messenger for the animals and he was the one who always told them when there was to be a council meeting. He went to Possum’s house.

“My friend,” Rabbit said, “there’s going to be a great meeting. Our chief, Bear, wants you to sit next to him in council. He wants you to be the first one to speak because you have such a beautiful tail.”

Possum was flattered. “It is true,” he said, “one who has such a beautiful and perfect tail as I have should be the first one to speak in council.” He held up his tail, combing it with his long fingers. “Is not my tail the most wonderful thing you have ever seen?”

Rabbit looked close at Possum’s tail.

“My friend,” Rabbit said, “it seems to me as if your tail is just a little dirty. I think it would look even better if you would allow me to clean it. I have some special medicine that will make your tail look just the way it should look.”

Possum looked close at his tail. It did seem as if it was a little dirty. “Yes,” Possum said, “that is a good idea. I want all the animals to admire my tail when I speak in council.”

Then Rabbit mixed up his medicine. It was very strong, so strong that it loosened all of the hair on Possum’s tail. But as he put the medicine on Possum’s tail he wrapped the tail in skin which had been shed by a snake.

“This snakeskin will make sure the medicine works well,” Rabbit said. “Do not take it off until you speak in council tomorrow. Then the people will see all your tail just as it should be seen.”

Possum did as Rabbit said. He kept the snakeskin wrapped tightly around his tail all the through the night.

The next day, when the animals met for council, Possum sat next to Chief Bear. As soon as the meeting began, he stood up to speak. As he spoke, he walked back and forth, swinging his tail, which was wrapped in the snakeskin. He smiled as he thought of how good his tail would look because of the medicine Rabbit put on it. All the animals were watching him very closely, looking at his tail. Possum grinned at the thought of how beautiful his tail would look. The time was right.

“My friends,” Possum said, holding up his tail and beginning to unwrap the snakeskin, “I have been chosen to start this council because of my tail. It is the finest of all tails. Look at my beautiful tail!”

Possum pulled off the snakeskin wrapping and as he did so, all of the hair fell off his tail. His tail was naked and ugly and when Possum saw it, the grin froze on his face. All of the animals were looking at him. Possum was so ashamed, that he fell down on the ground and pretended to be dead. He did not move until long after all the other animals had gone.

To this day, Possum still has that foolish grin on his face and whenever he feels threatened, he pretends he is dead. And, because he was so vain, Possum has the ugliest tail of all the animals.

Features

A Yellow Jacket is not Clothing

by Bob James

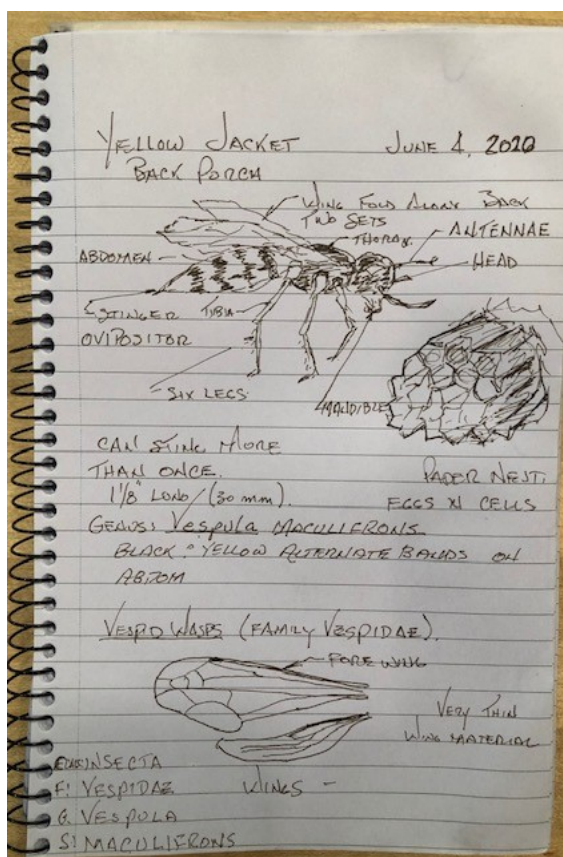
I have been involved in a war with a small yellow and black flying insect for almost my entire life. Last spring I was in my backyard watering bushes next to my house. All of a sudden a horde of these creatures came boiling out of the bushes ready to attack the intruder. One of them stung me on the hand and as I tried to run from their attack I fell and couldn't get up. Well, I thought, they have finally won and they are going to sting me to death in my own backyard. Amazingly though, they backed off! They seemed to take some pity on this old wounded warrior and they returned to their nest in the bushes. I crawled to my back porch and was able to get up with the use of a patio chair. That night I returned and attacked with a vengeance, destroying their nest and decimating their warriors. The war continues, however.

