NORTH TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST

THE DRAGONFLYER

Chilly Pause

In a recent *New Yorker* cartoon, a heavily bundled walker announces to her similarly attired companion that winter is the “big scarf, oversized sweater, puffy jacket, no peripheral vision season.”

While the old adage that “there’s nothing between North Texas and the North Pole but a fence post” can still ring true, in our milder winters we tend to take a more optimistic view of winter months. It’s just a seasonal timeout, a quiet dormancy, a brief standstill, a moment for a deep breath and planning.

The Dragonflyer hopes that your winter pause is warmly recharging in anticipation of spring and summer projects. In this issue, we look at a native fungi, bird, and prairie flower that embrace the cold weather, our chapter’s continuing focus on making nature accessible, and one of our prominent chapter friends. We also profile a native tree with a dominant and often unappreciated impact on Texas habitats.

~ Happy New Year!

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ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL

BY: VAL REISS

We have all experienced the benefits of nature, from the calm it can bring us after a stressful day at work to the thrill we experience when uploading that perfect shot to iNaturalist or marking that one lifer bird off of our life list. As Master Naturalists, we understand the value and importance of nature. It is a large part of our mission as a chapter to share that love of nature and engage with our greater community.

Importance of DEI efforts in the chapter

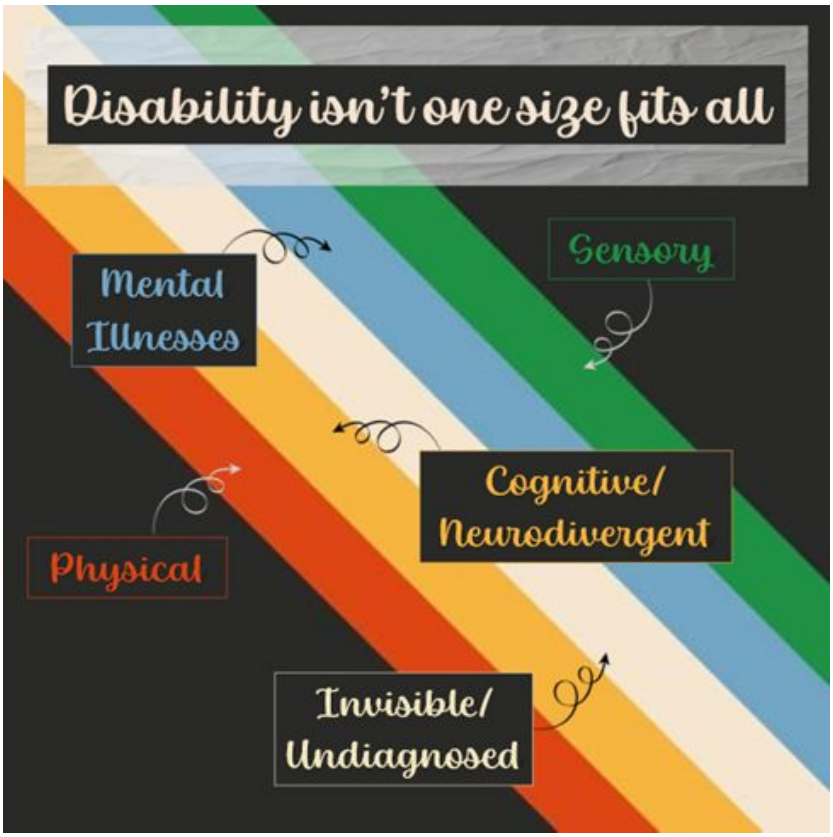
Often misunderstood and maligned, DEI is simply an acronym that stands for "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." Regardless of the rhetoric used in our divisive world, the underlying principle is actually something that all of us can get behind: to welcome and include everyone regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, and other marginalized groups. The Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex is one of the most diverse regions in our country and has many communities with limited access to nature or ways to get involved in environmental efforts.

As Master Naturalists, we also innately understand that ecosystems thrive because of their biodiversity. The variations and differences between species enriches the natural landscapes that we love and seek to protect. If we aren't reaching out to and embracing the diversity within our local North Texas communities, then we're not properly serving that community as a whole. From all of the different interests that we enjoy sharing with the public to the different backgrounds and talents we bring to our organization, our chapter also thrives on its diversity. It is in this spirit that the DEI Committee was formed.

ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL (CONTINUED)

Disability isn't one size fits all

When most people think about disability, a person in a wheelchair of the iconic blue disability symbol often comes first to mind. But disabilities come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from the visible disability of being wheelchair-bound to those disabilities that we can't readily see such as autism or hearing impairment. During Disability Pride Month each July, you may have seen the disability awareness flag. That flag represents the diversity within the disabled community. Each of the five stripes stands for a type of disability:



- **Green** for sensory disabilities such as blindness or hearing impairment
- **Blue** for mental illnesses such as PTSD
- **White** for invisible or undiagnosed disabilities
- **Yellow** for cognitive and neurodivergent conditions such as autism or ADHD
- **Red** for physical disabilities such as spinal injuries or pregnancy

There is also meaning behind the dark grey background. This color represents those disabled individuals lost due to having gone undiagnosed or forgotten to a system that doesn't include them. Disability isn't 'one size fits all,' so accessibility can't only take one form if we truly wish to reach out and include everyone.

ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL (CONTINUED)

How does accessibility fit into our mission?

The Dallas-Fort Worth area has a slightly older population than the national average and has a significant population of people living with one or more disabilities (estimates are around 800,000 people).

But not everyone has the same access to nature in order to experience those benefits. People with disabilities face myriad challenges when trying to experience nature. Many nature areas don't include information about accessibility on their website or brochures in order for a person with a disability to determine if they can access that site. For the locations that do, their consideration of accessibility may be limited to the presence of disability parking spots. Having disabled parking available simply means that the person can only enjoy the parking lot. The trail and nature area itself might not be accessible to them.

Patti Bonnin gives an introductory talk on how to make nature spaces accessible and inclusive. She also led an extended workshop out at the Trinity River Audubon Center to provide further real-life examples of accessibility and ideas for making spaces more accessible.

In order for nature truly to be accessible for those with disabilities, many things need to be taken into account. What is the surface of the trail made from and is it friendly to those in wheelchairs or using walkers? Does the trail have clear boundaries that can be detected by someone who is blind and using a cane? Are there benches along the trail for those with chronic fatigue conditions? Is the signage clear and understandable to those with developmental disabilities (as well as for our younger natural enthusiasts)? Are there community support systems in place for those who require an interpreter or the inclusion of a caregiver?

ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL (CONTINUED)

The DEI Committee has been utilizing a tool called Birdability to evaluate and describe the accessibility of the nature spaces we routinely utilize as part of our program. Birdability is a checklist that walks you through all of the barriers–from parking to walking the trails to utilizing the facilities–that those with disabilities might face when trying to enjoy a trail or birding site. After going through the checklist, you're then armed with all the information needed to provide a detailed description of the accessibility of the nature area. This information can then be used by someone with a physical, sensory, mental, or other disability to determine if that space is truly accessible for their unique needs.

The DEI Committee has also been working with the Training Class Coordinators to include accessibility considerations on the new class onboarding survey making needed accommodations on class trips easier to carry out. Class members who prefer to discuss their accessibility issues privately are also invited to contact the Training Class Coordinators directly.

It can be overwhelming–both as a chapter and as individuals–to think about how we can make an impact on the issue of accessibility. But many times, all it takes is asking "What do you need?" Reaching out to those with disabilities and simply asking what you can do to help can make a world of difference.

ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL (CONTINUED)

What's next for the DEI Committee?

Krista Varney and Coy Poitier are creating social media content with a focus on environmental issues for different groups during awareness events such as mental health awareness week, Native American heritage month, and Black History Month. Ginger Greatens and Krista Varney are also working on an upcoming land acknowledgment. In addition the DEI book club just had its first meeting in November and the team is looking to organize a movie club.

Our committee also worked with the Communications Team to craft and add an inclusion statement to the NTMN public website that proclaims: "We Welcome Everyone. As with nature, North Texas Master Naturalists value diversity, equity and inclusion" and affirms that we "are committed to creating an environment that is equitable, accessible and welcoming for all."

If you'd like to get involved with the DEI Committee, just reach out to us at diversity&inclusion@ntmn.org. To specifically get involved with the Accessibility Subcommittee, please contact Val Reiss at reissval@gmail.com or 979-204-2310.

ADVANCING ACCESSIBILITY OF NATURE FOR ALL

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iNat Species Feature

Smoked Oysterling

Resupinatus applicatus Photo by: **@*texotics* on iNat**

A small fungus that can commonly be found growing out of pieces of decayed wood, oysterlings get nutrition by excreting enzymes into their environment, breaking down organic decaying matter which they retrieve through their mycelia. This is why they are classified as saprotrophic.

