

# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

April 2024

T E X A S

Master Naturalist™  
Elm Fork Chapter  
1999-2024



*Celebrating*  
— 25 YEARS —



Hello and thank you for your interest in the Texas Master Naturalist program !!!

*We engage Texans of all ages through education and outreach as one of the core tenets of the Texas Master Naturalist program.*

*Our Mission is 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.*

*"The hum of bees is the voice of the garden."*

*- Elizabeth Lawrence*



**2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists**



## Please Join Us for our Next Meeting

Master Naturalist meetings are open to the public.

**This month's meeting program:**  
**What's the buzz about native bees?**  
- presented by—Chapter President, Kathryn Wells.

Thursday, April 18th  
9 am to Noon  
Denton County Administrative Courthouse  
1 Courthouse Drive, Denton, TX



# Visit our Booth



Look for the Texas Master Naturalist Elm Fork Chapter booth at the following events:

## **LLELA's Full Circle Trace Race**

**Saturday, April 13 - 8 a.m. to Noon**

**Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area Nature Preserve  
201 E Jones Street, Lewisville**



The Friends of LLELA is hosting the newly expanded "Full Circle Trail Race" to raise funds for restoration and educational projects. This year's event will be run by Tejas Trails and will feature all new distance categories including our first ever full marathon! **Races: 26.2 mi, 13.1 mi, 10k, 5k, youth 1 mi** Registration is open so secure your spot today!

## **Lantana Earth Day**

**Saturday, April 13 - 9 a.m. to Noon**

**North Community Center, 11555 Lantana Trl. Argyle**



The Fresh Water Supply District is hosting the annual Lantana Earth Day event, with lots of exciting new reasons to park your car and stroll the exhibits! Earth Day will provide residents with information on the environment, tree care for our area, and tough native plants, with hands-on activities for the kids and a guided nature hike. It's also an opportunity to dispose of hazardous and bulk materials and get your sensitive documents shredded.

## **Shady Shores Spring Clean and Arbor Day**

**Saturday, April 20 - 9 a.m. to Noon**

**Shady Shores Town Hall, 101 South Shady Shores Rd.**



Please join the town of Shady Shores in celebrating Arbor Day! We are collecting shredding, e-waste and will have roll offs. BUT more than that we will be hosting several local community groups. Follow our Facebook event Spring Clean and Arbor Day Celebration **Oh! And pancakes will be served as a fundraiser for our Keep Shady Shores Beautiful Greenspaces!**

## **Redbud Festival**

**Saturday, April 20 - 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

**Denton Civic Center, 321 E. McKinney Street, Denton**  
Celebrate in the Redbud Capital of Texas!



The award-winning Denton Redbud Festival has been promoting community beautification and Denton pride since 1994. The Redbud Festival features dozens of vendors with tree and plant sales, gardening supplies, household items and local/handmade products, along with family-friendly activities and live, local music. This is a free event.

## **Mariposas & Keep Lewisville Beautiful Cleanup**

**Saturday, April 20—8 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Thrive, 1950 S. Valley Parkway, Lewisville**



Attendees will be able to immerse themselves in the wonders of nature with educational activities, engaging giveaways, and invigorating nature walks led by passionate LLELA staff and community partners.



# Project Showcase

## DENTON ISD SCHOOL DAYS AT CLEAR CREEK

Providing educational experiences to complement the Denton ISD field trips for 2nd graders in the spring and 4th graders in the fall.

**DISD School Days at Clear Creek** originated as a project of the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalist Class of 2017.

The class learned that nearly 5000 elementary students from Denton Independent School District (DISD)

visit **Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center (CCNHC)** annually on field trips, and there had been some assistance from Elm Fork Chapter members in the past, but the trips were often challenging for teachers and less fun and educational than they could be for students.

The project development committee created a combination of indoor and outdoor education stations for the field trips, with service opportunities for volunteers at varied skills, interests, expertise, talents, and activity levels.



This project engages thousands of second and fourth graders each year through educational stations that have included exhibits and presentation on the following topics: Amazing Owls, Bees, Critters of Clear Creek (pelts and more), displays of nests, skulls, turtle shells, and fossils, local trees, native wildflowers, snakes, and a Stream Trailer demonstrating water conservation and ecology principles.

In addition, Texas Master Naturalists lead nature hikes where students are presented with education on natural features of the Texas cross-timbers region at Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center.

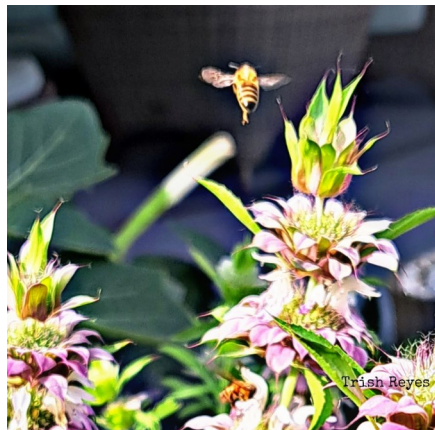
Today these key partners have joined in the effort:

**DISD, The City of Denton** (which manages CCNHC), **Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist (EFCTMN)** and **SWAt** (Science with Attitude), which is a group of EFCTMN members and **Denton County Master Gardeners** working together to enhance the knowledge of environmental education in Denton County.

# Plant Native

Here are some recommended native plants to attract pollinators :

- Flame Acanthus
- Red Turk's Cap
- Gregg's Mistflower
- Texas Lantana
- Texas Rock Rose
- Monarda 'Jacob Cline'
- 'Goldsturm' Rudbeckia
- 'Henry Duelberg' Salvia
- Zexmenia
- 'Apricot Sunrise' Agastache
- Butterflyweed
- 'Moonbeam' Coreopsis
- Cedar Sage
- Lemon Beebalm



If you want to attract Monarch Butterflies, the key plants to use are Gregg's Mistflower and Texas Lantana. Monarchs go crazy for these two, and it's good to include Butterflyweed because that is the only plant that Monarch's lay their eggs and the larvae eat as they mature. To attract Hummingbirds, Flame Acanthus and Turk's cap are your best bets.

These plants bloom all season and really take the heat and sun, with some even adjusting well in some shade.

## Easy Ways to Help Build Bee Habitat

Even the smallest green space can provide food and safe haven for pollinators. Whether you're gardening in a window box, garden bed, or across wide acres of land, taking the following steps will help improve the habitat for bees.



### 1. Feed the Bees

Choose nectar- and pollen-rich flowers with a range of shapes, sizes, colors, and bloom times. Seek out locally **native plants** as often as possible, as they have evolved regionally and are well adapted to the climate, soil, light, and water conditions in that area. Many native bee species have coevolved to feed exclusively on native flowers and need them to survive.



### 2. Skip the Mulch

70% of the world's bees — including bumblebees — live underground and need bare, **mulch-free**, well-drained, protected soil in a sunny area to create and access their nests. If mulching is absolutely necessary, use compost or leaves instead of wood, bark, or other bulky materials, and keep mulch layers thin — no more than half an inch.



### 3. Leave Stems Behind

Don't cut stems to the ground after blooms expire. Instead, strategically trim them so that cavity-nesting bees can move in and lay eggs. Leave spent flowers up through the fall and winter so migrating birds can feed on seeds. Then, in spring, trim stems at heights ranging from 8 to 24 inches high to provide homes for species such as mason bees.



### 4. Say No to Pesticides

The best way to avoid pest issues is to have healthy, resilient plants, which is why we recommend planting native species, which are best suited to thrive in the sun, water, and soil of a local ecosystem. If you must use a pesticide, choose a targeted organic product, and always avoid applying pesticides when flowers are blooming or directly to the soil.



## Did you know UNT is a **Bee Campus USA** affiliate?

The UNT Bee Campus USA is dedicated to providing habitats for pollinators and educating the community about the importance of pollinators in our everyday lives.

These commitments have earned UNT the honor of being named the 1st Bee Campus USA institution in Texas and the 12th in the nation!

