

April 20, 2021

Dear Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Master Naturalist Volunteers,

For so many of our Texas Master Naturalist volunteers, this time of year holds promise of time spent outside. Springtime in Texas is a perfect mixture of cool weather, roadside blooms as far as the eye can see, bird and butterfly migrations and so many other signs of life rejoicing. While these past two years held challenges impossible to predict, it also hosted a ray of hope, moments of Zen and a need for gratitude.

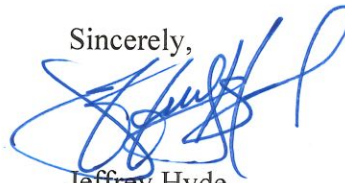
As times are constantly in flux, the value of getting outdoors, conserving our natural resources, and engaging in civic service to the betterment of our state's natural wonders is ever constant and of utmost value. And our Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are keenly positioned to get us there, providing our communities with opportunities to spend time outside and learn about these wonders at the same time! The core values of the Master Naturalist program hold strong in these times of turmoil. Our volunteer's dedication to their local community's outdoor spaces and natural areas is a model for organizations and agencies throughout the state.

The month of April is celebrated as National Volunteer Month, normally highlighted in the third week of the month. But the Texas Master Naturalist program and its 6,000+ volunteers deserve our agency's appreciation year-round! In 2020 alone, Texas Master Naturalist volunteer contributed 375,285 volunteer service hours to the benefit of our state's natural resources. Master Naturalist projects in 2020 included building and maintaining nature trails, conserving over 2,112 acres of native habitats, building birding stations, participating in science-based citizen data collection such as the City Nature Challenge or Monarch Watch programs, planting wildscapes and butterfly way stations, and much more.

Specific to the mission of Texas A&M AgriLife – *“works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service”* – the Texas Master Naturalist Program reached an audience of more than 50,000 Texans in 2020 with conservation programming, research, and leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. This impact extends the potential of our state agency beyond what is possible with the 1,800 county agents, extension specialists, staff, and program leaders.

Thank you to each one of you! You are on the front lines of conservation outreach and stewardship and its needed now more than ever. Stay well, stay active and we will see you again in person soon!

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Hyde
Director

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
600 John Kimbrough Blvd., Ste. 509 | 7101 TAMU | College Station, Texas 77843-7101

Tel. 979.314-8202 | Fax. 979.845.9542 | jeff.hyde@ag.tamu.edu | AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu