



NPAT's April, 2017 e-Newsletter

WE WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT -- Donate to NPAT Today!

Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization and land trust dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas and throughout the United States. NPAT protects 2,800+ acres of native Texas prairie, including over 100 acres of endangered/threatened tallgrass prairie. Your membership and contributions are fully tax-deductible to the amount allowed by law. We provide written verification which you can include in your annual tax report.

We encourage you to support our mission!

Updates and Highlights from March, 2017

March, 2017 was a VERY productive month:

- we will soon have a 'new NPAT Chapter',
- the 2nd Annual Savage Cabbage Bash was SPECTACULAR, and
- NPAT hosted an "Open Preserve" at our Maddin Prairie.

April is off and running, and our prairies promise to keep us very busy.

Thank you for your time and support.

Update: Support to create a new Chapter, San Antonio NPAT Chapter

March 7, 2017: San Antonio Area landowners and prairie enthusiasts, along with professionals within the Texas conservation and wildlife communities, met at the Longhorn Cafe on Blanco Road in San Antonio. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the feasibility of organizing a **new NPAT chapter in the greater San Antonio area!**

- NPAT presentation, "SAVING TEXAS PRAIRIES", was led by Executive Director, Pat Merkord.
- Don Kirchoff, landowner and NPAT board director, delivered a presentation describing 'The Kirchoff Family Farm'. He outlined the multi-year/on-going prairie restoration process on his family's farm in Wilson County.
- There was an overwhelming positive response to the meeting; one attendee gave Mr. Kirchoff a stellar review: **"great for all of our causes and restoration in general. You did a fantastic and compelling job of presenting it. Stories of success are imperative to sustaining that momentum. Keep up the good work and keep sharing your experiences!"**
- **NPAT's Board of Directors, Staff and Chapters concur!** We are honored to have Mr. Kirchoff's support. He 'practices what he preaches' and devotes himself to restoring his own prairie as well as advocating NPAT's Mission. Don is a well-respected individual whose principles are admired by all who talk or work with him!

So, now that the PLAN IS IN PLACE - The 20+ attendees supported officially forming The San Antonio NPAT Chapter.

Monthly meetings will be held on the 1st TUESDAY of each month.

Next step: Meet April 4 (at this Longhorn Café location once again) and to form the San Antonio NPAT Chapter. Discuss and determine a more accommodating location to conduct regular monthly meetings. On April 4 Pat Merkord, Executive Director of NPAT, will lead the group in making necessary chapter-related decisions, including designating members of a steering committee. For details, monitor [NPAT News & Events](#).

REPORT on Blackland NPAT Chapter's March Meetup

March 14, 2017, the Blackland Chapter of NPAT - Tall Grass Prairies. The Chapter welcomed Kenneth Steigman, Ph.D., director of Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, LLELA, and the former Sanctuary Manager, Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary.

Dr. Steigman reported the current status of ongoing **restoration efforts of 70 acres within LLELA's 2600 acres**. He reported on accomplishments that have been made by LLELA working with student volunteers from the University of North Texas and elsewhere. UNT student volunteers recently joined LLELA staff members and volunteers from Starbucks, the Sierra Club, as well as students from nearby schools, in planting, growing, managing and researching some of the most endangered ecosystem in our state - **tall grass prairies**. The group has been collecting plant materials from 7 different counties; LLELA now grows their own prairie plants for their restoration efforts. Dr. Steigman also shared his extensive knowledge of and experience with managing the prairie through conducting "*mosaic burns*". (More information can be found at [LLELA's website](#).)

"PRAIRIE TOUR IN JUNE" MARK YOUR CALENDAR – Saturday, June 3, from 7am to 9pm: Blackland Chapter of NPAT will sponsor a prairie restoration and management tour, [monitor Blackland's website](#). Plans are being made and will soon be finalized. We hope to depart Bath House Cultural Center at White Rock Lake for a **Day of Prairie TOURS: Reisel, Lehman, Burluson and Simpson, and Granger Lake Prairies. The trip fee will include lunch at Falls on the Brazos Park. The day will end with dinner (self-pay) at West Station Road House in West, TX.**



The 2nd Annual Savage Cabbage Bash was SPECTACULAR!!

March 25, 2017, Fort Worth, TX

Co-Sponsors: [Fort Worth NPAT](#) and the [Tarrant Regional Water District](#) (TRWD)

We Texans have become familiar with "Savage Cabbage"; a.k.a. bastard cabbage, *Rapistrum rugosum*; the INVASIVE perennial 'tall plant' whose large basal leaves block sunlight from native wildflowers threatening their survival. (Since the name is somewhat offensive for students to say, especially a young women's leadership school, the name was changed.)

"The 1st Annual Savage Cabbage Bash" was organized in 2016; many young women from Fort Worth's Young Women's Leadership Academy, YMLA, participated in the event. Their efforts that year were supported by **Marty Leonard, past president of Friends of Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, and board member of the Tarrant Regional Water District. Their first BASH was very effective!**

The "2nd Annual Savage Cabbage Bash" was held Saturday morning, 3/25/17. Marty Leonard along with TRWD graciously supported this year's event again and facilitated our proceeding with this project. TRWD also provided garbage bags and gloves! **50 students from YWLA, Fort Worth ISD, and Tarrant County Junior College South** worked together and successfully removed savage cabbage along a **1-mile stretch** of Clearfork on the Trinity River! They **filled more than 75 bags** with the **bastard cabbage!!** (Several passersby, who were using the trail, stopped and discussed the effort; we're glad they took the time to learn what the volunteers were working toward!)

NPAT extends "our sincere appreciation" to each individual named below, for encouraging your students and taking the initiative to facilitate their involvement in this 'Bash'. We are very grateful that you supported them to volunteer their valuable time and hard work for this very important project. Your collective contributions enabled us to have a very successful 'Bash';

- Principal Tamara Albury; High School Student Council Sponsor Samantha Keaton; and Middle School Student Council Sponsor Joanna Dehn of the YWLA;
- Campus President Peter Jordan, Professor Pansy Sheffield; Campus staff members of the Tarrant County College South;
- Principal Sarah Weeks of Arlington Heights High School.

We extend a **"SPECIAL THANK YOU!"** to each student volunteer for taking time on SATURDAY to help with this monumental task: removing savage cabbage so the sun can shine on our wildflowers enabling them to survive!

- It is a testament to your awareness, your concern for our environment, and your commitments to do something good for your own communities! This work was certainly challenging (not to mention back breaking); we are proud that you were '*visible examples*' to observers (hikers, runners, and drivers), showing what can be accomplished by working together and focusing on one goal.

-We rarely experience 'instant gratification' when working on a difficult task. We hope you felt a **strong** sense of

accomplishment when you stopped and looked behind you and saw what a difference your efforts made!

-Please continue and be diligent whenever you can, and encourage others to join you. We all have a lot to learn, and working alongside one another makes the path so much smoother. You have our sincerest appreciation! We hope to get to know you better!

- We look forward to seeing our volunteers April 10 when FWNPAT will host a very important PANEL DISCUSSION, "Prairie Management of Public & Private Property in Tarrant County". (See our April 10 posting.)

All the best,

JoAnn Collins, [Fort Worth NPAT](#)

Thank you for jobs well done!

Board of Directors, Staff, and entire membership of [Native Prairies Association of Texas](#).

OPEN PRESERVE - Maddin Prairie Preserve



"Open Preserve" was hosted by NPAT, March 25 & 26, 2017 Maddin Prairie Preserve (at our western-most prairie) near Colorado City, TX

Open Preserves offer opportunities to individuals from a variety of professions and backgrounds to meet up at a 'preserve' that has been 'opened' by the owner for purposes of those individuals conducting surveys of flora and fauna, hiking, observing, and enjoying their common interests and connections as (in this case) 'prairie enthusiasts! "Arrive when you can, no set schedule!" Keep watch on our website for future opportunities!

This weekend was a **huge** success; numerous photos were taken by several individuals who kindly shared them with NPAT. A few are included in this article; they all will be posted in "Maddin Prairie Photo Album" for everyone all to see and review in the future. Thank you Everyone!

Kirsti Harms, NPAT's Board of Directors Past President, organized and led the weekend event, as she describes:

Five prairie seekers arrived **Friday afternoon** and spent a couple of hours hiking: Tom Willard, NPAT Blackland Chapter from Cedar Hill; Kirsti Harms, NPAT Previous President, Board of Directors; Pat Merkord, NPAT Executive Director; Kim Clemons, Fort Worth NPAT Chapter, and Kelly Walker, Houston NPAT Chapter.

We observed the prairie dog town where we were greeted by at least 10 prairie dogs and a burrowing owl.

Saturday morning 20+ Birders arrived by 7:00, including Jane Tillman, Texas Ornithological Society, and Kyle O'Haver, Superintendent at Lake Colorado City State Park.

The weather conditions became more pleasant, the wind died down & temps were quite cool: 44 degrees!

Birders' goal: to chronicle 100 species for their "Mitchell County" list; many managed to get **100 plus entries**; so they left very happy!!

Saturday noon the group was led to [Lake Champion Reservoir](#).

The old park has been under renovation. The water level is up, and it looks like this park may come back to life! It's good to see a community taking an interest in their outdoors. There were still some waterfowl on the lake, though many have left already. It's a good birding spot.

One hiker is focusing on documenting plants and insects for NPAT. They found a coach whip snake Coadwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*) and a North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), among other things!

Back at Maddin: There's always maintenance to be done - fill the water troughs and do some "prairie dog town maintenance" lopping off invasive mesquite! We observed nesting behavior of the burrowing owl (*Athene unicularia*); they were staying around the perimeter and 'barking' at us.

When the group assembled **Saturday evening** we built a fire in the ring. The first serious attempt at campfire cooking was made; Tom managed the meal preparation, including asparagus—quite delicious! (Turns out - the four women attending were not inclined to cook! – perhaps someone among them will be inspired to brush up on this style of cooking, as it will definitely be a repeat!)

MIDDAY SUNDAY when we were starting to pack up, Katie Wenzell, PhD student in Plant Biology and Conservation, Northwestern University and the Chicago Botanic Garden, and her assistant arrived. They'd just come from [Independence Creek Preserve](#) near Sheffield. They are doing studies on the downy paintbrush (*Castilleja sessiliflora Pursh*) (below).



A few observers got good looks at prairie dogs (*Cynomys*) and owls then went on a hike to the high hill on the eastern boundary.

More maintenance to be done before leaving: electric fence work at the prairie dog town, and there were some tangles in the wires and brush touching the wires. Luckily it has a pretty strong pulse and I saw no signs of badger Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) on the interior. There were signs of badger on the south side exterior, but no signs of burrows being dug up. Projects to monitor on the next visit!

"Lots of flowers were blooming at Maddin and along the drive to Colorado City; this is just about the nicest time of year to visit." Kirsti Harms, NPAT



The weekend definitely surpassed expectations:

"The highlights were the *burrowing owl* (*Athene cunicularia*) and the Cassin's Sparrows (*Peucaea cassinii*)".
(photo to the left).

And all the singing Western Meadowlarks (*Sturnella neglecta*) with a few Eastern meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*) chiming in! There is a better concentration of Westerns at your prairie than I have experienced elsewhere in the great state of Texas!"

Jane Tillman
Texas Ornithological Society



(left) Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)

(right) Eastern meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*)

"It looks like I got a county record for the **Falcate Orangetip butterfly** (*Anthocharis midea*). I already have another for Maddin. I will get it submitted asap."
(see photo to the right).

"There were a couple others that I am curious about and are new to the Maddin list. Not many lepidopterists have studied/collected that area. I think I had 24 species this visit. I am submitting bee photos to [iNaturalist](#).

It was a wonderful weekend that went all too fast."

Kelly Walker, Houston NPAT Chapter.



BE SURE TO MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:
APRIL 4, 2017 - DEADLINE for making Hotel reservations to secure the "special event rate"
APRIL 26, 2017 - Online registration ends - SELECT: [Pollinator PowWow](#)
MAY 5-7, 2017 - TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW – Nacogdoches, Texas

MOVING ON to NPAT'S APRIL, 2017 EVENTS

SPRING PRAIRIE WALKS -ENJOY Hikes & Field Trips in the prairies!!!

Prairies are dynamic & ever-changing & we believe that the best way to 'know' a prairie is to visit it throughout the year. **NPAT's Jeff Quayle will lead** interactive, educational prairie walks throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area over the next few months to parks, ranches, and to NPAT property & conservation easements.

Events are being planned and finalized with fellow conservationists, [NPSOT](#), [iNaturalist](#) and others, on a regular basis. We encourage you to open [this link](#) and **keep a copy handy on your smartphone!**

Don't miss an opportunity! Our hikes are paced for the abilities of the participating audience! We want you to enjoy the prairie!

San Antonio NPAT Chapter Monthly Meeting - April 4, 2017

Join the celebration of NPAT's newest chapter!

Meeting to officially form the San Antonio NPAT Chapter will be held April 4, 2017, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

(The group will dine and conduct their meeting at the [Longhorn Cafe, 17625 Blanco Rd, 78232.](#))

6:30 pm Please order your meal upon your arrival

6:45 pm Presentation by Pat Merkord: information regarding NPAT's Prairie Preserves, Conservation Easements, and Volunteer Opportunities.

7:45 pm Topics for discussion:

- Partnerships, Collaborations, and Future Opportunities for Projects.
- Determine a mutually agreeable location to conduct monthly meetings on the **1st Tuesday of the month.**
- **NEXT MONTHLY MEETING - Tuesday, May 2.**

**Cen-Tex NPAT Chapter
Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, April 5, 2017
from 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**[Georgetown Public Library](#)
Classroom
Georgetown, TX**



Everyone is welcome!

Join us for an evening including:

Social & Refreshments @ 6:30,

Announcements @ 6:45, and

Presentation @7:00: Pat Merkord will present "Prairies of the Northern Great Plains", a photographic journey to little known prairies of Canada, North & South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa! .

We'll cap off the meeting discussing:

1. Options for future Chapter field trips in Central Texas: Commons Ford Prairie Restoration Project and the Indian Grass Prairie Preserve, both in Austin, Reisel Prairies, Falls County near Marlin, Simpson Prairie, near Crawford, and Blackland Prairie Remnants in Milam, Burleson and Williamson Counties. **2. Future Monthly Meeting Topics - the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month - could include:** "Amphibians of Prairies & Savannahs"; "Quail Populations on Texas Prairies"; "Maddin Prairie Preserve: A Restoration Success Story"; "Plant Propagation & Creating Pollinator Gardens"; "Texas Prairies & How to Conserve Them"; "How to Restore Land for Small Landowners"; and "Urban Green Space and How to Convert them to Pocket Prairies".

PLEASE JOIN US IN BEAUTIFUL DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN, Wednesday, April 5, 2017!

Fort Worth NPAT Chapter

Monday, April 10, 2017

Beginning at 6:30 pm

**PANEL DISCUSSION: Prairie Management of Public & Private Property in Tarrant County
(Amon G. Carter, Jr. – Downtown YMCA, 512 Lamar Street, Fort Worth, TX)**

A "groundswell" is developing among public/private property owners/managers in Tarrant County to identify, conserve, and restore native prairie remnants for a variety of reasons.