My first painful experience with Yellow Jackets occurred on my grandmother's back porch. I must have been five or six years old when one stung me on my left shoulder. I cried and my mother and grandmother applied ice to the wound. After the pain had subsided somewhat they smeared it with Calamine Lotion, the balm used at that time for any skin problem. The war had begun and I was more careful in the future.

A number of years later, as a teenager, I was fishing the Clear Fork of the Trinity River in Fort Worth just south of the T&P railroad tracks. The river flows east from Benbrook Lake all the way to Forest Park in Fort Worth. I was fishing the area where Hulen Street now crosses the river. Moving up the river I reached what was then called the "Well Hole" which was a wide area in the river and very deep. Walking the bank on the north side I saw there were a number of women sitting in lawn chairs under the huge cottonwood trees on the south bank about 150 feet away. They all had cane poles and were probably fishing for catfish using chicken entrails or worms for bait. As I stood there trying to decide where to fish a Yellow Jacket landed on my shoe and crawled up my left pants leg until it arrived right behind my knee. Then, he decided to sting me in that soft sensitive area. I shouted and grabbed the back of my pants behind the knee. Knowing he might sting me again I immediately unbuttoned my jeans and shucked them off right down to my underwear. I opened my hand with the Yellow Jacket in the cloth and saw it was crushed and dead. Then, I looked up and saw the women on the south bank laughing like mad at this kid doing a strip show right in front of them. Embarrassed I quickly put my pants on, picked up my fly rod and fishing gear and waved at the women as I walked off up the river. They were still laughing and clapped as I left!

When I worked at Balcones Research Center in Austin I had a friend named Red Worley. He told me he was allergic to Wasp stings and if stung he would pass out and possibly die. He carried a small kit that had a syringe in it with an anaphylaxis treatment to inject if stung. The small bottle held epinephrine which countered the venom. Now there is a handy pen-like instrument called an EpiPen which makes administering the medicine more convenient. The Yellow Jacket injects Mastoparan and Phospholipase A1 when they sting you and it can be quite painful. Ice works wonders to relieve the pain.

Features—Yellow Jacket cont'd



Almost all of the Yellow Jackets (*Vespula maculifrons*) in North Texas are paper wasps about 1 1/8 inch long. They are members of the Vespidae family and they are capable of stinging more than once, unlike the Honey Bee. They are black and yellow on their abdomen, with a black thorax and black head. The stinger is at the very end of the ovipositor (See attached sketch from my Journal). They have, like all insects, six legs. Their four wings are almost translucent; two large forewings and two smaller aft wings. The wings fold back along the thorax when they are not flying.

Yellow Jackets are very social creatures. They build paper-like nests in protected areas of porches, eaves or soffits of houses, garages or barns. The paper-like nest consists of small tube like cylinders clustered together containing eggs laid by the Queen. Approximately 30 days after the eggs are laid the larva emerge and develop into pupae and then into adult insects. These adults are sterile female workers and males that support the queen and the young. Some of the females that develop after the first generation and males leave the nest and mate. The males die and the fertilized

females go into hibernation for the winter. Those that survive the winter then emerge as new queens. Some nests in areas that do not freeze can continue to grow with 100,000 or more workers in the colony. I have seen nests in South Texas that are more than 12 inches in diameter.

