

THE DRAGONFLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER OF MASTER NATURALISTS



NTMN.ORG



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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017



**Native Wildflower
Garden in progress.**
**A volunteer project to
enhance Briarwood.**



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NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

Schedule:

6:30 Meet and eat

7:00 Introduction & Announcements

7:20 Featured Presentation

8:45 Adjournment

Meet us at:

Meadows Conference Center

Oak Corner Conference Room

2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas, TX 75204

214-821-0911



Please join us as John Wolf of Wolfsong Farm teaches us about the medicines and foods that are growing in our backyards right now! Visit ntmn.org for more information.

Master Naturalist 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 our local communities. Primary objective: Develop a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer network that can be self sufficient.

Chapter Meetings

Open to the Public and FREE to attend

First Wednesday monthly

Social time at 6:30 PM

Meeting at 7:00 PM

Visit ntmn.org for monthly meeting location and speaker schedule.

March meeting: March 8, 2017

Board Meetings

The Monday before the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM

REMINDER! Pay your 2017 annual membership dues.

Pay \$30 by PayPal, or by check or cash, or give to the Treasurer at the next meeting. Mail in to:

NTMN Attention: Treasurer

10056 Marsh Lane #B101

Dallas, TX 75229

If you experience any problems with the dues payment, please contact the NTMN Treasurer at Treasurer@NTMN.org.



Find us on Facebook at:

[facebook.com/northtexasmasternaturalists](https://www.facebook.com/northtexasmasternaturalists)

(public)

or join our group "NT Master Naturalist Members"

(for members only)



The President's Page

*A message from Bruce Stewart
Chapter President 2017*



Photo Credit: Carroll Mayhew

Celebrating NTMN's First Twenty Years

As we begin a new year we are also beginning North Texas Master Naturalist's twentieth year. The statewide program was established through a Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas AgriLife Extension partnership in March 1998. NTMN held its first class in 1998.

The goals of the state program were to develop a statewide Master Naturalist volunteer network that efficiently and effectively:

- Improves public understanding of natural resource ecology and management
- Enhances existing natural resource education and outreach activities

Even though this is our twentieth year, it is the custom that we celebrate our twenty years in 2018. To guide us in our observation of this anniversary I have asked **Sara Beckelman**, one of our original members, to chair a committee that will go through the archives and prepare a fitting tribute for this milestone. Sara will be recruiting volunteers to help with this effort.

A Surprise in Our New Class

We have had over eight hundred members over the years and this spring we are about to train a new class of master naturalists. There is something amazing about the new class: there are three legacies in the class. That is, there are three people who have relatives who are active in the North Texas Master Naturalists. The new generation was so inspired by their parents (and aunt) that they want to work with NTMN to continue to work on our mission. There is still plenty to be done and we welcome the new class to help us do it.



2016 Awards DINNER

Photos by Dave Rogers

On December 7, 2016, we had our annual awards banquet at Texas Discovery Gardens. It was attended by over 160 members and guests.

Our guest speaker was **Barney Lipscomb** from BRIT (shown right with *Jim Folger*), who gave a unique presentation about worldwide plant poisons and the role they played in history.





Congratulations

to all our members! We celebrated initial certifications by our newest class members, annual and double recertifications, and milestones for 250, 500, 1000, and 2500 service hours!



Ben Sandifer was also given a Special Award, making him an Honorary Master Naturalist, for his outstanding involvement with our NTMN program.



In addition, **Jim Folger** presented a plaque that was made to honor **Jim Varnum**. It will be placed in the Hummingbird Garden at the Texas Discovery Gardens.



We are eagerly anticipating 60 new North Texas Master Naturalist trainees for the 2017 class that convenes on February 7th. The Education Committee has put together another stellar group of experts in plants, prairies, herpetology, ornithology, entomology, forests, geology, water, ecosystems and climate to advise and inform on the relationship of all specifically focused on the Blackland Prairie and Texas in general. We have also added a couple of subjects addressed in the new curriculum: Laws, Regulations, Ethics and Citizen Science.

Please welcome these new additions to the chapter, introduce yourself, and as you share your passion to educate, serve and reach out to the community, learn their interests and encourage them in our shared mission.

Written by Connie Koval

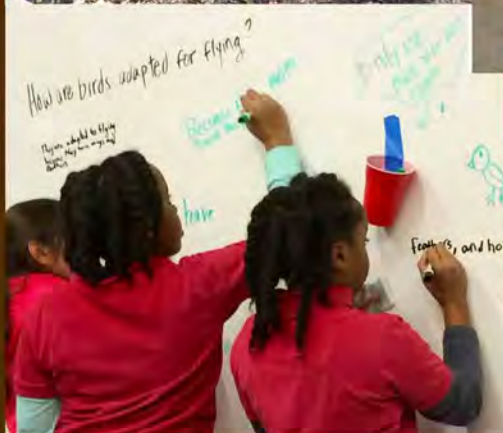
**NEW YEAR
NEW CLASS
2017**

Photos by
Judy
Parsons

JR. MN!



**Birding,
Nature Hike, &
Mammal Class**





And the Quarterly Volunteer Award Goes To...

November 2016

Written by Jim Folger

Dana Wilson is one of those native Texans who have made this state a better place to live. She was born in Baylor Hospital, graduated from Lake Highlands High School, received a Bachelor's degree from TCU and a Master's from UNT. She also began graduate studies in biology, but ran out of time and money to complete that degree.

She views life as a continual adventure, being one of those restless individuals who approaches work as a variety of experiments. Her unique job history includes nine years as a reference librarian, teaching ESL at Dallas Community College campuses for six years, managing a North Texas Food Bank food pantry for a social services program serving low-income families, and serving as the Volunteer Coordinator at Trinity River Audubon Center. She is now managing the floral department at Tom Thumb.

We can variously describe Dana as cheerful, a passionate nature lover, informed, well-prepared, always entertaining, positive, full of energy, a vegetarian, and wine aficionado. As **Jim Shouse** adds: "fortunately wine is not meat." Her NTMN profile lists her hobbies as cooking, volunteering, botany, and long dinners with friends.

"...a great friend to all Master Naturalists."

Like Jim, I first met Dana when she was Volunteer Coordinator at the newly opened Trinity River Audubon Center. And, as is the case with **John Wilt**, I try to attend as many of her nature walks as often as possible. We don't even bother to check the subject she will be speaking about, since we know it will be informative and entertaining.

As a NTMN since 2001, and as a friend of **Jim Varnum's** she brought her passion to nature by attending college courses and taking advanced training. She has given back to the chapter through her nature walks, plant rescues, and attacking invasives, as well as advising scouts, city mayors, and HOAs.

Barbara Baynham went through the NTMN training class with Dana and concludes: "She is amazing, and I'm so glad I got to sit next to her 15 years ago while training." In short, she is a great friend to all Master Naturalists.

"We don't even bother to check the subject she will be speaking about, since we know it will be informative and entertaining."

Please give a round of applause to Dana Wilson.



BIG Chapter Project

Written by Jim Folger
Photos by Dave Rodgers

Fall 2016

A lot was accomplished at the November 12, 2016 Big Chapter Project at Briarwood Retreat in Argyle, TX. The sunny, cool day was perfect for setting 5 landscape posts for informational signs, installing 100 ft. of fencing around the soon-to-be native flower garden, and extensively mulching around the main building and on the trails.

This project was created to recognize **Jim Varnum's** contribution to North Texas chapters. It was actually a two phase project, the first phase being preparing the ground for the native flower garden, and cutting and treating Ligustrum (privet) in an area adjacent to the garden as well as on the trails at the retreat. Big thanks to **Jim Shouse** and **Jim Flood** for showing up on November 5 and applying herbicide to the Privet. Some six representatives from the Elm Fork chapter and several of us from the NTMN chapter helped with the cutting.



While **Gary Barton** as the co-leader on this project would just as soon have me leave out this part, it is an unfortunate source of amusement. The plan was to solarize the garden area in preparation for seed balls (continuously blooming Butterfly Retreat Mix from Native American Seed) made by Cross Timbers members. Gary applied agricultural vinegar and covered the area with clear plastic film some 3+ weeks in advance of November 5. Unfortunately, cooler weather and generous moisture did not help achieve the desired result. When we arrived in November, we discovered that the plastic had helped create a greenhouse effect, and instead of nice bare ground, we had a luxuriant growth of Bermuda grass. Time for Plan B – Roundup. Anyway, a big shout out to Gary for his efforts!



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Thirty-five NTMN members showed up to help with the work on November 12. The participants were welcomed at 9:00 AM, and I quickly erred in suggesting that we would need the men to work on digging holes, pouring cement, etc. After a vocal expression by some of the women, I corrected myself and said that any women who would like to do that work were more than welcome to participate. As it turned out, **Tory Gardner** and **Tiffany Curtis** from the 2016 class did an excellent job in helping to set the posts.

