



Gideon Lincecum Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™ NEWS

August, September 2015 Newsletter

From the President:

What a year we have had so far, our 2015 class graduated and we are already gearing up for 2016's class. Jerry Gips is the new chair for the training committee and we are thrilled to have him involved. If you know of someone that might enjoy the class by all means direct them to our website or bring them to our Chapter Meeting and Programs. We have already had several people sign up through our website. A special thanks to Lori Buffum for maintaining our Facebook and website. It is much improved since her involvement. Christine Morrison, our treasurer has added a Paypal button to our website. Payments for the class and dues can be made on-line.

Donna Mueller, the new Scholarship Chair grabbed the bull by the horns and made the 4-H scholarships happen. We have presented two already, one in Fayette County and one in Colorado County. As they were both scheduled for the same day and time, Donna and I presented in Fayette County and Christine Morrison presented in Colorado County. I am scheduled to present in Washington County on the 14th of August and in Lee County on the August 23. At this time we have not heard from Austin County. One stipulation to receiving the scholarship is that the student must come to a Chapter Meeting and make a presentation to us. I am looking forward to hearing what these young people have to say.



Carol Daniels has her hands full with the VMS! Please, please, please report your time quickly, after September 1 we will be on our own. Any hours over 45 days will be lost to you and the chapter. Thank you Carol, it has taken a lot of patience and time.

September's meeting is still the 19th. I did some research and determined that there wasn't a better weekend available in September. Between the Washington County Fair and the start of Antique Week, there wasn't a better option. We will have a Board and Chapter Meeting on September 19 but, we will not have a Program. With everything going on that weekend, we did not want to get a speaker and then have a small audience. If you have other commitments that weekend, I will understand if you can't make

the Chapter Meeting. **Committee Chairs**, if you are obligated elsewhere for the Chapter Meeting, please send me an e-mail with the current status of your committee. I will then report for you. Thank you.

Please check our website for the latest volunteer and advanced training opportunities. There is something for everybody. Reminder, Chappell Hill Festival, is October 3 and we will have a manned display there. If you are interested in assisting, contact Charlotte at quebefarm@yahoo.com.

Hope to see you out and about this summer.

Cindy Hobbs, President

[Prairie/Greenhouse Committee Report](#)

Contributed by Charlotte Von Rosenburg

Out with the old greenhouse – in with the new. The greenhouse at Brenham High School suffered grave injury from a windstorm. After four years (!! Really, has it been that long?) We are moving up. Our **new quarters** are the greenhouse at the Blinn Ag. Center. Check out this state of the art greenhouse. To free up space, Tom Yates and I helped greenhouse manager Bryn Bentke move a 12' (no exaggeration) ficus tree to its new home in the country. Wish I had taken a picture of that!



Prairie grasses are starting to bloom and put on seed heads. This makes them very easy to **identify**. First you see Eastern Gammagrass – stunning in height and fancy flowers and seedheads. This summer, you have been seeing Little Bluestem, an iridescent blue/green color in the roadside ditches. Keep watching and soon you will see its cottony fluffs. Side Oats Grama has almost peaked already, but still lines up in some places. Switchgrass is easy to see almost anywhere on FM390. Indiangrass has beautiful color – but

no seedheads yet. Big Bluestem is showing off its “turkey foot” profile.

Soon it will be time to **collect seeds**! Get your paper bags and Sharpies. Roadside harvesting is allowed but Please Be Careful. We will be collecting at Quebe Prairie a time or two – schedule is pending. Tom Scanio and Greg Walker have come up with a Seed Management Proposal (See below). Sale of plants is a major fundraiser for our chapter and we are getting better and better at raising grass babies. However the process is labor intense. To better our chances of consistent success we must take better care of our seeds. Anyone interested in helping out with this?

The BISD Fourth Grade Ag Day will include a Prairie Stomp at Quebe. Talk about a major disturbance! Dr. Fred Smeins of TAMU will be bringing out grad students in October.

Quebe Prairie is becoming more and more degraded by invading KR Bluestem, dewberry vine, eastern ragweed, etc. As owner and steward I will need to make a decision soon regarding management

practices to control invasives, thatch, etc. There are pros and cons with every option. Not to mention the weather, which can really de-rail the best plans. Wish me luck figuring this one out. I'll keep you posted. Deadline for decision is February 2016.

NOTE: For those of you who are studying plant natives, here are some useful links about all things native grass and seeds. Enjoy!
Charlotte

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/28390230/Coastal-Prairie-Plant-Growers-Handbook-March-2010>

<http://www.texasprairie.org>

<http://www.ckwri.tamuk.edu/research-programs/texas-native-seeds/>

PROPOSAL FOR A SEED EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR THE GIDEON LINCECUM CHAPTER TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

Contributed by Tom Scanio

This proposal describes and establishes a Seed Exchange Program (SEP) for the Gideon Lincecum Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists.

1 DESCRIPTION

The SEP is a program whereby chapter members can contribute seeds (typically native grasses, flowers and forbs) to a seed bank and, in turn, receive seeds from the seed bank for their own use. The goals of the program are to have a repository of seeds for the chapter, to allow chapter members to increase the diversity of plants on their property and to have seeds available for direct sale or propagation of plants for sale by the chapter for fund raising activities.

2 MEMBER ELIGIBILITY

All members who have passed initial training and are up to date in dues payments are eligible to participate in the program.

3 SEED BANK DESCRIPTION

The seed bank is the physical repository of all seeds contributed by participating members. The seed bank resides with and is controlled by the seed banker. The seed banker is an eligible member who has been elected by the chapter board to take responsibility for the seed bank. The specific member designated as the seed banker is given in Appendix A.

The seed banker shall store the seeds in a climate controlled environment in order to insure long-term seed viability. He or she shall store the seeds in labeled packets that do not harm seed viability (for example, paper not plastic). The packet label shall have enough information to identify those seeds in the seed inventory.

The seed banker shall maintain an inventory of seeds including, for each seed packet:

Common name and ideally genus and species as near as can be determined Date collected

Name of donor

Amount of seeds contained, usually by weight

The seed banker has the authority to remove seeds from the bank if he or she determines that the seeds no longer serve the needs of the chapter and members. An example would be seeds that are too old to be considered viable. He or she may optionally arrange for volunteers to test seeds for viability, particularly the older seeds.

4 MANDATORY SEED CONTRIBUTIONS

A key element of the program is that of mandatory seed contributions. In order to receive seeds from the seed bank, a member must first contribute seeds to the seed bank. The seed banker will maintain a log for all contributions containing the name of the contributing member, date of contribution, type of seed contributed and quantity (usually weight) of seed contributed.

A participating member is to contribute more seed than he or she receives in return. This is done to insure that the seed bank be able to provide seed for use by the chapter for fund raising or other activities.

The seed banker has the authority to refuse a contribution by a participating member if the banker believes the plant species is not in the best interests of the chapter. Each contribution must be of a single species and not be a mixture of various species.

All seed contributions must be thoroughly "cleaned"; that is, the contributions must contain only seeds which have already been removed from seed stalks. The seed banker has the authority to refuse a contribution by a participating member if the banker determines that the seeds have not be cleaned sufficiently.

5 SEED WITHDRAWALS

The seed banker has sole discretion in allowing the participating member to withdraw seeds from the seed bank. Should any dispute arise between the participating member and the seed banker, the chapter board shall have final authority to grant or deny the request for seeds from the seed bank after first reviewing the contribution log for the participating member's contributions.

Seed Banker: Charlotte von Rosenberg

Tracking the Houston Toad

Contributed by Lori Buffum

Volunteers working at Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge have been helping to track a protected population of the endangered Houston Toad (*Bufo houstonensis*). A large number of these little guys arrived at the refuge in April and were placed in wire enclosures at a number of different spots on the prairie (high ground, low ground, open grasslands, riparian woodlands). For each group of toads assigned to a named and GPS-identified enclosure, individual toads were identified by “clipping toenails” on a back foot. Wow – that took some fine motor skills by researchers with magnifying glasses!

