

TEXAS

MASTER

NATURALIST

25TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF STEWARDING TEXAS

T E X A S



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Master
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Produced by the Texas Master Naturalist
State Program Office

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Photo: Mildred Dworsky, Hill Country Chapter

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OUR MISSION:

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





WHAT IS THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM?

Photo: Carl Marugg, Big Country Chapter

Started in 1997, the Texas Master Naturalist™ program includes **49 local chapters serving 213 counties**. The mission of the program is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated toward the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

The work of a Master Naturalist is so important because—not only are they individuals who love nature and voluntarily offer their time—they are trained naturalists with specialized knowledge of different ecosystems, species, habitats, and environmental demands. Our skilled volunteers work with communities and organizations across the state to implement outreach programs, help operate parks and nature centers, manage natural areas, and lead local natural resource conservation efforts. Private landowners depend on the expertise of our volunteers to help them gain a broader scientific understanding of the ecology and management of their natural resources.

The Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) program is sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. As of 2023, the Texas Master Naturalist Program has trained **16,700 volunteers**, impacted more than **256,792 acres** of wildlife and native plant habitats, contributed more than **6.93 million hours of service**, and reached more than **7.115 million Texas residents** of all ages. These volunteer efforts are estimated to be worth more than **\$159.52 million** to the state of Texas.



2,318 TRAIL MILES RESTORED

Photo: Jerrel Geisler, Heartwood Chapter

The short supply of dedicated and well-informed citizens and volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts. The Texas Master Naturalist program works to address this need by developing a local corps of volunteers to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the volunteers' own communities for the State of Texas.

This partnership among the **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**, and over **400 local partners** has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by a state program coordinator, an assistant state program coordinator, a program support specialist, and an advisory committee responsible for providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities for the chapters and their volunteers. At the local level, chapters consist of our trained volunteers aided by personnel from the partnering agencies as advisors and partnerships with additional community organizations sharing our mission.

Since 1997, Master Naturalist volunteers have developed or maintained **over 2,318 miles of trails** across the State of Texas. That equates to over half of the perimeter of Texas (4,137 miles). This is just one example of the positive impact our volunteers have within their communities for the improvement of Texas' natural resources and wild areas for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors alike.



256,792 ACRES OF LAND IMPACTED

Photo: Linda Zeller, Galveston Bay Area Chapter

For an individual to gain the certification and designation as a “Texas Master Naturalist,” he or she must participate in an approved training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtain 8 contact hours of approved advanced training, and complete 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service—all of which is provided at a local level using the guidelines of the state program.

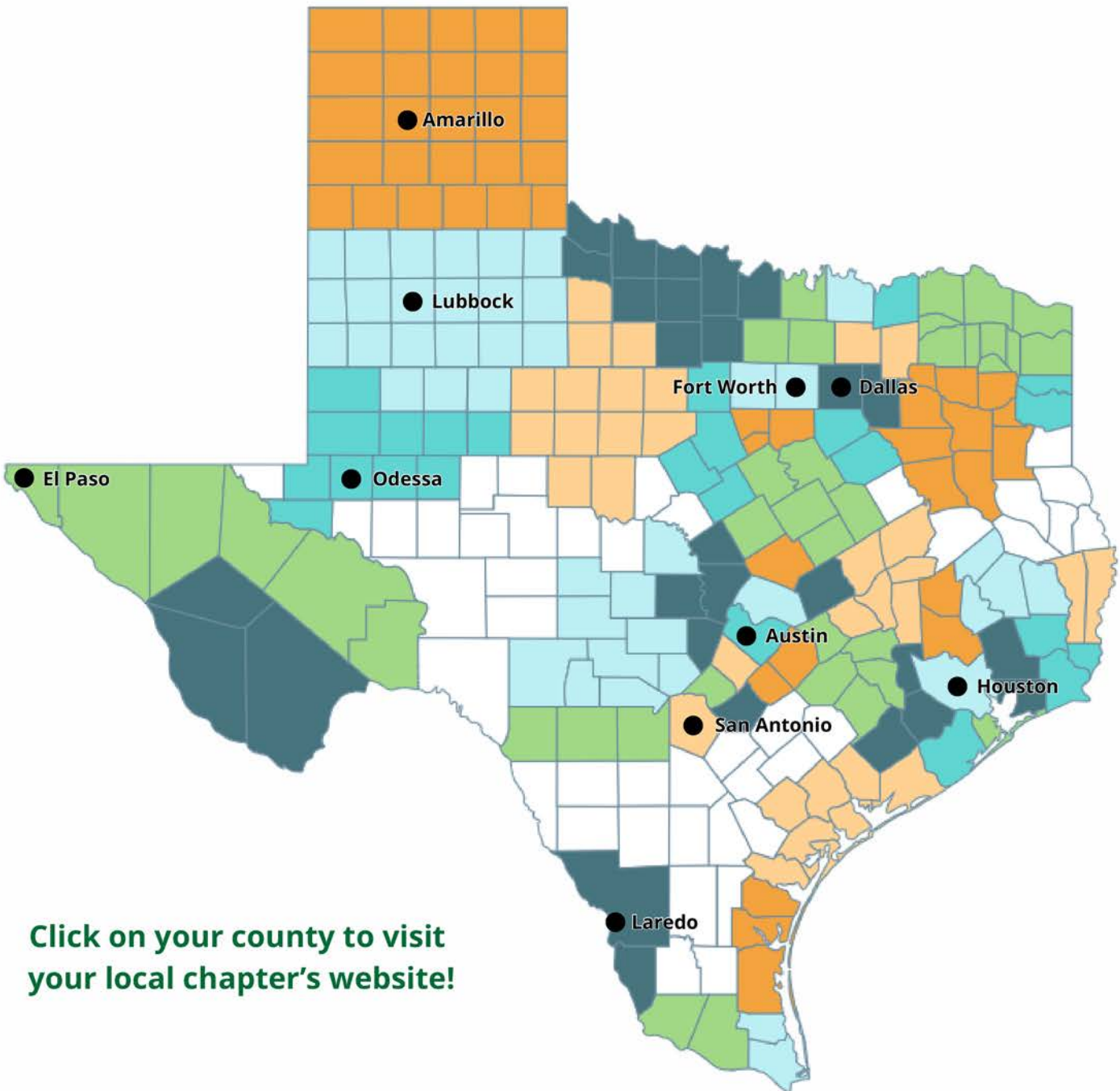
Volunteer service hours for Master Naturalists range from removing invasive species or building wildlife-friendly structures to interacting with their communities at a local events and providing information on plants and animals native to the area. Through these efforts, there have been over **256,792 acres impacted** and **7.115 million Texas residents reached** across the State of Texas because of the corps of volunteers who are part of the Master Naturalist program.

The Texas Master Naturalist program was the first of its kind. Since its inception, the program has grown from just four chapters and 150 volunteers in 1998 to **49 chapters and over 16,700 volunteers trained** serving Texas in communities as diverse and widespread as Austin to El Paso, with additional expansion every year. At the national level, the Texas Master Naturalist program has been a model by which **29 other states** have developed and implemented programs. This has led to a National Master Naturalist Program Initiative and then a national organization known as the Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP). Internationally, the Texas Master Naturalist program provided the inspiration and framework for programs in Australia and Canada.



