

# Texas Master Naturalist™



10th ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM REPORT

1998 - 2008



*“Ten Years Strong. Million Hours Long. Texas Master Naturalist Still Marching On.”*

– Angie Morrison, Lost Pines Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

---

# THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST™ PROGRAM

*“Through the Master Naturalist™ volunteer program, you can help make an impact in your community and Texas’ natural resource future ...”*

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 local corps of “master volunteers” to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the volunteers’ own communities.

Communities and organizations across the state rely on these skilled volunteers for implementing youth outreach programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In addition, private landowners depend on the expertise of these volunteers to help them gain a broader scientific understanding of the ecology and management of their biological resources.

This partnership among the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and over 300 local partners has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by two program coordinators and a steering 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.

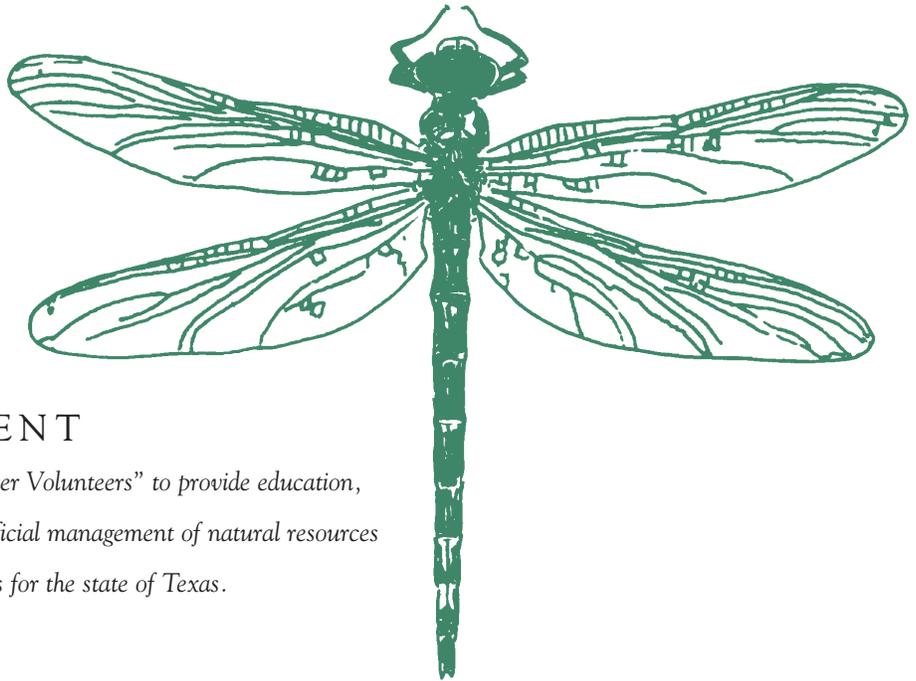
*“You will receive in-depth training in wildlife and natural resource management from recognized experts ...”*

For an individual to gain the certification and designation of 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 eight contact hours of approved advanced training and complete 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service—all of which is provided through local Master Naturalist chapters using guidelines of the state program.

*“In return, you will provide your community with volunteer service in the form of conservation projects, research, demonstration sites and outreach activities.”*

Upon enrollment into the initial training program, trainees have a maximum of one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and eight hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete eight additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter.

Founded with the first Master Naturalist chapter in 1997 and officially established as a statewide program in 1998, The Texas Master Naturalist™ program was the first of its kind. Since then, the program has grown from just four chapters and 150 volunteers in 1998 to 37 chapters and over 5,300 volunteers serving Texas in communities as diverse as Austin, Abilene, Dallas, El Paso, Harlingen, Junction, Lubbock, Rockdale, San Antonio and Wichita Falls with additional expansion in the coming two years. At the national level, the Texas Master Naturalist Program has been a model by which 28 other states have developed and implemented programs. This has led to a National Master Naturalist Program Initiative and then a national organization known as ANROSP (Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs) in the last three years.



## MISSION STATEMENT

*To develop a corps of well-educated “Master 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.*

## Goals

*To develop and support an effective and efficient statewide Master Naturalist volunteer service network which strives to:*

- 1. Improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management.*
- 2. Enhance existing natural resource management, education, outreach and research activities.*

## **Master Naturalists say it best ...**

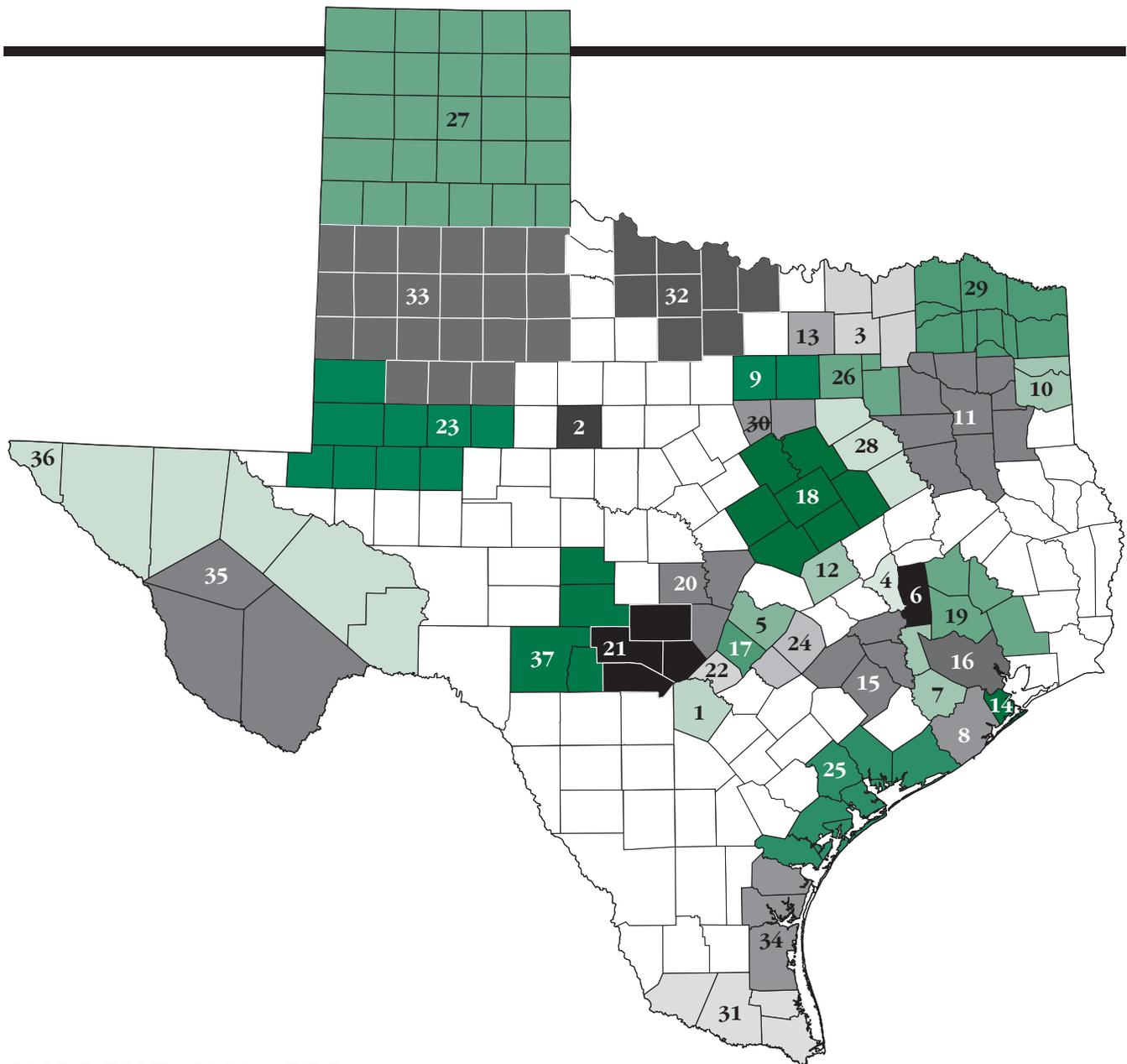
**... why they enjoy the Texas Master Naturalist Program ...**

*“because we just might make a difference.”*

– TMN volunteer attending the 2008 Annual Meeting

**... what was the most surprising thing they learned in the Texas Master Naturalist Program this year ...**

*“that a small group makes a big impact!”*



## CURRENT CHAPTERS

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Alamo Area (San Antonio)                     | 12 El Camino Real (Cameron/<br>Rockdale) | 25 Mid-Coast (Calhoun and<br>surrounding counties) |
| 2 Big Country (Abilene)                        | 13 Elm Fork (Denton)                     | 26 North Texas (Dallas)                            |
| 3 Blackland Prairie (McKinney)                 | 14 Galveston Bay Area (Galveston)        | 27 Panhandle (Amarillo)                            |
| 4 Brazos Valley (Bryan/<br>College Station)    | 15 Gideon Linccum (Brenham)              | 28 Post Oak (Athens)                               |
| 5 Capital Area (Austin)                        | 16 Gulf Coast (Houston)                  | 29 Red River (Clarksville)                         |
| 6 Cinco Tierra (Navasota)                      | 17 Hays County (San Marcos)              | 30 Rio Brazos (Glen Rose/Cleburne)                 |
| 7 Coastal Prairie (Rosenberg/<br>Hempstead)    | 18 Heart of Texas (Waco)                 | 31 Rio Grande Valley (Harlingen)                   |
| 8 Cradle of Texas (Lake Jackson)               | 19 Heartwood (Conroe/Huntsville)         | 32 Rolling Plains (Wichita Falls)                  |
| 9 Cross Timbers (Fort Worth)                   | 20 Highland Lakes (Burnet)               | 33 South Plains (Lubbock)                          |
| 10 Cypress Basin (Harrison/Marion<br>counties) | 21 Hill Country (Kerrville)              | 34 South Texas (Corpus Christi)                    |
| 11 East Texas (Tyler)                          | 22 Lindheimer (New Braunfels)            | 35 Tierra Grande (Fort Davis)                      |
|  | 23 Llano Estacado (Big Spring/Midland)   | 36 Trans Pecos (El Paso)                           |
|  | 24 Lost Pines (Bastrop)                  | 37 Western Edwards Plateau (Junction)              |

---

## Summary of the Texas Master Naturalist Program Accomplishments, 1998 through 2008

Texas' Master Naturalist™ program began as a statewide initiative in 1998. The program is jointly sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

- Through December 2008, with combined efforts of **37 recognized local chapters**, the Master Naturalist program has trained **5,306 volunteers**.
- Master Naturalist volunteers dedicated **over 190,124 service hours** in 2008, resulting in a **cumulative total of 1,003,409 hours of service** over the program's 10-year time span. This service is directed toward natural resource management and community projects, research and outreach.
- The economic impact of Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) volunteer service in 2008 is **valued at \$1.83 million<sup>1</sup>** while the 10-year economic impact of Master Naturalist service is valued at **\$16.41 million**. The service of TMN volunteers is equivalent to that of more than 99 full-time employees for the year and more than 500 employees over the 10+ year time span.
- These 5,300+ volunteers also obtained **29,487 advanced training hours** throughout 2008 and 185,541 hours of advanced training to date.
- In 2008, TMN **volunteers conducted 2,240 outreach, education and technical guidance events**. Over 75 percent (1,688) of those events were direct contact events where volunteers provided technical guidance, consultation and outreach and awareness efforts to nearly 150,000 (149,796) youth, adults and private landowners through hands-on classroom, one-on-one and group instruction given by Master Naturalist volunteers. Another 554 outreach events were indirect events such as manning various booths and/or displays reaching an untold number of people with additional natural resource management information. Direct contacts by Master Naturalists increased significantly since our last printed report when direct contacts were roughly 30 percent in 2003.