Oysterlings, found year round but a bit more often during the winter months due to the abundance of organic matter on the ground, are distinguished by their namesake cap. Flipping over logs during a hunt for amphibians at the abandoned fish hatchery near White Rock Lake, Caleb Hinojos discovered this striking group of mushrooms. Ever vigilant for fungi (and photogenic nature) regardless of his original mission, Caleb instantly recognized that the interstellar appearance of these oysterlings was a 'money shot' and snapped this photo. His keen vision was rewarded with best photo in the plants and fungi category at the 2025 TMN state conference.

Have any weird, noteworthy and exciting observations, or see something incredible posted in the iNat community? Share it with *The Dragonflyer* at dragonflyer@ntmn.org!

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE BY: CALEB HINOJOS

It has been roughly six weeks since we left the Delta. Slogging through the piney woods was a difficult endeavor due to heavy rains and an unfortunate loss of supplies. Ma and Paw are still holding up ok, but Eileen is having a hard time. She appears to have some type of cough that will not relent. Hopefully as we push west things will clear up. In the last couple of weeks, the forests have thinned out into something that looks like what I believe a plain to be. Tall grasses cover the terrain as far as the eye can see. There is also a different type of tree that seems to be scattered irregularly across the landscape. It looks unlike any other tree that I am familiar with, and has a curious inability to grow upright. Its canopies are inextricable and covered with large thorns measuring the length of a child's finger. The foliage is thin and comes off the branch in a wishbone type of shape. Some have said that it has some medicinal properties. The wood acts as good tinder and adds a unique type of flavor to food, while the bean pods have an extraordinary sweetness to them. Hopefully the provisions we receive from this can last for a bit, at least until we get to a trading post.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

This is how I would imagine a settler from a bygone era might look upon a honey mesquite tree, *Neltuma glandulosa*. Their range to the east begins in northwest Louisiana, but doesn't really become concentrated until you get to the western side of Dallas County. As you venture into the Southwest of the state it becomes a predominant fixture among the arid landscape.

One of the first traits that stands out about the mesquite is its structure. Before you get close enough to point out a single leaf or thorn, the overall shape of the honey mesquite can be quite unique compared to other trees. Although it can grow to heights between twenty to forty feet, it rarely seems to do this in a linear fashion. Rather, they usually demonstrate an ornate type of twisting and turning which gives way to large canopies that splinter into hundreds of directions.

As you get closer to the tree you can begin to see that the trunk itself has quite a story to tell. Not only does it show the twists and turns of growth, but the scars of fallen branches, as well as the colonists that have decided to set up shop among the ridges of the bark. Of particular interest are the lichens of the honey mesquite. Through years of observation, I have recognized that this yellow and grey pair of lichen are always colonized on older trees. I have not found any information about this in the literature, but when leading a night hike a few years ago, I shined my UV light on the tree and noticed a radically different array of fluorescent colors coming from the lichens. Some were orange while other were shades of red and brown, and of course there was yellow. I imagine this might have to do with the different residents which exist in the lichen structures because in the visible spectrum all I saw were yellow and grey.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

I have also noticed many older trees with mistletoe growing from the branches. This is due to the canopy which acts as a central hub to a variety of birds throughout a year. Speaking of canopies, theirs can be spectacular and reach towards the sky like that of a cathedral ceiling. When standing underneath, the branches seem to envelop you with an embrace that likens to that of a spider web.

If you happen to come upon a tree in bloom, which can happen up to four times a year, you will notice that the catkins are yellow and sometimes white. Although I haven't found them to have a strong aroma, they are well visited by many native bees and provide a great place to observe a variety of other flying insects as well. Once these flowers are pollinated, they will form into a long green bean that eventually plumps up and hardens into the seed pods that we associate with the mesquite trees.

Throughout its history honey mesquite has remained a staple in the lives of those who chose to reside in its habitats. For at least hundreds if not thousands of years the indigenous peoples of the American Southwest utilized this tree for a variety of purposes. The sap of the tree arguably had the widest range. Apparently, it was a great resource to utilize as glue. Examples of this include attaching feathers for adornment, and the binding of arrowheads to arrows. As the sap is exposed to the environment it begins to darken to a black color which led it to be utilized as dye for hair and textiles, as well as a paint for pottery. It was also used as a barrier on open sores, mixed in water to soothe sore throats, and even nibbled on as a sweet treat.