We are interested in learning:

- 1. What motivates people to learn about and save their local natural heritage?***
- 2. How can folks connect to other like-minded conservationists?***

FWNPAT has formed a panel of local prairie owners/managers to explore answers to these questions and facilitate networking.

As of 03/31/17 on our panel will consist of these individuals with Moderator noted below:

Mr. Nathan Loftice – [Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Sustainability & Environmental Div.](#)

Mr. Don Young – Founder and President, [Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area](#)

Dr. Greta Bowling – Faculty Member, [Tarrant County College Northwest Campus](#)

Dr. Jeanmarie Stiles - Faculty Member, [Tarrant County College Northeast Campus](#)

Ms. Floreen Henry - Faculty Member, [Tarrant County College South Campus](#)

Mr. Marc Villanueva – Lead Groundskeeper, [Tarrant County College Southeast Campus](#)

Ms. Pat Merkord – Executive Director, [Native Prairies Association of Texas](#)

The evening's panel discussion will be moderated by FWNPAT's Treasurer, Ms. Suzanne Tuttle, *recently retired Manager of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.*

-Audience members are encouraged to actively engage in the discussion!

-We have extended an invitation to the Savage Cabbage Bash volunteers who have gained a new perspective on conservation and restoration of prairies.

-All are welcome! **Please join us – we expect a lively, informative evening!**



**Houston NPAT Chapter Monthly Meeting
Wednesday, April 26, 2017, From 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Meeting Location**

Please note the change from our usual meeting location!

The Secret Life of Prairies, Dr. Morgan Russell

In today's world, prairie maintenance and establishment seems a bit elusive. Fragmentation, fire suppression, woody species encroachment, and other factors constantly threaten our prairie systems. How do we maintain a system that was and is defined by change?

We will discuss "*below*" and "*above*" *ground vegetative dynamics* that are the foundation of prairie diversity, productivity, and sustainability. The mechanisms responsible for prairie function, integrity, and stability will be emphasized to create a meaningful understanding of our prairies processes and ecosystem function.

Texas A&M Assistant Professor and Extension Range Specialist Dr. Morgan Russell's research has been focused on livestock grazing management and prescribed burning in semiarid environments.

**NPAT & NPSOT Cosponsor
"2017 SPRING PRAIRIE WALK"
APRIL 27, 9:00 a.m. to NOON**

BURLESON PRAIRIE



EVERYWHERE!!)

PHOTO: Many people attended the field trip to Burleson Prairie during the NPSOT-NPAT 2007 Symposium

Join the exploration of this Blackland Prairie site replicated by Mickey and Bob Burleson. Located northeast of Temple TX, you'll want to **select this link for details and driving instructions: [NPSOT](#)**
PLEASE RSVP to [Lynn Fleming](#)

WHAT TO BRING SO YOU'LL BE PREPARED:

- Sack lunch and chair/blanket if you want to lunch on the prairie.
- Wear closed-toe shoes, comfortable/protective outdoor clothing (long pants/shirt), your hat, drinking water, sunscreen, field guides; bug repellent! (**LAST YEAR CHIGGERS WERE**

MAKE A DONATION TO NPAT JUST REMEMBER TO SMILE!!

We do recommend everyone first try to shop locally; we also know that sometimes you can't find what you're looking, and your next step is to search *Amazon.com*.

That is when you can use **AmazonSmile** and designate *Native Prairies Association of Texas*, as your **"preferred charitable organization"** and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to NPAT.

You keep your current Amazon.com account, wish list, just know that purchases you make via Amazon.com are not eligible for this program.

- **Log on to smile.amazon.com**
- You will be prompted to select the charity of your choice
- Select **Native Prairies Association of Texas** and a portion of your purchase will be sent to us!
- Making this one extra selection will cost you nothing, and NPAT will benefit from your purchase.



