

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – May 2008 Editor, Mary Helen Israel



President's Message, Dave Brandes

Ah, May. That means things are slowing down a little. DEEP had another successful year and our other school programs are winding down. The only exception might be if you volunteer at Sea Center Texas. Here, there always seems to be a last minute rush as the school year comes to a close. If you have time, help them out.

Our next big push will be our intern classes beginning September 3. As you meet people this summer, tell them about us and the difference we make. Show them how excited you are to be a part of this organization and its mission. Tell them what an unbelievable deal our classes are and how much fun we have.

On an administrative note, our state organization is asking that we maintain an accurate roster of active members and that we keep it current. My understanding is they need this for liability reasons. To do this, we need some objective criteria to determine who is active and who is not. This does not mean we will be taking people off our communications lists that want to be on it or that you can't come to meetings if you are listed as inactive.

The criteria the board is proposing is two-fold. It will address supporting our organization and its mission, and demonstration of competency to do so.

To demonstrate support, you can either pay dues or submit volunteer hours to our membership chair. As soon as you do either, you will be considered to be supporting our organization for the current year. Of course, you can also do both, and we sincerely hope you do.

Active members must also be competent to carry out our mission, and competency can also be demonstrated in two ways. The first is to complete the initial certification as a Texas Master Naturalist. The second is to be an intern who is working toward initial certification and it has not been more than 18 months since your classes began. If either is true, you will be considered to have met the competency test for an active member.

If both support and competency are demonstrated, a member will be considered "active" on our roster. Your board encourages you to let us know how you feel about these criteria. We must have some standards for this, and these seem reasonable to us.

Finally, we are soliciting what I call Master Naturalists Culture Moments for our newsletter. These are actions, usually spontaneous, of people or organizations that demonstrate what we are trying to accomplish with our mission. I'm hoping we will have a couple in this newsletter as an example. We all want to make a difference as Master Naturalists. When we observe these changes in action, let's share them. They are very motivating personally when we take note, and to all of us when shared.

Oh, and Moms – Hope you had a Happy Mother's Day.

May Meeting Wednesday, May 14, 2008

8:30 a.m. Social time
9:00 a.m. Business Meeting
9:30 a.m. Advanced Training, Bird Banding, part 3 of 5

Reminder from Chapter Hosts, Jerry Krampota and Justina Dent

The following folks signed up to bring refreshments for the May meeting: Cherie McBride, Susan Severance, Barbara Bruyere. If for some reason you have a conflict, please call Jerry Krampota at 281-585-3249 or email at jkrampota@hotmail.com.

RECRUITMENT, Laura Brandes

TMN Members belong to other organizations, too--Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce, Jaycees, Knights of Columbus, Rotary, et al. As a member of a group you carry more prestige, and trust, than a stranger coming to a session for a presentation. I encourage each TMN-COT member to identify the most appropriate group that you are involved in and to arrange for a brief "show 'n tell" on the Master Naturalists and the upcoming 2008 Intern Training.

There are materials to help you including the pictorial storyboard, the 2008 Class Schedule, the 2008 Application Form, the business cards, and numerous publications that have been selected for both general and specific interests that can be used as "freebies". You are asked to get the name and a contact number for each person who showed and/or expressed an interest in the Master Naturalists.

Please let Laura know when you complete your arrangements, the date, place and time, etc. Please note the previous paragraph's last sentence as this is a much-needed follow through. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. lib823@comcast.net

End of Year Report on ConocoPhillips Elementary Program, Carolyn May-Monie, Project Leader

The following data was requested by the editor concerning the ConocoPhillips - Sweeny Elementary Program while I was the project leader. The timeline is from the first field trip conducted in November, 2006 thru May, 2008.

School Year: **Fall 2006 - Spring 2007**: 794 students

School Year: **Fall 2007 - Spring 2008**: 901 students

Total for 2 year period: **1,605** students

No. of TMNs teaching/assisting with the programs: approximately 23

No. of special guests teaching/assisting with the programs: approximately 9

No. of separate programs developed/conducted: approximately 28

Editor's note:

This is a very successful program and the teachers and students at Sweeny Elementary have expressed their appreciation for the TMN's efforts. The ConocoPhillips folks are very supportive and they are looking forward to next year's activities.