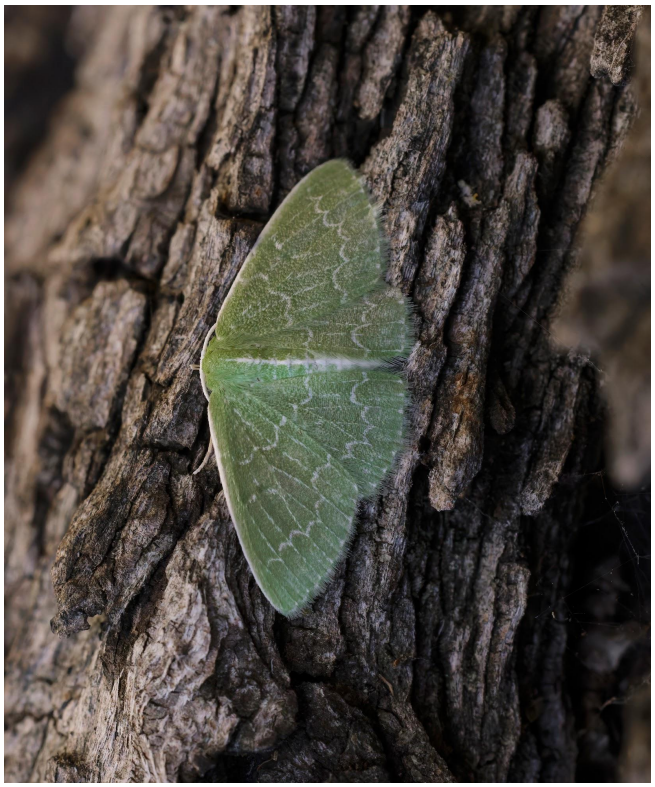
THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

Another part of the tree which can be utilized for medicinal purposes are the leaves. When chewed together they make a poultice which can be applied directly to sore gums. The pods were arguably the most important part of the tree for ancient human survival. Although the pods are quite hard, they have a sweet flavor to them and when ground up are used to make tortillas and cakes which were a staple of many indigenous groups. With regard to the wood, it is used for a variety of purposes. Many ranchers utilize the wood for building fence posts or other structures on their property, while the thinner branches have been added to livestock diet to be used as roughage. More commonly it is used in the smoking or grilling of food, and has become a staple of south Texas BBQ.

Apart from being a useful tree for humanity, it can support a wide variety of wildlife. One of my favorite places in Dallas County to see how beneficial they can be is at Mi Familia Park in Grand Prairie. I have been going here for decades, but when I became a naturalist, I developed a stronger awareness to how much life this grove was supporting. During migration this park transforms into a popular spot for migratory birds. I was fortunate enough to get a good shot of this hooded oriole during the couple of weeks that it decided to hang around. Throughout the summers it is a good place for natives to raise their young. I almost always see two generations of eastern bluebirds per year at this location as well as tons of mockingbirds, mourning doves, and western kingbirds.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

Reptile-wise, I have seen plenty of Texas spiny lizards and western rat snakes scaling the tree in search of their next meal. Mammalian life includes eastern fox squirrels as well as mice and rats. Apart from the lichens mentioned earlier I have also noticed a really interesting variety of bracket fungus on these trees. The top looks very similar to bark while the bottom has this strangely smooth texture which is full of pores. Invertebrates are also all over this tree, and in particular those in Hymenoptera. Bees utilize the cavities as hives, and apparently honey made from honey mesquite blooms is quite a delectable treat. I have spotted wasps of different types which include both solitary parasitoids as well as those that are communal. Ants always seem to be in, on, and around the tree though I am not able to get that great of an ID due to their size and how consistently they are moving around. Of course, no invertebrate list would be complete without moths and beetles which makes sense why so many predators love these trees. I have also spotted Carolina mantis ootheca among many of them. This is a compilation of cool things that I have found among the trees.



