



Sessions Agenda & Descriptions

Virtual Access Sessions Only

Updated August 20, 2022

Please Note:

All items on the agenda are tentative and subject to change prior to event registration and the final event agenda.

Please consider the environment before printing this 20+ page agenda.

T E X A S



OUR MISSION

To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

Program State Sponsoring Agencies:



About the 2022 Annual Meeting

*Welcome to Houston, Texas! This year marks our 23rd Annual Meeting and the **24th year** of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. We have scheduled **over 100** different presentations and field sessions with a variety of topics and speakers from around the state. Outside of the classroom, we also have plenty of opportunities to meet new friends and old friends alike, some really beautiful artwork and photos entered into our annual contest, and a wide variety of chapter projects on display in the Project Fair. Enjoy this weekend of comradery and learning! Thank you for being here with us to celebrate another year of incredible conservation impacts on the land!*

KEY for Agenda

Field Session
Meal
Virtual Access

Thursday October 20th 2022

11:00am - 2:00pm

Chapter Leadership Luncheon - Greenway Ballroom

Meal

Virtual Access

This session is for Chapter Presidents, Chapter Advisor's or the Chapter President Designee to attend, hear about statewide initiatives, program updates and accomplishments. There is also usually time for an open format forum.

Friday October 21st 2022

8:00am - 10:15am

Here an App, There an App: Getting the Most from Each for Community Science - Constellation East

Virtual Access

○ *Craig Hensley, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

Open the phone of many Texas Master Naturalists and you'll discover a variety of apps for documenting and learning about the natural world. If you are new to the world of nature apps, you're invited to join Craig Hensley, Texas Nature Trackers Biologist, to learn which apps do what and learn how to use them to enhance your learning as well as contribute to community science efforts. We'll begin with an indoor review and then head outdoors to use them. Come with your phone fully charged and be ready to download the following apps before we head outside. Apps we'll work with: iNaturalist, SEEK, eBird, Project Feederwatch, Merlin Bird ID, Nature's Notebook, BumblebeeWatch, The Audubon Bird Guide App, Song Sleuth, and NestWatch.

9:15am - 11:30am

You Can Monitor Bats Too! —A Hands-On Introduction to Acoustic Surveying with the North American Bat - Constellation West

Virtual Access

○ *Brian Reichert, Frank Tousley, Dane Smith, & Bethany Straw, NABat; Nathan Fuller, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

The North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) is a multi-national, multi-agency coordinated bat monitoring program that seeks to address the historic lack of information on status and trends of North American bat populations. Implementing NABat has involved over 1,000 partners across 170 organizations who collect, process, transfer, preserve, and analyze bat monitoring data. This training will focus on the important first step: data collection. Bats can be detected and monitored via the acoustic recording of their echolocation calls. We will present an introduction on both stationary and mobile acoustic monitoring techniques. Stationary acoustic monitoring training will explain site selection, micro-siting, and acoustic detector placement. We will also present an introduction to mobile/vehicular acoustic monitoring, covering topics in survey protocols, route planning, and safety. We will provide hands-on instruction with a variety of popular acoustic detectors and will highlight how to get involved with your local NABat hub to work within the NABat framework.

10:30am - 11:30am

Birding with Today's Technology: Utilizing eBird, Merlin, and Other Online Resources to Be a More Effective - Constellation East

Virtual Access

○ *Kelsey Biles, Houston Audubon*

This session is intended to teach people about birding and how to bird with today's technology by reviewing smartphone apps and internet resources such as Merlin, eBird, and online field guides. Participants should pick up some tips on how to collect valuable scientific data while they are birding. We will also be going over ways to apply this knowledge with citizen science opportunities with Houston Audubon. Note that we will not be going over bird identification, though no specific knowledge of birds is required to attend- brand new and advanced birders alike can gain something by attending! No equipment is required to attend.

11:30am - 1:30pm

Conservation of the Night & Lunch- Post Oak Ballroom

Keynote Address & Meal

Virtual Access

- *Cindy Luongo Cassidy, International Dark-Sky Association Texas Chapter*

Join us for a group lunch with a keynote presentation from Cindy Luongo-Cassidy. Are we ignoring half of the conservation work that needs to be done? Cindy will explore the natural world and its processes that depend on the absence of artificial light. Living things need natural darkness for navigation, reproduction, circadian rhythms, photoperiodism, competition, predation, and general habitat protection. We humans need it too. Learn what we can do to extend our conservation work to the nighttime.

1:45pm - 5:15pm

iNaturalist: From Getting Started to Contributing to Community Science and Self-Learning - Constellation East

Virtual Access

- *Craig Hensley, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

Virtually every Texas Master Naturalist has heard of iNaturalist. Many have downloaded the app, created an account, used it a handful of times, and then moved on without truly enjoying the power of this tool to learn about the natural world around them. Others have gone all in but still haven't harnessed the full power of this natural history tool. Join Nature Trackers Biologist Craig Hensley to explore iNaturalist, both the app and web page. Whether you are new to it or need a refresher, this session will provide you insights into how to enjoy personal benefits from it and contribute to community science efforts at the same time.