*Members of the Capital Area Chapter and the Texas Master Naturalist Program office pose for a group picture after receiving the Keep Austin Beautiful Award in the Education Category.*

---

## Summary of the Texas Master Naturalist Program Accomplishments, continued

- Program volunteers have impacted or conducted management and restoration projects on areas of land that involve roughly **90,000+ acres** of habitat while also developing or maintaining some **996.5 miles of interpretive trails — 81.46 of those trail miles being new in 2008.**
- More than **300 local organizations have partnered** with Master Naturalist chapters to accomplish common natural resources outreach efforts and service projects.
- **Two new chapters** were organized in 2008 known as the El Camino Real Chapter in Milam County and Cypress Basin Chapter serving Harrison and Marion counties.
- TMN chapters officially provide **service in 176 counties, which is 69 percent of Texas counties.**
- Combined local and statewide funding efforts have accumulated **more than \$150,000 in grants and donations** to support local chapter programs and projects to date.
- The program and its volunteers have garnered more than **19 local, state, national and international awards and recognition —including awards such as the following:**
  - **Department of Interior’s Take Pride in America Award (2005)**
  - **Keep Texas Beautiful Award (2006)**
  - **Texas Association of Environmental Education’s “Program Award” (2007)**
  - **Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal to J. Dale Shively (2007)**
  - **Citizen’s Environmental Coalition of Houston Award (2008)**
- Additionally, chapters and volunteers have been awarded **more than 30** local, community, regional or state awards to date.
- Since the implementation of the program’s cumulative service milestone awards in 2003:
  - 847** members received 250-hours Awards,
  - 453** members received 500-hours Awards,
  - 179** members received 1,000-hours Awards,
  - 34** members received 2,500-hours Awards and,
  - 13** members received the 5,000-hours Award and the U.S. Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award — the highest honors available to date through the Texas Master Naturalist Program.
- Held our ninth Annual Statewide Texas Master Naturalist Meeting and Advanced Training with 225 attendees participating in the three days of advanced training, chapter and leadership development trainings, informational meetings and awards presentations by the state program office.
- Hosted the fourth Annual National Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP) Conference — the professional organization for Master Naturalist type program leaders and administrators in New Braunfels, Texas.
- Celebrated our **10-year anniversary** in 2008!

### Master Naturalists say it best...

*“Bit-by-bit builds to bunches – each fact learned builds knowledge;  
each activity added together creates change.”*

– Unknown TMN volunteer

## Texas Master Naturalist Chapter Activities at a Glance

Recent years' activities are shown for 2005 through 2008. The totals represent all Texas Master Naturalist activities since 1997, which was the inception of our first Texas Master Naturalist prototype chapter in San Antonio.

Chapter (year established)	Volunteers Trained			Volunteer Service Hours			Advanced Training Hours			New Trail Miles										
	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total					
Alamo Area (spring 1997)	33	34	43	54	510	5,122	6,132	7,611	10,140	84,353	819	955	1,853	1,410	12,323	38	23	18	16	457
Big Country (summer 2003)	15	12	9	12	67	616	650	493	1,355	4,728	304	1,567	121	474	2,795	3				4
Blackland Prairie (spring 2006)		21	24	24	69		747	1,754	3,637	6,138		153	361	631	1,145					0
Brazos Valley (fall 2005)	19	23	16	12	70	99	1,003	1,451	2,166	4,719	24	219	417	423	1,083		1	3	0.5	4.5
Brownwood (spring 2001-2005)		0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	119	0	0	0	0	80					0
Capital Area (fall 1998)	25	29	30	21	391	7,224	14,486	6,599	8,302	64,287	1,604	1,651	1,772	2,810	14,619					5
Cinco Tierra (spring 2007)		0	7	9	16			240	689	929			123	232	355			7	9	16
Coastal Prairie (fall 2004)	22	11	13	12	79	1,806	2,701	3,671	3,391	12,223	425	663	429	580	2,274					0
Cradle of Texas (fall 2001)	24	16	16	0	137	13,567	13,386	12,697	11,745	70,731	1,025	1,265	659	1,235	7,334		3	8		12.5
Gross Timbers (fall 1999)	13	22	31	19	244	5,219	3,338	5,327	8,014	46,086	993	806	848	1,137	9,302			5	20	55
Cypress Basin (spring 2008)		0	0	14	14				648	648				52	52					0
East Texas (fall 2000)	23	20	8	8	163	2,222	2,653	1,445	1,627	18,749	357	508	323	522	3,897					10
El Camino Real (spring 2008)		0	0	25	25				3,353	3,353				600	600					0
Elm Fork (fall 1999)	28	23	20	20	235	6,298	7,971	7,220	9,774	51,397	1,217	1,496	1,331	1,195	9,707		5	5		41
Galveston Bay (spring 2001)	12	42	23	24	228	21,757	21,481	19,103	20,683	126,565	3,321	2,880	3,120	2,339	19,740			5		5
Gideon Lincecum (spring 2005)	13	15	24	23	75	1,096	1,574	1,919	3,269	7,858	183	480	533	667	1,863		1	2	1.1	4.1
Gulf Coast (fall 1999)	65	37	29	18	387	8,298	4,697	4,891	5,480	52,414	1,732	1,342	1,199	648	13,278					55

continued

Chapter (year established)	Volunteers Trained				Volunteer Service Hours				Advanced Training Hours				New Trail Miles			
	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total	
Hays County (fall 1998)	23	18	27	31	307	4,044	7,200	5,764	7,219	39,207	1,127	1,457	1,223	1,174	9,902	
Heartwood (spring 2005)	22	21	15	14	72	2,766	3,732	4,366	4,352	15,216	496	817	576	579	2,468	
Heart of Texas (spring 2003)	16	19	0	9	104	2,650	2,617	4,383	1,749	14,626	377	520	485	274	2,316	
Highland Lakes (spring 2003)	24	26	15	21	113	2,023	3,862	5,519	6,136	19,265	521	704	1,173	1,299	4,105	
Hill Country (fall 2002)	42	27	24	33	199	6,920	10,531	12,448	13,286	50,212	988	1,541	2,027	1,384	7,695	
Lindheimer (fall 2000)	18	15	16	9	152	3,613	4,349	4,856	5,906	27,129	797	881	1,048	877	5,454	
Llano Estacado (summer 2006)		27	16	14	57		348	936	1,309	2,593		42	249	365	656	
Lost Pines (fall 2000)	10	13	28	0	118	1,165	1,389	1,844	2,668	9,872	398	431	389	538	2,635	
Mid-Coast (fall 2000)	11	9	20	14	149	7,144	7,048	11,269	13,783	54,140	910	857	1,095	1,003	6,425	
North Texas (spring 1998)	41	36	39	23	402	11,102	10,953	10,977	12,025	87,642	1,930	1,687	1,625	1,489	14,533	
Panhandle (fall 2003)	10	0	10	0	40	1,615	974	1,481	1,917	7,234	259	138	411	534	1,638	
Post Oak (spring 2004)	4	5	0	0	24	1,645	1,509	1,171	1,412	7,142	304	208	63	264	1,224	
Red River (spring 2005)	9	7	5	16	37	174	654	643	1,227	2,698	55	199	1,218	322	1,794	
Rio Brazos (spring 2005)	29	15	20	0	64	2,553	4,591	3,154	3,141	13,439	562	825	831	705	2,923	
Rio Grande Valley (spring 2002)	37	28	17	26	197	8,411	8,418	9,146	9,744	48,628	1,831	1,782	1,730	1,334	9,888	
Rolling Plains (fall 2002)	12	20	14	15	99	491	668	1,689	2,446	7,029	93	153	207	343	1,110	
South Plains (spring 2006)		18	0	7	25		209	310	346	865		117	83	63	263	
South Texas (fall 2002)	10	16	0	7	74	3,055	1,624	1,609	1,083	11,014	330	444	246	584	2,462	
Tierra Grande (fall 2005)	15	20	15	13	63	184	1,994	3,535	3,840	9,553	158	299	620	837	1,914	
Trans Pecos (spring 2001)	18	26	16	13	164	2,385	2,586	2,678	1,410	15,295	349	382	273	242	3,081	
Upper Texas Coast (fall 2003-2005)		0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	55	0	0	0	0	20	
Western Edwards Plateau (spring 2004)	25	20	13	21	112	746	1,409	1,465	852	5,258	856	612	618	322	2,588	
<b>Total</b>	668	691	603	581	5,306	136,010	157,484	163,664	190,124	1,003,409	24,345	28,081	29,279	29,487	185,541	
											117.4	97.75	154.5	81.46	996.56	



# TEN YEARS OF TENDING TO TEXAS

## *Significant highlights of our 10-year history*

- In March 1997, the Alamo Area Chapter (known then as the Natural Initiatives Program) held its first Master Naturalist training.
- The Texas Master Naturalist State Program Advisory Committee was established in response to the program expansion of three Master Naturalist chapters, known as the North Texas, Capital Area and Hays County chapters, in 1998.
- Hired a full-time statewide program coordinator and developed the Cross Timbers, Elm Fork and Gulf Coast chapters in 1999.
- In 2000, four chapters known as the East Texas, Lindheimer, Lost Pines and Mid-Coast chapters were established. The first TMN statewide meeting and advanced training was held, and the program received its first international award with the Wildlife Management Institute's President's 2000 Award.
- In 2001, TMN volunteer Jeff Quayle discovers a new plant, which was confirmed and named after him as *Senecio quaylei*. Four new Master Naturalist chapters were established as the Brownwood Regional, Cradle of Texas, Galveston Bay Area and the Trans Pecos chapters. The TMN program is named winner of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission's (TNRCC) Environmental Excellence Award, the Texas A&M University Vice Chancellor's Award for Partnership and the National Audubon Society's Habitat Hero's Award.
- Two TMN volunteers are recognized by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department with the agency's "Lonestar Legends Volunteer Award" in 2002 and four new TMN chapters are established known as the Hill Country, Rio Grande Valley, Rolling Plains and the South Texas chapters.
- A formal evaluation of the statewide program and training was completed in 2003 with results indicating that the program is successful at: increasing participants' knowledge and retaining that knowledge over time, changing attitudes to be more positive toward resource management practices and consumptive uses of wildlife and promoting natural resource volunteerism. The study also provided demographic information about our volunteers.



*Members and leaders of the Alamo Area Chapter's first training class pose for a picture during the chapter's 10 year reunion.*



*Quayle's ragwort (*Senecio quaylei*)*

## TEN YEARS of *Tending to Texas, continued*

- Additionally, in 2003 the program celebrated its fifth anniversary and its 2,000th volunteer trained. We also welcomed five new chapters known as the Big Country, Heart of Texas, Highland Lakes, Panhandle and Upper Texas Coast chapters and implemented the TMN Cumulative Service Milestone Awards for the program.
- The state leadership and individual chapters hosted a visiting extension specialist in 2003 to assist with the pre-planning and development of a Junior Master Naturalist™ Program Vision and Funding preproposal.
- In 2004 the state program finalized, produced and distributed the first pilot edition of a comprehensive, 22-unit, 732-page statewide Texas Master Naturalist curriculum manual which allowed the opportunity to provide a more advanced, comprehensive training geared toward each individual chapter's ecoregion and natural areas. The first 5,000 Cumulative Service Hours Award was achieved by **Thea Platz** of the Alamo Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program. This same year, an assistant program coordinator was hired while three new chapters known as the Coastal Prairie, Post Oak and Western Edwards Plateau chapters were established.
- Also in 2004, the Texas Master Naturalist program model was formally taken nationally after having received an International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) Multi-states Conservation Grant, which assisted in providing national trainings for other agencies interested in developing Master Naturalist programs in their states. To date, there are Master Naturalist programs in 28 states.
- Six new chapters known as the Brazos Valley, Gideon Lincecum, Heartwood, Red River, Rio Brazos and Tierra Grande chapters were developed in 2005. This same year, the program was also honored with the U.S. Department of Interior's "Take Pride in America" Award, and the Dallas-area White Rock Lake's TMN Volunteer project was recognized with a TPWD's Lone Star Land Steward Award.



*Thea Platz*

*Texas Master Naturalist state program leaders receive the U.S Department of Interior's Take Pride in America Award from Secretary of the Interior Gale A. Norton in 2005.*



## TEN YEARS of *Tending to Texas, continued*

- In 2006 the program celebrated its first “million milestone” after having recorded over a half-million volunteer service hours and reaching over 1 million youth adults and private landowners. In this same year, three new chapters were established as the Blackland Prairie, Llano Estacado and South Plains chapters.
- Since 2006 and to date, the Texas Master Naturalist program and its coordinators have been leaders in the Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs (ANROSP)—the national network and organization for Master Naturalist program coordinators. The Alliance strives to facilitate networking and resource development for member programs with a goal to establish approved programs in all 50 states. The Texas Master Naturalist program was one of the founding members. There are 28 states that currently have adopted the Master Naturalist model. Additional information can be obtained by accessing the following Web site: [www.nralliance.org](http://www.nralliance.org)
- In 2007 we welcomed the Cinco Tierra Chapter; the program was honored as “Educator of the Year” by the Texas Association for Environmental Education, and the Mayor of San Antonio proclaimed October 12–14, 2007 to be “Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Days” in San Antonio to commemorate our first chapter’s—the Alamo Area Chapter—10th Anniversary during our eighth Annual Statewide Meeting held in the city.
- In 2007 we launched a new statewide TMN Web site (<http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>) which also allowed site service to each of our chapters. The state Web site continues to provide resources and information to our existing and potential volunteers, as well as general natural resource information to the citizens of Texas.
- A journal article covering the findings of the 2003 Texas Master Naturalist program assessment was submitted and has undergone peer review through the journal *Human Dimensions of Wildlife* and will be published as “Changes in Volunteer Knowledge and Attitudes as a Result of Texas Master Naturalist Training” by L. Bonneau, R. Darville, M. Legg, M. Haggerty and R. N. Wilkins in June 2009.

**TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST**

Log in Search Help

luralist Program Reaches 1 Million Hours of Service, to learn more, click on the "Making The News II

**Home**

- Building The News
- Workshop
- 2008 Annual Report

**Texas Chapters**

- MN-Chapters Seek Applicants
- Chapters Website Links/Location
- Find A Chapter

**State Meetings**

- 2008 State Meeting Awards Presentation
- 2008 State Meeting Awards Presentation2

**Chapter Highlights**

- 2009 - Highlights
- 2008 - Highlights

**What's a Master Naturalist?**

- Program Overview
- Curriculum
- F A Q
- How Do I Join?

**Staying Connected**

- Breaking News
- Making a Difference
- Sign up for TMN ListServ
- TMN Yahoo Groups
- AgriLIFE Bookstore
- Member Resources

**Programs**

- Other Links

**TEXAS**

Master Naturalist

The 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. Many communities and organizations rely on such citizen volunteers for implementing youth education programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In fact, a short supply of dedicated and well-informed volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts.

Photographer of Green Anole on leaf - Sue Kersey, Highland Lakes Chapter

**Chapters**

Alamo Area

**Chapter Spotlight**

**Buckeye Trail Project**  
Texas Master Naturalist at work, thanks to the **North Texas Chapter** for sharing this empowering video!

**Reduced price of the 10th anniversary t-shirt, Order Here! (AgriLIFE Bookstore)**  
Order Shirts size codes are:  
S - MKT-3550A  
M - Sold Out  
L - MKT-3550C  
XL - MKT-3550D  
XXL - MKT-3550E  
XXXL - MKT-3550F

**AgriLIFE EXTENSION** **TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE**

The Texas Master Naturalist program is coordinated by the Texas AgriLife Extension Services and Texas Parks and Wildlife. Texas Master Naturalist programs serve all people without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

<http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>



# S P O T L I G H T

## *Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers*

### FEATURED TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

The volunteer service of our chapters and their members is one of the most important aspects of the Texas Master Naturalist program! Here are just a few descriptions of the types of projects conducted. These and others have been award-winning projects of the program's annual Exemplary Project Award Competition. Outside grants and donations to the Texas Master Naturalist state program support the awards as small project grants to the top three winners annually, which make possible the continuation or expansion of the winning projects or the start-up of new chapter projects.

### *Hill Country Land Management Assistance Program*

The **Hill Country Chapter's** Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) is an ongoing project developed by chapter members to meet the demand by landowners new to the Hill Country area wanting to learn more about and take care of their property. Chapter members receive at least 36 additional hours of advanced training in a range of resource identification, monitoring and management topics particular to the Edwards Plateau ecological region in order to be trained as part of their LMAP team. Trained LMAP team volunteers then visit with the landowner on their property, help identify species and discuss the landowner's goals, plans and concerns for the property before following up with a written report which includes potential land management problems and possible solutions for good land stewardship practices that are both sustainable and consistent with the landowner's goals. A list of government experts and other organizations to contact for additional assistance and information is also provided. Over the past four years, chapter members have advised 167 landowners affecting more than 11,600 acres throughout the chapter's four-county area. The team has also identified over 200 species of native trees, shrubs, grasses and forbs of the area during their site visits.



*Jim Stanley (far left) talks about the effects of cedar management during a visit with a landowner while his wife, Priscilla Stanley (far right), takes notes for the development of a management plan for the property.*

---

## SPOTLIGHT on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued

### “Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP)”

Texas Master Naturalist volunteers of the **Cradle of Texas Chapter** have developed a science curriculum enrichment program and event that teaches concepts of natural ecological systems for the local Brazosport Independent School District. Since 2004, chapter members have led on-site field trips at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. These hands-on field investigations involve approximately 2,600 fourth- and seventh-grade students of the district annually. The program has been so popular that the neighboring Angleton ISD has begun to bring their 150 fourth-grade students for the event as well. During the 2004–2005 school year, 26 day-long field trips were conducted by an average of 10 chapter members. In addition to the curriculum enrichment modules, chapter volunteers have also developed docent guides and accompanying curricula for each of the eight teaching stations they run during the DEEP field days. The guides and curricula are used to train new docents for the project as well as the schools’ teachers.

*A Cradle of Texas Chapter member leads students in a dip-netting activity at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge as part of the chapter’s DEEP curriculum enrichment program for the Brazosport and Angleton ISDs.*



### Tyler Nature Center Herbarium

The Tyler Nature Center Herbarium, established in 2003 as an ongoing collection of Smith County plants for public educational purposes, is a project of the **East Texas Chapter** along with additional outside volunteers whom they train to participate in this project with them. The Herbarium is staffed by chapter volunteers providing educational programs and resources for local school groups, landowners and the general public while also providing one-on-one assistance in identifying plants of the area. Each of these resources helps to increase the environmental and conservation knowledge of the public in the area. The specimens collected by Texas Master Naturalist volunteers thus far number over 300, and as more volunteers become interested in the project, the collection continues to expand through these efforts and by specimen donations they seek from the University of Texas-Tyler Botany Department.



*East Texas Chapter members search and photograph specimens for use in the Tyler Nature Center Herbarium project.*

---

## SPOTLIGHT on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued

### *Texas Horned Lizard DNA Collection Project and Study*

TPWD, along with researchers from Texas Christian University (TCU) and volunteers from across the state such as members of the **Rolling Plains Chapter**, are working to collect Horned Lizard data and DNA tissue samples that will hopefully provide more information about the population structure, dispersal patterns, effective population sizes and genetic make-up of these populations of the beloved Texas horned lizard. Biologists aren't sure of any one contributing factor as to why this species continues to see a decline in its numbers, but believe instead that many possible factors, ranging from habitat loss to human influence to invasion of various other exotic species, are affecting this species. Master Naturalists are an integral part of helping to find the answer through this citizen science project where trained volunteers assist in locating and sampling the small and scattered lizard populations within their communities. Master Naturalists and their projects like this assist researchers and resource management agencies in making appropriate conservation decisions and policies with the information they provide.



### *Texas Buckeye Trail in the Great Trinity Forest*

The Texas Buckeye Trail has been established by the **North Texas Chapter** as a natural-surface hiking trail that winds into a hardwood bottomland forest to several destinations along the Trinity River. The trailhead, amazingly, is just four miles from downtown Dallas along the Trinity River and includes the confluence of White Rock Creek with the Trinity River. In addition to the chapter members' periodic trail maintenance and the construction of a footbridge measuring 40 feet, a signature trailhead kiosk has also been installed. The chapter has partnered with the Groundwork Dallas, Americorps, Dallas Park and Recreation Department and the Piedmont-Scyene Homeowners Association to make this community project a reality. Members lead the maintenance of the trail and the development of kiosks for interpretive information covering trail flora, fauna and ecology while also leading public nature hikes into this urban hardwood bottomland forest — such a rare feature in any part of the state, let alone in an urban area! As an additional service to the public, a Web site has been created to provide directions to and information about the trail. See this project's YouTube presentation on our Texas Master Naturalist Web site at: <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu>



### *Gulf Coast Green Homes and Garden Project*

The **Gulf Coast Chapter's** Green Home and Garden Program was established to educate Greater Houston Area homeowners about things they can do in their yard and home that are beneficial, or at least less harmful, to the environment as well as of benefit to the homeowner. The chapter set out to educate and change perceptions on what are good environmental practices through outreach to area homeowners. The event has now grown to become an annual workshop targeting homeowners in the large urban neighborhoods of Harris County. Supporting materials have also been developed to include monthly news articles in homeowner association newsletters and tip cards that are distributed at public events.

---

## SPOTLIGHT on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued

Green Tree Frog

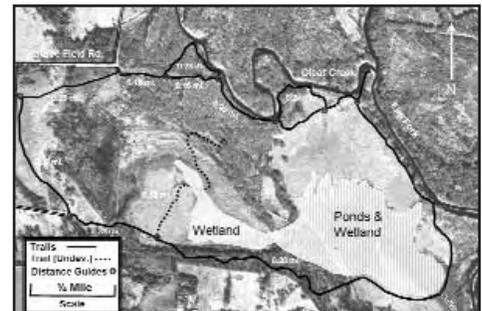
### Texas Amphibian Watch

Thirteen Texas Master Naturalists of the **North Texas Chapter** completed the six-hour advanced training Amphibian Watch Workshop presented by TPWD and then established their own local Adopt-A-Frog Pond project to routinely monitor nocturnal calls of frogs and toads. The pond, located at the White Rock Lake Park in Dallas, is monitored monthly on a Friday evening from March through October. Data sheets are completed by members and include weather and site information. Information is given to the Texas Amphibian Watch monitors at TPWD. Members make the monitoring activities open to all—members and the public—as an educational outreach event provided by the chapter. The chapter occasionally invites additional community groups such as the Boy Scouts, National Neighborhood Night Out, Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area, the State Fair of Texas, and others to assist in these efforts and support this environmental education event. Routinely, around 20 participants attend each of these sessions led by trained Master Naturalist volunteers.



### Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center Project

Members from the **Elm Fork Chapter** support the expansion and development of the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center near Denton. The Center, which began as a partnership between the Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Denton, is committed to restoring 2,700 acres located in the upper flood plain of Lake Lewisville now known as the Clear Creek Natural Area. The chapter uses this area extensively as their outdoor classroom to study nature and observe wildlife while also teaching “train the trainer” wetlands education programs to other volunteer trainees and docents for the Center. Since the project’s initiation in 2004, the chapter has established a footbridge to enhance trail development across the wetlands, trail maintenance, markers and interpretive signs along the trails, benches, educational kiosks, Blue Bird and Wood Duck nesting boxes with future plans to include an expansion of the trails to a total of four miles.



### Treasures of the Bay Educators Workshop Series

The **Galveston Bay Area Chapter** annually presents its “Treasures of the Bay” (TOB) Educators Workshop Series, which provides local natural resource knowledge, hands-on activities and materials for local teachers to use in their classrooms. Chapter members, making up a team of about 25, solely coordinate, conduct and instruct the workshop series as an ecoregion-based, four-day hands-on, in-the-field training event for 15 teachers annually. These formal educators gain knowledge and teaching techniques that potentially impact their students and families. Per participating educator, there is the potential for five classes involving approximately 20 students in each class. That’s quite an impact when you take into account all those students and the information that they then share with their friends and families too! The combined 129 years of formal educator experience that this chapter has within just a handful of its members has provided success to this project. The training they provide these educators has been modeled after the Master Naturalist training and provides not only a service to the community but a recruitment tool for the chapter as well.



---

## SPOTLIGHT *on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued*

### MEET A MASTER NATURALIST

These and others exemplify the many Texas Master Naturalist volunteers who give unselfishly of their time and talents to advance the mission of our Texas Master Naturalist program and its sponsoring agencies of Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.



#### **Member Profile: Tom Collins**

Tom Collins is a sixth-generation Texan who grew up in the Hill Country area and was inspired by his mother—a self-taught naturalist—to be curious and inquisitive of all things natural in the world around him. Tom has enjoyed a full life of college, marriage, the Vietnam War, parenthood and a career at Dow Chemical; and then he found time to return to his real passion of birding and observing all things that fly. Upon his retirement in 1998, Tom became a full-time volunteer with organizations such as the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, TPWD's Sea Center Texas and the Brazoria Muckers. In 1999, Tom learned of the Texas Master Naturalist program and worked with his local county Extension Marine Agent and a staff member at Sea Center Texas to develop the Cradle of Texas Chapter in Brazoria County. After the first training class was over, Tom was quickly elected the first president of the chapter and then was asked to serve on the Texas Master Naturalist State Steering Committee, where he was instrumental in developing several documents that would later prove to advance the start-up and viability of new Master Naturalist chapters across the state. Tom continues to be a champion for natural resources anywhere he is. Today, he is back where his roots began in the Texas Hill Country as a member of the Hill Country Chapter based in Kerrville. Of his experience being a natural resource volunteer in general, Tom says, "It can be fun, it can be hard work sometimes, it can be intellectually rewarding, it can refuel your personal self-esteem and confidence, and most importantly, every hour you log will help make this world just a tad bit better." Tom was awarded the TMN 5,000-hour cumulative service award along with the U.S. Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award in 2008. Throughout his 10-year full-time volunteer career, Tom has given of his time to projects such as:

- Developing and publishing flora and fauna checklists for various natural areas and nature centers
- Serving as a TPWD nature tracker coordinator
- Leading youth education events
- Helping to harvest and release red drum fingerlings into the Gulf
- Organizing and leading corporate birding teams for TPWD's Great Texas Birding Classic and raising \$100,000 in requisition funds for conserving important bird migration areas
- Developing and maintaining nature trails and the interpretive signage of those trails.
- Wetland construction and restorations and Wildscape demonstration areas
- Bird censuses and research projects with agencies and universities
- Monarch larval monitoring and other butterfly counts

---

## SPOTLIGHT on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued

### Member Profiles:

#### *Jim Varnum, Sara Beckelman and Steve Houser*

The **North Texas Chapter** also had a milestone year this year with celebrating its 10th anniversary as a chapter and honoring three of its members with the highest Master Naturalist program honors. Texas Master Naturalist volunteers Jim Varnum, Sara Beckelman, and Steve Houser (*pictured left to right*) were each recognized in 2008 with the Texas Master Naturalist 5,000-hour Service Award, the Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Service Award and with a Resolution presented by the State of Texas House of Representatives by their local District 107 Representative, Allen Vaught, which honors their service within the North Texas Chapter and the Texas Master Naturalist Program.



**Jim Varnum** is an educator at heart, spending his time as a Master Naturalist volunteer teaching others about one of his greatest loves — native plants and grasses. Jim has become an expert in the fields of plants and prairie restoration and often leads botany training classes for other Master Naturalist chapters, public groups and organizations such as preservation societies, conservation councils, elementary classrooms, churches and native plant societies. In an extension of Jim’s personal passion for native prairies, he purchased property with native prairie remnants and works cooperatively with The Nature Conservancy in Texas to help conserve and educate others about this dwindling resource. He assists in conducting plant surveys for local parks and nature centers and is developing seasonal lists for each of them. Jim’s volunteer support doesn’t stop there, though — he served as the North Texas Chapter’s records keeper and tracked the members’ service and impacts for several years before leaving the tall task in the capable hands of a succeeding chairperson in order to take on new tasks with the chapter’s Education and Training Committee and chairing the Advanced Training Committee. Jim’s fellow Master Naturalists describe him as a humble, unassuming man who is an enabler, an inspirer and an extreme supporter of other members in fulfilling the hands-on work of the Texas Master Naturalist mission.

**Sara Beckleman** became a Texas Master Naturalist in 1999, moved through the ranks of her chapter in numerous leadership positions and now serves in the Past President role on the chapter’s committee of advisors. In her TMN volunteer service, Sara favors any projects involving native grass and seed collection, composting, wildscaping, butterfly and other wildlife habitat development and monitoring, or basically any service project that allows her to be outside — and the dirtier she can get her hands, the better! You may see Sara anywhere in Dallas County on a given day leading a group in making “seedballs,” surveying plants, banding doves for TPWD’s white-winged dove movement study, serving as a docent at the Texas Discovery Gardens butterfly gardens, an education exhibit at the Texas State Fair or at one her new favorite projects of saving chimney swifts through the chapter’s latest project — building and erecting nesting towers and education programs to go along with these towers outside the classrooms of two different schools in the metroplex and at the Cedar Ridge Nature Preserve. Sara’s Master Naturalist awards are not the only honors she received in 2008 — she was also honored by the City of Irving, where she lives, with a Certificate of Environmental Excellence from the City. Of her experiences in the Texas Master Naturalist program, Sara says that: “I was not aware of the great personal rewards in volunteering as I had a late start. I now consider it the most rewarding part of my life ... with the great joy and purpose it brings. ...”

---

## SPOTLIGHT on Master Naturalist Projects and Volunteers, continued

**Steve Houser**, a Dallas-area native, became a Texas Master Naturalist in 2000 and is a self-proclaimed “tree hugger.” By profession, he is a consulting certified arborist and the owner-president of one of the largest independently owned, tree-care expert firms in the state. His company is well recognized around the world for representing Texas in international tree-climbing competitions for several years—perhaps one could say this is where the tree hugging comes in! Steve’s professional passion of “everything trees” is also his volunteer passion, and he contributes well over 1,000 hours annually to worthy tree and forestry projects of the TMN program and other volunteer programs in which he is involved. According to Steve, he joined the Master Naturalist program as a means to further his education and as a way to pass along the knowledge, respect and benefits of trees and nature to others—and he is doing just that, whether through teaching public training sessions; leading various community forest advisory committees; establishing the Dallas Historic Tree Coalition, which works to recognize historic trees and their preservation; or establishing the Texas Tree Trails system of greater Dallas where significant trees are located and recorded. Steve’s passion and legacy will live on for centuries through these projects! Steve says he was drawn to the Texas Master Naturalist program for the expert training it provides in the “connectedness” of all things in the natural world, which complements his existing experience and knowledge, but he stays in the program because “I am proud to be a part of a group that not only understands the Master Naturalist mission; they live it every day. I enjoy working with Texas Master Naturalists because their attitude is good and their purpose is pure in its intent.”

---

*“We all have an obligation to leave our ecosystems in better shape than we found them and Master Naturalists provide many of the answers to reach this goal. Volunteers in general perform a vital function and I can testify that they can, and do, change the world.”*

– Steve Houser, North Texas Chapter Master Naturalist

---

## MEET A CHAPTER ADVISOR



Each of our Texas Master Naturalist chapters, depending on its location, has a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and/or a Texas AgriLife Extension Service employee supporting its chapter in an advisory capacity. These chapter advisors provide an important link for the program and their agency to the chapter and its volunteers. Without the support of our many chapter advisors and the agency and organizations they represent, the Texas Master Naturalist program would not be possible. In 2008 we established the Chapter Advisor Award as just one way to recognize the valuable contributions of these employees to the program. The inaugural Chapter Advisor Award went to Dallas County Extension Agent **Fred Burrell, Jr.**, Texas AgriLife Extension Advisor to the North Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Fred was nominated by his chapter and selected as this year’s winner for his unending support to his chapter since its establishment in 1999; his commitment to the conservation of natural resources; enlisting and enabling Texas Master Naturalist volunteers to do the same; promoting the program and his chapter when at all possible and constantly looking for opportunities where he and Master Naturalist volunteers can make a difference in Texas’ natural resource future.

---

## Master Naturalists say it best ...

### ... when asked why they became a Texas Master Naturalist ...

*"To be the change I want to see in the world."*

*"To make a difference!!!"*

*"To pass my love of nature on to the next generation!"*

*"To become a better steward of nature and to pass it on to others."*

*"To continue what my parents started – a legacy of love of the natural world and community service."*

*"To learn more about nature and the interconnectedness for myself so that maybe I could help others learn and appreciate the same."*

*"To grow, learn, and help make the state and world a better place to live."*

*"Continue working with children and sharing my love of nature with them."*

*"Learn and share information about natural Texas."*

*"Better appreciate the environment where I live."*

*"Spread the passion I have for Texas' natural resources."*

*"Expand my knowledge of the natural world and pass that on to future generations."*

### ... when asked why they enjoy the Texas Master Naturalist Program ...

*"I can hang out with folks of an environmental view."*

*"We learn so much and have fun."*

*"It provides me an opportunity to give back."*

*"I like to volunteer with people of a like mind concerning our environment."*

*"I'm with people who think like I do and nobody cares what you're wearing."*

*"I've met the most amazing people through it!"*

*"It gives me a reason to spend some time with nature and contribute."*

*"New friends. Fulfilling work. Being outdoors. Exercise!"*

*"It brings back memories of a time when life was childlike."*

*"I have made friends with so many people with similar interests — AND have learned so much."*

*"Because I always learn something and help others to learn too."*

*"I found a community of people that have the same interests."*

*"It enables me to learn more about the things I love most and to share that knowledge with people with the same interests."*

*"Provides an opportunity to 'turn kids onto nature'."*

---

## Vision for the Future

### Texas Master Naturalist Program

Over the next two years, contacts with community volunteers and leaders will be made to develop additional Master Naturalist chapters. Targeted areas include:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ellis County</li><li>• Nacogdoches/Lufkin area</li><li>• Polk County area</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sabine-Neches Chapter serving Orange, Jefferson and Hardin counties</li><li>• San Angelo/Tom Green County area</li></ul> |
|---|--|

The development of these new chapters also brings the potential of 100 or more new and additional volunteers to the Master Naturalist program annually. The Texas Master Naturalist program is always looking to expand. To find out how to develop a new Master Naturalist chapter in your area, contact the program coordinators listed in this publication.

*Master Naturalists from across the state hard at work:*



*East Texas Chapter members utilize their herbarium collection resources to lead youth in an educational field day.*



*Alamo Area Chapter members assist with a prescribed fire.*



*Master Naturalists hit the trail to put up bluebird nest boxes.*



*Capital Area Chapter members teach about butterflies.*

---

*For more information about the program or any of our chapters statewide, please visit <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu> or contact the program partnering agency representatives below:*



Michelle M. Haggerty, State Coordinator  
Master Naturalist Program  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
309 Sidney Baker South  
Kerrville, TX 78028  
mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu  
(830) 896-2504

Sonny Arnold, Assistant Program Coordinator  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
111 Nagle Hall, 2258 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-2258  
sarnold@ag.tamu.edu  
(979) 458-1099



Dr. James Cathey, Extension Wildlife Specialist  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service  
Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences Program Unit  
111 Nagle Hall, 2258 TAMU  
College Station, TX 77843-2258  
JCCathey@ag.tamu.edu  
(979) 845-0916

TPWD receives federal assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies. TPWD is therefore subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, in addition to state anti-discrimination laws. TPWD will comply with state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any TPWD program, activity or event, you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203, Attention: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access.