Yellow Jackets are attracted by the sap and juices of fruits but have a very diverse diet. They will eat carrion and garbage. They are opportunistic scavengers and hunters. I have seen Yellow Jackets eating mites on rose bushes. They have few predators but birds will eat them as well as frogs and lizards. Female bee moths (*Aphomia sociella*) will lay eggs in the paper nests and the hatched larvae will then feed on the eggs, larvae and pupae of the wasps destroying large parts of the nest while looking for food.

So, my advice is to steer clear of these critters when possible and try not to go to war with them. They certainly outnumber me in our ongoing war. Yellow Jackets are a formidable enemy and they can ruin your picnic.

Yellow Jackets

These social wasps swarm in September searching out sugar, discarded sodas, following a woman's fruity perfume; they are careless in their hunger, falling into paint cans, entering cars, driven to consume, to sip and sample, and often, hungry, angry and sting.

Patti White

Features

CHECKING IN WITH THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST CLASS OF 2019 DURING THE QUARANTINE

As a member of the TMN Class of 2019, I found myself wondering if I would earn enough service hours in order to be certified this year. Many of the service opportunities I had on my calendar “disappeared” due to the pandemic. I contacted Elise Spain, and she recommended that I reach out to our class to get a feel for what everyone has been up to this summer – COVID-style! To quote Elise, “It’s been a very unconventional year with many of the traditional service opportunities less active than usual (by a long shot).” My assignment is two-part: (1) to find out what my classmates have been up to this summer; and (2) hear about the creative ways people are achieving their service and AT hours. Lucky for me, writing this article for the newsletter will inch me closer to my goal. But LUCKIER for me is that I got to communicate with many classmates – people that I met about a year ago, some of whom I got to know well.

I emailed our class (apparently the largest ever – 36) to see what they have been up to. Some have taken amazing trips; others have stayed close to home. My husband, Dave, and I are in the latter group. Amazingly enough, we have enjoyed tons of wildlife in our own back yard in Hickory Creek. We’ve seen rabbits, lizards, one snake, frogs/toads, and tons of birds. Birds that have visited our four feeders: doves, finches, hummingbirds, gold finches, cardinals, grackles, yellow bellied sapsuckers, brown headed cow birds, red winged blackbirds, and a rare visit from some yellow headed blackbirds. Oh, and something, probably an opossum, is leaving presents of scat on our patio.



On several occasions in the springtime, we did wander over to LLELA and Clear Creek to hike and for Dave to practice his trail guide skills. The walks were wonderful outings, but how is it that I can come home with 20 bites and him zero?

LLELA



Cathy Milliger might win the prize of most adventurous. She drove to the Grand Canyon, Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park – a “bucket list” trip for her. She spotted elk, pelicans, a bald eagle, Canada geese, osprey, coyote and mule deer. She said the cold, fresh air was worth the trip and she plans on going back next year.



Cathy Millican Grand Canyon at Yellowstone



Features—Checking In cont'd

Mark Sandel, even with having knee surgery early in the year, went camping in Colorado for 10 days.

Karen Dreger took trips to Lake Bob Sandlin State Park, Atlanta State Part and Daingerfield State Park in northeast Texas. Located in the Piney Woods Region, these three parks had great lake views through the pine trees. She hiked, geocached and had a breakfast picnic by the lake. Sounds heavenly!

Savannah Thomas is volunteering at the Fort Worth Botanical Garden and has signed up to be a GROW volunteer at BRIT.

Leonard Chochrek has been holding down the fort at LLELA. He was only impacted when LLELA was closed. Once it reopened, he continued with Monday Mayhem, Trailhead Tuesday and Wednesday Workday.

Shirlee Singer has been keeping herself busy doing needlepoint of butterflies and their caterpillars. She will be documenting these needlepoints with butterfly and plant popular and scientific names. She got a new toy – a rain gauge – and will begin reporting on that soon. Shirlee has also been gardening and propagating plants.



