

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

July 2024

T E X A S



Please Join Us at our Project Showcase

Walk with us...
see what Master Naturalists do!



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.

"In every walk with nature one receives far more than one seeks."

- John Muir

FREE EVENT Projects Showcase *Open to the Public*

Thursday, July 18th

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Denton County Elections Building
701 Kimberly Drive
Denton, Texas



Come learn about our projects in Denton, Cooke & Wise Counties and find out what it's like to be a TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST.



Connect
with Nature



txmn.org/elmfork
940-349-2882
contact@efotmn.org



Education
& Training



Projects
& Outreach



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners, Courts of Texas Cooperating. Persons with disabilities needing alternate options for effective participation in the meeting should contact Denton County AgriLife Extension office at least a week in advance of the meeting or event to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

Restore and Preserve
Natural Areas

Create and Maintain
Wildscapes and New
Habitat

Share your Knowledge,
Skills and Talents to Fulfill
Community Needs

Monitor and Record Rain
and Water Quality

Restore and Assist with
Land Management

Care for Wildlife

Educate our Youth

Contribute to Citizen
Science

Continuously Grow your
Knowledge of our
Ecosystems

Make an Impact for a
Better Tomorrow !!!

Project Spotlight

BAT Acoustic Monitoring

One of our latest project additions, this project is a part of NABat, a bat monitoring program across North America that uses standardized acoustic tracking protocols to gather data on bat populations. Volunteers place acoustic monitors in designated areas, remove and relocate them as needed, and collect, download, analyze, and report data.



Acoustic monitoring of bats provides empirical data on the distribution of bat species in key areas of the state during the summer months.

The data captured is used to identify areas in need of conservation and help target conservation of native flora and fauna necessary to support bat species.

<https://www.nabatmonitoring.org/>

Bats are the second most diverse order of mammals with about 1,400 species worldwide. Currently, there are 150 species of bats recognized in North America, including 138 that are found in Mexico, 47 in the United States, and 17 in Canada. In the United States, eight species or subspecies are listed as endangered by the federal government and one species is listed as threatened. In Mexico, three species are considered threatened and two species are provided special protection.



Bats are important to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and are considered to be good bioindicators for monitoring ecosystem health because of their longevity and their sensitivity to changes in their environment that may also affect many other organisms. Additionally, bats provide many benefits and services to humans. Because bats are active mainly during the night (nocturnal) many of their important benefits and services occur “under the radar.”



Texas happens to be the battiest state in the country. It is home to 33 of the 47 species of bats found in the United States. Not only does it hold the distinction of having the most kinds of bats, it also boasts the largest known bat colony in the world, Bracken Cave Preserve near San Antonio, and the largest urban bat colony, Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin.

Eight species of bats have been confirmed within the three counties served by the **Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists**, with three being Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

This project contributes to international scientific research into the distribution and viability of bat populations throughout Texas and potentially, to improvement in the overall bat population. It helps identify areas of concern, where the bat population is decreasing. It also helps develop solutions to maintain and increase populations where needed.

<https://sciencebase.usgs.gov/nabat/#/explore>



Plant Native

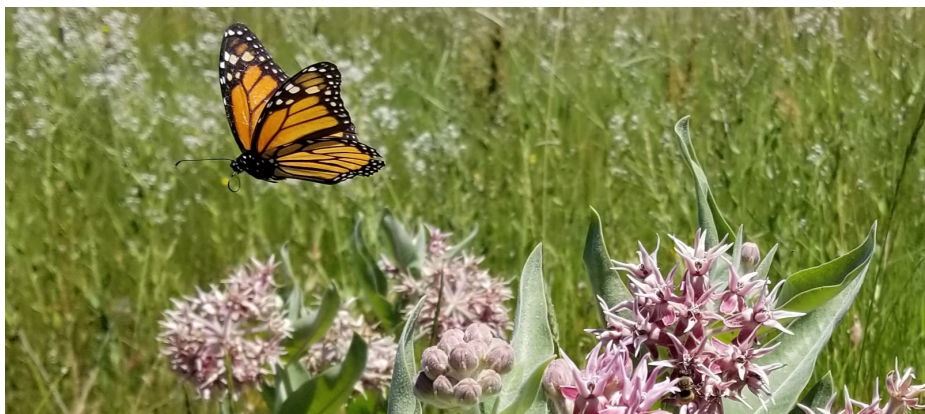
What is a Host Plant?

A host plant is a specific plant that a bug, butterfly, or caterpillar eats, and where it lives and lays its eggs. A well-known example is milkweed. Monarch caterpillars only eat milkweed, and monarch butterflies only lay their eggs on milkweed.

Host plants are ALWAYS native plants—and that’s a good thing.

Native plants don’t need fancy fertilizers, special soil, or extra attention.

When planted in their home area, native plants have all they need to grow.



Why do host plants exist?

The monogamous eating relationship between wildlife and host plants boils down to one word: **survival**.

Milkweed has a toxic compound in its milky sap. Monarch caterpillars have evolved to eat milkweed and hold the toxicity safely within their bodies. Predators know to leave monarch caterpillars and butterflies alone.



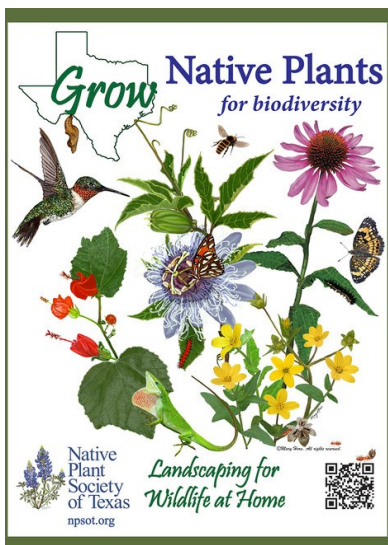
Host plants give mom butterflies peace of mind.

Let’s put ourselves in a mom butterfly’s “shoes” for a moment...

You’re flying around—sometimes across states—and you need a place to safely lay your eggs. How can you ensure your baby caterpillars have food? The answer is a host plant.

Milkweed is just one example of a host plant and its butterfly partner. There are many other host plants where the butterfly moms lay their eggs and are the sole food for their caterpillars. Without these native host plants, the butterflies could not survive.

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/enticing-north-texas-butterflies/>



Growing host plants is easy!

You can either plant from seed or start with plants from a nursery or neighbor. There are many online seed companies that offer native seeds to plant.

To maximize butterfly moms finding your host plants...grow at least five host plants in an area.

One other amazing thing about host plants is many of them come back year after year. **Plant native host plants once and sit back, and enjoy.** Planting native host plants is great for saving water (and being a lazy gardener). Once native plants are established, they thrive with only the rain found in their home area.

For those who don’t want to spend hours and hours gardening, planting native host plants ensure your garden will be beautiful for years to come **AND help butterflies, with minimal work from you.** (Especially compared to non-native plants and lawn care.)



Take a Hike

Trails are critical to our health and mobility. Scientific research and health professionals agree that hitting the trails is advantageous for all aspects of fitness and mental wellness.

There are dozens of trails in the tri-county area that the **Elm Fork Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists** serve. Here are some to consider:



Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center features more than 10 miles of family-friendly hiking trails through diverse habitats. Fisherman's Trail winds along Clear Creek to the Elm Fork confluence. Wetlands Trail allows visitors to view constructed wetlands with inhabitants such as waterfowl, herons, and beavers. Old Wetlands Road and High Trail wind through thick, majestic bottomland forest. The outer loop of the trails system totals 3.2 miles - perfect for 5K trail runners.

There are 20 hike and bike trails maintained by the **City of Lewisville** for public use.

Paths are designed for a mix of walkers, joggers and cyclists and offer routes from place around the parks and throughout the city.

A list of trail locations can be found here:

<https://www.playlewisville.com/parks/hike-and-bike-trails>



The **Greenbelt Corridor** is a 20 mile multi-use trail that meanders alongside the Elm Fork Branch of the Trinity River. One of the area's most popular nature trails, it runs north and south from below the Ray Roberts Dam to the headwaters of Lake Lewisville, offering 12 miles for equestrians and 10 miles for bicyclists and hikers.

The corridor is operated by **Texas Parks and Wildlife**, and no hunting or firearms are permitted. It's a natural playground where outdoor enthusiasts and families can hike, bike, ride horses, rollerblade, geocache, or simply kick back! Play it smart and check out the official Texas Parks and Wildlife maps.

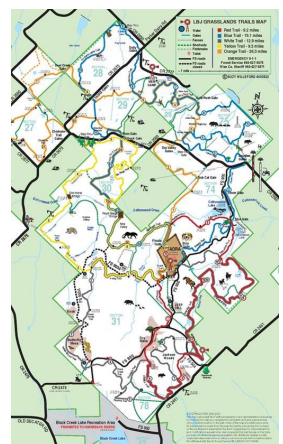
<https://www.cityofdenton.com/223/Greenbelt>

If you are looking for distance, the **LBJ Grasslands** are the place to go!

Located North of the Metroplex, near Decatur Texas, there are 70+ miles of trails and a lot to explore here. You can make this a single day adventure, or backpack for multiple days.

