

# LRMN News

Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalist's Newsletter



TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION



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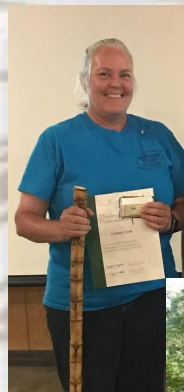
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### Newsletter

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## July's Chapter Meeting

Our July meeting began with awarding certificates to three more students from our 2019 Training Class. Connie Cook and her mom, Janell Hall and Elke Lyons were out of town and were unable to attend the End of Class party. That makes a total of 16 that have accomplished their first 40 hours this year. (two more to go...) Way to go team!!!



L-R Jackie Kopycinski, Roger Goldsberry, Danielle Horton, Janell Hall, Connie Hall, Jerry Clark, Heather Goodman, Summer Sanderson, Marissa Hudgins, Elke and Fred Lyons.

Our member, Richard Peters has been the "Man of the Hour" twice this month. Filling in as speaker for our July meeting when the schedule changed at the last minute, he presented a great presentation on local snakes. He even brought preserved specimens and a live corn snake from the Martin Dies Jr. Nature Center to pass around.

The following week, he presented the same presentation at the Kindred Hospice/Stringer Benevolence meeting at the Belle Jim Hotel when their speaker cancelled. (He almost cleared the building when he brought out the live snake, but all in all it was good. Ha) Thanks Richard, for being ready and available!!



*"The secret to success is to be ready when your opportunity comes"*

Benjamin Disraeli

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### August—

- 3rd— Watson Preserve—Wildflower walk with Joe Liggio (in search of Chapman’s orchids)
- 3rd— Big Thicket Preserve— Guided Canoe trip—10-2 Register at 409-951-6700
- 7th— Big Thicket Preserve— Guided Canoe trip—10-2 Register at 409-951-6700
- 8th— LRMN Board meeting—**Agrilife office—10am
- 13th—LRMN Chapter meeting** 6pm MDJSP Dining hall— Program — Bats, Richard Peters



### September—

- 4th—MDJSP Nature Center—Homeschool Program—Bird Adaptations—work as a volunteer
- 5th—LRMN Board meeting—**Agrilife office—10am
- 7th—Neches River Rally—8am-1pm for info—<https://www.nps.gov/bith/index.htm>
- 9th—LRMN Chapter meeting with Master Gardeners** - 6pm St. Michael’s Church— Carnivorous plants
- 25th—MDJSP Nature Center—Homeschool Program—Bird Calls—work as a volunteer



Head Start—Contact Claire Boutte - [fdclaire@gmail.com](mailto:fdclaire@gmail.com)  
 Martin Dies Jr. State Park - Contact Ranger Amy at [amy.kocurek@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:amy.kocurek@tpwd.texas.gov)  
 MDJSP service projects—Contact Lori Horne—[lori.horne1965@gmail.com](mailto:lori.horne1965@gmail.com)



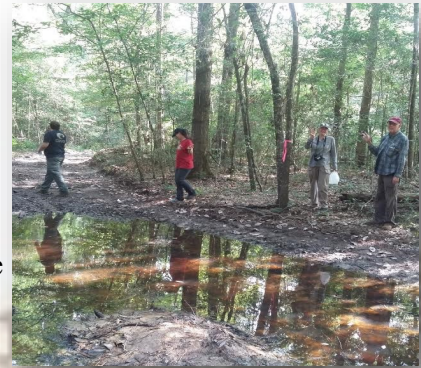
### FREQUENTLY USED WEB SITES

- Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalists web site..... <https://txmn.org/llr/>
- Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalists FaceBook....<https://www.facebook.com/LongleafRidgeMasterNaturalists/>
- Martin Dies Jr. State Park events.....[https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park\\_events](https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/martin-dies-jr/park_events)
- Watson Preserve.....[http://watsonpreserve.ning.com/?xg\\_source=msg\\_mes\\_network](http://watsonpreserve.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network)
- Big Thicket National Preserve.....<https://www.nps.gov/bith/index.htm>

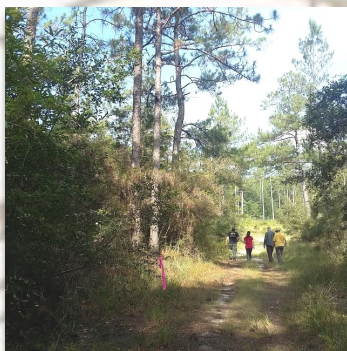
Send your favorites to me at [sherlmx@gmail.com](mailto:sherlmx@gmail.com)

# E. O. Siecke

The E. O. Siecke committee met at the State Park with Forester Ben Plunkett on July 16th to flag the proposed trails. Due to the main trail's frequent flooded conditions, another trail has been added. Incorporating the extra trail has added two more ecosystems to increase the hiker's experience.



(a good place for snake education)



(Upland Pine Ecosystem)

Placement of trail locations were flagged, ecosystems locations were discussed, placement of directional and trailhead signs were marked and educational sign assignments were agreed upon.



(Deciding on how to add the second trail)

After a look into his budget, Ben determined that if we could get all the information for the signs to him by the second week of August, he would be able to get them made and paid for by September 1st. So... let's go, go, go!!!

## Friends of the Park

Fourteen members met to talk with Ranger Chuck to discuss the park's progress, happenings and ways that we can be of service to them.



Highlights from the meeting:

The lake level will be dropping 12 feet before the week is done, leaving all the boat ramps inaccessible. This will be done to check the dam structures.

Ranger Chuck and Travis Primrose, officer at the Goodman Unit requested a wood chipper that can be attached to a tractor to help with trail cleanups. Mr. Primrose has a crew of inmates that come on contract to work at the park with mowing and cleanups. With the money our group receives from selling firewood to park visitors, we voted to purchase the chipper.

Coming up on October 5th, 2019, in conjunction with the Jasper Chamber of Commerce, the park will host the Dam to Dam Paddle and Saddle Annual event. All paddlers, bikers and interested volunteers should register at the Jasper Chamber of Commerce office— call 409-384-2762 or email them at [Jaspercoc.org](mailto:Jaspercoc.org).

## The Trash-off Challenge

A trash off contest to improve our communities! Beginning July 26, 2019 and ending November 5, 2019 in Jasper and Newton counties.

**RULES** - Take pictures of the littered area before you pick up trash and after. The photo needs to include trash bags and participants to qualify. Use the buddy system, work in pairs or teams. The goal is to see who or which team picks up the most trash!!!

Send in photos to [lori.horne1965@gmail.com](mailto:lori.horne1965@gmail.com)

On Saturday, July 27, 2019, the litter on Hidden Beaches bathed in morning sunlight for the last time. Six Master Naturalists trundled toward a halfway point on the road connecting Ebenezer and Letney Parks, where they were equipped with gloves, grabbers and trash bags. Some of them didn't fully know it yet, but that was the day they would bring an unsightly pile of trash to its doom. At the meeting point, a trail from the road leads through the Angelina National Forest to the Sam Rayburn shoreline - a popular secluded spot for equestrian trail riders, beach seekers, and rogue campers. Unmanaged apart from occasional monitoring by law enforcement, the Hidden Beach's popularity has adversely affected its beauty. Trash has littered its shoreline for months or longer, crowned by an enormous pile of cans and bottles stacked on top of an old burned log. This particular pile had evoked much shaking of heads and even some angry Facebook posts. Danielle Horton, Marissa Hudgins (with her children Lucas and Laree) and Jackie Kopycinski had first cleaned up the parking "area" (not much more than a clearing by the road) in late June. A month later all three returned, joined by Joanie Kochanek, Richard Peters, and Nick Coco with his daughters Adaiah and Ella. Since it was the last refreshing morning of a mid-summer cool front, barely any bug spray was needed. *Hibiscus moscheutos* (swamp rose mallow) bloomed along the trail. The month's worth of trash in the parking area was dispatched into bags within minutes. The team began working quickly down the lakeside trail that sloped toward the beach. Halfway three



(Before)



(After)



Doc's Debris Destroyers

white ringed longleaf pines appeared to be inhabited by RCW's despite all the foot traffic in the area.

The trail ended at a cliffside and split into several paths to the beach, and soon the group descended upon the legendary pile of trash. The gasps and groans of initial shock were replaced by strategy talk as the team worked to eliminate the pile and surrounding litter. The sun began to climb and with less shade on the beach, the air began to feel oppressively like July again.

With full bags accumulating, the team began to wonder how they were going to get the heavy load of bags back uphill to the parking area. They hauled the bags up to a level area and counted sixteen 39-gallon bags and one styrofoam ice chest. Richard Peters expertly maneuvered his van down the sandy trail and back to retrieve the bags, and the walking group followed him back to the parking area. They only heard him bottom out a couple of times, and they agreed that anyone else would have gotten stuck in sand for the rest of the day.

As the team dispersed, Danielle grabbed the last two bags so she, Richard and Jackie could drop them off in the Ebenezer Park dumpster. Their work made a big step in restoring Hidden Beach from a shameful eyesore to a sparkling, secluded haven.

-photos and article submitted by Danielle "Doc" Horton.

**They have set the bar high. Are you up to the challenge????**

## LRMN BEEKEEPERS TO THE RESCUE!

By Joanie Kochanek, LRMN

When Lori Horne received a call from MDJSP Manager Pablo Ramirez about bees in a tree at a campsite, she contacted Joanie Kochanek. Joanie & husband Mike are beekeepers, who live close to Martin Dies. Joanie realized more experience was necessary for this task! Terry McFall, longtime LRMN member and Texas Beekeepers Assn. Master Beekeeper was contacted. After viewing the large beautiful hive, he quickly came up with a viable plan to retrieve it, rather than destroy it. Pablo arranged a hydraulic lift for our use, as the hive was about 15' up.

On Tuesday, July 30, 2019, Terry, Mike and Joanie arrived at the park with bee gear and equipment needed. As thunderstorms were forecast for the day, we knew this had to be accomplished fairly quickly.



We all got prepared with bee jackets and gloves. With Pablo operating the bucket lift, up Terry went, first time in a bucket! This was an established large hive, with delicate combs and bees just hanging from two limbs in a fork.



Each comb had to be carefully sliced off of the tree with a knife, and placed into a tote, lowered down and then pushed carefully into bee frames, held in with rubber bands. With honey dripping, bees getting angry, we heard an occasional “ouch” from the bucket, knowing poor Terry was bearing the brunt of the bees’ ire. Terry and Mike then worked on transferring the brood comb into frames, carving it to fit. Luckily, the Queen bee was spotted by Joanie, caught, later placed in the box. After about 3 hours of work, Joanie & Mike transported the hive to their bee yard. A little bit of honey was saved, and we have called it “572 honey,” the campsite number. And Amy will have a few pieces of comb for the Nature Center. Whether the bees will stay in their new home will remain to be seen. What a way to get service hours!!!!