Maggie Watt participated in the seed collection at Lake Ray Roberts. She helped collect horsemint and partridge pea seeds and said it was a great project with “easy social distancing”. Daniel shared some interesting facts about each of these which made it all the more enjoyable.

Dale Denton and his son made trips to a house they have near Lake Whitney to do needed repairs, and Dale has taught Cooking and Camping Merit Badge segments for his son's scout troop as well as participating in Conservation Hour workdays for the scouts at Heritage Elementary's Texas Our Heritage garden.

Shirlee Singer's needlepoint

Regarding initial certification statistics, so many of the Class of 2019 have already achieved this goal. Congrats to them! Mary Morrow took a look at the recertification stats and was pleasantly surprised that the numbers were not that far off compared to 2019 stats at this time last year. That is very hopeful! And for those of us (and I am in this group) that still need hours, we can do it! Mary suggested iNaturalist as a great year round tool to learn a lot about what flora and fauna exists in our area.

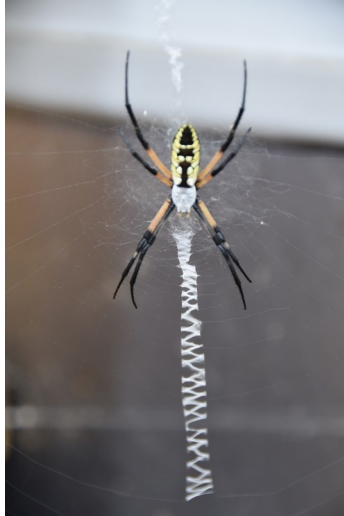
According to Jody Springer, the projects that have been most heavily impacted are those in the training and education and the public outreach areas. These include projects like DISD School Days and the summer programs for children such as Flower Mound WILD, Growing UP Wild, the Texas Native Plant Art Exhibition, and the AgriLife Office. Some positive news from Sharon and Jerry Betty is that – although in the initial planning stages - beginning in October Clear Creek will be continuing with their education stations and interacting with 1500 fourth grade DISD students via ZOOM meetings. There will be presentations on snakes, mammals of Clear Creek, erosion, bees and possibly a virtual hike. How did we manage before technology?

Here's hoping that you all stay safe, stay healthy, stay active and I'm looking forward to the day when we can meet again in person.

Features

From Marilyn Blanton

Yellow Garden Spider



female with her zigzag pattern on her web

I knew she was there, I'd seen her before
Settled quietly on her web by the door

With a full body and voluptuous shape
What a fashion statement she'd make

In striking black and yellow, she looked great
Hanging head down on her web of circular shape

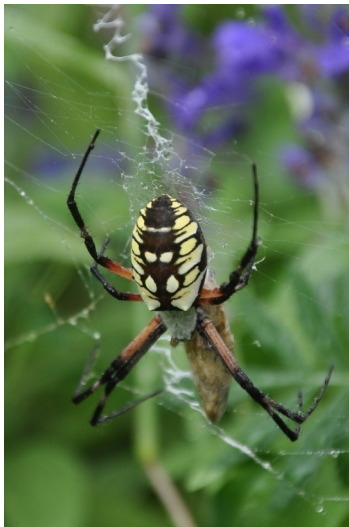
Her legs were long and her eyes were bright
I thought she was such a lovely sight

With a touch of tan and silvery white
Her pattern was stunning in the morning light

I looked later in the day to see if she was
still on display
And found her still waiting on her web in
glorious array

Like an intricate work of art, her web was
complete
Signed with her zigzag signature to make
it unique

I stopped just before dark to see my
friend once more
And there she was just like before, sitting
on her web by the door



With her captured prey



egg case.

Yellow Garden Spider

The yellow garden spider is a common spider that is also known as the black and yellow garden spider and the zigzag spider. It's scientific name, *Argiope aurantia*, means "gilded silver face". The spider is not aggressive but can bite if disturbed. The bite is said to be similar to a bumblebee sting. The female is much larger and more colorful than the male. The yellow garden spider is in the orb weaver family. They are known for their large circular webs. Their webs have a vertical stabilimentum (reinforced area) that makes a zigzag pattern. The large female normally sits head down in the center of her web.