Then the tracking began. With lots of students, interns, staff members, and volunteers involved, crews were going out daily then weekly, then bimonthly to check all the enclosures, noting the conditions at each spot and locating each individual toad to measure it and weigh it. All the data is being recorded and analyzed to contribute to efforts at the state level to help this wild species retain its place in our regional ecosystem.

This picture of the babies was on release day back in early April, when some weighed just .3 gram (others weighed up to almost a whole gram!) and were 12-17mm long (SUL= snout to urostyle length). Now a few are ~15 grams and 40mm SUL. (See the last picture of the big bruiser!) [Just to give you a point of reference, a raisin weighs about a gram and 12 mm is about the length of a pinky fingernail.]

Those toad tracking volunteer hours were some of the most physically demanding hours our chapter members spent at Attwater, walking through high prairie grasses on ground that is anything but level, sinking into 6-9 inch deep puddles and gullies, creeping through the forest thickets and brambles, coping with the heat and humidity of hot summer days. TMN-GLC toad trackers have included Butch Young, Russ Healy, Lori Buffum, Jerry Gips, and Cindy Rodibaugh. I think I can speak for all of us when



I say it was a privilege to

work alongside the very dedicated crew of toad trackers and to see wildlife protection in action as they lovingly handled each little surviving toad. Each trek was also a wonderful educational session about the prairie and woodlands environment at the refuge.

There will be more opportunities for toad monitoring before the end of this year’s project when the mature individuals will probably be released in Bastrop.

Learn more about *Bufo houstonensis* at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/species/htoad/> .
See you on the toad trail!



GLC TMN BISSD Committee Learns from the Coastal Prairie Chapter

Contributed by Carol Paulson

On July 8, TMNs Dave Redden, Carol Paulson, Lori Buffum, Charlotte von Rosenberg and Royceanna Kendall and BISSD Outdoor Learning Coordinator, Natalie James, met with several members of the Coastal Prairie Chapter in Rosenberg, TX. Since we would like to guide the BISSD Fourth Graders in building sample (pocket) prairies on their campuses, we thought a good place to start would be by meeting with those who have already done such a great job of planting a prairie and a prairie demo garden at Seabourne Creek Park.

We got wonderful advice and took many pictures, particularly in the demonstration garden which is



open to the public and awesome to see. We are now waiting for the beginning of the BISSD school year to implement some of their suggestions. Many thanks to Lynn Trenta, Karl Baumgartner and Jim Butcher.

Adopt-a-Highway at work.

Contributed by Mary Ann and David Butler

Adopt-A-Highway volunteers met early on August 12 to clean up our portion of the highway. Mary Ann and Ron Peach, Ann Ray, Butch Young, and Mary Ann and David Butler worked from 7:30 to 9:30 and managed to get a significant stretch of the road cleaned. You can see we all were still smiling in spite of the heat. We collected thirteen bags of trash and lots of trash that would not fit into bags.



Your Hours as of July 18, 2015

48 Chapter members have reported 2694.2 volunteer hours and 321 AT hours this year.

Initial Certifications: Jerry Gips
Ann Ray

Recertifications: Lefty Yarnold
LuAn Yarnold
Butch Young

250 hours: Lori Buffum
Donna Cooley
Donna Mueller
Nita Tiemann

1000 hours: Carol Daniels



This year's meeting is scheduled for **October 23rd through 25th** at the hill country scenic **Horseshoe Bay Resort**, located on the shores of Lake Lyndon B Johnson. Registration for this highly anticipated event is NOW available through the Annual Meeting page on the Texas Master Naturalist State website at <http://txmn.org/2015-annual-meeting/>. Additional information about the annual gathering weekend, annual awards and contests, the advanced training sessions agenda, and registration details can be found on the website as well.