Though the thought of all of this wildlife may get some folks excited, as Europeans who focused on rangeland for livestock expanded westward, they did not share that sentiment and determined that this tree was not only a nuisance, but should be erased from the landscape. Reasons for this were varied but one of the most common was the fact that the root system of honey mesquite is extremely large. They can have a circumference of around 50 feet with a taproot that can extend over one hundred and fifty feet down. This means that the grasses for grazing would most likely not be able to thrive due to nutrient and water competition. Combined with their expansive canopy it is no wonder that competition beneath the mesquite is so tough.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

Another reason that ranchers didn't like mesquite trees is because of their thorns. If one of their livestock got caught up in these it could cause serious harm such as a punctured eye or foot. Along this same vein ranchers hated the mesquite because livestock could succumb to something called mesquite sickness after eating a large quantity of the bean pods. Although this did not always result in death it was a possibility that many would rather avoid than gamble on. Due to these issues, management and eradication strategies became a necessity.

In the 1959 the Texas Experimental Agricultural Station released a report which covered topics such as identification, mechanical and chemical removal, as well as long term benefits of controlling their growth. Mechanical removal methods were pretty straightforward such as pulling up of small saplings, utilizing heavy equipment to bust up roots using a cutting blade, or uprooting trunks using a tractor and chain. The chemical means were a bit more-tricky and were often to be used at specific times of year or certain sizes of trees. One of the more aggressive methods was the direct application of gasoline, diesel, or other fuels to root systems of trees that hadn't yet grown into a sizeable stand. As I read it all I could think about was how much of an impact this would have to the soil over the long term, but it goes to show how much this tree was disliked.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE (CONTINUED)

Overall, what took me most by surprise was how small the section for benefits was. It only consisted of five paragraphs and a couple of the paragraphs still made disparaging remarks about the tree. On my initial reading I thought that this was quite uncalled for, but after some time had passed I began to think about what was not said in this handbook. Not a single nod to any indigenous knowledge was made. Unfortunately, this seems to be a standard practice as opposed to a one off, but it poses a very interesting question for discussion. If knowledge hasn't been presented in a specific way by specific institutions of authority, then should it be accepted? Though there is no single answer to the question it is interesting that this jagged tree has so much knowledge around it that this question should even arise.

This photo, taken using a full spectrum camera with a 665nm wavelength filter, isolates the orange-red hues in the image.

In the end, this is an amazing tree with quite a history in its native territories. From giver of life to thorn in the side, honey mesquite is truly an organism that fully embraces the concept that there are two sides to every coin. Neither is wrong, but how one approaches the tree can drastically determine how they will see and utilize it. Hopefully the next time you see one you will give it a closer look and see what you can learn from it.

THE DUALITY OF HONEY MESQUITE

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AFFINITY CORNER: NATIVE PLANT AFFINITY GROUP

BY: NANCY WILSON

Like biological affinity, NTMN affinity groups strengthen the interaction of like-minded members. The Dragonflyer caught up with Nancy Wilson, one of the members of the Native Plant Affinity Group.

What is it about native plants that creates an affinity?

Plants are like any fascination—birds or insects or rocks—if you love them, you want to spend time with other people who love them. As naturalists, we love learning about the roles plants play in nature and in our yards. Our outings give us a chance to hang around interesting people and learn about biodiversity in urban settings. Home landscapes can be great places to spot birds, bees, butterflies and other species.

So, a garden club?

More like an ecosystem club. Members have created expertly cultivated private and public gardens, but they all relate back to nature. We also like to get out in nature just like you. This past year, for example, member Dana Wilson led us on some eye-opening botanic hikes at Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Plants are crucial to the food web, so while we're studying the plants, we're learning about who eats them.

What other adventures has the group had?

Some of our most memorable adventures took us behind the scenes at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Ft. Worth, where we marveled at the world-class herbarium collections and got up close with incredible macrophotography used for both art and science. One highlight was a special tour with Victor Mozqueda, whose photographic artistry brought the book "The Hidden Beauty of Plant Patterns" to life.

AFFINITY CORNER: NATIVE PLANT AFFINITY GROUP (CONTINUED)

All NTMN plant enthusiasts are welcome! Email nativeplantnance@gmail.com to join our mailing list.

What's growing this year?

We have partnered with the Native Plant Society of Texas to develop a workshop on growing native plants from seed. We hope to do more private garden tours and visit some nurseries and commercial growers to encourage the expansion of native plant selections in the marketplace. We would like to do more hikes "on botany time." Many of our outings count for AT credit, but honestly, the real treasure is the laughter, friendships and spontaneous moments that happen when you get together with fellow plant nerds.

iNat Species Feature

Dakota Mock Vervain

(Prairie Verbena)

Glandularia bippinatifida Photo by***: @vince13* on iNat**

Though often overlooked among the tall grasses and showy pollinators of the prairie due to its low sprawling habit, prairie verbena's purple blooms and delicate leaves on woody stems provide a graceful understory texture.

