

A man with a grey beard, glasses, and a cap, wearing a maroon shirt, stands in a forest and speaks to a group of people. The background is filled with green trees and foliage. The man is positioned in the center of the frame, slightly to the right. The group of people is in the foreground, mostly seen from the back or side, listening to the man. The overall scene is outdoors in a wooded area.

# Municipal Mutualism

Blackland Prairie Chapter's building a strong and productive relationship with the city of Frisco through TMN member technical guidance for the Urban Forestry municipal board.

**Rick Travis**

**Blackland Prairie Texas Master Naturalist**



**Let's start with an example how investing time and energy on a municipal board can lead to a beautiful friendship.**

# Grand Park



The core property

Purchased by the city in 2007.

Total park and trail is approx. 1100 acres with 300-acre core area.

Property has remained fallow for several decades.

Parks Dept. began concept and design work on the core property in 2023.

Chapter was asked to conduct a site assessment of the core property.



# The Woodland Survey

Conducted by a group of 26 Blackland Prairie  
and Elm Fork chapter TMN's.



The Grand Park woodlands were organized into 12 sections

Transect survey.

Recorded canopy species, understory trees, groundcover, wildlife/evidence of wildlife.

# Canopy Trees

Example of woodland survey data provided

Primarily an Early/Mid Succession Forest

The oldest trees and highest diversity are found along the creek banks and sloughs

Total	%
2375	41.64%
1309	22.95%
1074	18.83%
299	5.24%
185	3.24%
174	3.05%
134	2.35%
57	1.00%
23	0.40%
23	0.40%
20	0.35%
10	0.18%
4	0.07%
4	0.07%
3	0.05%
3	0.05%
2	0.04%
2	0.04%
2	0.04%
1	0.02%
5704	100.00%

Canopy Species	Section Count												Total	%
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
Cedar Elm	129	121	172	50	259	190	329	211	265	138	82	142	2375	41.64%
Sugar Hackberry	113	85	19	258	57	28	97	112	93	138	82	227	1309	22.95%
Ash	128	10	69	2	35	131	101	137	162		299		1074	18.83%
Honey Locust	8	14	5	58					7	88	17	25	299	5.24%
American Elm	11	10	5	20					4	108	7	1	185	3.24%
Osage Orange	17	12	7	24					15	23	8	10	174	3.05%
Gum Bumelia	6	4	1	6					13	35	26	14	134	2.35%
Black Willow			6						5	38	7		57	1.00%
Black Walnut		4	9						5		1		23	0.40%
Chinese Pistache	4				3		3	1		8		4	23	0.40%
Eastern Redcedar	5			1	1		4	1		6	2		20	0.35%
Persimmon													10	0.18%
Chinaberry	1												4	0.07%
Pecan											1		4	0.07%
Bur Oak	1												3	0.05%
Red Oak							3						3	0.05%
Box Elder Maple			2										2	0.04%
Cottonwood										2			2	0.04%
Mulberry										1	1		2	0.04%
Silver Maple						1							1	0.02%
	423	262	297	425	416	377	601	501	570	636	773		5704	100.00%

# Recommendations for the Woodlands

- Clean up all the dump sites ASAP. We can provide the photos with GPS coordinates for the various areas we observed.
- Seed/plant Bur Oak, Chinkapin Oak, Pecan, Black Walnut trees into the riparian woodlands.
- Seed/plant native understory species such as Roughleaf Dogwood, Rusty Blackhaw, Smooth Sumac, Carolina Buckthorn, Redbud, Possumhaw Holly.
- Plant native nut species trees and understory trees listed above into the developed areas of the park. Birds and squirrels will distribute the fruit into the riparian areas.
- Remove/control invasive privets found in a few areas.



# The Meadows iNaturalist Surveys

Conducted in a series of bioblitzes by members of several DFW area TMN chapter members, TPWD, Nature Conservancy, Frisco Parks staff, and other volunteers.