Important Information:

The State Texas Master Naturalist is offering scholarships for the Texas Master Naturalist 16th Annual Meeting taking place October 23rd-25th, 2015 at Horseshoe Bay Resort near Marble Falls, TX. These scholarships are available to ONE person from each chapter for \$75 off of either a Single or Double Occupancy registration level. Once the recipient has been verified by the Chapter President, they will need to email me in order to receive the **scholarship code to apply it to their registration and deduct the \$75 scholarship from their Single or Double Occupancy registration level.**

Scholarship recipients MUST be verified by a Chapter President, once verified, the state will send me/you the scholarship code. (Last day for registration for the Annual Meeting is October 9th at 11:59 PM). Don't register until we have made our selection and I get the discount code from the state. If you are planning on attending this year's Annual Meeting, please contact me immediately. The board will select the recipient at the Sept. meeting. cndy_hobbs@yahoo.com.

Cindy Hobbs, President

Note: For dates and time of GLC-TMN meetings and volunteers opportunities, please see our Chapter Website at www.txmn.org/glc.

Contributed by President Cindy Hobbs

Rebecca Chester, Biologist for the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, wrote a wonderful article about the volunteers at the Refuge, in their Friends of Attwater Newsletter. I know many of our members volunteer there and it is appreciated.

Master Naturalists at the Refuge

Volunteers Efforts Lighten the Staff's Load

Rebecca Chester, Biologist

Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, Eagle lake, Texas

The refuge has been fortunate enough to have a group of very knowledgeable, capable, enthusiastic Master Naturalists who have participated in a wide variety of projects including invasive species control, prairie restoration efforts, native seed collection, herbarium collections, Houston toad monitoring, fire break preparation, demonstration garden enhancement, acclimation pen construction, and other projects. Throughout every season, there are many projects occurring at the refuge that the Master Naturalists have contributed greatly to, expanding what the staff and interns are able to accomplish. In turn, they are able to apply their newly acquired knowledge, while continuing to learn about natural resource management as it relates to plants, animals and the ecosystem as a whole. As part of the local community, the Master Naturalists will inevitably share their knowledge and appreciation of native prairie with their neighbors and other landowners, thus furthering awareness of native prairie and wildlife.

The Master Naturalists have performed invasive species control activities from spraying Macartney rose (*Rosa bracteata*) from a tractor to boom-mowing trees and brush that were encroaching on the prairie to scouting for new non-native arrivals on the refuge. Uncontrolled, the rose, brush and trees will eventually take over a prairie habitat; greatly reducing the grasses and wildflowers (think wildlife forage) and providing unnatural perches in a prairie habitat for predators of prairie-chickens. Plowing the old rice fields and preparing them and planting is a time-consuming task that with which the members of the group have helped. The refuge begins the restoration process by removing levees and ditches, plowing, then planting bluestem seeds that were collected from elsewhere on the refuge. Members have also collected seeds from native species identified by the Prairie Seed Council as candidates for large grow-out operations to bolster prairie restoration projects. White prairie clover (*Dalea candida*), knotroot bristlegrass (*Setaria parviflora*), swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), and yellow indiagrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) are just a few of the species collected at the refuge for this effort. Finding new specimens for the herbarium collection is a chance to apply their botany skills and is quite helpful since it can take time to search for some of the less common species that have eluded refuge staff collection efforts thus far. A new project at the refuge this year has been monitoring Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*) survival and growth as part of the larger red-imported fire ant impact research at the refuge.



Left: A group of Master Naturalists enjoying a sunny winter day trans-planting salvaged native grasses into a restoration area in an old rice field.

FWS photo

From the Editor: Pictures!

Congratulations are in order!!

GLC TMN Bert Pecore celebrating his 90th birthday in front of the native prairie at his home in Shelby. With him are wife Wilda and granddaughter Olivia.



See how many of these grasses and plants (see Charlotte von Rosenberg's article) you can identify. Some of these were also submitted from the Seabourne trip and from Attwater.