As a Bee Campus USA institution, UNT is committed to:

- A high standard for environmental accountability by developing a campus pollinator habitat plan that contributes to a healthy native ecosystem
- Hosting events, workshops, and presentations that provide learning opportunities to the UNT community
- Sponsoring service-learning projects on and off campus
- Offering pollinator-focused curriculum or continuing education

**Want to know more about how to support pollinators on campus and beyond? Visit our page on [Creating Pollinator Habitats!](#)**





# Take a Hike



Lewisville Lake  
Environmental Learning Area

LLELA offers a diverse list of guided activities which can be enjoyed by visitors of a wide variety of skill levels and ages. Program offerings are always changing and growing, so keep a close eye on this web site for new opportunities. The [calendar](#) has up-to-date information.



## Bird Walks

Birders of all skill levels are invited to join an expert to explore birding locations at LLELA. Ages 10 and up. There is a LLELA bird walk at 7:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of most months.

## Nature Walks

Join us for our monthly naturalist-led nature walk. Each season at LLELA is different, and we never know what we'll find—deer tracks, autumn leaves, blooming wildflowers, nesting songbirds, butterflies and much more. The hike will last about two hours, and all ages are welcome.



## Night Hikes

Join our trail guides as they lead a moonlit stroll through the woods and across the prairie. We may hear some bumps in the night, but have no fear...it's probably just an armadillo. Howling coyotes, hooting owls, and other nocturnal sounds will provide an out-of-the-ordinary hiking experience. Ages 5 years and up.

**Registration is required online.** Please check the [calendar](#) for upcoming dates.

## Student Field Experiences

A 2,600-acre classroom made of tall-grass prairies, bottomland and Cross Timbers forests, and the Elm Fork and its associated wetlands. Just imagine the opportunities for fun and meaningful educational opportunities!

- Field trips are typically scheduled Monday-Friday.
- Cost per student is \$10 per experience and all invoices must be paid 30 days prior to visit. Larger groups must book multiple days. There is no additional charge for teachers, parents, or chaperones.
- Teachers, parents, and chaperones are responsible for classroom management of students.
- Each study is 1.5 to 2.5 hours.



For more information, contact Outdoor Recreation Supervisor, Erin Piper, [epiper@cityoflewisville.com](mailto:epiper@cityoflewisville.com) or 469.635.5482.

[Use this link to be redirected to our program request form.](#)

**Leave No Trace:** *Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but memories, kill nothing but time*



# You Can Help!



VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## Not a Texas Master Naturalist, but want to volunteer?

Check out these volunteer opportunities in your area.

Our chapter provides close to 30,000 volunteer hours annually in **conservation, restoration and education** activities throughout Denton, Wise and Cooke counties.

For over 23 years, we've trained close to 1,000 volunteers who have **developed and interpreted nature trails, built pollinator gardens, measured water quality, led educational hikes in area parks and nature centers, monitored species biodiversity** and led many other beneficial environmental conservation projects.



Please consider helping our efforts.

**DONATE**

## Ray Roberts Lake Prairie Restoration Volunteer Day



Join **Texas Conservation Alliance** and **Texas Parks and Wildlife** in restoring our prairies by aiding in the removal of invasive species and encroaching small trees.

These efforts will prepare park grounds for future projects such as prescribed burns and native planting that will help restore them into natural, prairie habitat that will benefit local wildlife, park visitors, and trail accessibility.

**April 13th - 9AM-12PM**  
**Ray Roberts Lake State Park - Isle Du Bois Unit**  
**Map & Directions**  
**Parking/Meeting Location—Bluestem Grove parking lot**

**REGISTRATION is REQUIRED.** To register visit the link below and sign up.  
<https://www.tcatexas.org/event-details/take-action-restore-prairie-at-ray-roberts-state-park>

Entrance fees are waived for registered participants.  
[More information about this event...](#)

## Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area Habitat Restoration

Every Monday and Wednesday, as well as the 1st Saturday of the month, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

- Help in LLELA's native plant nursery.
- Assist in workdays to plant prairie grasses, seed wildflowers, or plant wetland plants.
- Process seeds to prepare them for planting (can be an indoor, seated job).
- Control invasive exotic plant species.
- Help cut new trails.
- Maintain existing trails, including the kayak/canoe trail.



LLELA needs volunteer assistance in almost all areas of operations on an ongoing basis. Please contact the staff listed for the project you are most interested in, below. \*\*Note LLELA does have opportunities for large groups to volunteer. **Contact Restoration Manager Richard Freiheit at [freiheit@unt.edu](mailto:freiheit@unt.edu) or call 214.264.8047 to discuss.**



# More Educational Opportunities...

## Snake Senses

Live snake! What?!

Join a Ranger to learn all about snakes, their amazing adaptations, and how to keep your senses when you encounter a snake in the wild.

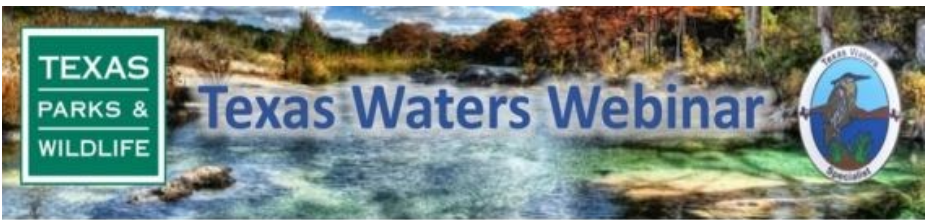


Those who join will have the opportunity to get up close and personal with one of our park ambassador snakes!

**When: April 13th - 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM**

**Where: The Lost Pines Amphitheater**

**Ray Roberts Lake State Park - Isle Du Bois Unit**



Enjoy learning about improving water quality, water quantity, conservation practices, water law, and aquatic habitats. Join us throughout the year for FREE.

Desalination: Southmost Regional Water Authority Brackish Groundwater Treatment Facility: **Thursday, April 18 @ 6:30-7:30 PM CT**

Judy K. Adams, Division Manager, Jose Armando Garza, Water Treatment Manager, & Jacob Galvan with Brownsville Public Utilities Board; Southmost Regional Water Authority

- [Register](#)
- Visit the [Texas Waters](#) webpage for information on becoming a certified [Texas Waters Specialist](#) and view recorded webinars from 2017-2023.

In addition to this **Educational Opportunities** newsletter, The Elm Fork Chapter produces a monthly newsletter for it's members.

This newsletter is now available in an audio version.

**“Stream: The Naturalist News”**  
(March 2024 edition)



**Interested in having a Master Naturalist as a speaker for your next event?**

Contact our Speakers Bureau for more information.

[Request a Speaker](#)

Many educational videos are available on our [YouTube Channel!!!](#)

# About Us...

## 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.

## Vision

In our community, the Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program will be recognized as a primary source of information, education and service to support natural resources and natural areas today and in the future.



Conservation



Preservation



Restoration

## Training

The Elm Fork Chapter offers training for new Master Naturalists each year. Classes include instruction from statewide curriculum materials and from local experts on a wide range of natural resource topics. Look for information about the Training Program on the website.



## Service

Members volunteer thousands of service hours each year through work on projects which involve education, public outreach, trail clearing, tree planting, prairie restoration, and so much more.

**We look forward to YOU becoming a Texas Master Naturalist!!!**

To become a Texas Master Naturalist, please email us at: [training@efctmn.org](mailto:training@efctmn.org).

The Texas Master Naturalist-Elm Fork Chapter proudly serves Denton, Cooke and Wise counties.

The Elm Fork Chapter was established in 1999, as one of the first chapters in the state. We are a group of over 200 active members, sharing our curiosity, knowledge and love of nature.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is a partnership between the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, and other local partners.



**Keep up to date on the wonderful world of the Elm Fork Chapter Texas Master Naturalist program.**

**Please like us on Facebook and visit our websites!!!**



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