Tucked into thatch in the shadow of tall grasses, it resembles the scrollwork on a medieval manuscript or an ornate hem on a long gown. An early bloomer in March continuing through November, and often in a mild winter into January, it stays green all year. This native of the North American prairies was spotted by Vince Hale along the Spring Creek Preserve trail. A great viewing spot is also among the Big Bluestems at Frankford Prairie.

Have any weird, noteworthy and exciting observations, or see something incredible posted in the iNat community? Share it with *The Dragonflyer* at dragonflyer@ntmn.org!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Diana O'Connor

Diana O'Connor spent the last 20 years of her DISD teaching career at Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School where she was also school librarian. Inspired by Master Naturalist friends, she joined our Chapter in 2025 upon retirement. Diana has learned so much about the blackland prairie and its history through projects like the Oakland Cemetery, and enjoys working at John Bunker Sands and Trinity Audubon Center where she helps kids have hands-on experiences with nature. She enjoys teaching and working with children of all ages as well as reading, traveling, hiking, pickleball, bicycling, spending time with family (including three children and four grandchildren) and friends. She feels as though she has found her tribe of fellow nerds, and is actively recruiting friends and educators to become Master Naturalists.

Steve Houser

Steve is the founder and owner of Arborilogical Services, one of the first certified arborists in Texas, and an accomplished tree climber. He and his firm have received numerous industry recognitions, including repeated Arborist of the Year awards by the Texas Forest Service and Texas Urban Forestry Council. A prominent student of and advocate for Texas forests, Steve is a Trustee with the Texas Historic Tree Coalition and the Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee and co-author of Comanche Marker Trees of Texas. He finds great joy and honor in developing friendship with Native American tribes with roots in Texas and learning from our first true naturalists and their profound connection to the natural world. On Earth Day each year, Steve transforms into TREEmendous Tom, the joyous education tree (shown here with his sister, Winnie the Willow).

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)

Monica Morrison

In addition to a career in the financial and tech industry, Monica Morrison has spent more than 25 years volunteering at big cat rescues and participating in wild cat research both in Texas and other countries. In 2017 Monica founded Texas Native Cats and continues to champion their cause. A North Texas Master Naturalist since 2012, she is grateful for the support by our Chapter to her organization in protecting Texas wilderness. Monica has also enjoyed working on Big Chapter projects with our chapter, as well as learning about the significance of historic trees with the Historic Tree Project.

Emily Black

After a freeze killed all of the landscaper-recommended plants for her yard, Emily Black resolved to learn about and install native plants herself. Beginning with a Turk's cap, her new native-planted yard also introduced her to the insects, birds, and mammals that responded to the habitat. That thrilling success led her to joining the Texas Native Plant Society and then our chapter in 2023. Although she currently works in healthcare IT for Epic, the makers of MyChart, her passion continues to be native plants. Emily is also very excited to fill the new role of Co-Communications Director for our chapter in the new year. She is most likely to be found working and identifying species at Oakland Cemetery with her daughter and restoring the diverse habitat of a parcel of land she purchased near Palo Pinto Mountains State Park.