Be aware of hunting season, as hunting is allowed in the grasslands. Make sure to bring water, a map, and a phone to track your GPS, as you may not encounter anyone out here!

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/texas/about-forest/>



You Can Help!



Texas Nature Trackers (TNT), part of the Wildlife Diversity Program, tracks the status of wild populations of plants and animals throughout Texas.

Participating in TNT projects is a great way to learn more about the biodiversity of the state and contribute to Texas Parks and Wildlife's research and conservation efforts.

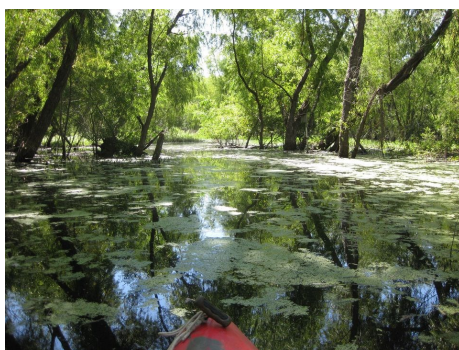
https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/texas_nature_trackers/get_involved.phtml

Lake Lewisville Environmental Learning Area (LLELA)

201 E. Jones St., Lewisville, TX 75057

Join the River Care Team

Each month on the second Saturday, volunteers from the community, college students, Scouting organizations, and many others come together to help clean the Elm Fork of the Trinity River shoreline.



The River Care team meets at the gatehouse before driving down to the river parking area. Bring work gloves, sensible shoes, and spend a couple of hours clearing debris from the banks of the river.

January to June 10 a.m.-noon, July and August 8-10 a.m., September to December, 10 a.m.-noon. No registration is required, just show up! Contact Kari Waddle at kwaddle@cityoflewisville.com for more information.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department operates and maintains a system of public lands, including Ray Roberts Lake State Park, historic sites, fish hatcheries and wildlife management areas. There are many opportunities for you to get involved with this important work.



Annually, volunteers donate more than a half-million hours of service worth more than \$17,000,000 to TPWD.

The volunteer application process is done online at tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/help-parks.

Once the application is received, applicants undergo a background check and can then apply for specific opportunities or parks. A volunteer coordinator at the park will match the volunteer with opportunities according to their interests/passion, skillset, and time availability.

To learn more, check out "How to Volunteer" at tpwd.texas.gov/volunteer.

For general information, visit - tpwd.texas.gov



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

Please consider helping our efforts with a donation.



More Educational Opportunities...

In addition to this **Educational Opportunities** newsletter, The Elm Fork Chapter produces a monthly newsletter for it's members; "**Naturalist News**". This newsletter provides more education and detailed information on our Chapter, including the work and play involved in our projects, and training. Now available in an audio version:



"**Stream: The Naturalist News**" here >>>>>>>



TEXAS ASSOCIATION for ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Texas Has a PLAN!

So that all Texans may come to value Texas' natural resources, know the principles of natural resources stewardship, and live

sustainably, educators came together from across the state to create a plan that would provide a framework for ongoing statewide efforts that foster natural resource/environmental literacy as a cornerstone of education, recreation and life-long learning.

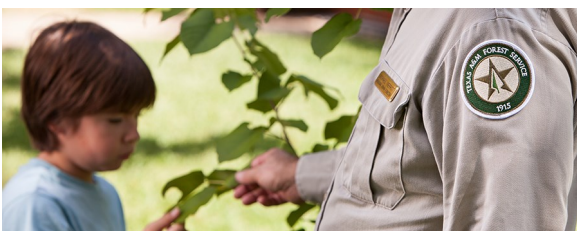
The core of who we are as Texans lies in the sustenance, history and culture built around our natural world. The future of Texas' natural and cultural resources depends on every one of us having a sense of place and our role in that place.

The Texas Natural Resource/Environmental Literacy Plan serves as a framework to coordinate statewide efforts of formal and informal educators to provide lifelong opportunities for all Texans, regardless of age, culture, and circumstances, to become stewards of our natural resources. Learn more about the plan:

https://taee.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/tnrelp_online1.pdf

All life on earth depends on forests.

Texas A&M Forest Service strives to educate and inform all Texans on the benefits and conservation of our state's trees and forests.



Conservation education is vital to ensuring people of all ages understand and appreciate the importance of natural resources, as well as how to conserve them for future generations.

LEARN & EXPLORE
<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/ConservationEducation/>



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

[Request a Speaker](#)

Questions ???
Email speakers@efctmn.org



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

About Us...

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



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.

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.



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Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist
611 Kimberly Drive, Hulcher Service Building B, Suite 151
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