Let's Read

Book Recommendation (Robert's Readings)

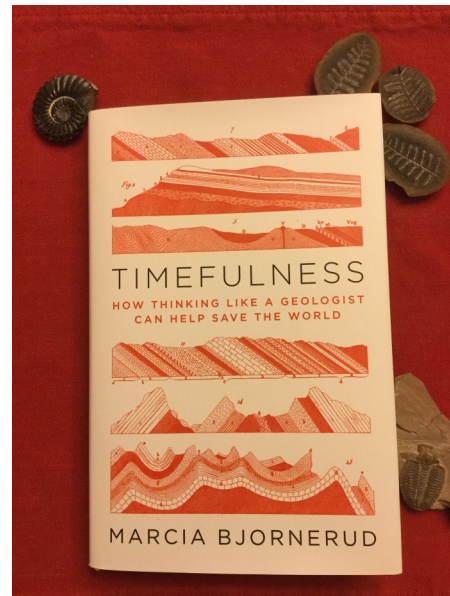
As a boy, my father took me to a flat, rock ledge in the desert mountains of what would later become part of Franklin Mountains State Park. There, worn into the flat rock, was a group of about a dozen mortar pits, about 10 inches deep and six inches across, that were used by Native Americans to grind seeds hundreds of years before. Looking closer you saw, trapped in the rock itself, fossil seashells and corals from a time millions of years ago when this area was covered by a shallow sea.

This isolated patch of rock filled my eight-year-old mind with questions: How long did it take to carve out a 10-inch deep pit in the rock using only another rock as a tool? How long did these people live here? How long ago had an ocean covered the place where I was now standing? That afternoon provided me with a somewhat awestruck awareness of just how much time had to have passed before I could stand there to wonder at these holes worn down into the rock.

Timefulness (How Thinking Like A Geologist Can Help Save the World) by Marcia Bjornerud attempts to expand the reader's "time-literacy", exploring both the "depths" and the "shallows" of geologic time. Illustrating how the Earth is molded by changes that are nearly instantaneous (such as meteor impacts, where only a few seconds alter the face of the planet) and by changes that are agonizingly slow (such as the movement of the continents which speed along at about the same rate as your fingernails grow).

Increasing our understanding of the Earth's systems which are highly stable over time and which systems are precariously balanced and can change rapidly; may lead us to better decisions concerning the stewardship of our Earth.

As Master Naturalists we have gained increased appreciations of animals, plants, water, and the land. This book may increase your appreciation of another of the Earth's intricacies: geologic time.



Book Recommendation—Robert's Readings is hosted by Robert McLaughlin, class 2017. His name was inadvertently left off last month. Editor received inquiries as to the name!

Notices

From Jody Springer

Announcing the publication of the 2020 Service Project Directory!

With the considerable contribution of each of our chapter Project Managers, the Projects Committee has compiled a directory presenting each of our active volunteer service projects. By collecting a consistent set of information for each project, we can see and compare how our projects:

- Address TMN program purposes,
- Organize project activities to drive purpose achievement, and
- Intersect with the TMN curriculum subjects.

Project managers have also provided detailed information about the work environment and physical requirements for their project volunteers and lots of information about where to find more information and how to volunteer.

We invite you to explore the new Service Project Directory and related information. It is our hope that you will find the new resources to be valuable whether you are a 2020 Class trainee or a seasoned chapter member.

To find the new Service Project Directory, navigate to the Chapter website, select Members Only from the Member Support drop-down listing. (You may be prompted to input the chapter password.) Then select "Service Projects". (<https://txmn.org/elmfork/service-project-summary/>)

The Directory is available as a downloadable Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file. In the same area, you will find a listing of all Chapter active projects with clickable links for each project at the project number. The link connects to a detailed two-page project profile.

Because this is a new resource and presentation, we welcome your questions, comments and ideas for improvement. Please reach out to any of our committee members or send an email to projects@efctmn.org.