Special thanks to **Connie Koval** and **Whitney Wolf**, who brought snacks and water for the participants, and helped with the sign-in. Everyone worked hard on the project, and your contribution was greatly appreciated by **Stephanie Varnum** and the Briarwood staff.





On January 7, 2017, twenty-four Board members, Committee Chairs, and Past Presidents met at Old Parkland to review accomplishments for 2016, discuss the current status of the chapter and the challenges to be addressed in the future. The conclusion of the discussion was the development of goals for 2017.

A. Results on accomplishment of the top seven goals for 2016 are summarized as follows:

1. Enhance communication among members, among chapters, with state office, and the public
Whitney Wolf reported that the Communications Team made good progress and initiated changes to the Dragonflyer and the website that made them more attractive and relevant to members and the public. This included stories about volunteer opportunities, frequent website postings and new tabs, photos, and updated design template and Facebook link.

The Social Media Committee and communication plan were developed, and monthly meetings were posted on community calendars. In addition, business cards were developed for outreach events that include a QR code to the website.
2. Address use of our excess capital to further our mission
The treasurers, **Linda Donnelly** and **David Reid**, introduced a Grant Form that would allow people to apply for grant funding. Further work needs to be done to identify opportunities that will benefit the mission.
3. Increase diversity of our membership
Jo Lynne Merrill reported that we have made some progress in attracting young new members.
4. Do more urban habitat projects
Mary Mamantov noted that new projects were added including the creation of a pollinator garden at City Hall and a garden at the downtown library. Members participated in two BioBlitz events at Harry S. Moss and William Blair Jr. Parks.
5. Retention of members
Nelda Reid spent considerable time communicating with members about reporting hours for recertification. Retention is an on-going challenge for most non-profit organizations.
6. Collaborate with other urban & surrounding chapters
Jim Folger reported progress in connecting with other chapters, especially in North Texas. A Regional Conference is planned for April 9 at Briarwood Retreat Center, and other chapters participated in the Fall Big Chapter Project at Briarwood.

At the annual State meeting, our chapter conducted a session on the Unique Concerns of Big Chapters that was moderated by Jim Folger and included a panel of participants from 9 chapters around the state. It was very productive and it was concluded that more chapter-to-chapter interaction needs to be encouraged. **Bruce Stewart** added that at the president's conference the need for functional interaction among chapters needed to be a part of the annual conference.
7. Engage South and West Dallas
Connie Koval reported that she met with leaders of Bonton Farms in SE Dallas. **John White** added some comments that outreach initiatives might be the best way to encourage diversity.



B. Planning for 2017

In thinking ahead to this year and what was important to accomplish, a nominal group process allowed each of the 24 participants to suggest one goal that was important, and/or reinforce a goal suggested by someone else. Each person then received three votes they could cast for the goals that were suggested. The result is shown in the following rank ordered list which shows the Top 7 Goals on which we'll focus. Also included is a list of others that will be addressed if we have the people and time to do them. It is expected that each of the Top 7 goals will have a board member as the lead with others recruited to participate on the team that addresses those goals.

The next step in the planning process is to come up with strategies and action plans to implement these goals. As this process moves ahead, the Goals Committee (consisting of **Jim Folger**, **Rose Mercer**, **Carrie Robinson**, and **Whitney Wolf**) will be available to provide the teams with help and guidance.

Importantly, if any of you would like to help and contribute to the thinking about these goals, that help would be most appreciated. Please contact the lead person and let them know of your interest in joining the team.

2017 Goals

TOP 7

1. Expand public education opportunities/website, school and library outreach.
Increase Jr. MN program by adding more program venues.
2. More VMS training and assistance, generating reports as needed for the data in the system.
3. More in-depth AT opportunities - more programs for continuing education.
Train the trainers to train, especially to present to children.
4. Partner with Master Gardeners - encourage a more symbiotic relationship.
5. More birding field trips and provide binoculars for participants.
6. Determine where excess capital might be employed to further our mission.
7. Micro urban habitat projects for public, such as wildscapes.

LEADS

John White / Rose Mercer

Judy Parsons

Whitney Wolf / Bruce Stewart

Mary Mamantov

Gary Barton

Rose Mercer

Linda Donnelly / David Reid

Jo Lynne Merrill

OTHERS (to be addressed as time and personnel are available):

8. Website - revisit the usefulness and appearance of the website.
9. Simplify/communicate the process to get VH/AT approved.
10. Enhance Citizen Science opportunities.
11. Enhance Mentorship program - encourage mentors to stay involved after the class graduates.
12. Collaboration with other chapters and State leadership - continue what we started in 2016.
13. More/better communication with members and the public.
14. Document and enhance the partnership process.
15. Recognize member contributions - continue work of Awards Committee.