OUR CHAPTERS

Photo: Laurie Sheppard, Blackland Prairie Chapter



**Click on your county to visit
your local chapter's website!**

Alamo Area Chapter

- San Antonio, Bexar County

Balcones Canyonlands Chapter

- Concordia University, Travis County

Big Country Chapter

- Abilene, Haskell, Coleman

Blackland Prairie Chapter

- Plano, Greenville

Bluestem Chapter

- Sherman, Grayson County

Bois d'Arc Chapter

- Bonham, Fannin County

Brazos Valley Chapter

- Bryan, Centerville, Caldwell

Brush Country Chapter

- Laredo, Zapata

Brush y Canyons Chapter

- Brackettville, Hondo, Uvalde

Capital Area Chapter

- Austin, Travis County

Central Texas Chapter

- Belton, Bell County

Coastal Prairie Chapter

- El Campo, Prairie View, Sugar Land

Cradle of Texas Chapter

- Angleton, Brazoria County

Cross Timbers Chapter

- Fort Worth, Weatherford

Cypress Basin Chapter

- Jefferson, Marshall

East Texas Chapter

- Palestine, Tyler, Quitman

El Camino Real Chapter

- Cameron, Milam County

Elm Fork Chapter

- Decatur, Denton, Gainesville

Galveston Bay Area Chapter

- Galveston, Galveston County

Gideon Lincecum Chapter

- Brenham, Columbus, La Grange

Good Water Chapter

- Georgetown, Williamson County

Guadalupe Chapter

- Seguin, Guadalupe County

Gulf Coast Chapter

- Houston, Harris County

Hays County Chapter

- San Marcos, Hays County

Heart of Texas Chapter

- Hillsboro, Mexia, Waco

Heartwood Chapter

- Conroe, Huntsville

Highland Lakes Chapter

- Blanco, Burnet, Lampasas, Llano

Hill Country Chapter

- Fredericksburg, Rocksprings

Indian Trails Chapter

- Corsicana, Waxahachie

Lindheimer Chapter

- New Braunfels, Comal County

Llano Estacado Chapter

- Colorado City, Midland, Monahans

Longleaf Ridge Chapter

- Jasper, Newton

Lost Pines Chapter

- Bastrop, Lockhart

Lower Trinity Basin Chapter

- Cleveland, Liberty, Mont Belview

Mid-Coast Chapter

- Goliad, Matagorda, Rockport

North Texas Chapter

- Dallas, Kaufman, Rockwall

Panhandle Chapter

- Amarillo, Childress, Dalhart

Piney Woods Lakes Chapter

- Livingston, Shepherd

Prairie Oaks Chapter

- Hamilton, Stephenville

Red River Chapter

- Paris, Sulphur Springs, Texarkana

Rio Brazos Chapter

- Cleburne, Glen Rose, Grandbury

Rio Grande Valley Chapter

- Brownsville, McAllen, Raymondville

Rolling Plains Chapter

- Graham, Quanah, Wichita Falls

Sabine-Neches Chapter

- Beaumont, Lumberton, Orange

South Plains Chapter

- Lubbock, Plainview, Snyder

South Texas Chapter

- Corpus Christi, Kingsville

South Texas Border Chapter

- McAllen, Rio Grande City

Tierra Grande Chapter

- Alpine, Fort Davis, Marfa

Trans Pecos Chapter

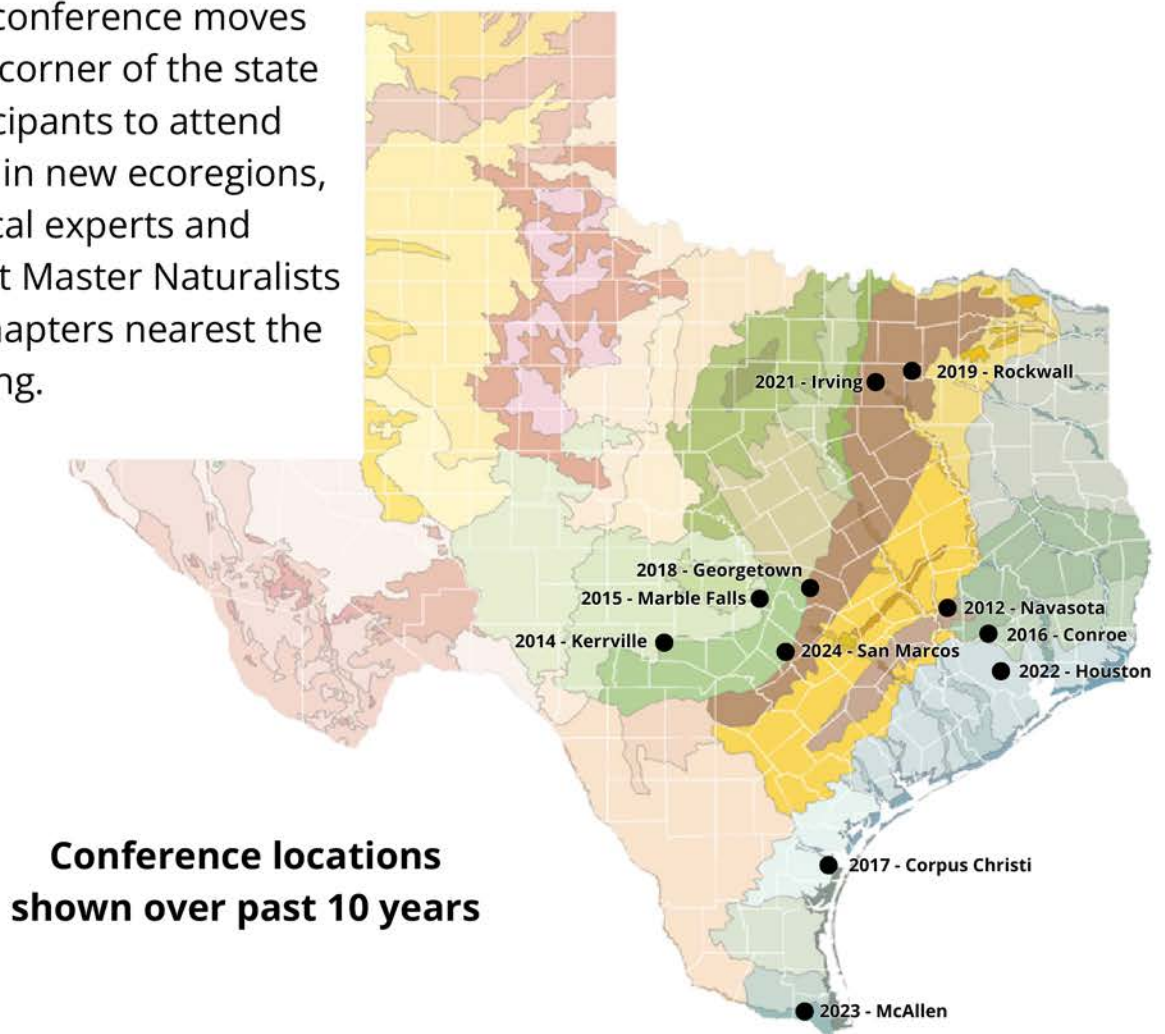
- El Paso, Fort Stockton, Pecos



Photo: Mary Pearl Meuth, TMN Assistant State Coordinator

The Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for the volunteers from around the state to gather, participate in hands-on educational seminars, and receive all their Advanced Training requirements for the year in one weekend. It's also an opportunity for program participants and supporters to network, share new ideas, and to learn from chapters in different regions of the state.

Annually the conference moves to a different corner of the state to allow participants to attend field sessions in new ecoregions, learn from local experts and meet different Master Naturalists from those chapters nearest the Annual Meeting.



Conference locations shown over past 10 years

NEW STATE PROGRAMS

Photo: Renee Dowhaniuk, Blackland Prairie Chapter

Developed in the era of virtual and distance learning, the Texas Master Naturalist State Office initiated three new programs in 2020 and 2021 to help keep Master Naturalists connected to advanced training opportunities, develop diversity programming and showcase stewardship projects that could be done virtually or at a distance.



#TMNTuesdays is a monthly webinar series offered as a way to learn about top conservation issues of the state, earn advanced training hours, and interact with wildlife professionals from across the state!

Hosted on the second Tuesday of the month since 2021, these events have sometimes hosted over 2,000 attendees per event with speakers from state agencies, universities, private organizations and more.

The ever-popular **Virtual Volunteer Fair** is an annual webinar where Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are introduced to virtual and distanced service projects offered by partner conservation organizations in their communities. This returning feature of our program allows members to remain active during the hottest months of the year and provide service opportunities for any ability throughout the year.



In 2021, The TMN Program hosted a mini webinar series, **"Be The Change"**, dedicated to exploring diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility opportunities in our natural resource and conservation community. Just as the natural world thrives with biodiversity, the TMN Program is dedicated to engaging all audiences in conservation, education and stewardship. One of the

goals with this mini series event is to start and continue to conversations about these important topics amongst the Master Naturalist membership.

MASTER NATURALISTS ACROSS THE YEARS A LOOK AT HOW WE HAVE GROWN

T E X A S

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MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

Photo: Derrick Mims, Alamo Area Chapter



6.93 MILLION HOURS of service completed

Photo: William Dupre, Hays County Chapter



7.115 MILLION PEOPLE reached through outreach and events

Photo: Derrick Mims, Alamo Area Chapter



256,792 ACRES of habitat enhanced

Photo: Carl Marugg, Big Country Chapter



OVER 1.012 MILLION HOURS of advanced training classes

Photo: Kathy Cox, Lost Pines Chapter



2,318 MILES of trails developed or maintained

That's over half of the perimeter of Texas!



\$159.52 Million of estimated economic impact

Photo: Betsy Cross, Hays County



VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Photo: Mike McGee, Heartwood Chapter

One of the key factors of a Master Naturalist is their dedication to volunteering for the betterment of their communities. Master Naturalists record volunteer hours in a Volunteer Management System (VMS) hosted by TPWD. These hours help highlight the incredible growth and impact of the Texas Master Naturalist program since its inception in 1997.*

*TMN Chapters listed in order by their year established. Each 5 year increment listed is the State Program's anniversary year and the Chapter's sum total of volunteer service hours up to each program anniversary year.