# Grand Park iNaturalist Survey Recap



Overview

9,884  
OBSERVATIONS

1,184  
SPECIES

697  
IDENTIFIERS

134  
OBSERVERS

Stats



- Research Grade
- Needs ID
- Casual



- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Insects
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned F...
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals
- Other Animals

# Highlights from the Meadows



# Highlights from the Meadows



# Highlights from the Meadows



# Highlights from the Meadows



# Ecological Valuations of the Meadow Areas at Grand Park



**Dark Green – Highest Value. Very Diverse, Native Meadow.**

**Light Green - Primarily native, diverse, high value ecologically.**

**Yellow – Some value, contains mix of native and non-native/invasive flora.**

**Red – Low value, primarily non-native/invasive flora, or low-value native flora.**



Ecological Valuations



Approved 2024 Master Plan



**How this beautiful friendship began...**



# I Applied for the Frisco Urban Forestry Advisory Board

- **Strategy:** Develop a productive personal and TMN relationship with Frisco Parks staff and city leadership.
- **Tactic:** Apply for either the Parks or Urban Forestry advisory boards.
  - Offer technical guidance.
  - Involve other chapter members.
  - Become a trusted resource.
  - Develop an ongoing working relationship with Frisco Parks.

# Frisco Urban Forestry Advisory Board

- Volunteer Advisory Board created in 2001
- Appointments are approved by City Council
- 2-year terms run Oct-Sept
- Board meets monthly





# My Timeline as a Member of the Frisco Urban Forestry Advisory Board

- Applied in 2016, was not appointed.
- Re-applied and appointed in 2017.
- Remained on the Board for the maximum 6 consecutive years that term limits allow, from Oct 2017 through Sept. 2023.

# Technical Guidance Provided to the Board

- Utilize my BS in Forestry as a Trees/Forest Ecology subject matter expert.
- Responsible for training Board members each year.
- Provide training for Frisco Parks staff members.



# Technical Guidance Provided to the Board

- Utilize my BS in Forest  
Trees/Forest  
man
- Re  
me
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GO JACKS!





## **Technical Guidance Provided to the Board**

- Lead periodic public tree walks and other events sponsored and conducted by the Board.
- Our other board members learn how to participate in and lead these walks.



# The Types of Guidance Provided to the Board, Parks Staff, and the Public

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- Description, natural history, and ecological value of the native trees.
- Description, history, and ecological issues created by invasive trees.
- Ecological, economic and quality of life benefits trees provide.
- Ecological assessments and recommendations.
- Advice and counsel.

# Technical Guidance Provided to the Board

- Liaison for other agencies and organizations.
- Examples: Texas Forest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Agrilife, Texas Trees Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Texas Conservation Alliance...**and of course, Texas Master Naturalists.**







## **TMN Benefits from Investing Time and Energy on the Urban Forestry Advisory Board**

- Created a strong relationship and working bond.
- Influenced thought processes and decisions.
- Recruited Master Naturalists from the Board and city staff.



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# Growth of Blackland Prairie TMN Relationship with the City of Frisco



- Frisco Native Ecosystem Restoration Project
  - VMS project created in late 2020
  - Ongoing meadow and woodland restoration efforts in several park locations.
  - Ecological surveys, assessment report, and recommendations for undeveloped areas.
- Over 2200 VH hours recorded for this project since inception.
- Chapter Outreach is an active participant in Frisco events.
- Anticipate a significant increase in MN participation re education with addition of Nature Learning Center.

T E X A S



# Formula for Success



## Municipal Mutualism

1

Join a municipal advisory board

2

Provide technical guidance and advice.

3

Build a trusting, mutually beneficial relationship.