MAY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

TEXAS POLLINATOR POWWOW – Nacogdoches, TX May 5 -- 7, 2017
A pollinator conservation conference for Texas and beyond.

Cole Art Center, Clay Bolt Social Reception and Pollinators of the World Art Exhibit
[Stephen F. Austin State University](#)

We are very pleased to present some of the best and brightest of minds and committed professionals in pollination conservation today!

Make note of these APRIL Deadlines:

APRIL 4, 2017 - Hotel reservations must be made to secure the special event rate

APRIL 26, 2017 - Online registration for the Nacogdoches PowWow **ends** (Complete information: Speakers and details of events on: <http://www.texaspollinatorpowwow.org/>.)

Pollinator PowWow Highlights

Friday and Saturday: Conference with dozens of highly respected and qualified horticulturists, biologists, photographers, ornithologists, entomologists, anthropologists, agroecologists, and ecologists.

After Dark:

Friday: BAT NIGHT 7:00 – 11:00 pm: USFS Experimental Forest: acoustic hikes and mist-netting; Co-leaders: Dr. Chris Comer, Dr. Merlin Tuttle.

Saturday: MOTH NIGHT/CAT WALK 7:00 - 11:00 pm: SFASU Native Plant Center: moth traps, identification, specimen-gathering, photography, UV night hikes; Co-leaders: Dr. Dan Bennett, Dr. Doug Tallamy.

Sunday: BOGGY SLOUGH FIELD DAY 9:00am – 3:00pm: Teams will be led by ento/biologist/botanists; make your observations, take notes, collect, samples, etc.

May 20 & 21, 2017



Photo taken by Jane Tillman while visiting Maddin March, 2017. Thank you, Jane!

ANNUAL BREEDING BIRD SURVEY
Maddin Prairie Preserve
Colorado City, TX

Mark your calendar!!
Plan to join us on our *annual breeding bird survey!*
To RSVP contact Kirsti Harms, and get all your info!

"It might be wise to rent a state park cabin Lake Colorado City State Park (with A/C) because it may be pretty hot by then. Looks like summer may hit early this year. Y'all are all welcome to come out!" **Kirsti Harms, Past President, NPAT**
Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*)

NPAT is proud to have the dedicated support of each volunteer in each local chapter:

Blackland Chapter (Dallas)

<https://blacklandnpat.wordpress.com/contact/>
Monthly Meeting on 2nd Tuesday each month

GenTex Chapter (Georgetown)

(website under reconstruction)
Monthly Meeting on 1st Wednesday each month
(NEXT meeting, Wednesday, April 5, in Georgetown Public Library, Georgetown, TX)

Fort Worth Chapter "FWNPAT"

<https://fortworthnpat.wordpress.com/>
Monthly Meetup on 1st Monday each month

Houston Chapter "HNPAT"

<https://hnpat.wordpress.com/>
Monthly Meeting on 4th Wednesday each month

San Antonio Chapter (San Antonio)

(website under construction)
Monthly Meetups – 1st Tuesday of each month
(Tuesday, April 4, 6:30-8:30pm, Longhorn Café, 17625 Blanco Rd., San Antonio, TX 78232 and
(Tuesday, May 2, 6:30-8:30pm - LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED at 4/4/17 Meeting)



SAVE A PRAIRIE!!!
EACH DONATION
MAKES A DIFFERENCE!!
www.texasprairie.org
We encourage YOU to become a part of THE SOLUTION,
CONSERVE TEXAS PRAIRIES!!

- JOIN and/or DONATE
- EDUCATE PEOPLE (young and old) to recognize the value of Texas Prairies!
- Volunteer your time and/or make a tax-deductible contribution
- 'Gift' a membership, join on the individual or family level, donate/bequeath money or property; donate vehicles; donate land, even donate when shopping on AmazonSmile.com; NPAT's processes are secure and 'user friendly'.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



Native **Prairies**
Association of Texas