Again, many thanks to chapter Project Managers from the Projects Committee:
Regina Dale, Mike Hatch, Susan Pohlen, Jody Springer, Kathy Webb and Fran Witte



Newly emerged cicada from Dale Meyer

Notices

TMN-EFC 2020 Training Classes Begin August 18

We'll be blazing virtual trails with the 2020 Training Class beginning on August 18, and we welcome the 17 pioneering members of our new class! We'll share more about the virtual classes and modified field trips with pictures as we get them, but now it's time to thank committee members for being MVPs in making plans.

The Training Committee has been stellar in rising to the challenges this year! I thank **Regina Dale** (MN 2019), a very creative Co-Chair; **Jim Gerber** (MN 2019), the person in charge of technology for the classes; **Mary Cissell** (MN 2015), speakers; **Gale Bacon** (MN 2018), evaluations and VMS; **Dale Meyer** (MN 2011), mentoring; and **Missy McCormick** (MN 2019), secretary. We also thank **Jean McMeans**, **Cindy Edington**, and **Ron Edington** who began the year with us and helped plan what the 2020 Training Class has become.

With classes on Zoom, it was Regina's brainstorm to create **Zoombee**, our class mascot. You may see Zoombee show up in several places over the next 12 weeks!

--Elise Spain, Co-Chair with Regina Dale for the 2020 Training Class



From Karen Dreger

SWAt is going virtual!

The Science With Attitude (SWAt) team is going virtual this Fall offering distance learning programs for schools and groups. Since most schools are distance learning (online class) to start the school year or if they are returning to campus, outside volunteers are not allowed, SWAt decided to join in and embrace teaching our popular topics through virtual programs. Currently we are updating our website to allow teachers to still request topics and dates for a SWAt member to join their class remotely and teach a topic.

Since the usual field trips to Clear Creek this Fall have been cancelled - we have decided to have a virtual Clear Creek...LIVE! The DISD School Days at Clear Creek is also going virtual with 5 topics that will be broadcast to the schools via Zoom. Dates are still being determined, but the topics will include snakes, bees, pelts (mammals of Clear Creek), forces of nature (with the water table) and a guided hike.

Stay tuned for more updates on our SWAt virtual programs or join us for our monthly meeting every fourth Thursday of the month at 9:30am. If you would like to get involved with SWAt, please contact: Toni Benjamin.

Notices

August 21 Isle du Bois unit (Pilot Point)

What: Wildflower seed collection

Time: 8:00 - 10:00 am

Meet up Location: Bluestem parking lot

VMS: Service hours (work time plus driving time) P060212:RM: Ray Roberts SP

Instructions: Please wear the TMN badge - no park entrance fee is required to volunteer at the park.

Daniel Rios will provide an overview of what the group will be doing and why we do this.

2020 Virtual Annual Meeting October 14-17, 2020

The Annual meeting agenda is posted online. Registration will begin next week. Contest information is available on the website. Check your photos for a prize winner to submit or create a video about being a naturalist in a pandemic.

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

Video Contest <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2020-video-contest-rules-submission/>

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller is urging Texans to take extreme precaution when receiving unsolicited seed packets from China. These packets have been mailed to multiple states, including Texas, falsely labeled as jewelry. Residents are advised not to plant the seeds as they could contain harmful invasive species or be otherwise unsafe.

"I am urging folks to take this matter seriously," Commissioner Miller said. "An invasive plant species might not sound threatening, but these small invaders could destroy Texas agriculture. TDA has been working closely with USDA to analyze these unknown seeds so we can protect Texas residents."

If you receive a foreign package containing seeds do not open it or plant the contents. Keep contents contained in their original sealed package.

An invasive species is an organism that is not native to a particular region. The introduction of this "alien species" can cause economic or environmental harm. In agriculture, an invasive species can destroy native crops, introduce disease to native plants and may be dangerous for livestock.