A Visit to the Houston SPCA, Laura & David Brandes

David and I heard a TV news report that the Houston SPCA had confiscated over 90 reptiles and amphibians. We emailed them with the request to be able to obtain any appropriate specimens for TMN educational purposes. Two weeks later we drove to the HSPCA. We returned with five snakes! The first objective was to call Ruby and let her know that we had a milk snake for her as she wanted one for her menagerie. Then David and I decided "what's another four mouths to feed?" so the ex-dining room, now cat room, houses the snakes.

We had one Mexican black snake, two corn snakes and one milk snake. OK...everyone's gaining weight, shedding and being handled. They were the "stars" at EnviroFest and the Volunteer Day.

The final chapter occurred right before these events--an email from the HSPCA asking if we wanted another Mexican black. Apparently he was on their confiscation list but had escaped from the duct taped lids on the holding containers. So now, we have FIVE snakes--Midnight (F), Ringo (M), Curious George (M), Popcorn (F) and CornFlake (F).

Final comment--anyone in the TMN-COT who wants or needs to have a snake (or snakes) for an educational or outreach event, just call.

Naturalist Moments, Laura Brandes

At the SBNWR crabbing event held for the Northside 3rd graders, the crabs weren't cooperating and the kids were bored. Three students joined me where I was sitting and expressed their disappointment. I spotted a Ladybug in the grass. The next thing that happened was we had "squared off" a 2 sq. ft. block of grass and began exploring what we could find. Those students are keen-eyed and smart! We all had so much fun. So, if you think that the TMN-COT Instructors are just keeping busy--think again!!! Every student went through DEEP! What a tribute to our volunteerism.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Tom Morris spot-coped a bald eagle across Wolfweed Pond. "Majestic" is the word that comes to mind.

At the Migration Celebration David and I "guided" the San Bernard Big Oak Trail. That day was beautiful, sunny and just windy enough to keep you de-humidified. Unfortunately, there were no iris in bloom and there was very, very little water. However, Mother Nature did not let us down. At the first little pool, there were several black ringed snakes taking advantage of the stranded tadpoles. Shortly thereafter, a ribbon snake was spotted in the larger water pool catching a large toad for lunch. We had children, teens and adults watching this natural event for 45-60 minutes!! (The snake had gotten just one hind foot and the toad was very large so it took awhile.) The comment: "Oh, yeah. We saw the Big Tree but you should see this snake!!" Nature itself is more entertaining than all the channels on DTV and Comcast.

2008 TMN-COT Intern Training, Laura Brandes

The final schedule of Presenters has been set and is on the website. Note that "Advanced Training" (AT) was not a primary objective for the September and October meetings as well as the November graduation. To count as AT, you must not have taken the topic within the last two (2) calendar years. We just had the graduation presenter, Bryan Adams, at our April meeting. What an inspiring presentation!! If you heard it, you need to hear it again; and if you didn't, don't miss this date.

COT Texas Master Naturalist Awards John Marshall

Members recertifying

Bill Brown
Barbara Bruyere
Barbara Burkhardt
Gardner Campbell
Mickey Dufilho
Rainbo Johnson
Joan Simonson

250 Hours

Barbara Bruyere

1000 Hours

Carl Dodson

PARTNER IMPACT		Hours	% of Total	Rank
BBSP	Brazos Bend State Park	112	5	7
BCP	Brazoria County Parks	0	0	14
CP	ConocoPhillips	28	1	10
COT	Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas	283	14	3
GCBO	Gulf Coast Bird Observatory	80	4	9
GCWR	Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue	442	21	2
HBU	Halls Bayou Unit of SBNWF	0	0	14
INEOS	INEOS	103	5	8
LJP	Levi Jordan Plantation	5	0	12
MC	Migration Celebration	277	13	4
SCT	Sea Center Texas	115	6	5
TPWD	Texas Parks & Wildlife Department	114	5	6
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service	495	24	1
VHPSHS	Varner Hogg Plantation State Historic Site	23	1	11
XHX	Extreme Hummingbird Extravaganza	0	0	14
Other		1	0	13