Chapter (Established)	5 Years	10 Years	15 Years	20 Years	25 Years
Alamo Area (1997)	50,948	84,353	179,856	305,621	445,920
Capital Area (1998)	21,193	64,287	103,369	153,822	220,364
Hays County (1998)	11,918	39,207	85,630	157,477	238,811
North Texas (1998)	33,540	87,642	162,039	277,587	398,755
Cross Timbers (1999)	18,959	46,086	89,811	140,922	199,181
Elm Fork (1999)	14,594	51,397	133,640	246,517	385,461
Gulf Coast (1999)	21,300	52,414	75,696	142,753	223,677
East Texas (2000)	8,325	18,749	31,011	45,874	75,406
Lindheimer (2000)	4,892	27,129	76,801	160,054	255,914
Lost Pines (2000)	1,884	9,872	28,892	70,809	112,960
Mid-Coast (2000)	9,908	54,140	117,319	180,336	236,488
Cradle of Texas (2001)	11,487	70,731	136,357	219,012	290,987
Galveston Bay Area (2001)	24,619	126,565	260,071	459,391	662,975
Trans Pecos (2001)	4,247	15,295	27,651	37,862	54,831
Hill Country (2002)	2,536	50,212	169,080	346,076	503,273
Rio Grande Valley (2002)	5,828	48,628	121,542	228,124	297,997
Rolling Plains (2002)	764	7,029	19,336	35,828	54,508

Chapter (Established)	5 Years	10 Years	15 Years	20 Years	25 Years
South Texas (2002)	1,870	11,014	21,748	52,941	114,582
Big Country (2003)	500	4,728	16,390	32,056	43,216
Heart of Texas (2003)	1,097	14,626	25,222	36,960	45,829
Highland Lakes (2003)	522	19,265	77,064	152,956	216,636
Panhandle (2003)	319	7,234	19,187	37,155	59,243
Coastal Prairie (2004)		12,223	41,299	79,230	168,579
Brazos Valley (2005)		4,719	20,165	36,308	52,699
Gideon Linccum (2005)		7,858	28,485	57,070	86,781
Heartwood (2005)		15,216	42,905	78,863	133,084
Red River (2005)		2,698	19,085	44,071	67,737
Rio Brazos (2005)		13,439	47,315	88,136	126,106
Tierra Grande (2005)		9,553	43,595	78,810	95,756
Blackland Prairie (2006)		6,138	48,556	129,778	256,395
Llano Estacado (2006)		2,593	9,392	23,117	37,268
South Plains (2006)		865	12,070	22,991	28,410
Cypress Basin (2008)		648	8,329	27,738	46,555
El Camino Real (2008)		3,353	37,043	67,112	90,376
Sabine-Neches (2009)			9,000	18,606	41,268
Central Texas (2010)			15,867	42,304	77,213
Good Water (2010)			13,396	55,754	117,061
Indian Trail (2010)			15,084	57,110	86,087
Piney Woods Lakes (2010)			14,710	25,256	39,975
Bois d'Arc (2011)			8,646	16,559	19,071
Longleaf Ridge (2011)			3,761	11,495	21,894
Bluestem (2012)			1,514	11,100	32,510
Balcones Canyonlands (2014)				5,239	28,590
Guadalupe (2014)				9,685	29,616
Brush Country (2015)				569	569
South Texas Border (2015)				23,173	64,719
Lower Trinity Basin (2017)				2,063	13,866
Prairie Oaks (2017)				4,986	19,351
Brush y Canyons (2023)					814

A photograph of several alligators resting on a large, weathered log in a swampy environment. The alligators are dark with yellowish spots and stripes. The text '25 YEARS OF PROGRAM AWARDS' is overlaid in a bold, white font with a brown outline.

25 YEARS OF PROGRAM AWARDS

Photo: Betsy Cross, Hays County Chapter

2021

Superior Service - Partnership Award
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

2019

Conservation Education Award-Writing: TMN Curriculum
The Wildlife Society

2018

Outstanding Achievement Award
Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

2017

Outstanding Book Award
Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society
Keep Texas Beautiful Award: Civic Organization
Keep Texas Beautiful
Bright Idea in American Government
The Harvard Kennedy School's Innovations in American Government

2016

Outstanding Educational Materials Award
National Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs

2014

Environmental Excellence Award, Civic/Community Leadership
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Governor's Volunteer Award, Community Leadership
OneStar Foundation, Office of the Texas Governor



25 YEARS OF PROGRAM AWARDS

Photo: Deborah Youngblood, Hill Country Chapter

2012

Environmental Awareness Award

Texas League of Women Voters

2010

Program of the Year Award

National Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach & Service Programs

2007

Environmental Program Award

Texas Association for Environmental Education

2006

Keep Texas Beautiful Award

Keep Texas Beautiful

2005

Take Pride in America Award

U.S. Department of Interior

2001

Environmental Excellent Award

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission

Vice Chancellor Award in Excellence in Partnership

Texas A&M University

Habitat Heroes Award

National Audubon Society

2000

Presidents Award

Wildlife Management Institute



25TH ANNIVERSARY PROJECT

Photo: Meghan James Highland Lakes Chapter

In 2023, the Texas Master Naturalist Program celebrated a big anniversary: 25 years! Through the Virtual Volunteer Fair, Storytelling Project, Season of Thanks, and many more projects, we recognized our chapters, thanked our volunteers across the state, and continued to grow as Master Naturalists. Below is a sample of the Storytelling Project, where we asked our volunteers what it means to them to be a Master Naturalist.

To view more of our 25th anniversary celebration, visit our website at: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/blog/texas-master-naturalist-25th-anniversary>

25TH ANNIVERSARY



In September 2013, one of my best friends passed away. A victim of breast cancer, Diane was a close friend to other moms in her daughter's elementary class. Because she could no longer drive, this group of friends, to which I belonged, took turns taking Diane home from work and to her many treatments. These commitments gave us all a meaning to our weekly routines. When Diane passed away, I felt not only sorrow, but also bereft of purpose.

On a Sunday afternoon the following January, as I sensed the hollow space in my coming weekly schedule, I spotted a newspaper notice of Texas Master Naturalist classes. It seemed Diane was saying, "Go. Breathe and listen and see the natural beauty around you." The classes filled me with curiosity and appreciation for my local native habitat. They filled me with awe for that natural beauty.

“




BECKY JONES,
SOUTH TEXAS
BORDER
CHAPTER



Storytelling PROJECT

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

25 YEARS OF TENDING TO TEXAS

Photo: William Dupre, Hays County Chapter

As part of the 25-year celebration, the Texas Master Naturalist state program office developed a timeline banner highlighting the program from its inception in 1997 to its 25th year of operation. This banner made its debut appearance at the Texas Master Naturalist 2023 Annual Meeting and will be expanded upon and featured at many annual meetings to come.



25 *Years* of *Conserving Texas*



1997



Alamo Area Chapter
In March 1997, the Alamo Area Chapter—known then as the Natural Initiatives Program—holds its first Master Naturalist training.



Capital Area Chapter
Hays County Chapter
North Texas Chapter

In 1998, the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Program was launched with the establishment of the North Texas, Capital Area, and Hays County chapters. Members and state partners create the Texas Master Naturalist State Advisory Committee and write a mission statement for the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Program.

1999



Alamo Area Chapter's first graduating class of trained Master Naturalists.

1998



Cross Timbers volunteers take one of their first field trips to a local park.



As the program expands, new classes of Master Naturalists graduate across the state, as seen here with the Elm Fork Chapter.



Michelle Haggerty is Program's Statewide

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.

1999



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
503

- Elm Fork Chapter
- Cross Timbers Chapter
- Gulf Coast Chapter

To become a Master Naturalist, the basic training and chapter field sessions always involve hands-on activities to familiarize the volunteers with their area's natural resources—and how to best conserve and manage them.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
836

- Mid Coast Chapter
- Lost Pines chapter
- Lindheimer Chapter
- East Texas Chapter



Hands-on learning at the first Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting.



As the program expands, new classes of Master Naturalists graduate across the state, as seen here with the Elm Fork Chapter.



Dr. Bill Ward is seen here with Alamo Area Chapter volunteers learning about local geology.



Michelle Haggerty is hired as the TMN Program's Statewide Coordinator.

2000



Texas Master Naturalist holds its first Statewide Annual Meeting and advanced training at Camp Balcones Springs in Marble Falls.



Becky Ray Beckelman
Texas Chapter Coordinator



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
836

- Mid Coast Chapter
- Lost Pines chapter
- Lindheimer Chapter
- East Texas Chapter



Hands-on learning at the first Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting.



As a trained and well-educated volunteer corps, Master Naturalists are sought out for their expertise in conservation. Volunteers from Elm Fork Chapter hold a booth focusing on seed collection at the Native Plant Society of Texas Symposium.



2000



Texas Master Naturalist holds its first Statewide Annual Meeting and advanced training at Camp Balcones Springs in Marble Falls.



Becky Rader awards Sarah Beckelman, both of the North Texas Chapter, with her recertification award.



Wildlife Management Institute President's Award



Within our first few years, the Texas Master Naturalist Program became recognized internationally with the Wildlife Management Institute President's Award. This award was given for the exceptional professional creativity, ingenuity, and tenacity in developing a program that advances resource management within the state of Texas.

2001



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
1,246

- Cradle of Texas Chapter
- Galveston Bay Area Chapter
- Trans Pecos Chapter



Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's (TNRCC) Environmental Excellence Award



Vice Chancellor's Award in Excellence



National Audubon Society's Habitat Heroes Award



At the Annual Meeting, volunteers from across the state take part in a marsh class, using wetland trays to help better understand the marsh ecosystem.



Two TMN volunteers, Timothy [unclear] are recognized by Texas Parks and Wildlife for their work on the agency's Lone Star Land State Natural Area.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
1,665

- Hill Country Chapter
- Rolling Plains Chapter
- Rio Grande Valley Chapter
- South Texas Chapter

Our annual recertification pins debut this year. Volunteers provide 40 hours of volunteer service and participate in 8 hours of advanced training annually to earn their annual recertification pins.

Annual



North Texas Master Naturalists tag birds. One of the many ways chapters help their local area is through biological surveys and tracking wildlife populations.



Senecio quaylei discovered by Cross Timbers Master Naturalist, Jeff Quayle



Being a Master Naturalist means getting a bit muddy sometimes.



State Coordinator Michelle Haggerty celebrates with one of the first Lost Pines Chapter members to be certified.

2002



Trans Pecos volunteers get cleaning up leaf litter in Rio Bosque Wetland.



Two TMN volunteers, Timothy Foltz and Tomye Foltz-Zettner, are recognized by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with the agency's Lone Star Land Steward Award.



 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
1,665

-  Hill Country Chapter
-  Rolling Plains Chapter
-  Rio Grande Valley Chapter
-  South Texas Chapter

Our annual recertification pins debuted this year. Volunteers provide 40 hours of volunteer service and participate in 8 hours of advanced training annually to earn their annual recertification pins.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Oak Leaf



Michelle Haggerty and Tom Collins bring the Texas Master Naturalist Program to the public at the TPWD Wildlife Expo.

2003



Annual Recertification Pin:
Lindheimer Daisy

2002



Trans Pecos Chapter volunteers get some help cleaning up leaf litter at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park.



Master Naturalists from the North Texas Chapter work on their big chapter project at White Rock Lake.



Alamo Area Chapter's 12th class poses out in the field after a long day of learning.




East Texas Chapter members attend the Annual Meeting and celebrate the fifth anniversary of the TMN Program.





I believe in the Texas Master Naturalist Program because we volunteer for Texas and do good in our area with beautification projects and taking care of living things in water, land, and air.

Delores McCright, Red River Chapter

2003



 TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
2,220

-  Big Country Chapter
-  Heart of Texas Chapter
-  Highland Lakes Chapter
-  Panhandle Chapter

TMN celebrates its five year anniversary as a statewide program. The organization now has 22 chapters and 2,220 volunteers. A formal evaluation of the program shows success in increasing participants' long-term knowledge, improving attitudes toward resource management practices, and boosting natural resource volunteerism.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Lindheimer Daisy



Master Naturalists from the North Texas Chapter pose for a group picture at the Annual Meeting at Mo Ranch.



Coastal Prairie Chapter

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a national program after receiving approval from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) Multi-States Conservation Program, which assists with national programs. In 2004, 15 programs represent the first national program to participate in the first national meeting.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Green Frog



East Texas Chapter members attend the Annual Meeting and celebrate the fifth anniversary of the TMN Program.



Lost Pines Master Naturalists take part in field research for their local area.



2004

Highland Lakes Chapter members...

In 2004, the program distributes comprehensive recertification materials to let each chapter focus on general ecology and a focus on the...



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
2,763



Coastal Prairie Chapter

The Texas Master Naturalist model goes national after receiving an International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) Multi-States Conservation Grant, which assists with national training for new Master Naturalist programs. In 2004, 15 programs representing 20 states participate in the first national training.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Green Frog

The first 5,000-hour award is given to Thea Platz, Alamo Area Chapter.



Sonny Arnold is hired as Assistant Program Coordinator

2005

- Brazos Valley Chapter
- Gideon Lindecum
- Heartwood Chapter
- Red River Chapter
- Rio Brazos Chapter
- Tierra Grande Chapter



Annual Recertification Pin:
Belted Kingfisher

2004



Highland Lakes Chapter hosts some special guests to learn about Raptor Rehab for their new class training.



North Texas Chapter members Becky Rader and Linda Sharp plant pickerelweed at Duck Creek



An essential part of being a Master Naturalist is dedicating time to service projects that benefit local natural resources. Elm Fork Master Naturalists pose for a picture on the brand-new bridge built at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center.



Brazos Valley Chapter hosts first training class, involving hands-on activities in the classroom and outside.

In 2004, the state program distributes a pilot edition of a comprehensive Texas Master Naturalist curriculum manual, which lets each chapter provide an even more comprehensive basic training on general ecology of the state, with a focus on the local flora and fauna.



Barron Rector instructs Brazos Valley Chapter trainees at the Extension Range Center in College Station.





U.S. Department of Interior's "Take Pride in America" Award



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
3,431

- Brazos Valley Chapter
- Gideon Lindecum Chapter
- Heartwood Chapter
- Red River Chapter
- Rio Brazos Chapter
- Tierra Grande Chapter



Annual Recertification Pin:
Belted Kingfisher



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
4,122

- Blackland Prairie Chapter
- Llano Estacado Chapter
- South Plains Chapter

In 2006, the program celebrates its first "million milestone" after reaching over 1 million youth, adults, and private landowners and recording over a half-million volunteer service hours.



Capital Area Chapter volunteers serve their region through planting native plant demonstration gardens.

2005



Brazos Valley Chapter hosts their first training class, involving hands-on activities in the classroom and outside.



The Elm Fork Chapter has a workday at Clear Creek, clearing trails and benefiting their local natural resources.



White Rock Lake volunteer project is recognized with TPWD's Lone Star Land Steward Award.



Lou Verner, Biologist and North Texas volunteers advocate




2006



Barron Rector instructs Brazos Valley Chapter trainees at the Extension Range Center in College Station.



 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
4,122

-  Blackland Prairie Chapter
-  Llano Estacado Chapter
-  South Plains Chapter

In 2006, the program celebrates its first "million milestone" after reaching over 1 million youth, adults, and private landowners and recording over a half-million volunteer service hours.



Keep Texas Beautiful Award



Annual Recertification Pin:
Prickly Pear Cactus



The Brazos Valley Chapter is shown installing a native plant demonstration garden, helping TMN reach the next million milestone of volunteer service.

2007

2006



Lou Verner, TPWD Urban Biologist and Advisor for the North Texas Chapter, leads volunteers on a birding adventure.



Master Naturalists have many talents that they showcase during the Annual Meeting. Highland Lakes Chapter members pose with their prizes.




Capital Area Chapter members collect and monitor salamanders at Eliza Springs.



Heart of Texas Chapter members work to collect samples of freshwater mussel at Lake Waco.

2007

 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
4,725

 **AWARD** Educator of the Year by the Texas Association for Environmental Education

 **AWARD** Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal to J. Dale Shively

Mayor of San Antonio proclaims October 12-14, 2007, to be "Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Days" in San Antonio to commemorate our first chapter's 10th anniversary during the 8th Annual Statewide Meeting.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Grass Shrimp



The North Texas Chapter poses for a group picture at the Annual Meeting.



 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
5,306

- El Camino Real Chapter
- Cypress Basin Chapter



Annual Recertification Pin:
Texas Sage



By hosting evergreen groups, volunteers gain knowledge with each generation of...



Heart of Texas Chapter members work to collect samples of freshwater mussels at Lake Waco.



Annual Meeting attendees get an introduction to wildlife tracks by TPWD Biologist Richard Heilbrun.



Master Naturalists are generationally-minded, including and engaging future conservationists and teaching the value of wildlife and natural resources in the state of Texas.

New statewide TMN website is launched.

2008



The Capital Area Master Naturalist booths at the Nueces River Cave Festival provide educational and...



Master Naturalists from the Gulf Coast Chapter are hard at work but all smiles.





TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
5,306

- El Camino Real Chapter
- Cypress Basin Chapter



Citizens' Environmental
Coalition of Houston Award



In its first chartered year, the El Camino Real Chapter hosts a local event to teach nursing home residents how to fish, to bring conservation education to all generations of Texans.



TOTAL Y...
5,995

Sabine-Neches

2009

[10 YEAR SYNOPSIS]

\$16.41 million
estimated economic impact

5,306
volunteers trained



Annual Recertification Pin:
Texas Sage



By hosting events for school groups, volunteers share their knowledge with the next generation of naturalists.

2008



The Capital Area Chapter hosts booths at the NatureSmart Austin Cave Festival with fun, educational activities for adults and children.

996.5 miles
of trails developed or improved

1+ million
service hours

19 national, state, and local awards

34 chapters

90,000+ acres
of habitat enhanced



Master Naturalists from the Gulf Coast Chapter are hard at work but all smiles.



The North Texas Chapter gave its first 5,000 milestone award to some of its founding members: Jim Varnum, Sara Beckelman, and Steve Houser.



Alamo Area Chap volunteers measure flow and turbid



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
5,995

● Sabine-Neches Chapter

2009



Annual Recertification Pin:
Salamander



New Braunfels Parks and Recreation
Department's Teddy Roosevelt Conservation
Award: Lindheimer Chapter



Rolling Plains Chapter volunteers
collect their gear before doing
Texas Horned Lizard surveys.



The East Texas Chapter
documents plant species in
their area for the chapter's
herbarium.



Alamo Area Chapter
volunteers measure stream
flow and turbidity.



Master Naturalists work side by side with state
and national agency partners to put in the hard
work for managing our state's ecosystems,
including working with tools like prescribed
burning with the Alamo Area Chapter.



An El Camino Real Master
Naturalist takes measurements
of a Northern Cardinal before
banding its leg.

2010



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
6,737

- Piney Wood Lakes Chapter
- Indian Trail Chapter
- Good Water Chapter
- Central Texas Chapter



League of Women Voters of Texas
Environmental Awareness Award



Alliance of Natural Resources
Outreach and Service Program's
"Program of the Year" Award



Cradle of Texas Chapter members host the Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Hays County Chapter members seine the river to identify and log various fish species in the area.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Wood Duck

2011

2010



Members from the first class of the Indian Trail Chapter pose for a picture after completing a class group project together. Many chapters include this as part of their training to set a foundation of service and community.



The Rolling Plains Chapter hosts a clean-up at Sikes Lake. Master Naturalists are essential to maintaining and preserving the beautiful natural areas in their region.



The Red River Chapter completes a bald eagle survey in their area.



The Central Texas Chapter's first class focuses on aquatic invertebrates.



The Good Water Chapter hosts "Kid City," engaging youth in their community and demonstrating nest-building techniques.



The Brazos Valley Chapter instills lifelong passion for conservation in their chapter's "Junior Master Naturalists."

2011



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
7,391

- Longleaf Ridge Chapter
- Bois d'Arc Chapter

Sonny Arnold, a founding member of the Texas Master Naturalist State Program and assistant state coordinator, officially retires.



"Sea Rim Serena," made of trash from Sea Rim State Park, is shown with the Sabine-Neches Chapter. Many chapters use creative ways to help clean up natural areas and involve the public.



Bois d'Arc Chapter members host a fossil day to engage community members with the history of the natural areas in their region.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Texas Horned Lizard



Annual Recertification Pin:
Mexican Free-tailed Bat



The Texas Master Naturalist Program receives funding from the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The mission of the WSFR is to work through partnerships to conserve and manage fish and wildlife, and their habitats, for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.



Through their advanced training, Master Naturalists find specific areas of interest they want to learn more about. These North Texas Chapter members got involved with the Texas Watershed Stewards Program.



El Camino Real Chapter hosts a nature festival with reptiles that bring big smiles!

2012



The Brazos Valley Chapter instills lifelong passion for conservation in their chapter's "Junior Master Naturalists."



The Longleaf Ridge Chapter is investing in their region as they canoe in a local park.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
8,142

● Bluestem Chapter



FIRST 10,000-HOUR
RECIPIENTS



TOTAL
8,854

2013



Annual Recertification Pin:
Mexican Free-tailed Bat

Steve Houser, 10,000 Hours
North Texas Chapter

Dick Benoit, 10,000 Hours
Galveston Bay Area Chapter



North Texas Master Naturalists take part in their big chapter project at Cedar Hill State Park. Many chapters use a huge chapter project to encourage camaraderie amongst members while making the maximum impact in their area.

Annual
Mo

2012



Piney Wood Lakes Chapter members pose for a picture after studying rare and invasive plants in Angelina Forest.

Kip Kiphart, 10,000 Hours
Hill Country Chapter



Kip Kiphart, Hill Country Chapter member and one of the first 10,000-hour recipients, hunting for monarchs at Garner State Park.



Cooling down and goofing off is part of the fun of being a Master Naturalist.




New trainees walk out of the class at Blackland Prairie Chapter.



Highland Lakes Chapter invites children to seine for aquatic species.

2013

 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
8,854



Chad Etheridge of the Cross Timbers Chapter inventories the wood duck boxes installed at Fort Worth Nature Center.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Monarch Butterfly



All Master Naturalists participate in hands-on training, as seen here with the Llano Estacado Chapter.

[15 YEAR SYNOPSIS]



 **\$54.9 million**
estimated economic impact

 **4.1 million**
youth and adults reached

 **8,854**
volunteers trained

 **1,866+ miles**
of trails developed or improved



-  Guadalupe Ch
-  Balcones Cany

The first collegiate chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, located at Concordia University, is developing a program to bring both university students and members into the training program. We encourage students to partner with surrounding communities through volunteer service and forward into their careers in conservation service.



New trainees with the Blackland Prairie Chapter get out of the classroom.



TMN reaches its second million milestone with 2.434 million hours of service.



Hill Country Master Naturalists plant trees at Muleshoe Farm.



Gideon Lincecum Chapter members rallied after removing invasive species such as ligustrum and chinaberry from the trails at Festival Hill.

2014



Tierra give count hours



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
9,676

- Guadalupe Chapter
- Balcones Canyonlands Chapter

The first collegiate chapter, Balcones Canyonlands, is developed in partnership with Concordia University. This chapter model brings both university students and community members into the training program, allowing the students to partner with members of their surrounding community, apply their passion through volunteer service, and then move forward into their careers with this base in conservation service.



Big Country Chapter trainees learn about the local soil as part of becoming Certified Master Naturalists.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Nine-Banded Armadillo



Mary Pearl Meuth is hired as Assistant Program Coordinator.



Coastal Prairie Chapter is honored with a certificate of appreciation from the City of Rosenberg and an award from the Houston-Galveston Area Council for the Seabourne Park Ecosystem Restoration Project.

2014



Tierra Grande Chapter members give a big check to their local counties: their volunteer service hours add up to an equivalent of one million dollars.



A South Texas Border Master Naturalist is all smiles during a shark dissection.



Local families paint fish prints at a Cradle of Texas Chapter outreach booth.



South Plains Chapter members visit Caprock Canyon State Park to learn more about their local terrain.



Mary and Paul Meredith, from the Mid-Coast Chapter, have made a significant impact during their time as Master Naturalists.



TCEQ's Texas Environmental Excellence Award for Civic/Community Leadership



Governor's Volunteer Award for Community Leadership

2015



 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
10,434

- Brush Country Chapter
- South Texas Border Chapter

The Texas Master Naturalist Program surpasses 10,000 trained volunteers through 45 Chapters.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Texas Bluebonnet



The Brazos Valley Chapter performs an aquatic field study.

We need to make sure our younger generations know how to be good stewards of the land.

Donna Clark, Prairie Oaks Chapter

 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
10,937



Annual Recertification Pin:
Guadalupe Bass



South Texas Border Chapter member removes invasive species and clears a trail.

After the devastating Blanco River flood of 2015, I wouldn't have had a clue where to start to restore our land that looked like a war zone. Being a Master Naturalist helped me know how to get started and gave me an automatic group to ask for answers. I would have been lost without this connection.

Suzanne Davis, Hays County Chapter



The Bluestem Chapter held outreach booths on Earth Day complete with butterfly tags and joy from celebrating natural resources of our state.



Trans Pecos Chapter members set up a booth at the Hueco Tanks Interpretive Fair.



Lindheimer Chapter member repairs a trail bridge over a slough that feeds into the Guadalupe River.



Diane Russett, Coastal Prairie Chapter shows off a caterpillar.

2016



2017

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
10,937



ANROSP Outstanding Educational Materials Award



The new Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Curriculum is published!



The Cypress Basin Chapter installs a native garden at Caddo Lake State Park.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Guadalupe Bass

2016



Diane Russell with the Coastal Prairie Chapter shows off a collection of caterpillars.



Dick Benoit of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter surveys the prairie after a long days work of service

The first 15,000-hour awards are given to Galveston Bay Area Chapter members Dick Benoit, Jim Duron, and Tom Solomon, and to Hill Country Chapter member Kip Kiphart.



Master Naturalists with the Longleaf Ridge Chapter participate in a Centennial Forest tree planting event at Big Thicket National Preserve.




Members of the chapter—Balcones playful energy on a local g




Coastal Prairie Chapter hosts a bird walk at Seabourne Creek Nature Park.

2017



 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
11,562

 Lower Trinity Basin Chapter

 Prairie Oaks Chapter



Annual Recertification Pin:
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle



Gulf Coast Master Naturalists bring the community together for a day of tree plantings.



The Panhandle Chapter hosts Naturalist Days each year at Palo Duro Canyon State Park to recruit new members.



Members of the newly established Lower Trinity Basin Chapter help clear a pollinator garden.



Innovations in American Government Awards: Bright Idea in American Government



Keep Texas Beautiful Award: Civic Organization



*I am now a co-
friends and fan
our natural w*

Rachel Nel

Annu



Members of the first collegiate chapter—Balcones Canyonlands—bring playful energy on a hike to learn about local geology.



Outstanding Book Award: Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society



Gulf Guardian Award, First Place Civic/Non-Profit Organization: Galveston Bay Area Chapter



Lost Pines Chapter members prepare to host their annual Biocensus team project, helping to survey plant species diversity along the same roadway each year.



Students and other members of the Prairie Oaks Chapter—a collegiate chapter in partnership with Tarleton State University—work together to learn about stream quality testing.

2018

*I believe whole
Master Na
positively imp
with knowle
about*

Rowena

Both Tom Solomon, Galveston Bay Area Chapter, and Kip Kiphart, Hill Country Chapter, surpassed the 20,000 volunteer service hours milestone on the 20th anniversary of the TMN Program.



[20 YEAR SYNOPSIS]

- \$116 million**
estimated economic impact
- 5.9 million**
youth and adults reached
- 12,148**
volunteers trained
- 2,580+ miles**
of trails developed or improved

I am now a connection to the outdoors for my friends and family who don't know a lot about our natural world and how to take care of it.

—
Rachel Nelson, Heart of Texas Chapter



Master Naturalists leave a lasting legacy in the conservation and stewardship service they provide and in the youth they educate. Rio Brazos Chapter members are shown participating in Feather Fest.



2018



Trainees with the Rio Grande Valley Chapter are led through Hugh Ramsey Park in Harlingen.



Heartwood Chapter leads an innovative project at TDCJ Ellis Corrections Unit. Chapter members teach inmates the Master Naturalist curriculum.

I believe wholeheartedly in the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and its ability to positively impact the environment by providing us with knowledge and tools to inform the public about the importance of nature.

—
Rowena Ochiagha, Alamo Area Chapter

- 4.59 million**
service hours
- 36** national, state, and local awards
- 244,773 acres**
of habitat enhanced



Outstanding Achievement Award from the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
12,850

2019



Annual Recertification Pin:
Golden-Cheeked Warbler



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Education Award recognizes the Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Curriculum as a work that effectively conveys sound conservation concepts to the public.



Conservation Education Award,
The Wildlife Society



Dr. Chris Mathewson, a geologist and professor at Texas A&M, enjoying the Sunset Cruise at the 2019 Annual Meeting. Dr. Mathewson was honored posthumously as an honorary Texas Master Naturalist the following year.



Annual Recertification Pin:
American Bumblebee



Hays County new training class members net macroinvertebrates at John Knox Ranch to study water quality.



Tierra Grande Chapter members volunteer frequently with the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, providing an interpretive foundation for leading hikes on the trails.



Llano Estacado Master Naturalists enthusiastically net dragonflies at the Sibley Dragonfly Celebration.



New Master Naturalist trainees in the Longleaf Ridge Chapter get hands-on and in the field to learn about the natural cycle of prescribed fire in the pineywoods at Aldridge Sawmill Historic Site at Angelina

2020



State Haggert pivoted to team



As a sign of the members work collecting native Preserve for pro



UNPRECEDENTED, PERSEVERANCE, REMOTE, PIVOT, SOCIAL DISTANCE, QUARANTINE, UNCERTAIN TIMES, FLEXIBLE.



TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
13,339



2021



First TMN Exemplary Service Awards given to Bert Stipelcovich, the Coastal Prairie Chapter, and the TMN State Program Office's Michelle Haggerty and Mary Pearl Meuth for exceptional efforts to bring together a Virtual Annual Meeting for more than 1,200 TMN volunteers.



Annual Recertification Pin: American Bumblebee

Master Naturalist father and daughter peer at moths drawn in by a blacklight station. Many members record observations like these as an index of biodiversity in their area. Award winning photo captured by Valerie Taber, Rio Brazos Chapter.

2020



State Coordinators Michelle Haggerty and Mary Pearl Meuth pivoted to working virtually with a team of support at home.



Across the state, gatherings took place in different ways during the pandemic, with meetings moved online or outside. Members of the Gideon Lincecum Chapter hosted their monthly meetings at local pocket prairie project areas, working at the same time.



Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, TMN volunteers reflected on lessons learned from the program, the connections to green spaces as a form of relaxation and health, and the stewardship of those spaces for the enjoyment of others. Coastal Prairie Chapter members help maintain one such green space for the public.



As a sign of the times, Gulf Coast Chapter members work masked and at a distance collecting native grass seeds at Nash Prairie Preserve for propagation in partnership with a local native plant nursery.

Nature and spending time in nature has long been a priority for me. It allows me to slow down, reconnect on the things that matter most, reflect on life, and feel more grounded. In the midst of this pandemic, however, nature has now, more than ever, become a necessity.

Ashleigh Acevedo, Gulf Coast Chapter

2021

 **TOTAL VOLUNTEERS**
13,900



Annual Recertification Pin:
Sideoats Grama



Jim Duron, Galveston Bay Area Chapter member, reached 25,000 volunteer service hours—equivalent to 12 years of full-time service to the TMN program.



With the help of members and chapters around the state, the TMN Program launches its dragonfly license plate showcasing artwork by Hill Country Chapter member Bridget Langdale.



Trained members of the Mid-Coast Chapter responded quickly in the unprecedented freezing cold of Winter Storm Uri to provide support for agency rescue operations of cold-stunned turtles all along the Gulf Coastline.



The Master Naturalist state office initiates a series of virtual programs to meet the needs of members during the continuing pandemic. The TMNTuesday monthly webinar series offers advanced training from state experts, while the Be The Change webinar series addresses diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Virtual Volunteer Fairs offer project showcases for members to connect with virtual and distance-based service opportunities statewide. Many of these programs continue to be offered.



Master Naturalists of the Trans Pecos Chapter host an interactive table at Franklin Mountains State Park annually for their Chihuahuan Desert Fiesta as a way to showcase their chapter's project, recruit new master naturalists, and educate the public about the numerous wildlife in the Chihuahuan desert.




Texas Festival & Event Association (TFEA): Best in Texas Award for Nature Discovery Series, Guadalupe Chapter



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Partnership Award - Texas Parks & Wildlife Texas Master Naturalist Program

2022

Annual R
Ligh

 TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
14,618



The first ever Texas Master Naturalist in space! Gulf Coast member and NASA Astronaut Kjell Lindgren commanded the SpaceX Crew-4 shuttle to the International Space Station. He took TMN pins and patches and even hosted a downlink with fellow Master Naturalists from the ISS.



A group of Girl Scouts at Camp Kiwanis learn about using binoculars with the Panhandle Chapter. Just as the natural world thrives with biodiversity, the Texas Master Naturalist Program is dedicated to engaging all audiences in conservation, education, and stewardship.



After 170 days in space, Kjell and crew safely returned to Earth Friday, October 14th. Days later, TMN members attending the annual meeting were the first group to welcome him home as he shared his views on the role of a TMN volunteer's stewardship of Texas' natural resources after viewing Earth's landscapes from space.



Annual Recertification Pin:
Lightning Whelk



Cross Timbers Chapter members JoAnn Collins, Zachary Chapman, and Dana Austin celebrate the advantageous work of removing bastard cabbage at Fort Worth Prairie.



Galveston Bay Area Chapter members help school children through a sea turtle excluder net to learn about the conservation and restoration of Gulf Coast resources.



Elm Fork Chapter members use every opportunity to engage the public. Even a wandering box turtle at Denton's Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area helped.


As a TMN, you're not expected to be an expert. It's helpful to get comfortable with saying 'I don't know' and following it with 'but I aim to find out.' ... TMNs-in-training quickly find out it's almost impossible to know everything, and instead, lean into a particular area of interest. For instance, I'm an admirer of insects and mushrooms. Others in my chapter are avid birders. A few have replaced their lawns with lush, gorgeous pocket prairies, and butterfly gardens. There are countless ways to make an impact as a TMN.

Esmeralda Fisher, Coastal Prairie Chapter

2022

2023



 TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
15,300

 Brushy Canyons Chapter



Annual Recertification Pin:
Texas Ecoregions



TMN volunteer Mark Brown and wife Cheryl are recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with the agency's Leopold Conservation Award.



Tom Solomon, Galveston Bay Area Chapter, completed his 30,000th hour of service—equivalent to more than 14 years of full-time service to the TMN program.



Since 2018, a Texas Master Naturalist Conservation Award is presented annually in the junior and senior divisions of the Texas Science and Engineering Fair.



To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the TMN Program, artist Audrey Taulli combined the 2023 Texas ecoregions recertification pin with many previous TMN recertification pin species placing them across the state according to their habitat range to create our 25th anniversary logo.



The South Plains Chapter organized a Training tour at Caprock Canyon State Park with members learning about the life history of free-tailed bats of the Trailway and Cliff Swallow.

The Texas Master Naturalist program allows for people to find other people with a like-minded outlook on life. We 'nature-nerds' seem to find each other while out on the trails or while teaching children about insects.

Lynn Seman, Rolling Plains Chapter



TMN volunteer Mark Brown and wife Cheryl are recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with the agency's Leopold Conservation Award.



Tom Solomon, Galveston Bay Area Chapter, completed his 30,000th hour of service—equivalent to more than 14 years of full-time service to the TMN program.



[25 YEAR SYNOPSIS]

- over \$215 million** economic impact
- 6.628 million** people reached
- 3,010+ miles** of trail
- 6.787 million** service hours



To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the TMN Program, artist Audrey Taulli combined the 2023 Texas ecoregions recertification pin with many previous TMN recertification pin species placing them across the state according to their habitat range to create our 25th anniversary logo.

- 40+ awards**
- 49 chapters**
- 256,792+ acres**



The South Plains Chapter organized a Trailway and Bat advanced training tour at Caprock Canyon State Park with members learning about the life history of Mexican free-tailed bats of the Trailway and Clarity Tunnel.

*er Naturalist program allows for people
people with a like-minded outlook on life.
's' seem to find each other while out on
while teaching children about insects.*

Seman, Rolling Plains Chapter

THE IMPACT OF MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEERS

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A NATURALIST

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



MASTER NATURALISTS AT WORK

Photo: Deborah Repasz, Galveston Bay Area Chapter

The Texas Master Naturalist program empowers volunteers by providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to protect and preserve local natural resources. Volunteers undergo training and participate in diverse service projects, including environmental education, habitat restoration, and community outreach. Through ongoing involvement and recertification, volunteers ensure a legacy of informed conservationists who contribute to the program's mission. The program offers various volunteer opportunities, ranging from administrative tasks to hands-on fieldwork, fostering leadership development and collaboration.

A typical Texas Master Naturalist volunteer service project may involve habitat restoration in a local park or nature reserve. Volunteers collaborate to remove invasive plant species, plant native vegetation, and establish wildlife habitats like birdhouses or pollinator gardens. They also conduct educational activities such as guided nature walks or conservation workshops, engaging with the community to raise awareness about environmental stewardship and foster a connection to nature.

The Texas Master Naturalist state program office annually recognizes outstanding chapter projects through the **Exemplary Project Fair**. Chapters have an opportunity to present a current project, facilitating knowledge sharing and inspiration among chapters. In 2020 the project fair shifted to an online webinar format that remains a more accessible feature today for acknowledging and supporting the impactful work of our volunteers. The following pages showcase past winners of the Exemplary Project Fair throughout the years.



Photo: Rio Brazos Chapter

Brazos River Cleanup & Campout Educational Weekend

Rio Brazos Chapter

The Rio Brazos River—known for recreation, electrical generation, irrigation, and home to countless animals—has been used as a tire and trash dumping ground for over 100 years. In 2017, the Rio Brazos Chapter created a project to cleanse their namesake of tires, trash, and other debris that has accumulated over the decades.

The project has morphed from a simple 4-mile section with 13 chapter members participating in 2017 to a 17-mile stretch worked by four crews and over 60 participants. The project's goal is to continue bringing other groups into the project as it expands its reach and impact up and down the Brazos. The volunteers utilize canoes, kayaks, and foot patrols to clean the river, its banks and its sandbars.

In 2018 and 2019, the project expanded to include advanced training classes and a campout for participants. These expansions also enabled the collaboration of numerous partnership organizations including TPWD, NRCS, the Brazos River Authority, and the Lower Brazos Riverwatch.

With measurable results of over 20,000 pounds of tires and trash collected; numerous new TMN members recruited; and new friends and chapters participating, the Rio Brazos River Cleanup & Campout Educational Weekend showcases the invaluable impact of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteers.



The White Rock Lake Blackland Prairie Restoration Project

North Texas Chapter

The White Rock Lake Blackland Prairie - Unit 2 Restoration project was initiated to begin the process of restoring and preserving the 13-acre unit of native prairie land around historic White Rock Lake in Dallas, Texas. Native habitat preservation is vital to the survival of our native Texas species of plants, mammals, birds, and insects, and to the health of the surrounding environment—which is of particular importance in a sprawling urban area like Dallas.

Working with Dallas Parks and Recreation and North Texas Master Naturalist project liaisons, 18 new Master Naturalists from the North Texas Chapter class of 2020 participated in the project. They conducted biological surveys over several months; created invasive plant informational guides; conducted a project workday (following coronavirus guidelines) to remove invasive species; collected seeds from native plants for dispersal on future workdays, and developed a three-year plan for prairie restoration.

The three-year plan outlined the chapter's commitment to continued invasive removal; identification of more native species; development of native grass and forbs seed collection protocols for use in future workdays; increasing community involvement; providing educational opportunities, and developing awareness of the local Blackland Prairie ecoregion and its importance in helping to maintain native biodiversity of the local area.



Building Bobcat Woods Loop Trail

Cradle of Texas Chapter

The Cradle of Texas Chapter provided project management and volunteers to dismantle a decaying 25-year-old boardwalk, construct a new boardwalk, develop a loop trail, and design and install interpretive panels at Bobcat Woods on the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge.

The old 0.2-mile boardwalk, located under a forest canopy along Cacklebur Slough, was a popular wildlife viewing site but had deteriorated and needed an upgrade. The refuge desired to replace this structure and extend the trail across the slough to the Wolfweed Moist Soil Units, forming a 0.75-mile loop trail with a spur connecting to an observation platform on the first reservoir.

The Chapter partnered with the refuge and the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges which acquired a \$160,000 grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Recreational Trails grant program. Deconstruction of the old boardwalk began in February 2017. Construction of the new boardwalk and loop trail, along with the interpretive panels installation, was completed in December 2020. This project engaged 17 Cradle of Texas Chapter volunteers and more than 3,500 hours of volunteer labor.

Bobcat Woods and the adjoining wetland and prairie provide habitat for more than 180 species of resident and migrating birds. The trail is a popular birding spot, especially during spring migration, and serves 20,000+ annual visitors. The new, wider, ADA-complying Bobcat Woods boardwalk and loop trail enhances visitor access and enjoyment of this special place.



Llano Estacado Native Bee Survey

Llano Estacado Chapter

The native bees of the Llano Estacado Chapter region were documented in 2021 in several ways. Photographic surveys of public and private properties and other areas were made through scheduled TPWD and Llano Estacado Chapter bioblitzes and then posted to several projects in iNaturalist including Adopt-A-Loop (GTWT), Bees and Wasps of Texas (TNT), and any other iNaturalist projects representative of the Llano Estacado.

Representative bee collections are also being made for the areas (with permission where required) using netting and/or traps. Collections are not for private use and are donated to educational or research institutions or partnering museums. Bees are being collected under expert supervision and deposited in the USDA Bee Biology and Systematics Lab in Logan, UT; the Museum of Southwestern Biology in Albuquerque, NM; Texas A&M University in College Station, TX and other appropriate institutions.

Educational materials for outreach programs through the Llano Estacado Chapter have been created as a result of this project and include brochures, PowerPoint presentations, posters, and more. These educational materials teach others about the importance of native bees, how to identify them, and what related conservation actions --such as planting native plants, creating pollinator gardens, and preserving native habitats--one can take to help preserve native bees in our area.



Photo: Llano Estacado Chapter

Pollinator Garden Assistance and Recognition Program

Hill Country Chapter

The Pollinator Assistance and Recognition Program (PGARP) is a project of the Hill Country Texas Master Naturalist Chapter and the Native Plant Society of Texas chapters of Kerrville, Fredericksburg, and Boerne. The goal of the program is to promote the creation of small-plot gardens (at least 100 square feet) to provide food, shelter, and water for pollinators, and to encourage greater use of native plants. A secondary goal is to recruit new members to the Texas Master Naturalist program and the Native Plant Society of Texas. PGARP is publicized through the placement of rack cards in each chapter's communities, newspaper articles, presentations to various organizations, and word of mouth.

Project requests are distributed to one of three area coordinators based on the location of the property in the 10-county area. After the property owner has been contacted, a team of 2-4 volunteers visits the site. The volunteers identify existing plants--both native and exotic--and evaluate light, soil, terrain, and availability of water. The plight of pollinators is discussed while the need for native plant gardens to support them is explained. Site-appropriate suggestions are made and the components of a pollinator garden are listed.

The same information is provided in a written report for the property. Follow-up visits are offered and if criteria are met, the property is declared a "Recognized Hill Country Pollinator Garden" and a garden sign may be purchased by the property owner. The program has been well received by the community, with 83 site visits made, 22 garden recognition signs awarded, and 24 community presentations given since April 2018, when the program began.



Galveston Beach Hero Project

Galveston Bay Area Chapter

The Galveston Bay Area Chapter's Beach Hero Project team created a fun, educational, and engaging program addressing what their chapter volunteers do to help combat plastic pollution on the beaches of Galveston. Members of the project cast wear superhero capes during the in-school presentations and ask the children what they are doing to help better their local environment.

At the end of the program, the chapter provides donated art supplies for each student to artistically show their efforts. Upon completion, the chapter collects the artwork and awards a Beach Hero certificate. The artwork is then exhibited at community meetings, an art gallery, and on social media. To date, the project has reached over 750 children in five under-served grade schools in the Galveston area.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, the program pivoted from in-school presentations to creating a video for use by schools, adult daycare centers, and home schooling groups. Leveraging social media to help continue to share the artistic work and dedication of the students, the Galveston Bay Area Chapter continually seeks ways to not only provide but improve its program.

The Galveston Beach Hero Project's goals are to provide a positive opportunity for grade school children to artistically depict their commitment to combating plastic pollution. The chapter aims for students to think of the beaches as an extended part of their home and to develop a desire to protect the environment in which they live.

MASTER NATURALISTS SAY IT BEST

Photo: Janet Rogal, Balcones Canyonlands Chapter

I believe in the Texas Master Naturalist Program because...



"It rescues me from a life of isolation and depression by giving me goals to get out in nature, connect with like-minded people, and feel like I am making a difference in the world." - *Nancy Angell, Sabine-Neches Chapter*

"Initially, it is a resource where people can turn for their questions about nature; it then builds people's awareness that all of nature is important; it then offers them a place where even their small efforts contribute to society in a meaningful way." - *Gwen Lanning, Heartwood Chapter*



"There are so many areas where we, as humans on this earth, destroy valuable natural resources due to our ignorance. Through TMN we learn how each of us can make a difference and gain the tools to share that information with others. Together we can make a huge difference." - *Jessica Jones, Piney Woods Lakes Chapter*

MASTER NATURALISTS SAY IT BEST

Photo: Derrick Mims, Alamo Area Chapter

What change(s) do you see in yourself and others after joining TMN?



"I think we all become more aware and knowledgeable of our environment. More willing to share what we have learned." - *Kathleen Appelbaum, Piney Woods Lakes Chapter*

"Better knowledge, greater commitment, growing confidence and sense of fellowship."
- *Rose McFetridge, Gulf Coast Chapter*



"More knowledgeable about our associate parks and wildlife management areas."
- *Teresa Swann, Tierra Grande Chapter*

"I have read more books on natural history than I otherwise might have and have written reviews of them for our newsletter." - *Bob Romero, Gulf Coast Chapter*



MASTER NATURALISTS SAY IT BEST

Photo: Betsy Cross, Hays County Chapter

How would you describe the impact(s) of TMN on local resources?



"We are small but mighty. When we talk to our community I can see we open their eyes to new ways of looking at the world around them." - Angela DeGroot, Bois d'Arc Chapter

"All of our partners rely on us to fulfill their missions. Without our help, they would not be able to do near what they need to do." - Wilfred Korth, Mid-Coast Chapter



"Positive! Our chapter has several projects that work with kids. They are like sponges, wanting to know more and to experience the nature around them."
- Jessica Jones, Piney Woods Lakes Chapter

THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO NEXT

T E X A S

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FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Photo: Linda Kuhn, Galveston Bay Area Chapter

The Friends of Texas Master Naturalist organization is being established to provide support to the Texas Master Naturalist program and its staff. The goal is to establish a 501(c)3 corporation to provide outside financial support and logistical assistance to the Texas Master Naturalist program.

Immediate responsibilities include collecting and disbursing funds for the annual meeting, which typically amounts to approximately \$125,000 annually, and aiding in the planning of the financial side of the meeting as required by program sponsors. This support organization is necessary due to federal grant regulations prohibiting any appearance of profit-making and selling. The establishment of the Friends group support organization will allow for continued effective management of funds and logistical coordination while complying with regulatory requirements.

Its primary purposes will include fundraising, financial management for TMN activities such as the Annual Meeting, TMN curriculum, the TMN Endowment, and assisting in the overall success of the program. Once the organization has been formed, membership will be open to individuals who are or have been certified as Texas Master Naturalists, irrespective of residency. Members may be involved in the executive board, committees, and elections.

For more information about the Friends of Texas Master Naturalist organization please contact Donna Cole.

Cell: 214-538-4444

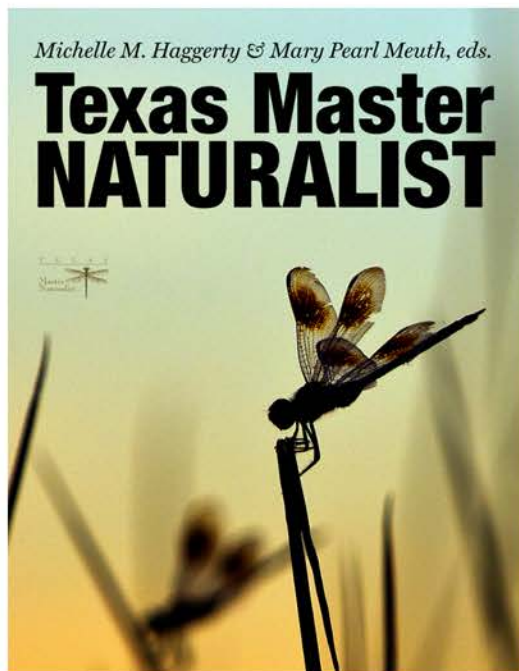
Email: donna@donna2112.com



STATEWIDE CURRICULUM SECOND EDITION

Photo: Texas Master Naturalist Program

Our first state-level Texas Master Naturalist Curriculum was developed in 2004 and printed as a three-ring binder. In 2014, we engaged in a major update and publishing project and printed our curriculum with TAMU Press as a full color, 750+ page, 6.5-pound textbook and finally published it in 2016. It would only make sense that within that 10-year timeline, we start another update to the book!



Starting in 2024, the TMN Program is working to review, update, and print a second edition of our TMN Statewide Curriculum. While this project will be a multi-year project, each unit will be updated and reviewed for its continued application in natural resource management and service. Additionally, new unit materials and new unit subjects will be added—including coastal, desert, and prairie ecology and management.

Order the book through TAMU Press

800-826-8911

bookorders@tamu.edu



JUNIOR MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Photo: Regina Dale, Elm Fork Chapter

The **Junior Master Naturalist program** is designed to not only expose youth to the natural environment but to foster a lifelong relationship with maintaining the integrity of the earth. While a formal state-wide Junior Master Naturalist program has not yet been established, the majority of Master Naturalist chapters currently work with youth in some capacity. Further plans are being made to grow the program in the future.

The mission of the state-wide Junior Master Naturalist program would be: To develop a lifelong appreciation and knowledge of natural history and natural sciences among youth; and develop skills in personal development (My Self) and in service and leadership for sustainable communities (My Community).

The goals of the program include:

1. Develop a lifelong appreciation of Texas natural history and natural sciences among youth of all ages.
2. Provide knowledge resources to the youth of Texas regarding natural history and natural sciences.
3. Give Texas youth a means for personal development in service and leadership for sustainable communities.



TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST ENDOWMENT

Photo: Marc Opperman, Capital Area Chapter

The Texas Master Naturalist Endowment was created as a partnership effort supported by both the Texas A&M Foundation and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Foundation. Having two foundations working together to build sustainable funding for the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) program speaks to the importance and incredible passion of the TMN volunteers.

The mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Endowment is to further enhance the Texas Master Naturalist program, its chapters and volunteers, now and into the future, for the benefit of natural resource **education**, **conservation**, and **stewardship**. The goal is to create a \$5 Million TMN Endowment. These funds would be used to bolster the TMN program, duplicate its efforts across the state, and support the local chapters in ways that cannot be done with the current funding and capacity.

A contribution to the Texas Master Naturalist Endowment can provide the ability to expand the TMN program through additional administrative support, regional program coordinators to support local chapters, enhanced advanced training, curriculum, and youth program development (the Junior Master Naturalist program). Your generosity in support of the Texas Master Naturalist Endowment means the TMN program will have secure and sustainable funding now and in the future. To support the future of our program, visit: www.masternaturalistendowment.org





THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST LICENSE PLATE

Photo: Derrick Mims, Alamo Area Chapter

Our Texas Master Naturalist Specialty License Plate is here! Join us and show off your Texas Master Naturalist membership, support of the program, love of dragonflies, and commitment to conservation education through volunteer service all over your city, county, Texas, and beyond by adding it to your car. By purchasing a Texas Master Naturalist license plate, you will be directly providing financial support back to our program and its conservation and stewardship of Texas' natural resources. Anyone can purchase this plate and \$22 of each \$30 annual plate fee comes directly back to the Texas Master Naturalist program for continuing our mission.

The plate is available for purchase on the website:

Personalized plate (\$70): [The Texas Master Naturalist License Plate](#)

Non-Personalized plate (\$30): [The Texas Master Naturalist License Plate](#)

We are just as excited as you are to see this plate launch and we cannot wait to see these license plates on vehicles all across Texas! This has been an event years in the making, and many people helped along the way. Thank you to all of those who contributed to getting a plate developed and launched. The artwork is by one of our own Master Naturalists.

See y'all on the road!





GET INVOLVED & SUPPORT

Photo: Joyce Tipton, Coastal Prairie Chapter

JOIN US

*Apply to your local chapter!
Visit txmn.tamu.edu for details.*

SUPPORT US

*Learn more at
www.masternaturalistendowment.org*

CONTACT US

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