

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – February 2009 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

President's Message, Dave Brandes

Welcome to February. Our general meeting Wednesday will continue our three part series on Hurricane Ike. I'll see you there.

Let's talk a little bit about volunteer time and recording hours. As you know, the state is telling us that our time must be logged and dated per activity. Please remember to do this. We won't be able to accept just the totals. Also, time keeping seems to become more onerous each year for our Membership Director. Please help by using the Excel spreadsheet if at all possible. And please, use it as is. If you modify it, we lose the benefit. The spreadsheet that accumulates all of this time relies on no layout changes.

And, the saga continues. Our state organization has pushed back a little on citizen science projects that are conducted entirely at home -- in other words, backyard projects. These projects are somewhat hidden from public view and perhaps do not impact our mission as much as some of our other projects. They have suggested that we limit our time on these activities. Our Board of Directors considered this and some of their other suggestions and adopted these guidelines:

1. To be approved for volunteer time, a home citizen science project must enter the collected data into a database that is or will be published for public use.
2. Home citizen science project volunteer time credit will be limited to 2 hours per week per project, or a total of 104 hours per year per project. This is more than 2 ½ times the hours needed to certify per project each year and should not really limit us.

Since the year is starting anew, I'd like to also remind you that Advanced Training not delivered at our general meetings or by a chapter partner must be pre-approved by our AT Chair (not by me). This ensures the training credit will be appropriate for our coastal ecosystems.

OK, on to more fun items. INEOS has started their environmental education sessions again. This is great news. The session last Friday was extremely well attended by COT instructors and they continue to inspire the kids. Thank you, thank you, thank you. If you were at the USFWS volunteer appreciation dinner and heard Bryan read some of the letters from the kids, you know how much impact we have.

We've started a new project in cooperation with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to update the Brazoria County invasive species distribution maps. This data will

roll into the USDA database. Twenty-five of our members attended the orientation and training session. We have permission from both the Brazoria County Parks Department and the Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex to conduct surveys on their properties with prior notice.

When I met with Richard Hurd, BCPD Director, regarding the above COT Invaders project, he mentioned an interest in developing a day camp program for Mohawk. This could be exciting for our northern county residents.

Our training pilot is going very well with 7 interns. The mandatory classes have been completed and each intern is off and running, creating their own schedule to complete the training and field experience requirements.

See you at the meeting,

Dave

Membership, Jerry Eppner

As the 2009 Membership Chair, I am still getting up to speed on the intricacies of accurately and efficiently recording your volunteer and advanced training hours. Thanks to all who have followed the instructions and submitted hours in properly-named files. It makes my job easier. And also thanks to those that have let me guide them through the process so that future submissions are easier to work with.

A few folks were able to submit 2008 time after the end of the year deadline, and several of these had enough VT and AT to recertify for 2008. These include: Mary Helen Israel, Jan Kater, Louis Peltier, Clyde Zilliox and Steve Zilliox. Fortunately, the state organization had a few 2008 recertification pins left that we were able to acquire, and these will be presented at the next general meeting.

Also, we have our first recertifying member for 2009, and that would be Laura Brandes who has had to put a lot of hours in getting the new intern training pilot off to a good start.

Congratulations to all! Jerry Eppner

February Meeting Wednesday, February 11, 2009

- 8:30 a.m. Coffee and Social time
- 9:00 a.m. General meeting
- 9:30 a.m. 2nd of a Three Part Series on Hurricane Ike Impact:
Hurricane Ike Impact on the Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife
by Shane Kasson, Wildlife Manager San Bernard and Big
Boggy National Wildlife Refuges, Texas Mid-Coast NWR
Complex

Reminder from Chapter Hosts, Jerry Krampota and Justina Dent

The following folks signed up to bring refreshments for the February meeting: Gerald Forrest, Candace Novak and Janet Clemenson. If for some reason you have a conflict, please call Jerry Krampota at 281-585-3249 or email at jkrampota@hotmail.com.

Training Chair, Laura Brandes

The following is a list of the seven 2009 interns who have recently started their master naturalist training. Please welcome each and every one and offer them encouragement and assistance in their endeavors.

January, 2009 Interns

Bradford, Stephanie: a retired Data Technician with previous experience in naturalist education, an experienced cartographer and a resident of Alvin.

Holler, Mary: a retired Elementary Education teacher with 27 years experience, loves the outdoors and resides in Angleton.

Johnson, Ed: retired from BASF in capital procurement and as a secondary school Science Teacher, likes working with kids and is a resident of Angleton.

McCreight, Don: a mechanic who likes to muck and resides in Alvin.

Mudderman, Denis: a "snowbird" from Minnesota who is a retired Geographer and avid volunteer with DEEP.

Rosebury, Don: works in sales and real estate development, wants to develop wetlands in Sargent and lives in Bay City.

Upperman, Steve: retired from Law Enforcement, likes woodworking and photography and resides in Pearland.

Excerpts from the Houston Chronicle, Home & Garden Section, January 31, 2009

The following are excerpts from the Houston Chronicle about an event which involved three members of COT-TMN, Ellis and Barbara Burkhardt and Sandy Henderson. The article was written by Gary Clark, well known naturalist, who is a frequent presenter at COT meetings.

The Burkhardts were driving back home to Lake Jackson from Rockport, where they had taken relatives to see the whooping cranes. They weren't far from home when Ellis slammed on the brakes, sending their luggage and photography equipment to the floor.

He was trying to avoid hitting a hawk. But to no avail. The bird, a female red-shouldered hawk, collided with the car. Experienced naturalists with the Cradle of Texas Master Naturalist program, the Burkhardts knew what to do next. They turned the car around, found the hawk lying upside down by the road, gingerly gathered her up and swaddled her in a towel.

Barbara made a few calls on her cell phone and reached Sandy Henderson, a volunteer with Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue, who waited in Lake Jackson to take the bird to wildlife rehabilitator Dana Simon.

The hawk had no serious external injuries but it was blind in one eye. Whether the blindness resulted from the car collision is unknown. The bird was badly banged up – imagine getting struck by a car traveling 35 mph. Simon is optimistic that the bird will recover and be released back into the wild at the spot where the accident occurred. Hawks collide with cars far too frequently. While people don't deliberately slam their cars into hawks, they do toss candy wrappers, potato chip bags and other food wastes onto roadsides which attract rodents like rats and mice, which in turn attract hawks to the roadside to prey on them.

Another fine example of Master Naturalists doing well for the environment!

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