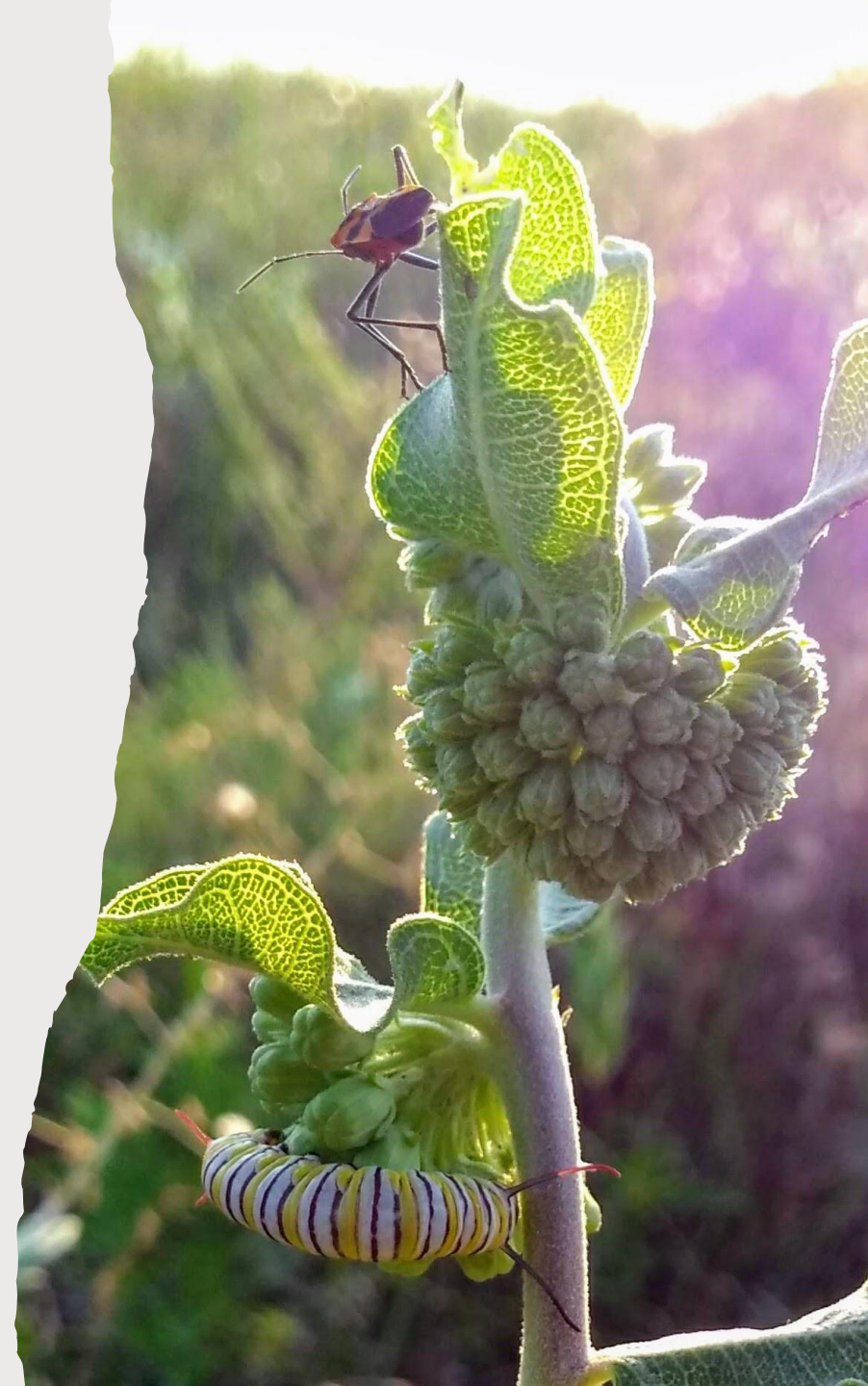
4

Grow TMN resources, services and influence.

**NEW!**

# Frisco Natural Resources Advisory Board

- The Urban Forestry Board has a new name and enhanced mission beginning with the 2024-2025 term.
- Applied and was accepted to this new Board for the Oct. 2024-Sept. 2025 term.





Q&A



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