NEWS FROM THE TMN LISTSERVE

Texas Master Naturalist Program named a "Bright Idea" award winner!!

Congrats to our Texas Master Naturalist Program

Harvard's ASH Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation has announced the 2017 Innovations in American Government Awards Bright Ideas winners wherein our TMN Program was named as a "Bright Idea in American Government" Award recipient.



Click here to read about our program and all the other great award winners:

<https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/2017-innovations-american-government-awards-bright-ideas>

Do You Know About AmazonSmile?

Purchases at AmazonSmile make a donation to our NTMN account!

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

Which products on AmazonSmile are eligible for charitable donations?

Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. Recurring Subscribe-and-Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.



UPCOMING EVENTS

2017 North Texas MN Regional Conference “Prairies, Lakes & Timbers – Navigating the New Normal”

Sunday, April 9
Briarwood Retreat Center, Copper Canyon
Argyle, Texas

Earn up to 9 hours AT in one weekend!

Special **Jim Varnum** dedication on
Sunday, April 9 at 8:15 am.

Registration will open mid-February.

Visit <http://txmn.org/bptmn/event/2017-at-north-texas-master-naturalist-regional-conference/>

2017 Native Plants and Prairies Day

Saturday, May 6, 2017
10 am - 3 pm

White Rock Bath House Cultural Center
521 E. Lawther Drive
Dallas 75218

NPPD is a special event at White Rock Lake to communicate to adults and children the value of native plants and prairies. The day will include plant walks, speakers, information booths, and activities for kids.

Visit ntmn.org for more information.

FOR MEMBERS

PUBLIC

Obituaries

The Dragonflyer has respectfully added this section to honor members who have passed. Please forward information and obituaries to newsletter@ntmn.org.



PARTING SHOT



North Texas Chapter Administration

***President** - Bruce Stewart president@ntmn.org

Goals Committee - Jim Folger goals@ntmn.org

Nomination Committee - Judy Parsons pastpresident@ntmn.org

Partnerships Committee - Linda Barnes partnerships@ntmn.org

Policies and Procedures Guidelines Committee - Whitney Wolf policy@ntmn.org

***Vice President** - Rose Mercer vicepresident@ntmn.org

Audit Committee - Stan Altschuler audit@ntmn.org

Awards Committee - Jim Folger awards@ntmn.org

Hospitality Committee - Jean Hill hospitality@ntmn.org

Programs and Special Events - Bob Richie programs@ntmn.org

Resource Manager: Vacant

***Secretary** - Jo Lynne Merrill secretary@ntmn.org

Historian/Archivist - Natha Taylor historian@ntmn.org

***Treasurer** - Linda Donnelly and David Reid treasurer@ntmn.org

***Volunteer Service Projects / Advanced Training Director:**

Mary Mamantov activities@ntmn.org

Big Chapter Projects - Vicki Adcock bigchapterproject@ntmn.org

***Membership** - Susan Walters membership@ntmn.org

Volunteer Management System

***New Class Director** - Connie Koval education@ntmn.org

***Communications** - Whitney Wolf communications@ntmn.org

Facebook - Linda Cooke facebook@ntmn.org

Newsletter - Jennifer Weisensel newsletter@ntmn.org

Photography - Carroll Mayhew photographs@ntmn.org

Social Media Chair - Carrie Robinson socialmediachair@ntmn.org

Videography Committee - Jennifer Weisensel videos@ntmn.org

Website - Rick Murphy webmaster@ntmn.org

Outreach Director - John White outreach@ntmn.org

Education Outreach - Tabatha Knickerbocker educationoutreach@ntmn.org

Public Outreach - Adriana Bates & Bert Pigg publicoutreach@ntmn.org

Speakers Bureau - Karen Helms speakers@ntmn.org

Trunk Inventory Resource Manager - Elaine White trunks@ntmn.org

***State Representative** - Gary Barton representative@ntmn.org

***Immediate Past President** - Judy Parsons pastpresident@ntmn.org

***New Class Representative** - Linda Barnes newclassrepresentative@ntmn.org

***TPWD Advisor** - Sam Kieschnick Sam.kieschnick@tpwd.texas.gov

***Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Advisor** - Elizabeth Rudd Elizabeth.Rudd@ag.tamu.edu

**Denotes Board Member*

The Dragonflyer is published every two months. Send your submissions to Jennifer Weisensel at newsletter@ntmn.org.



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

T E X A S



NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER