

TEXAS PRAIRIE

Journal

Bob Burleson

1937-2009

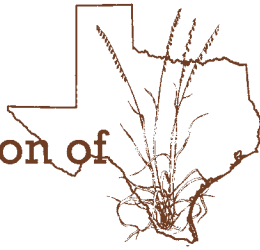
Prairie Treasures

Places to bird on the coast

Rattlesnake Master

A remarkable prairie plant

Native Prairies Association of Texas



2002 - A Guadalupe St. PMB 290
Austin, Tx 78705-5609

Who We Are and What We Do

Mission

The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) is a non-profit land trust dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas. We save Texas prairies.

Less than 1% of the original 20 million acres of Texas' beautiful tallgrass prairie remains, so we must act now to conserve our remaining tallgrass prairie heritage.

Conservation

NPAT protects prairies through acquisition, partnerships, and by accepting donations of conservation easements and property to protect native prairie in perpetuity. Learn more about protecting your prairie in perpetuity and potential tax benefits.

We protect over 1200 acres of native Texas prairie, including over 100 acres of endangered/threatened tallgrass prairie.

Restoration

We restore native prairie on our own land, and promote restoration on other private and public lands to benefit the native plant communities, grassland birds, and other prairie wildlife of Texas. We provide informational resources and advice to assist restoration.

Appreciation

We educate Texans about native prairies, plant communities, grassland birds, and other prairie wildlife. We promote the conservation and restoration of Texas prairies.

Partners and Affiliations

NPAT is affiliated with the following groups:

- Coastal Prairie Coalition
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
- Land Trust Alliance
- Native Plant Conservation Campaign
- Native Plant Society of Texas
- North Texas Prairie Coalition
- Plant Conservation Alliance
- Teaming with Wildlife
- Texas Land Trust Council
- Texas Native Lands Alliance
- Texas Prairie Coalition

COVER PHOTO © LYNNE RICHARDS

This bison is part of a herd of 19 at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area. LLELA covers about 2,000 acres and is located northeast of Lewisville and below the dam at Lewisville Lake. For more on Lynne and LLELA, see page 5.

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NPAT Update

From the President

Greetings Members!

HELLO TO ALL NPAT members and supporters! This is my first letter to you as president of the board of directors. A big thanks to you all for caring about Texas' native grasslands and being members of such a great grass-roots organization. Though there is much to be done in conserving Texas' native grasslands, NPAT is making progress in many ways.

With the addition of staff, Executive Director Dalmara Bayne and Program Directors James Alderson and Charles Anderson, we are growing our organization and learning more effective ways to accomplish our goals.

Tallgrass prairie county surveys to locate these prairie remnants are ongoing. 52 counties have been completed, out of 95 total. We have met many great prairie owners and have talked about several potential future conservation easements during the surveys. [See page 11 for more details.]

Activity with conservation easements has increased, and the Simpson Prairie conservation easement has been expanded to 75 acres total. We are also in the process of acquiring a conservation easement on restored prairie adjacent to NPAT-owned original tallgrass prairie.

At Maddin Prairie Preserve, the prairie dogs are doing well and more grassland bird species have been identified. Our staff have applied for additional funds, and work to improve the well for wildlife water access has been completed.

I also have some sad news to relay: Bob Burleson, a founding member of NPAT and advisor, passed away on Monday, April 20th. In addition to their other conservation work, Bob and his wife Mickey restored several hundred acres of Blackland Prairie on their property near Temple, spending decades mapping native prairie remnants in the surrounding counties and collecting seed for their restoration. See the article on page 3 in the newsletter for more information. Bob, you will be missed. Our thoughts are with Mickey and the rest of the family.

Looking to do more? Ask a friend to join NPAT or purchase them a gift membership. If you own native grassland or restoration, consider a conservation easement on your prairie with NPAT to conserve the native



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA SPANGLER

NPAT President Jason Spangler

prairie in perpetuity. If you own land in a prairie ecoregion, think about restoring native grassland. And as always, NPAT is seeking potential board members and volunteers. Please contact us if you are interested!

NPAT Board Update

A BIG THANK YOU to board members who left the board since the last newsletter: Kunda Lee Wicce, Jim Eidson, David Croft, David Rosen, David Todd, Matt White, and Kyle Brazil. Thank you for your service to NPAT and Texas' native grasslands!

A special thanks to past-president **Kunda Lee Wicce** for her long service to NPAT (which included serving in every officer position over the years). The organization would not be where it is today without her involvement and dedication to prairie conservation.

Returning to serve on the board for another term are President **Jason Spangler** (Austin), President-Elect **Pat Merkord** (Conroe), and Secretary **Kirsti Harms** (Austin).

Join me in welcoming NPAT's new board members and thanking them for their willingness to serve:

Vice President **Daniel Dietz** (Austin) is currently Stewardship Director at the Texas Land Conservancy. Daniel has worked for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, The Nature Conservancy, and the City of Austin's Wildland Conservation Division.

Our treasurer *(continued on page 2)*

Inside This Issue

NPAT Founding Member, Bob Burleson
Page 3

Prairie Treasures
By Gary Clark
Page 4

Mueller Restoration Project
By Daniel Dietz
Page 6

Rattlesnake Master
By Matt W. Turner
Page 8

The West Columbia Monument Garden
By Thomas and Chelsea Adams
Page 10

Tallgrass Prairie Survey Update
Page 11

NPAT Events
Page 12

TEXAS PRAIRIE *Journal*

THANK YOU to everyone who contributed to this newsletter! We welcome reports, articles, literature reviews, and announcements related to native prairies. If you wish to submit articles and photos, send to editor@texasprairie.org.

Editor: Kirsti Harms
editor@texasprairie.org
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Jason Martinson (Austin) is an attorney with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and has previously worked for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Fred Burrell (Dallas), a native of Nacogdoches, is the Dallas County Extension Agent for Texas AgriLife. Fred has served as an Extension Fellow to the National Association of Counties (NACO) from 2002 to 2003, and as adviser to the North Texas Master Naturalists.

Leslie Cook (Houston) is a Natural Resource Specialist at Sheldon Lake State Park with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Leslie performed extensive field research on fungi from Sheldon Lake Park and is co-author of the paper, "Characterization of Basidiomycete rDNA Operational Taxonomic Units of Texas Coastal Prairie Soils." She is coordinating restoration of coastal tallgrass prairie at the park.

Aron Flanders (Sulphur Springs) works as a wildlife diversity biologist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. His work focuses on rare and non game species, and he works with landowners via incentive programs such as the pastures for upland birds program, which converts introduced grasses to native prairie. He has been involved with research on the impacts of introduced grasses on breeding birds in the Rio Grande Plains and Northern Blackland Prairie.

Dr. Daniel Scognamillo (Nacogdoches) is an Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation/Spatial Ecology in the College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin University.

Jason Singhurst (Austin) has served as a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department botanist/ecologist in Texas for the past 13 years. He has extensive field knowledge with rare plant species in eastern and central Texas. He has authored or co-authored over 40 scientific publications and in 2007 co-authored a book on *Rare Plants of Texas*. He has concentrated the past few years on rare and endemic plant surveys of coastal prairies, including defining a few un-described prairie swale plant communities in the Coastal Bend region.

Thank you for supporting our native grasslands and NPAT. See you on the prairie!

—Jason Spangler

Executive Director's Report

MY FIRST YEAR with NPAT has been both exciting and productive. As many of you may know, we received grants to survey 95 counties for tallgrass prairie remnants and by the end of this year we will have completed at least 70 of those counties—thanks in large part to the efforts of our Program Directors James Alderson and Charles Anderson. [See page 11 for more information on the surveys.]

By the end of this year, we will also near our goal of applying to the Land Trust Alliance for accreditation by bringing the organization into alignment with their standards and practices. This includes: easement criteria documents, baselines, and management plans for all of our properties, annual monitoring, and accepted record keeping practices.

We have added 25 acres to our 50 acre Simpson Prairie Easement this year and are in the process of acquiring a seven-acre easement in Falls County adjacent to our Riesel property. Acreage in Wharton County will also be acquired this year and NPAT is working with a mitigation specialist towards acquiring easements in multiple counties.

To further our protection goals, we now have representatives on both the North Texas and Coastal Prairie coalitions, and the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture management and technical committees, We



have also joined the Texas Native Lands Alliance.

We will be sponsoring two regional restoration workshops for experts with the goal of publishing concise protocols for landowners and offering the information on our soon-to-be redesigned Web site as well.

Protection of native grasslands through both education and acquisition remain our

primary goals. Education fosters awareness of the plight of our prairie heritage as well as many associated issues, such as water resources, climate, habitat, and sustainable economics. Acquisition through both fee simple and conservation easements assures that these resources will be available to future generations. The surveys will provide us with a map for prioritizing future acquisitions; particularly in the Blackland, Cross Timbers and Coastal regions.

Although this is a challenging time for many, the current economic climate offers a window of opportunity for acquisition that we may not see again, which is amplified by the tax benefits on easements due to expire at the end of 2009. Therefore, I encourage you to support our protection efforts through membership and donations of both land and capital. With your support, NPAT will continue to be a part of the solution for Texas and serve as a model for what is possible through both advocacy and cooperation.

—Dalmara Bayne

Thank you!
Prairie Angels

Kunda Lee Wicce: NPAT's past president, for her passion and dedication to NPAT and Texas prairies for so many years.

Brian Rowe: who surveyed Parker County prairies for \$1 and paid \$1,000 to the County for tax records.

Nancy Webber: who volunteered to help with our brochure update by placing hundreds, possibly thousands(!) of labels on brochures.

NPAT Founding Member, Bob Burleson Passes

ON MONDAY, April 20, 2009, Robert Clair “Bob” Burleson Jr., 71, one of the founding members of NPAT passed away. Services were held April 27 at First Baptist Church in Temple.

Bob was born on Oct. 24, 1937, to Robert Clair Burleson Sr. and Ruth Bowmer Burleson in Temple. He married Mickey Fulwiler.

Bob was a member of the firm of Naman, Howell, Smith & Lee and a fellow of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

Along with his family and legal career, Bob and his wife Mickey were deeply involved in conservation efforts throughout Texas, including the creation of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Bob and Mickey restored several hundred acres of Blackland Prairie on their property near Temple, spending decades mapping native prairie remnants in the surrounding counties and collecting seed for their restoration. Bob has served as a member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission and as president of the Texas Archaeological Society, and was a leader in establishing TPWD's Natural Resources Division.

In addition to serving as NPAT advisers, speaking at NPAT conferences, and even writing NPAT's Articles of Incorporation, Bob and Mickey graciously opened their prairie for many NPAT field trips and other organizations' events. Bob and Mickey won the Texas Lone Star Land Steward award for the Blackland Prairie ecoregion last year for their native prairie restoration.

Further, Bob was a founder of Texas Explorers Club, chairman of the Southwest Regional Advisory Committee of the National Parks Service, president of the Texas Archeological Society, drafting and helping to pass the Texas Antiquities Code, a leader in the creation of the Texas Organization for Endangered Species, organizer of a successful effort to protect peregrine falcons, a former executive director of American Whitewater Affiliation and editor of its magazine, and received the Texas Outdoor Writers Association's “Conservationist of the Year” Award in 1976.

Bob co-wrote “Backcountry Mexico,” published by the University of Texas Press, and along with Mickey also co-wrote a



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TEXAS LEGACY PROJECT

Bob Burleson, shown here during his interview for the Texas Legacy Project in 1999.

tall-grass restoration guide, “The New Southern Reconstruction: Home Grown Prairies.”

Survivors include his wife, Mickey; two daughters, Clair Burleson and Lea Burleson Buffington; and two grandchildren.

To learn more about Bob:

*The New Southern Reconstruction—
Home Grown Prairies:* [www.texasprairie.org/
Resources/HomeGrownPrairies.shtml](http://www.texasprairie.org/Resources/HomeGrownPrairies.shtml)
Temple Daily Telegram article:
www.tdtnews.com/story/2009/4/21/57372
Texas Legacy Project interview: [www.texas
legacy.org/bb/narrators/burlesonbob.html](http://www.texaslegacy.org/bb/narrators/burlesonbob.html)
—Jason Spangler

BOB HAS BEEN among the most inspiring of all our prairie conservation leaders, beginning with the restoration of their property near Temple—from an old cotton field to a high-diversity, local-ecotype prairie. He and Mickey have conducted many educational tours for hundreds of visitors—children and adults—who left with a far deeper appreciation and understanding of the prairies than before they arrived. His sweet, helpful, supportive attitude was a tremendous source of inspiration and we could feel his deep love of the prairies. Bob had a big big heart that he opened to any one concerned with conservation of nature.

—Kunda Lee Wicce

Sunday, June 21, 2009

Dear Members of NPAT,

Thank you so much for the floral arrangement you sent to Bob's memorial service. The wildflowers were beautiful and such an appropriate way to remember Bob. He would have been very pleased, as was his whole family.

You and your mission were very dear to Bob's heart, and he appreciated deeply each of you and what you do to preserve Texas prairies. I know he would be encouraging you now to keep up the good work if he were still walking this earth.

We, his family, are very grateful for all your kindnesses toward him and us.

Fondest regards,
Mickey Burleson

Prairie Treasures

Six great places to explore the coastal prairies that lie within 60 miles of Houston

By Gary Clark

“As to scenery... while I know the standard claim is that Yosemite, Niagara Falls, the upper Yellowstone, and the like, afford the greatest natural shows, I am not so sure, but the Prairies and Plains, while less stunning at first sight, last longer, fill the esthetic sense fuller, precede all the rest, and make North America's characteristic landscape.”

—WALT WHITMAN

WHEN most people think of North American prairies, they think of the grasslands that once covered the Midwest. They probably don't think of Texas. Yet before the state was settled, seven million acres of tallgrass prairie blanketed the Texas coast from Baffin Bay near Kingsville well into Louisiana. Fragmented by agriculture, invaded by non-native trees, and displaced by modern urbanization, the prairie that once filled Whitman's "esthetic sense" has been reduced to less than one percent of its former splendor.

Nonetheless, the remaining prairies are critical for the many bird species that inhabit the Texas coast either year-round or seasonally. For example, Eastern Meadowlarks dot the prairie with their yellow breasts all year, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers sally over the prairie in summer, and Le Conte's Sparrows settle into the prairie for the winter.

Not all birds are thriving on the limited prairie lands. Attwater's Prairie-Chicken populations once numbered more than a million birds, but with only 62 individuals left, the birds could become extinct in the wild in a couple of decades. Northern Bobwhite populations also are crashing. Even sparrows like Grasshopper and Le Conte's, though not endangered, compete for smaller portions of wintering grassland along the Texas coast.

Despite its diminished size, the prairie abounds with birds. It's a land of water birds like grebes and egrets, of soaring birds like hawks and kites, and of field birds like shrikes and bluebirds. And in winter, the bird population swells with ducks and geese, and pipits, sparrows, and other passerines.

The birds come to the prairie because of its diverse habitats. Upland prairies and marshy

grasslands spread inland 50 to 80 miles from a coastline hugged by fresh, brackish, and saltwater marshes. Along the rivers and creeks crossing the prairies are ribbons of woodlands with deciduous and evergreen trees. Adjacent agricultural fields that broke up the original prairie hold grain crops in summer that lay fallow with waste grain in winter.

Because of mild winters, upland prairies have abundant grass seeds, insects, and rodents, and prairie wetlands and coastal marshes are full of aquatic critters and vegetation. Small wonder that winter is the best time to see birds on the prairie.

Six birding hotspots all within 60 miles of downtown Houston show off the array of winter birdlife on the prairie. The must-see hotspots include three national wildlife refuges—Attwater Prairie Chicken, Anahuac, and Brazoria—as well as the Katy Prairie, Armand Bayou Nature Center, and Texas City Preserve. Practically all wintering species of Texas coastal birds are represented in the area, with the exception of Whooping Crane, which is farther down the coast at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

The **Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge**, located near the town of Eagle Lake, is a good place to start a winter birding tour of the remnant coastal prairies. This 10,500-acre prairie refuge is located about 60 miles west of Houston. Stretching beside the San Bernard River, the refuge's open spaces offer solitude broken only by bird calls.

A two-mile dirt road leads to the refuge headquarters. The lane is impossible to traverse without stopping over and over to see multitudes of sparrows, including Vesper Song, Le Conte's, and the ever-present Sa-

vannah. Eastern Meadowlark is ubiquitous as well. Red-tailed Hawks soar overhead, Northern Harriers strafe the prairie, and Crested Caracaras swoop up and down, now landing to feed on carrion, now running along the prairie floor after rodents, now soaring back up to perch on a sycamore tree near the river or by the headquarters.

Sycamore and oak trees surrounding the headquarters hold such wintering songbirds as American Goldfinch, Orange-crowned Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and American Robin. Sprawling grasslands near the parking lot teem with sparrows offset by a few Eastern Bluebirds. A Sharp-shinned or Cooper's Hawk may perch in the trees scouting the ready food source of songbirds. Inside the visitor's center, you can study a display of 100 taxidermy bird mounts to calibrate your bird-identification skills. More important, learn about the native prairie and watch a video about the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken.

Otherwise, don't expect to see a prairie-chicken. Fewer than 50 wild birds are making a last-ditch stand for survival on this trace of their once vast prairie home. Refuge managers carefully guard them. Consequently, you cannot drive or hike on the largest stretch of the refuge bordering the river where the chickens struggle to become a viable breeding population.

Just 20 years ago, you could have strolled on a prairie trail just after dawn between February and April and seen the chickens fluttering up from the grass and witnessed their mating ritual, the males prancing on a lek, lowering their heads, inflating bright orange neck sacs, and uttering an echoing, deep-toned wooo-looooo similar to the sound of air blowing over the top of a soda bottle. The sound of their prancing feet is like the soft drumming of timpani—hence the genus name, *Tympanuchus*. Now the only chance of seeing them is on guided tours during the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken Festival in early April.

Still, you can take an early-morning or late-afternoon walk on the Pipit or the Sycamore Trail near the headquarters and see dozens of other birds. American Pipits are common, and Sprague's Pipits, though less common, are present to the alert eye. The sound of Greater White-fronted and Snow

About the Cover

Picturing a prairie at Lewisville Lake

Geese as well as the chortling calls of Sandhill Crane continually reverberate overhead. Take the Sycamore Trail to the river in search of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows, maybe a few Harris's Sparrows, and scores of Turkey and Black Vultures. Look for a Bald Eagle, too.

Drive the five-mile auto tour loop and stop often to look for sparrows in the tall grass. Look for Grasshopper Sparrow in the upland grasses and watch for Wilson's Snipe in the muddy shortgrass fields.

Pintail Marsh at the west portion of the loop has hundreds of ducks, including American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Ring-necked Duck. Cinnamon Teal is sometimes present in the midst of Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. The prairie is also home to mammals, the most impressive of which are bison. A small herd of bison grazes near Pintail Marsh, their massive shoulders and backs reflecting golden hues in early-morning light.

The **Katy Prairie** is easy to get to and easy to bird, especially if you have only a morning or afternoon. Defined by agricultural fields, parcels of bluestem grassland, extensive prairie wetlands, and creek bottom woodlands, the landscape is a haven for winter waterfowl and sparrows. Birding the area is a simple matter of driving the country roads.

One of the more popular birding spots is at the intersection of Longenbaugh and Katy-Hockley Cut-Off roads. Longenbaugh Road bisects two extensive wetlands bordered by shortgrass prairies and fence lines with scattered trees and shrubs. Stand on the roadside between 7 and 8 a.m. and you'll see Lincoln's, Le Conte's, and Savannah Sparrows, plus erupting flocks of Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese (with Ross's Geese mixed in), and pintails.

The scene will remind you that some of the agricultural intrusion on the prairie has benefited waterfowl. No doubt, Snow Geese come over the Katy Prairie because of fallow winter grain fields and shallow wetlands created by 20th-century rice farming.

Another place to see a bounty of birds as a happy benefit of prairie farming is along Sharp Road by the Nelson Farm Preserve, a property now owned by the Katy Prairie Conservancy. Though not open for public access, the preserve includes a roadside viewing platform where you can watch White-faced and White Ibises in a marsh, Eastern Phoebe and maybe a Wilson's Warbler in the adjacent wooded patch, and sparrows in profusion everywhere.

Roads through *(continued on page 7)*



PHOTO © LYNNE RICHARDS

LYNNE RICHARDS is currently working on a Master's Degree in Photography. Her thesis project involves documenting the restoration and preservation of native Texas prairies. She has been working on this project since February, mainly with the very generous cooperation of Dr. Ken Steigman at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area. She has also been to Clymer Meadow and Park Hill Prairie, attended a controlled burn school in the Hill Country, attended PrairieFest at Tandy Hills, participated in a day-long Prairie Workshop with Jim Eidson, and visited the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center. This project encompasses three areas: the beauty of the natural prairie, reasons for the loss, and the ongoing preservation and restoration work.

Lynne says, "I've thoroughly enjoyed learning about and photographing prairies, and hope to be able to use the images to promote awareness of the extent of the loss of this valuable ecosystem and the importance of its preservation." www.richardsracepics.com

Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area

SITUATED beneath the Lewisville Dam, the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) occupies a unique ecological position in the landscape of North America. It is here where the northwestern-most extent of the bottomland forests stretch fingers into the southern end of the

tallgrass prairie of the Midwest; where the Elm Fork of the Trinity River winds its way out of the sandy uplands of the dry Cross Timbers into the deep, rich soils of the Blackland prairies; where agricultural lands intergrade with ranching and a rapidly growing urban expanse.

With its diversity of habitats, LLELA is home to a wide variety of wildlife including bobcat, river otter, deer, and mink, along with birds such as wild turkey, painted bunting, and dozens of waterfowl species. LLELA is dotted with sloughs, wetlands, creeks, and dry channels, the landscape features originally wrought by the Elm Fork and its tributaries during flood events. These remain filled by rainwater, flooding, and groundwater discharge, where one may find many ducks, turtles, and wading birds.

LLELA, also known as the Lewisville Wildlife Management Area, was created in the early 1990s by a consortium of local, state, and national government agencies, who have obtained a 25 year management lease from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Today, the LLELA consortium is comprised of the University of North Texas, Texas A&M University, the City of Lewisville, and the Lewisville Independent School District.

The mandate of the LLELA consortium is to develop the area for the preservation and restoration of native habitat and biodiversity, environmental education, and environmental research.

The principal goals of management at LLELA are to preserve and protect native biodiversity and to restore degraded ecosystems, communities, and native biodiversity while providing compatible educational and scientific use of LLELA lands.

Prairie research has been a recent focus of ecological assessment and restoration efforts at LLELA. In November 2003, through a cooperative research program with a bison rancher, they received a herd of 19 bison to reintroduce the essential process of grazing to the prairie research area. Since 1996, they have been investigating the effects of different management techniques, such as herbicide use, burning, seeding, and mowing, in prairie restoration.

For more information on the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, visit www.ias.unt.edu/llela.

From airport parking lot to prairie

The Mueller Restoration Project

By Daniel Dietz

IT IS SATURDAY morning July 18 at 10 a.m. While the temperature is just now reaching 90 degrees, the sweat is already dripping off my body while I rip the inflorescences off of Johnson grass. It feels a little crazy, doing this work, but then I look up and see 12 other people also engaged in this activity, and I continue onward. Most of these folks are members of the nascent Friends of the Prairie group that has formed to take care of a new 30 acre blackland prairie restoration project in the Mueller neighborhood of central Austin. “How improbable”, I think, remembering my first visit to this property 20 years ago. It was an airport back then.

When the airport was moved from the Mueller location to the old Bergstrom air force base, the City of Austin had a chance to redevelop the old airport and decide what kind of future it wanted. The result is a neighborhood of energy efficient homes, with affordable housing mixed in with middle class families, a neighborhood where “walkability” was a key factor in its design, and where 20% of the property is devoted to parks and green.

Yet, despite this focus on creating the future, the neighborhood pays homage to the past in many ways. The home facades harken to older Austin neighborhoods. The former air traffic control tower still rises above the homes, and the street names pay homage to historical Austin figures ranging from former mayor Tom Miller to iconic blues club owner Clifford Antone. When the development’s landscape architects hired the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to design a naturalistic park, they choose to pay respect to the past by restoring a portion of Texas blackland prairie.

The restoration took place in 2008 on a



30 acre area that was partly airport parking lot, and partly Bermuda grass / King Ranch bluestem field. It had to be re-sculpted in order to remove the parking lot and accommodate a storm water retention area. Before this happened, the wildflower center rescued some of the little bluestem that had survived the years of intense mowing. These plants and much of the native soil were stockpiled and then later reused. While restoring a prairie in the middle of a drought is not preferred, the project was aided by an irrigation system installed by the developer. This irrigation system has both contributed to project success, and led to some fairly incongruous sights, such as big bluestem and indiangrass blooming in the first week of June.

Restoration is a long term process, of course, and only time will what the Mueller prairie project will contribute to blackland prairie conservation as a whole. When it comes to capturing the imagination and educating the public about prairies, however, it is already a success. Within one year, neighborhood residents had formed a Friends of the Prairie group and held their first neighborhood “Prairie fest”.

As the only publicly accessible prairie

located within Austin’s city limits it has tremendous potential as an educational resource for the community. When people become connected to this specific project and begin to appreciate the grasslands, they will hopefully become more attuned to the importance of prairie conservation.

Thanks to the efforts of Mark Simmons of the Wildflower Center, NPAT has been involved with the Friends of the Prairie group since this spring. In March, executive director Dalmar Bayne and two board members staffed a booth at prairie fest to raise awareness about the broader issue of prairie conservation in Texas. In June, NPAT

board member Daniel Dietz, led a plant identification walk for the Friends group.

Still, there is more that NPAT members can do to help this restoration project. For example, the site’s diversity is still relatively low, and NPAT members could donate blackland prairie plants and seeds that are not commercially available. Likewise, the Friends group is looking for individuals who would lead children’s hike and activities in this prairie, or adult hikes that concentrate not only the plants, but also the birds and insects. If this interests you, please contact Janelle Dozier of the Friends of the Prairie at janelledozier@yahoo.com.

Or, you could join Friends of the Prairie in weeding Johnson grass, pulling seed heads off to buy time until the landscaping company can come by with the backpack sprayer. If it seems crazy, just remember that you are only a few hundred feet from where the runway used to be. Anything is possible.

Daniel Dietz is currently Vice President of the Board of NPAT. He is the Stewardship Director for the Texas Land Conservancy.

CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

NPAT NEEDS YOU! If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, or willing to help with committee projects, prairie restoration and advocacy, please contact NPAT via email at info@texasprairie.org or via postal mail.

Prairie Treasures

continued from page 5

the Katy Prairie cross songbird-rich woodlands lining Cypress Creek and sparrow-rich grasslands. On a morning when winds are calm, you can usually stand on the side of the road and pick up most of the 14 species of sparrows that winter on the prairie, including Field, Vesper, Song, and Swamp Sparrows—that is, if you're not distracted by the billowing clouds of geese or by a Bald Eagle soaring against a clear blue sky.

Twenty miles southeast of downtown Houston is **Armand Bayou Nature Center**, a non-profit, private wildlife preserve that encompasses 2,500 acres of bottomland forest, wetlands, and a tallgrass coastal prairie. Its name honors the memory of the late Armand Yramategui, one of Houston's beloved 20th-century naturalists.

A 100-yard boardwalk leads from the admissions building at the parking area across woods and marsh to the interpretive center. The center has numerous wildlife exhibits and photographs, but what is special to birders is the wide surrounding porch. Here you can sit on benches and watch Golden-crowned Kinglets and other passerines flit among the trees and hop onto the bird feeders.

Aside from trails leading through woods to Armand Bayou, one of the few pristine bayous left in the state of Texas, you'll want to concentrate your time on the Lady Bird Trail, which circles a mile through a tallgrass prairie of bluestem, switchgrass, Indian grass, and gamma grass.

Being located close to boggy woodlands and a major bayou, the prairie can hold a surprising diversity of birds. Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Bluebird, American Pipit, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and American Goldfinch are common. In the sky above, Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, and Crested Caracara should be expected, and Peregrine Falcon is not out of the question. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, which was rare on the upper Texas coast only two decades ago, shows up frequently.

Virtually next door to Armand Bayou Nature Center is the **Texas City Preserve**, which is owned by the Nature Conservancy of Texas. The prairie preserve is another outpost for surviving Attwater's Prairie-Chickens. Though entrance to the preserve is limited, access may be available during the winter months to see sparrows, geese, and Sandhill Crane. During March, guided trips to see the prairie-chickens may be available.

On the upper Texas coast east of Galves-

ton Island lies **Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge**. Like other Texas coastal wildlife refuges, Anahuac encompasses prairies adjacent to coastal marshes. What distinguishes Anahuac is that it's part of the Texas Chenier Plain National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which embraces more than 100,000 acres from the Louisiana border to Galveston Bay. Other refuges in the system include Texas Point, McFaddin, and Moody's, but 34,000-acre Anahuac is the most accessible.

No place is more typical of the Chenier Plain, an ancient beach ridge, than Anahuac. River sediments dumped onto the plain over thousands of years created the prairie soil on the refuge, and the prairie itself mingles with marshes, woodlots, and three bayous. As a result, the refuge supports one of North America's most important habitats for wintering waterfowl that migrate down the Central Flyway. That's why you may find Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese and a few Canada Geese along with 15 to 20 species of dabbling and diving ducks.

Bird diversity is breathtaking. You are as likely to see Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow as you are Song Sparrow, along with eight other sparrow species. And you can find sandpipers and dowitchers as easily as sparrows and meadowlarks. Clapper Rail, Sedge Wren, Tree Swallow, Horned Lark, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, and Lesser Scaup all vie for your attention. What's more, alligators on the refuge resembling dinosaurs will make your heart stop.

Constant scenes of grebes, herons, egrets, terns, gulls, and the stunningly beautiful Roseate Spoonbill make it difficult for you to put your binoculars down.

The 43,000-acre **Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge** lies west of Galveston

Island and is part of the Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes the San Bernard and Big Boggy refuges. Birdlife at Brazoria is similar to that at Anahuac with its prairies and coastal marshes. But because of a 4,000-acre native tallgrass prairie, it has a few more hawks and a few more sparrows.

A three-mile gravel road leads you across the refuge to the Information Center. The road cuts through hackberry trees, baccharis shrubs, and the native bluestem prairie. You should easily see Red-shouldered Hawk perched in the trees, White-tailed Kite hovering over the fields, Northern Harrier sailing low over the grasses, and Crested Caracara perched on fence posts.

Sandhill Crane often strides in the prairie grasses, and Savannah, Lincoln, and Song Sparrows hop up on grass stems. Northern Bobwhite, becoming increasingly uncommon on coastal prairies, is most likely to show up in this stand of native grassland.

Beginning at the Information Center is a short boardwalk that bridges a cattail marsh and takes you to a hiking trail. The trail leads for half a mile to an observation platform over Big Slough, a wide, slow-moving, freshwater stream that meanders through the refuge. Along the trail, look for Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, and wintering Orange-crowned and Wilson's Warblers.

Reprinted with permission from the author. Gary Clark has been studying and writing about nature most of his adult life. He writes a nature column for the *Houston Chronicle* that also appears in the *San Antonio Express News*. www.texasbirder.net. This article was first published by *Birder's World Magazine* in August 2004.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge is located seven miles northeast of Eagle Lake off of FM 3013. Open sunrise to sunset daily. Visitor's center is open weekdays, 7:30-4. 979/234-3021, ext. 12. www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/attwater/

Katy Prairie is north of the town of Katy. The intersection of Katy-Hockley Cut-Off Road and Logenbaugh Road is a favorite birding spot. Another great roadside birding spot is the Nelson Farm Preserve, off of Sharp Road. www.katyprairie.org

Armand Bayou Nature Center is 20 miles south of Houston at 8500 Bay Area Blvd. Open Tuesday-Saturday: 9-5. Sunday: noon to 5. 281/474-2551. www.abnc.org

Texas City Preserve is 10 miles south of Armand Bayou Nature Center at 4702 Texas 146 North. Public access is through education programs and volunteer opportunities. 409/945-4677. www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/texas/preserves/texascity.html

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge is south of Anahuac and Winnie off of FM 1985. This refuge suffered considerable damage from Hurricane Ike. For the latest information: 409/267-3337. www.friendsofanahuacnwr.org

Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge is near Angleton off of County Road 227. Open sunrise to sunset daily. 979/233-533. www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/texasmidcoast/

Rattlesnake Master

The history and lore of a remarkable prairie plant

An excerpt from *Remarkable Plants of Texas* by Matt Warnock Turner

ERYNGIUM YUCCIFOLIUM is an odd plant. Aptly named, this species, when young, can fool even a seasoned naturalist into thinking it is a yucca. But it is no yucca. In bloom, the compact, prickly flowerheads resemble the buds of a thistle about to open, but they are not buds (they are flowers), and this is no thistle. It is rather, an umbel, a member of the carrot family. Its common name, rattlesnake master, is outlandish, and meaningless for identifying the plant in the field. But the name of this native has a homegrown value and is crucial to its historical understanding.

Many Native American tribes of the Southeast and eastern portion of the Great Plains valued this plant first and foremost as an antidote against poison in general and snake venom in particular. Three of the so-called civilized tribes, the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Creek of the southern Appalachians and Deep South, are known to have treated snakebite victims with rattlesnake master, and tribes as far away as the Great Lakes (such as the Meskwaki) employed the plant for the same purpose. One Cherokee physician, who authored an influential medicobotanical book based on native cures, declared the herb “one of the most powerful and certain remedies for snake bite now known” (Foreman and Mahoney 1849). Almost invariably the root was the part used; it could be consumed raw, steeped in water as an infusion, boiled as a decoction, or chewed to make



PHOTO COURTESY OF LISA SPANGLER

Rattlesnake Master on Nash Prairie

a poultice for external application. The Meskwaki also incorporated the plant's leaves and fruit in a traditional rattlesnake medicine song and dance.

The earliest Anglo settlers to Texas were reminded of the plant's alleged powers by Stephen F. Austin's cousin, Mary Austin Holley, who noted in her famous book

Texas: “A root called rattlesnake's master grows abundantly in the pine woods, and is said to be an efficient remedy” (Holley 1836). William Bollaert, the writer, chemist, geographer, and ethnologist who traveled extensively through the Republic of Texas in 1842-44 preparing a report for the British Admiralty, mentions that “there is no scarcity of snakes” in Texas, but that “rattlesnake master is in great abundance.” He goes on to say that the root tastes like a “strong bitter carrot” (Hollon & Butler 1956). Special caution must be taken with common names of plants purported to treat snakebite. Indigenous peoples used many plants to this end, and settlers began applying English common names such as snakeroot and snakeweed indiscriminately to many plants. For instance, both *Eryngium yuccifolium* and *Liatis punctata* (gayfeather, a member of the Aster family) were both called at various times “button snakeroot” and “rattlesnake master.”

Native Americans and folk healers employed *Eryngium yuccifolium* for numerous other medicinal purposes. The Meskwaki, Choctaw, and natives living along the Arkansas River, used the root as a powerful diuretic (increases urine). Apparently, if used in larger doses, the root can act as an emetic (incites vomiting). The Alabama and Cherokee, in fact, used an infusion of the plant for its emetic properties, either to treat illness, or, as in the case of the Seminole, for ceremonial purification. Southeastern tribes may have added rattlesnake master to their black drink (a tea made from yaupon, which see) in order to impart strong emetic properties to the drink for ritualistic purposes. The Cherokee used a decoction of the plant to protect children against whooping cough and an infusion was held in the mouth to treat toothaches. Ante-bellum African-American healers soothed the coughing of tuberculosis with a root tincture. From 1820 to 1873 the U.S. Pharmacopoeia listed the rattlesnake master's properties as a diaphoretic (increases sweating), expectorant (controls coughing), and emetic, while late-nineteenth-century treatises of medicinal botany add to this list the properties of stimulant, febrifuge (reduces fever), caustic anti-fungal, and gangrene-preventative.

While many of these uses are unlikely to

RATTLESNAKE MASTER

Eryngium yuccifolium Michx.

Origin of scientific name: Apparently known from the days of Hippocrates, Father of Medicine (fifth century BCE), Eryngion is the Greek name for the Eurasian species *Eryngium campestre*. By the time of Pliny (first century CE), its root already had a reputation for counteracting poisons and venoms, treating wounds (especially those of snakes), and healing sores. The species name is Latin for “yucca-like leaves.”

Other common names: button snakeroot, yucca-leaf snakeroot, bristle-leaf eryngo

Family: Apiaceae (Carrot family)

Description: Stout, upright perennial, 1-4' high (max. 6') with tuberous root; basal leaves long (to 3') and narrow (1¼"), armed with bristles along margins; round, button-like, terminal flowerheads tightly packed with many small, greenish-white flowers.

Habitat and distribution: In sandy and clayey soils in prairies, open woods, thickets, and along roadsides in mainly the eastern third of the state; eastern half of U.S. (including Plains), minus New England.

The Maddin Report

stand up to the rigor or potency of modern synthetic drugs, and the number and variety of uses begins to smack of panacea; but the one specific treatment for snakebite should, perhaps, give us pause. Many American tribes were aware of this precise use, across thousands of miles, and identified the same part of the plant for treatment. In the Old World, the Romans utilized the root of another species of *Eryngium* for exactly the same purpose. Rural Jordanians employ yet another species to treat scorpion bites, for which there is scientific evidence for the plant's effectiveness (Kindscher 1992). Despite all this, there is an absence of research on the effectiveness of rattlesnake master in treating snakebites. Given that the Apiaceae contains many species with reported medicinal uses, this absence is surprising.

All but forgotten in historic times is the prehistoric use of rattlesnake master as a fiber plant. Footwear constructed from its fibers are arguably among the oldest in North America. Sandals and slip-ons, found in cave deposits in central Missouri, have been radiocarbon-dated to 8300 calendar years before the present. Cords, bag, braided work, and even burial cloth composed of the fibers appear in abundance in prehistoric sites in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. Rattlesnake master leaves, similar to those of yucca, can be shredded or used in their entirety; the stems also contain a strong bast fiber. Oddly, the use of this plant for fiber seems to have disappeared in historic times, as researchers have noted (Whitford 1941). Not a single entry for this plant as a source of fiber, or any other species of *Eryngium* for that matter, appears in the exhaustive scholarly work *Native American Ethnobotany* (Morman 1998). One has to assume that native peoples found better substitutes or that somehow ancient knowledge was lost.

Eryngium yuccifolium is a prairie plant, often considered an indicator for the tall-grass prairie. With the rich soils of the prairie having long ago been plowed for cultivation, rattlesnake master has doubtless diminished in numbers and is less commonly recognized. It is easily grown in gardens where it makes an interesting, and historically-rich specimen plant.

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Matt Warnock Turner is a naturalist, teacher, and freelance writer who works at the University of Texas McCombs School of Business. An active member of the Native Plant Society of Texas, he has written articles and given lectures on botanical topics.

IN LATE September Pat Merkord and I made a quick visit to Maddin. The first thing we saw when we arrived was a white storage building. Thanks to Charles Anderson's efforts we have a building (with a window!)—electricity and a working well are coming next. We plan to run water to a wildlife trough in the restored field—a feature that has been in disrepair for a few years. Pat and I were quite excited about having a place to stay at Maddin, even if it is a bit spartan.

Next we headed for the prairie dog town to see if we could get a count. Sneaking up on them is always a challenge, they've got a good vantage point on the rise where they live. We drove to a nearby spot, looked from the vehicle, then walked up quietly. We counted 15 before they all disappeared into their burrows—the numbers seem to be holding. As we approached, a burrowing owl flushed from one of the mounds. It had not been seen since Charles' visit in March. We were worried that the owls had left. Sunday, we counted a second burrowing owl, so there may be a breeding pair at Maddin.

A prairie falcon was also spotted perching on a post—it is now a regular sight around our prairie dog town. (I'm still waiting for the ferruginous hawk!) Pat would like to set up a camera to see what goes on here while



Hundreds of migrating Monarch butterflies passed through Maddin Prairie Preserve in late September.

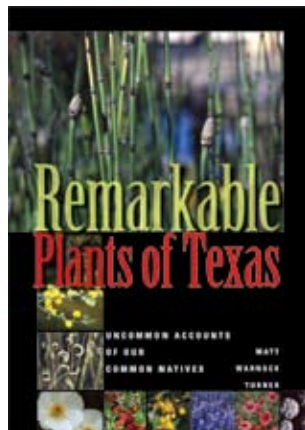
we are not around. I'm formulating a plan for a wildlife viewing blind.

While this was a short visit, we did make it to the creek area. This is the season when the summer birds have gone south, the winter birds are just starting to arrive and at that moment, only a few migrating birds were moving through. During migration, timing is everything. What *was* timed for our visit was the monarch migration. There were hundreds of butterflies floating through the riparian area with many hanging from the undersides of tree leaves—taking a rest. It was a magical sight. I spoke to Mike Quinn of TPWD who told me that the monarch migration this fall is more to the west than usual. But, apparently Maddin is in the normal pathway of their migration. We got lucky. —Kirsti Harms

For Your Library

Remarkable Plants of Texas Uncommon Accounts of Our Common Natives

By Matt Warnock Turner



Matt Warnock Turner explores the little-known facts behind our familiar botanical landscape. In sixty-five entries that cover more than eighty of our most common native plants, he traces our vast array of connections with plants. Turner looks at how people have used plants for food, shelter, medicine, and economic subsistence; how plants have figured in the historical record and in Texas folklore; how plants nourish wildlife; and how some plants have unusual ecological or biological characteristics. Illustrated with color photos and organized for easy reference, *Remarkable Plants of Texas* can function as a guide to individual species as well as an enjoyable natural history of our most fascinating native plants. For more information, visit www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/turrem.html

Native Plants of the West Columbia Monument Garden

By Thomas and Chelsea Adams

IN SPRING 2008 we were approached by Sandy Weems, a local merchant, and asked if we would provide native Texas wildflowers at a monument/garden honoring the original Texas settlement in West Columbia, Texas. As a botanist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and resident of Brazoria County for 9 years Thomas is an expert on local flora and initially thought these plants would be sufficient in number and charismatic appeal for public display. However it became apparent that the garden site, with its isolation and radiant heat from adjacent asphalt, would be detrimental to most local plants which had evolved in more hospitable conditions. Although a sprinkler system provided consistent watering it did not span the garden. More brainstorming concluded that drought tolerant native Texas plants would have to fill in where water did not reach. We had a number of sources for plants and seeds from other regions of Texas—nurseries, plant rescues from development sites and Audubon sponsored events, plant sales at the LBJ Wildflower Center in Austin, and our own yard which is certified as a backyard wildlife habitat by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2008 we collected seeds and filled our backyard with dozens of potted plants. In November we started to populate the garden.

Now any native plant enthusiast will tell you that putting a species such as Mexican Oregano (*Lippia graveolens*) from south Texas in a habitat of clay soils and 55 inches of rain annually will get you root rot in a few days. Soil augmentation was necessary to not only allow for drainage but also to mimic the pH and soil structure of the original habitat. Fortunately alkaline based caliche was easily obtained and used as a mix with garden soil.

The garden is a gradient from wetland to



A native prairie garden now grows in downtown West Columbia

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN FANNON

(*Callicarpa americana*), buckshot canna (*Canna flaccida*) and shore milkweed (*Asclepia perennes*).

Some species adapt well to standing water or drought conditions—wooly and halberd-leaf hibiscus (*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*, *H. lavis*) and salt marsh mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*). Sea purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*) and sea lavender (*Limonium carolinianum*) grow in saline habitats but thrive equally well in the garden. Further down, the flame acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*) and rock rose (*Pavonia lasiopetala*) explode in colors of pink and orange alongside purple passion flower (*Passiflora incarnata*). mealy blue sage and blue sage (*Salvia farinacea*, *S. azurea*) took advantage of the precipitation to grow into many branched monsters. Wavy-ribbed cactus (*Thelocactus setispinus*) and christmas cactus (*Cylindropuntia leptocaulis*) are found in clay-caliche soils and may be the only cacti at

the garden besides the local prickly pear that will not rot.

Towards the xeric section of the garden we were successful with most of the transplants—brushland shrubland verbena (*Lantana achyranthifolia*), Texas lantana

desert species. Where sprinklers are available the local plants thrive—turk's cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii* var. *drummondii*), gulf coast penstemon (*Penstemon tenuis*), scarlet hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccinea*), downy lobelia (*Lobelia puberula*), irises (*Iris virginica*), American beautyberry

Prairie Plants are Tough!

OUR COASTAL PRAIRIE experienced severe drought this past summer with many days of 100+ degree temperatures. Some of our most beautiful prairie wildflowers proved their worth. This was the year for Texas coneflower (*Rudbeckia texana*), Blazing star (*Liatriis pycnostachya*), and Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*). They not only survived, they thrived.

These plants reach four feet or more. During a drought season, they provide food, shade, and water for insects, birds and other wildlife. It is remarkable how the shape of flower petals, seedheads, and leaves can collect and hold tiny amounts of moisture. The abundant seed produced from these important native plants will be used for restoration at other coastal prairie sites.

—Carolyn Fannon

(*Lantana urticoides*), Kansas blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*), eastern blue stars (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*) and blanket flowers (*Gaillardia puchella*). A solitary population of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) was rescued in Angleton only days before it was to be sprayed with herbicides and cut down. It overlooks a population of Texas grama (*Bouteloua rigidseta*). At the “desert” end are the yuccas (*Y. rupicola*, *Y. louisianensis*), red yucca (*Hesperaloe parvifolia*) and false agave (*Hechtia texensis*) to name a few. One of our joys, heartleaf hibiscus (*Hibiscus martianus*), produces a massive display of scarlet flowers throughout the summer. It’s been a labor of love and a learning experience. We don’t know why the autumn sage didn’t take. Maybe it requires more caliche?

Many species expanded beyond their natural stature and will need to be transplanted or constantly pruned. Many species that we thought would fade away are robust and flowering. Other “undesirables” came with the top soil—spurges, Johnson and Vasey’s grasses and need constant weeding out. There are over 100 species of wildflowers, shrubs and small trees in the garden. Next spring will bring the bluebonnets and spiderworts and what we hope will follow a continuous rotation of bloomers throughout the summer, fall and winter.

Thomas Adams helps manage over 85,000 acres of coastal prairie, marshes and bottomland hardwood forests along the Texas Mid-coast. Specifically he participates in prescribe burns, coordinating invasive species eradication and restoration of degraded prairies. He also works with non-profit organizations as an advisor and, when possible, supplies needed seed stock for their prairie restoration projects.

The West Columbia Monument Garden

is a historical park on the main street of West Columbia in Brazoria County. This site is remarkable. A few prairie enthusiasts learned that Thomas Adams is the one who grew and installed the plants—big bluestem, Texas cone-flowers, rattlesnake master growing in a public park on main street. Amazing! An interesting story was published locally. To read more go to www.uswaternews.com/archives/arconserv/8histpark2.html —Carolyn Fannon

Carolyn is a free-lance photographer who has been photographing coastal prairies for the past 14 years, particularly those in Galveston County.

Tallgrass Prairie Survey Update

From Charles Anderson

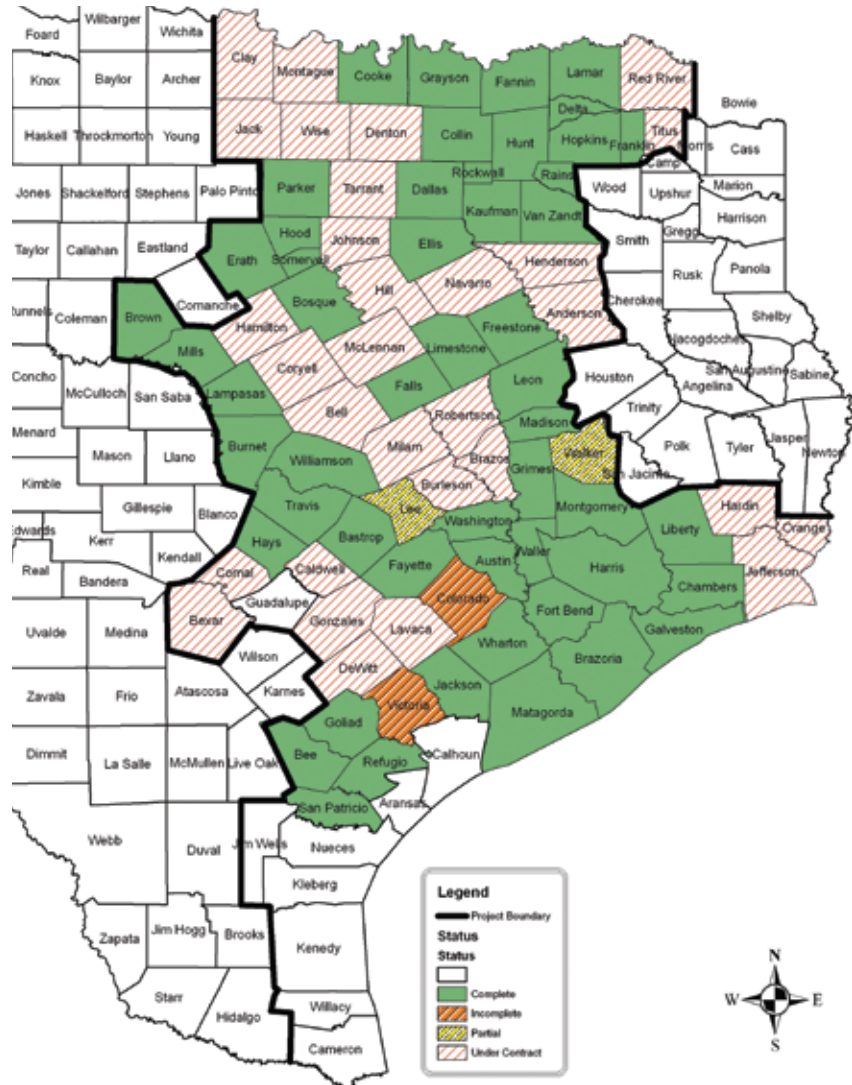
THANKS to some generous grants and the diligent efforts of several surveyors, NPAT is currently covering 95 counties in search of tallgrass prairie remnants. Our goal is to have all county surveys in the project area completed by the end of the 2010 growing season. 52 Counties have been completed. An additional 15-20 should be completed by the end of the 2009 growing season.