1:45pm - 4:00pm

Pollinators on the Night Shift - Constellation West

Virtual Access

- *Lisa Tuck, Heartwood Chapter, Walker County Master Gardeners, The Herb Society of America*

One evening, I saw what I thought was the world's smallest hummingbird. When I looked it up, I discovered it was a hummingbird moth. There are pollinators working after dark! Moths outnumber butterflies many times--I have seen numbers from 6:1 to 15:1. This talk will provide ways to help these primarily nocturnal pollinators on three

fronts: host plants for the caterpillars; nectar plants for the adults; and lighting that will reduce impact on their habits.

1:45pm - 4:00pm

Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies and Moths -

Timber Grove

Virtual Access

○ *Lynne Weber, Capital Area Chapter*

Want to attract beautiful and beneficial pollinators like butterflies and moths to your garden? Learn about the special relationships that exist between several native plant species and the butterflies and moths that use them, beyond monarchs and milkweeds! Explore why native plants are essential to healthy ecosystems, the role of nectar and host plants, and how these insects find the desired host plant species upon which to lay their eggs. This talk will leave you with the knowledge and resources needed to encourage and appreciate a wider diversity of caterpillars, butterflies, and moths in a Texas native plant garden.

5:30pm - 6:30pm

Quiz Bowl/Trivia Contest IX - Constellation East & West

Virtual Access

○ *Richard Heilbrun, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

How are you with wildlife trivia? Join us for a fun-filled, low-stakes, but high energy battle! Participants will compete for prizes and bragging rights by answering science questions, wildlife facts, Master Naturalist trivia, and general trivia. Test your knowledge or come to learn! Bring the beverage of your choice or just bring yourself and a sense of humor and represent your chapter in a contest of knowledge or battle of wits. Teams are encouraged this year. Bribes are welcome, but not guaranteed to work in your favor! Assemble your team beforehand, or during the session, or participate individually.

6:30pm - 8:30pm

Keynote Presentation & Dinner - Post Oak Ballroom

Keynote Address & Meal

Virtual Access

○ *Michelle Haggerty & Mary Pearl Meuth, Texas Master Naturalist Program*

Enjoy a fellowship dinner after a full day of advanced training sessions and field sessions. Our evening keynote speaker is still TBA, but trust us - it'll be out of this world!

Saturday October 22nd 2022

8:30am - 10:45am

Convincing a Park to Reduce Mowing (Updated!) -

Constellation West

Virtual Access

- *Sam Kieschnick, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

One day, you enjoy the margins of your favorite local park. Lots of plant diversity, interesting insects buzzing around, birds flying, and singing around the tall grasses and wildflowers. You come back the next day, and it's all mowed! How can we, as Master Naturalists and nature enthusiasts, deal with this?! In this presentation, we'll go over some ways to convince and guide the management of public parks. It's a long process to develop the necessary relationships with park management, but we'll show you some positive ways to encourage and entice management to allow some of the parks to go 'wild.' We'll also talk about ways to deal with discouragement. Not all stories end with success, although we will mention some positive cases here in Dallas/Fort Worth.

8:30am - 9:30am

The TPWD Adopt-a-Loop Program Two Years Later: How Master Naturalist Chapters Can and Are Helping -

Constellation East

Virtual Access

- *Bruce Neville, Brazos Valley Chapter, Lisa Marler, Hill Country Chapter, Terri Stinn, Heartwood Chapter, Shelly Plante Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

At the first TMN Volunteer Fair, TPWD representatives sought help to update the Great Texas Birding Trail maps. With just one dedicated staff and 123 loops on 9 trails which included 920+ sites to monitor, the staff were overwhelmed. They found willing partners in the Master Naturalists.

Many chapters adopted one or more loops. Chapter members update management information on and directions to the sites, order new signs, recommend new sites to be added and also sites that should be deleted due to functionality. Chapter members conduct quarterly field surveys of their adopted sites. The TMN volunteers' surveys are contributing to ecological databases, not just on birds, but on the entire flora and fauna of the sites, using the citizen science platforms eBird and iNaturalist.

There are still many trails that need a "forever home." Come hear what three chapters are doing and see what you can do to help move the project forward by joining the TPWD Adopt-a-Loop Program.

9:45am - 12:00pm

The Young and the Nestless: The Secret Lives of Songbirds - Constellation East

Virtual Access

- *Kelsey Low, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center*

Don't be fooled by their cute, fluffy exteriors – songbirds live complex lives full of drama and intrigue! From romances and infidelities to song battles and even serial killers, the secret lives of songbirds are more gripping than any soap opera. In this “episode” you'll get an introduction to songbird anatomy, foraging, migration, communication, and courtship with examples from common Texas birds. These stories will help you better interpret the incredible features and behaviors of the songbirds around you in a fun and engaging way.

11:00am - 12:00pm

Twists and Turns Replacing Lost Canopy - Constellation West **Virtual Access**

○ *Beth Miller, Piney Wood Lakes Chapter*

An EF3 tornado struck Onalaska, TX on April 22, 2020, cutting a wide swath of destruction through Polk County, which has a population near 60,000. Three were killed and hundreds left homeless after nearly 1,000 homes were damaged. It is estimated that over 5,000 trees were lost and arborists expect many more to die from stress over the coming years. Within days of the twister, Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) contacted the Polk County Judge with an offer of help to purchase and distribute trees to replace some of the 5000 lost. It was nearly 18 months later that the Onalaska Canopy Recovery Program, initiated by Piney Wood Lakes Master Naturalists and Polk County AgriLife Extension Office, and the ADF distributed 750 native hardwood trees to 125 families who had their properties wiped almost clean. Learn about the twists and turns it took before \$11,500 gave the lost canopy a new start.

- A \$1.5m grant request became \$11,500 of funding.
- Reaching 800 property owners without an official list of impacted residents.
- Getting word out in a very remote county isn't easy.
- Would anyone care 18 months later?

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Lunch & Science Fair Winners Presentation - Post Oak **Ballroom**

Meal

Virtual Access

Lunch and learn! Hear from our Junior and Senior Science Fair winners!* Each of these students earned a certificate from the Texas Master Naturalist program for their conservation focused science fair project at the state Science and Engineering Fair. Incredible young minds at work!

*(one or both depending on final student availability)

1:15pm - 3:30pm

Exploring Ambiguous Moral and Ethical Situations **(Formerly Laws and Ethics) - Constellation West**

Virtual Access

○ *Richard Heilbrun, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department & Mike Mitchell, Game Warden (retired)*

Open to previous attendees and newcomers, in 2022 we'll explore all the new ethical dilemmas and legal situations that a Master Naturalist might encounter. This interactive exercise will discuss situations that every Master Naturalist should know and understand. Some situations may be straight forward, and some may ask you to dig into your life experiences and training to apply your conservation ethic to real world situations. Brought to you in a friendly, common sense dialogue between a retired game warden and a wildlife biologist, the speakers will challenge each other and the audience to answer conservation's most challenging quandaries. This activity will supplement the Laws, Rules & Ethics module in the TMN curriculum. Now in their sixth year teaching this topic at the annual meeting, Richard Heilbrun and Mike Mitchell put a new spin on this interesting discussion.

1:15pm - 2:15pm

iNaturalist 301: Advanced Applications & Exploring Data in iNaturalist - Constellation East

Virtual Access

○ *Tania Homayoun, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department*

The iNaturalist platform is so much more than just a place to share your nature observations and contribute to others' community science projects. Moving beyond the iNaturalist basics, this session will explore topics such as creating Projects and using them to collect and organize observations; using filters and URL searches to explore observations; and how to download iNaturalist data and use it to fuel your own investigations and projects. This session is for advanced iNaturalist users and assumes that participants are comfortable using iNaturalist to make observations and identifications and are familiar with the website. Participants are encouraged to bring their own laptop or tablet to the session. New iNaturalist users should attend iNaturalist 101 and 201 sessions first.

2:30pm - 4:45pm

Wrens: Little Birds with Lots of Energy - Constellation East

Virtual Access

○ *Scott Kiestler, Friends of LLELA*

North America is host to eleven species of wrens. All are small, most reclusive, and they are always on the move. Males often sing year round and their scolding calls from the undergrowth may be the only hint that they are around. Known to many a non-birder as the "the little bird with the perky butt" because they usually have their short stiff tails pointed skyward. Join us for an illuminating talk about this energetic little bird.

3:45pm - 4:45pm

Operation Game Thief: Collaboration to Catch Poachers - Constellation West

Virtual Access

○ *Daniel Shaw, Operation Game Thief & Mike Mitchell, Game Warden (retired)*

If Texas Game Wardens work to protect our state's resources, and Texas Master Naturalists work to serve beneficial management of our state's resources, then it's time

to focus more on this collaborative relationship. Operation Game Thief is a nonprofit created in 1981 to help facilitate conservation-related crime stoppers tips. But it's actually much more and forms the third leg in an important triad. This presentation, by a Texas Game Warden, gives a detailed description of Operation Game Thief, how it works, and how the three organizations could better collaborate to improve our quality of life. The new executive director of Operation Game Thief will also join in, helping explain the history, funding, flow, and success of the Operation Game Thief program. This is a first-time program focused upon collaboration to help work towards conservation achievement.

6:00pm - 8:00pm

Dinner & Evening Awards Presentation - Post Oak Ballroom

Meal

Virtual Access

Enjoy a final dinner with us. We'll celebrate the milestone awards of our attending master naturalists, recognize award winners and special recognitions and celebrate the programs annual successes.

Sunday October 23rd 2022

8:00am - 9:00am

Contest, Awards, & 2023 Recertification Pin

Presentation - Post Oak Ballroom

Virtual Access

This morning we celebrate the winners of our Contests & Awards to round off our 2022 Annual Meeting. We'll also be announcing our 2023 Recertification Pin!

End of Conference

Thank you all for attending and have a safe trip home!