Please report unsolicited seed packages to SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov

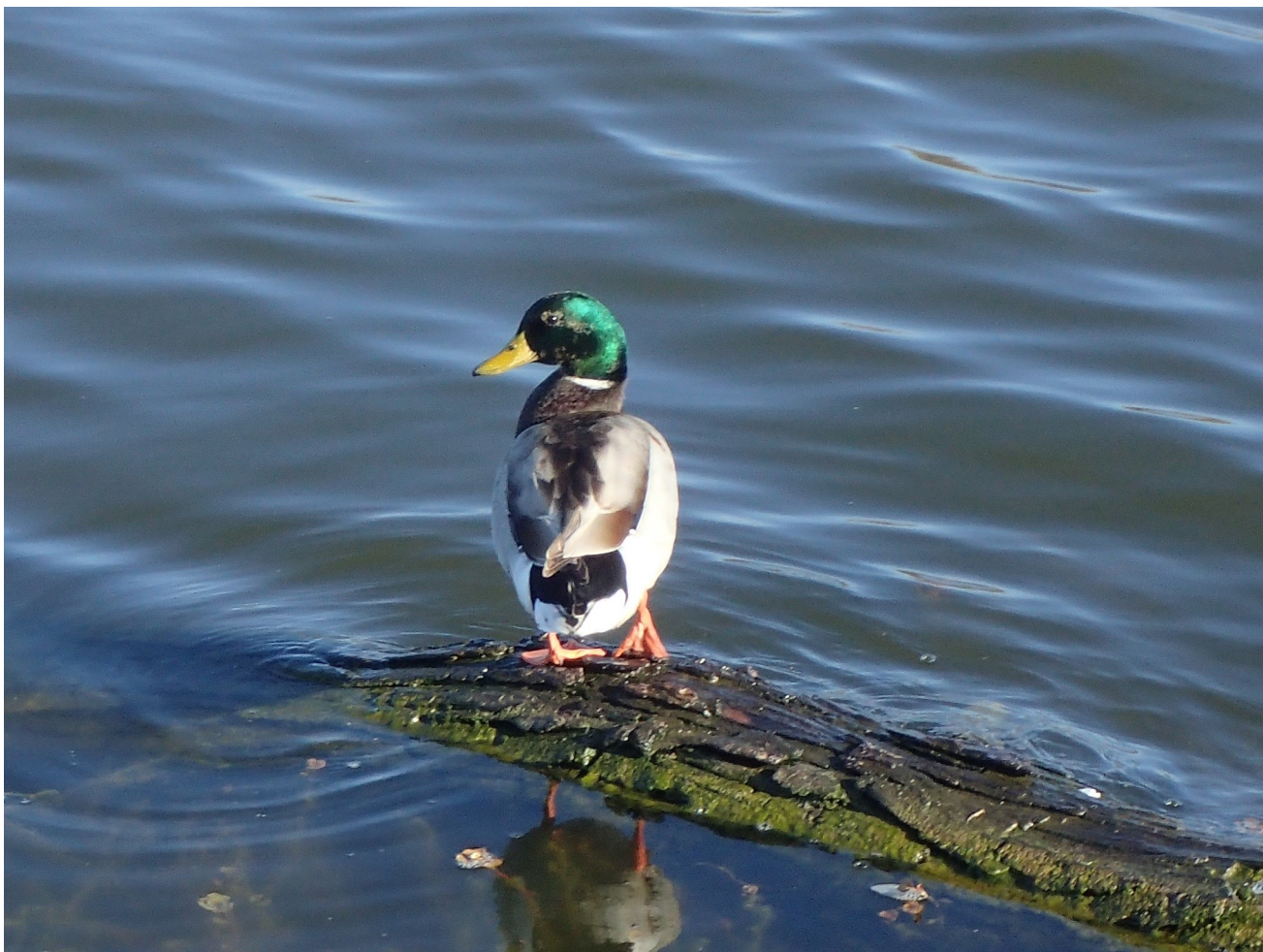
More information can be found here: <http://ow.ly/Dlcy50AJJlr>

Thank you,

Chase T. Brooke

**County Extension Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources - Collin County
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.**

Field Notes in Focus



Mallard—From the gallery of Jonathan Reynolds

If you would like to contribute photos of flora and fauna for this section please send to:

newsletter@efctmn.org

Photo Gallery



Partridge pea from Jonathan Reynolds



Red River from Jonathan Reynolds

Contributors to this Naturalist News



wanda odum
editor, class 2005



Van Elliott class 2009

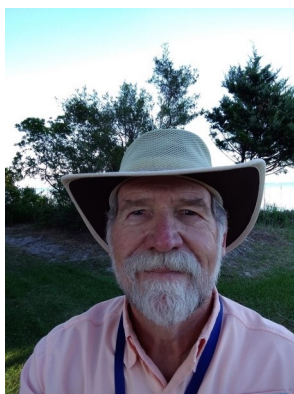


Elise Spain class 2017

Mary Morrow class 2014



Sue Yost class 2017



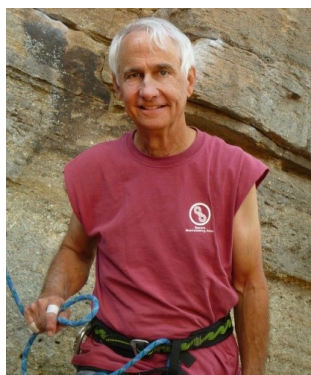
Jim Gerber class 2019



Judi Elliott class 2009



Marilyn Blanton class 1999



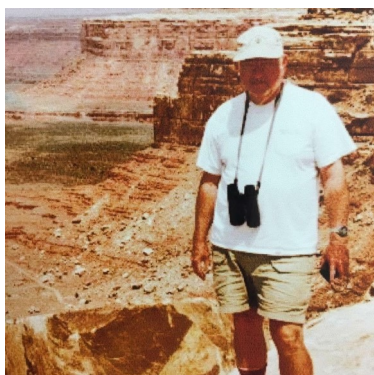
Jonathan Reynolds class 2014



Jean Mason class 2017



Rita Lokie class 2013



Bob James class 2003



Dale class 2011 & Deborah class 2012 Meyer



Robert McLaughlin 2017

Almost the Last Word

"Raining cats and dogs"



ANIMALS FALLING FROM THE SKY IS JUST ABSURD -
UNLESS IT'S FROGS, BEETLES, WORMS, SNAKES, SPIDERS
OR OCCASIONAL JELLYFISH.

We're glad this doesn't literally happen. That would be ridiculous, right? Animals falling from the sky is just absurd - unless it's frogs, beetles, worms, snakes, spiders or occasionally jellyfish. That's just normal, apparently. It is thought that the animals are "collected" by the wind during a storm or hurricane, and carried on the jet-stream to fall on our unsuspecting heads. A nice headpiece from the tentree accessories line will help keep these out of your hair - better stock up in case of insect-rain-apocalypse.

[https://www.tentree.com/blogs/
posts/10-funny-things-you-
only-find-in-nature](https://www.tentree.com/blogs/posts/10-funny-things-you-only-find-in-nature)

Want to be a Naturalist News contributor?
Send to:

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We're on the Web
www.txmn.org/elmfork

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Our mission . . . "to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our community"

Our vision . . . "in our community, Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future."

Board Meetings

The Board meets each second Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. The Board last met August 13, 2020. Next monthly Board meeting September 10, 2020.

Monthly Board meetings are open to members.

Regular Monthly Chapter Meetings

9:30 a.m. preceded by a social time at 9:00 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Chapter meetings are open to the public. Next meeting:

Virtual meeting on August 20, 2020

Michael Fox "Odonates (Dragonflies and Damselflies)"

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD:

PRESIDENT—Brenda Wellenreiter

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT—Adelaide Bodner

VICE-PRESIDENT/PROJECTS—Jody Springer

SECRETARY—Kathryn Wells

TREASURER—Jerry Betty

MEMBER-at-LARGE—Harriet Powell

CLASS 2019 REPRESENTATIVE— David Jones

ADVISORS:

Janet Laminack, Extension Agent

TPWD—unfilled at this time



Wanda odum—
pen from 2019