The following is a list of surveyors and the counties they are covering:

- **Brian Rowe:** Cooke, Johnson, Montague, Parker, Tarrant
- **Carrol Green:** Bell, Brown, Burnet, Coryell, Lampasas, Mills
- **Charles Anderson:** Comal, Hays
- **Dan Ricks:** Bastrop
- **David Rosen:** Jackson, Matagorda, Wharton
- **David Toledo:** Bee, DeWitt, Goliad, Lavaca, Refugio, San Patricio
- **Ed Rhodes:** Hamilton, Jack
- **Glenn Merkord:** Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson,

- Montgomery, Orange
- **James Alderson:** Caldwell, McLennan, Milam, Navarro
- **Jay Kane:** Austin, Fayette, Limestone, Travis, Williamson
- **Jeannine Tinsley:** Madison
- **Jeff Quayle:** Grayson
- **Loren Naylor:** Brazos, Burleson, Liberty, Robertson, Waller
- **Lori Biederman:** Grimes
- **Matt Bahm:** Collin, Dallas, Denton, Fannin, Hill, Kaufman, Rockwall, Van Zandt
- **Matt White:** Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Hunt, Lamar, Rains, Red River, Titus
- **Dr. Paul Mezynski:** Falls
- **Ranch Logistics:** Bexar, Gonzales
- **Randy Moss:** Colorado, Victoria
- **Rich Jaynes:** Ellis
- **Ryan Hammons:** Anderson, Freestone, Henderson, Lee, Leon, Walker
- **Southwind Conservation:** Bosque, Clay, Erath, Hood, Somervell, Wise
- **Tim Kiphart:** Washington

Counties still available for contract: Aransas, Calhoun, Cameron, Guadalupe, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Nueces, and Willacy



Field Trips & Events

Get out! Get involved!

People, Prairies: Partners Native Plant Society of Texas Annual Symposium

Wichita Falls, October 15-18

The focus of this year's symposium will be the junction of the West Cross Timbers and the Rolling Plains, which is very near the east-west centerline of the continental United States. The symposium will cover not only the flora, but also the fauna, history and people of the area.

It will be hosted by the Red River Chapter of NPSOT, with much help from the almost brand new Wild Flower Power Chapter (Young County), the River Bend Nature Center, and the Native Prairies Association of Texas. For more information, go to npsot.org.

NPAT Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, October 17, 1:30-2:30 pm.

Wichita Falls

Come hear about NPAT's activities in the past year, and also attend the NPSOT 2009 Symposium in Wichita Falls.

Location: KMA Boardroom at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel 401 Broad St.

For more information contact Jason Spangler at jason_spangler@texasprairie.org.

Workshops and tours Peaceful Springs Nature Preserve Native Plants of Texas

Saturday, October 17

Join Bill Carr, one of the authors of "Rare Plants of Texas" as he takes you through several types of habitat found on the ranch.

Peaceful Springs Nature Preserve is located 40 miles northwest of Austin, the Preserve covers over 500 acres of wilderness, and borders the Balconies Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge on three sides.

Visit www.peacefulspringssnp.com for more information or call 512/355-3111.

Prairie Pandemonium Armand Bayou Nature Center

Saturday, October 17, 9 a.m. to noon

Help Armand Bayou Nature Center to restore the tallgrass prairie, critical native habitat.

Sign-in will begin at 8 a.m. Lunch is included, and door prizes are too. Volunteers should be 12 years of age or older, and if under 18 to be accompanied by an adult. You will become a part of a team planting effort. Participants will need sturdy shoes and clothes that can get muddy. The nature center will provide tools and work gloves.

At seven hundred acres, Armand Bayou Nature Center manages one of the most extensive holdings of coastal tallgrass prairie in the lower Galveston Bay watershed.

Pre-registration is required to participate. To register, contact Christine Smith at 281-474-2551, or email chris@abnc.org.

Come out, learn about, and help restore the Texas Tall Grass Prairie!

Field Day Maddin Prairie Preserve

Saturday October 24, dawn to dark

Come out to explore the plants and animals on NPAT's 1,110-acre prairie preserve near Colorado City. Maddin Prairie Preserve features remnant and restored mixed-grass prairie, mesquite savanna, and riparian areas. A tributary of Champion Creek passes through the property and features a diverse riparian area.

An evening barbecue dinner will be held at the new building on the preserve. For more information contact Kirsti Harms at kirsti_harms@texasprairie.org or 512/296-9160.

NPAT's Board will hold a meeting on at Maddin on Sunday October 25.

Prairie Heritage Day Brazos Bend State Park

Saturday, November 7, 2009

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The day will include exhibits, activities for kids, hikes and talks on the prairie's past, native bees, the Atwater prairie chicken, the prairie's future and more. Presented by the Coastal Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program. There will be presenters and exhibits from the Katy Prairie Conservancy, Native Plant Society of Texas, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Houston Audubon Society, Native Prairies Association of Texas and more.

To find out more, go to www.brazosbend.org.

Prairie Plant-a-thon Sheldon Lake State Park.

Saturday November 14

Native grasses are the soul of a prairie. Volunteers who help replant and reclaim a piece of their natural heritage are the heart of a prairie. The Annual SLSP Prairie Plant-a-thon is a big part of an ongoing effort to restore and reclaim native, coastal prairie on park land that was once farmed.

On we'll need 120 volunteers to pitch and plant over 2,500 plants in the prairie. The Second Annual Prairie-Plant-A-Thon is an opportunity for the community to help TPWD restore a piece of its natural heritage.

For more information, go to www.foslsp.org/plant_a_thon.php

Help Save Fort Worth Prairie Park

THE GREAT PLAINS Restoration Council (GPRC) is working to protect 2000 acres of the biologically rich remaining Fort Worth Prairie. The State of Texas General Land Office owns this property and is seeking to sell it. They have agreed to work toward a conservation alternative. Trust for Public Land has joined forces with GPRC to permanently protect the Fort Worth Prairie Park.

The Fort Worth Prairie Park is a hidden crown jewel of Texas that is home to over 700 native plant species; it is our "prairie rainforest." It is an important breeding and resting ground for migrating monarch butterflies and grassland birds. Rock Creek and other streams run through it. Many types of native wildlife live there, including two genetically pure buffalo from the Fort Worth Nature Refuge whose ancestors were in the original Wichita Mountains herd. Students from Texas Christian University, University of Texas-Arlington, GPRC's Inner City Youth Leadership Development Program, and Plains Youth InterACTION™ study and learn on this land. This never-plowed, original tallgrass prairie landscape also holds enormous cultural significance.

Please help build additional community support to protect the Fort Worth Prairie Park and connect it to other core areas through biological corridors. For more information, visit www.gprc.org/fortworthprairiepark.html or <http://texas.sierraclub.org/fortworth/conservation/prairiepark.html>.

Life Members

Lynnette J. Alley
Leonard Anderson
Jim Apken
Bruce & Billie Ballengee
Skip Barnett
Richard & Joanne Bartlett
Col. Delbert M. Bassett
Jim Bayliss
Lisa Bellows
Keith Benson
Catherine Brown
Sam & Joan Carruthers
Mark B. Chapin
Bill and Genny Dalton
Correne L. Dragoo
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NPAT is working hard to conserve lands that ultimately serve critical human endeavors as well. Hay meadows, sustainable grazing, climate stabilization, water quality/quantity, healthy soils, habitat support for species that pollinate our food, sustainable energy and economic systems, not to mention our own health are all part of what we are working towards conserving.

Support for NPAT is ultimately a part of the solution. For we are working towards a goal that will ultimately serve the whole and help to create a legacy we can be proud of for generations to come.