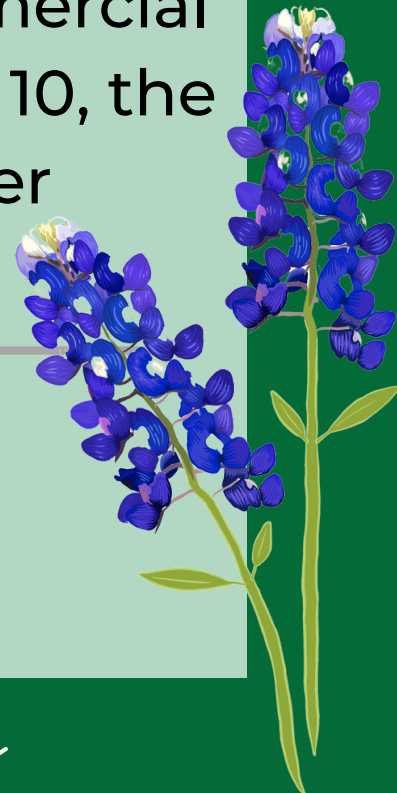


# 25TH ANNIVERSARY



When I first heard the objectives of the Master Naturalist Program, it sounded exactly like something I had been hoping to find.

Today, as one searches for the path to the Friedrich Wilderness Park amidst commercial development along Interstate Highway 10, the prescience of the pioneering Master Naturalists in Texas is clear.



RACHEL CYWINSKI,  
ALAMO AREA  
CHAPTER



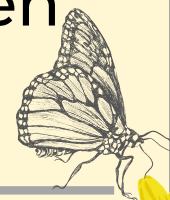
*Storytelling*  
PROJECT

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



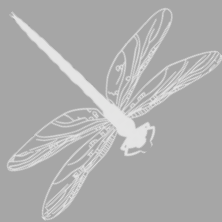
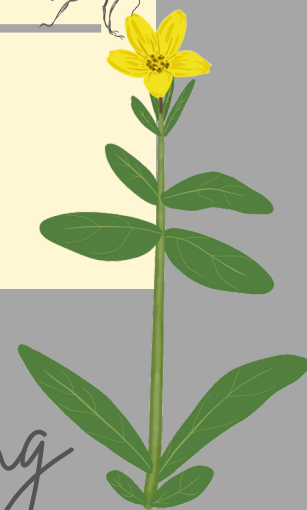
”

It occurred to me that as our pollinator garden does its steady job to heal and nourish the environment, perhaps it does the same to human souls. An ordinary day with an extraordinary legacy - the garden as common ground.



”

KAREN ALBRACHT,  
NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER



Storytelling  
PROJECT

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



My first year as a TMN member has been full of opportunities: helping the sea turtle rescue, outreach for ocelots, and birding programs, among others, were all great experiences.

My heart has been drawn to monarch butterflies. Exploring more about monarchs and tagging monarchs for monarchwatch.org has been an enlightening and rewarding experience. The season was great for the monarchs, I tagged 93 Monarchs, 64 males and 29 females—eight in Brownsville and 85 on South Padre Island, Texas.

I'm determined, now more than ever, to help make a difference in the survival of the migrating monarch butterfly. Native milkweed awareness, monarch education, outreach to the community for native nectar plants, tagging in the fall again this year.



TMN has introduced me to the details of nature I had never thought about before. I look forward to the future as I continue my TMN journey and make a difference in any way I can.



**CHERYL BRUMMETT,  
RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHAPTER**



*Storytelling*  
**PROJECT**

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



## Song for the Morning Star

The Earth Mother wakes The People and the creatures.  
Together they sing a song of greeting to the Morning  
Star.

In the star time The People were given life by the Before  
One.

They would be nurtured by The Earth Mother.

They are charged to care for her. She would provide for  
them.

Now she watches and weeps at what The People, her  
children have done.

She is withering as The People, move forward with their  
progress.

Few of The People remember the pledge of caring and  
providing.

Someday the Morning Star will shine but The People will  
not be there to see,

And The Earth Mother and the creatures will sing their  
song of greeting alone.



LARRY L DUNCAN, ELM FORK CHAPTER



Storytelling

PROJECT

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Visit our Facebook page to view Alicia's video and learn about the beautiful "resacas" of the Rio Grande Valley!



ALICIA CAVAZOS,  
RIO GRANDE VALLEY CHAPTER



Storytelling  
PROJECT



# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



## Being A Texas Master Naturalist

Many years ago, my husband and I had a dream to retire early and buy some land to escape the big city. It was a very big dream and would take years of commitment. In 2003, we found 42 acres down a dirt road that honestly fell in our laps. We put a contract on it before the sign even went up. We were land owners – Wow did we really own a piece of gods precious ground? It was amazing.

As it was a little over an hour from our home in the city, we would travel there frequently to groom, clear trash, fix fences, dismantle an old barn, etc. During all these years, it was unknown to me that my mother-in-law was working in this same community as a Texas Master Naturalist. We had known she was very active in her Church and the Naturalist Group but did not know much about it. We had heard about the reason she moved to the old “Rock House” on the corner in Ladonia, Texas, was to be close to her beloved Sulfur River access to go fossil hunting.

In August 2021, we had made the big jump and sold our home in the big city and moved to our land to start a new chapter. Since inception of ownership, we had known it was crucial to keep our Agriculture exemption, so we continued our agreement with a local rancher. Now that we were going to be here full time, we completed the process to transfer our exemption to Wildlife Management. With lots of help from the USDA and Texas Agriculture Department we were approved. We started learning so much about how we could improve our land and bring it back to a natural habitat that both wildlife, plants, insects, and us could all thrive together.

ANGELA DEGROOT,  
BOIS D'ARC CHAPTER



Storytelling  
PROJECT

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



The next logical step was to start looking for ways to further our education to do the best we could with what we have been blessed with. We signed up for the upcoming class of 2022 to become Master Naturalists and had no idea what this journey would include. To our joy, we found ourselves in the chapter my mother-in-law was a member of and all her friends that knew her so well. Unfortunately, she had become ill and unable to participate for the last couple of years, and she left to be with her Lord before we graduated.

Every person in our small chapter has a great passion, and the new members who joined with us bring their own interests and excitement. The number of people we have met from professors, biologists, water specialists, game wardens, State Park Staff, and so many more is just amazing.

One of our favorite memories of this last year was Fossil Day where we walked in the steps of my mother-in-law and journeyed down into the river bed she had to have explored thousands of times. She was not with us in the flesh, but we could feel her all around us. We were told a story by one of her young students, who is a father now, about how she would find and leave fossils for him to find, so he always had them to take home. What a legacy.

Our commitment is to continue her journey and work to improve our land for generations to come. We are looking to learn as much as we can and encourage everyone that has knowledge to share to do just that. For all who have been doing this for years I say - Thank You. In closing, I am humbled by the journey PK Kirkpatrick was on and pray we can even provide a fraction of her passion to our journey.

ANGELA DEGROOT,  
BOIS D'ARC CHAPTER

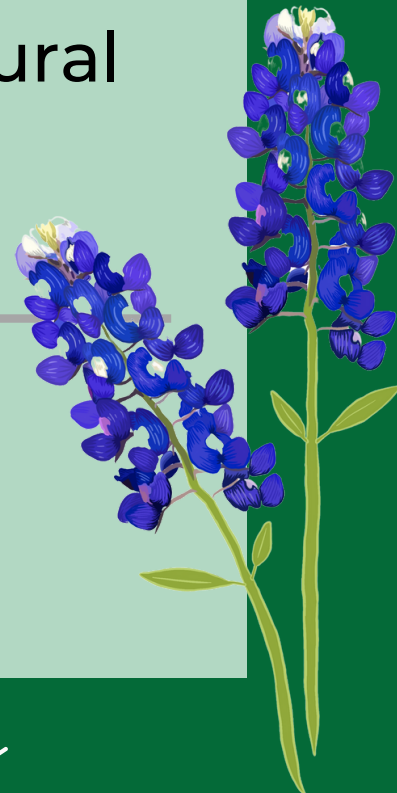


Storytelling  
PROJECT

# 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Visit our Facebook page to view Rachel's video and learn about the Master Naturalist's "weapons of warfare" used for monitoring our communities' natural resources!



RACHEL CYWINSKI,  
ALAMO AREA  
CHAPTER



*Storytelling*  
PROJECT



# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



I joined the Master Naturalist program in the Spring of 2017 when I was a junior in high school, and I credit the program for completely changing the way I looked at the Chihuahuan Desert that I grew up in. I was surprised to learn just how many unique ecosystems (and the associated plants and animals) can be found here. Ranging from mountain habitats to wetlands, I was able to explore more than I could have ever imagined. The best part of all being a Master Naturalist has been taking family and friends to these same sites and seeing their astonishment that these marvelous habitats are in their own backyard. Volunteering with the Master Naturalists even led to my first internship with Texas Parks and Wildlife working with local populations of burrowing owls! As a college student who now works in research and extension, I have been able to draw on my experiences as a Master Naturalist to direct new outreach efforts!



STEPHEN STRESOW,  
TRANS-PECOS  
CHAPTER



*Storytelling*  
**PROJECT**

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



When I first learned about the Texas Master Naturalist group, it was not at all what I was expecting, it was much more. When I joined the Texas Master Naturalist group, I found my true calling and people whom I could relate to. Nature has always been the thing I love the most, and I love to go out each day and volunteer and enjoy teaching others about the local wildlife. However, I also love taking photos of nature and wildlife. I became a graduate of the class of 2016 and have never looked back. If it was not for the Texas Master Naturalist group, I have no idea where I would be now. I found my true love for nature but also for videography and photography. I am now at the University of Texas in Arlington studying photography and documentary with an emphasis on wildlife.

This program really changed my perception on my home area and the places I had been visiting all my life but didn't know much about. I enjoy learning about the vast eco-regions and love traveling to see how the areas all interconnect. I enjoy going out each day whether it is for a BioBlitz, community day, or out in a wildflower restoration area I can never get enough. Since joining the program, each day is a day for wildlife adventure.



*Storytelling* **PROJECT**

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Becoming a Master Naturalist has become even more important to me in recent years. In 2018, my grandmother passed away from cancer and that was the first time in my life I had felt so devastated. She was the one who got me into gardening and my family got me into birding, and we all bonded greatly at zoos, museums, and aquariums. My aunt, a science teacher, got me into geology and space. My grandmother loved what I did and always wanted to share in it even when her cancer was progressing more and more. I still use the TMN as a place of healing and a place to keep her legacy alive. The master naturalist program has helped me because it is a place that I feel belonging, and with that, I take comfort and solace. I feel at peace, and I feel it has become another home away from home.

The Texas Master Naturalist Cross Timbers Chapter is one of my tribes and a place I love to come to; to learn, experience, keep up with old friends, make new ones, and to become better connected with myself, my community, and the various states of wildlife, nature science, and research. It has been a life changer, and I enjoy every minute. It has and still is bringing me lots of joy and opportunities. It is a great program, and I am glad to be one of the many members who serve in the mission and the cause for life in all its many forms.



ZACHARY CHAPMAN,  
CROSS TIMBERS  
CHAPTER

*Storytelling*  
**PROJECT**



# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



## A Remedy for Nature Deficit Disorder

I had set a goal to try something new. I have been involved in the Texas Master Naturalist certification program and admit that I really have been enjoying the experience! As a result, I have begun volunteering at the local state park. Today was “learn to fish” day advertised for homeschool children. I am far from a fishing expert, but I wanted to step outside of my comfort zone a bit. I broke night-crawlers into thirds and baited hooks! Surprisingly the only fish caught today were some Blue Gills. They have a dark spot near their dorsal fin and are sometimes known as sunfish. It was also a “catch and release” morning, and happily all released fish seemed to swim off no worse for the experience! The children ranged in ages from toddlers to adolescents, and most brought their own poles and tackle boxes, many still in packaging! The park ranger had 30 fishing poles set up and ready for use along with several containers of earthworms. He discussed the types of fish they might be fortunate to catch in the lake along with the basics of setting up your line. I was proud of the mothers who went ahead and placed bait on their children’s lines! All the children were very polite, attentive, and eager to learn how to fish. I still have a lot more to learn about teaching fishing!



DIANE LANGTON,  
PINEY WOODS LAKES  
CHAPTER

*Storytelling*  
**PROJECT**

# TMN 25TH ANNIVERSARY



My next opportunity was with a demonstration for kindergarteners about “The Critters of East Texas.” Around 80 youngsters arrived and were divided into four groups. There was a group for learning to fish, a short interpretive hiking experience, a craft station, and my “critter station.” I had various skulls and skins of native animals. The first group was looking a bit sad. One child stated “What happened to them?” We did not contemplate this occurrence. The teachers were helpful with that aspect. The ranger dropped off a deceased rat snake. That was the most popular item, and everyone wanted to hold it. I still do not understand why some in each group were afraid to touch the animal skins, yet happy to hold a snake. The day was a good experience for the children. Regarding “Nature Deficit Disorder,” spending less time outdoors can result in behavioral changes in children. Lack of exposure to green space can result in vitamin D deficiency, increased incidence of aggression, depression, or obesity. Take advantage of neighborhood parks and park programs. Plant a butterfly garden together. Try to identify bird sounds. There is a great app called SEEK geared for children. (Adults have been known to enjoy this also!) It helps to identify plants and animals. Encourage schools to take advantage of park programs and incorporate more outdoor activities into their day.

Get outdoors!

DIANE LANGTON,  
PINEY WOODS LAKES  
CHAPTER

Storytelling  
PROJECT



# 25TH ANNIVERSARY



My journey was made possible in 2014 by my then 12 yr old. He was in National Junior Honor Society and needed volunteer hours. Meanwhile, I personally was searching for a volunteer program that I could give back and really grow as a person. I've always loved nature and Texas, but had not ever connected that passion with volunteering.

I responded to a need for volunteers at Twelve Hills Nature Center in Dallas. I reached out and asked if they would accept a 12 yr old which they did. As we did gardening work, I noticed a few people around me - mostly dressed in a uniform of sorts and talking about prairies, grasses and invasive species. I asked them - literally- who are you people? They responded with we are Texas Master Naturalists. I asked them about the program. As my son and I walked back to our car, I looked at him and said "this is what I'm going to do."

KRISTEN WELTY,  
BLACKLAND PRAIRIE CHAPTER

Storytelling PROJECT