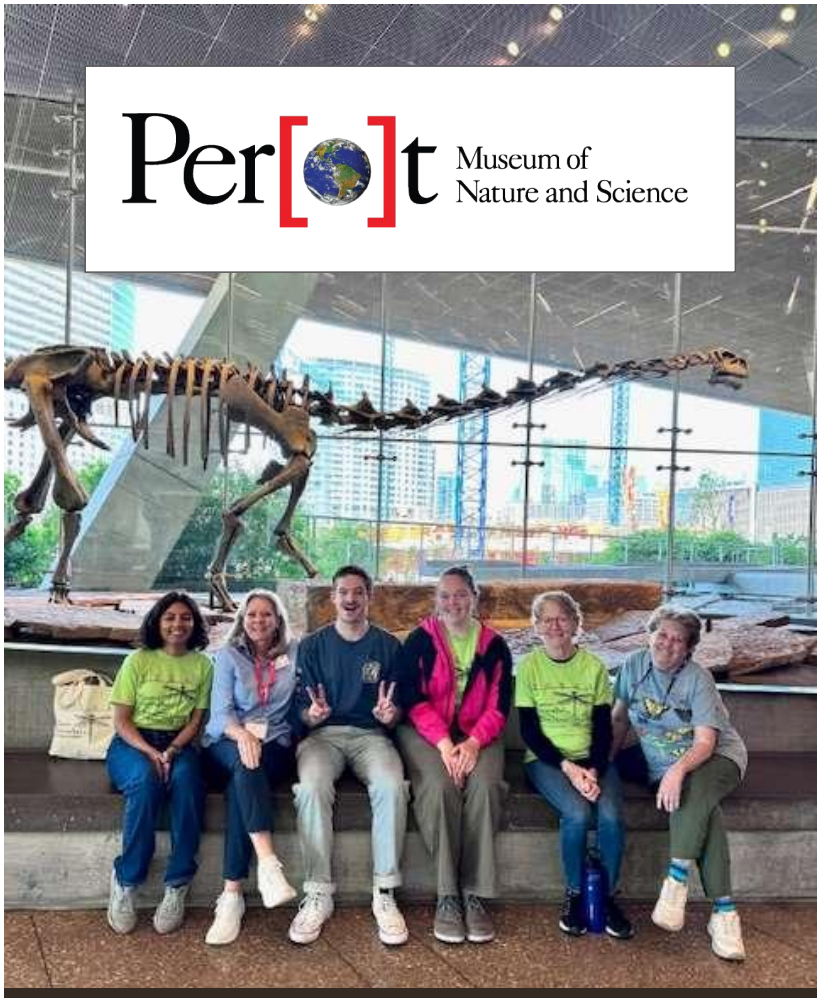
INAT: @emilydblack | **JOINED:** May 2021 | **OBS:** 5112 | **SPECIES:** 1824 | **IDS:** 1742

FRIENDS OF NTMN

Perot Museum of Nature and Science BY GIGI CHANCE

The Perot Museum of Nature and Science has been a valued partner of the Master Naturalists since 2019. In addition to working with a wonderful staff and meeting a diverse group of museumgoers, one of the most exciting aspects of this partnership is the wide range of opportunities available to volunteers.

The Perot museum presents an exciting learning experience that allows you to see behind the scenes and explore all aspects of the museum. Volunteer placement areas include the 3D Dino Puzzles, Moody Family Children's Museum, Bio Lab, Challenge Lab, Science on the Spot, guest services, exhibition hall support, TECH Truck, and traveling exhibition support. In March, 2026, the museum joins in celebrating the FIFA World Cup coming to North Texas with a traveling exhibit revealing how physics, biology, and technology shape the sport of soccer on and off the field.



NTMN Class of 2025 member volunteers

The Moody Family Children's Museum, expanded from 6,250 to nearly 11,000 square feet, now welcomes visitors with a recent upgrade. This space allows young explorers to tinker, participate in engineering activities, enjoy an immersive Imaginarium experience, and explore a bigger outdoor area with climbing and water features. The area is a cheerful spot for children, and volunteers facilitate hands-on activities about science and nature. This part of the museum was created for children eight years old and under to explore and have fun together with their parents.

FRIENDS OF NTMN (CONTINUED)

Perot Museum of Nature and Science

By Kevin1086 - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikipedia Commons

Beyond typical volunteer roles, Master Naturalists participate in special events at the museum. For example, NTMN volunteers had an incredible opportunity to be part of the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, when they worked at Klyde Warren Park and the Perot Museum lawn handing out protective glasses, helping visitors craft eclipse pins, and sharing fun educational activities through the TECH truck. Master Naturalists were also special guests at the debut event of the Audubon Texas Lights Out film screening at the Perot Theater. This offered a wonderful chance to inspire city officials and state leaders to help protect migrating birds.

Last year marked the first-ever group workday with members of the 2025 Master Naturalist training class. The team created diorama scenes in the Challenge Lab, conducted experiments in the Bio Lab, and collaborated with the public in the Science on the Spot for a hands-on activity about bird beaks. The Perot Museum is proud to host a Master Naturalist Group Day annually in the future. Please keep an eye out for information about this event.

By Paul M. Budd - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, Wikipedia Commons

FRIENDS OF NTMN (CONTINUED)

Perot Museum of Nature and Science


By Joe Mabel, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikipedia Commons

The Perot offers an excellent opportunity for you. Volunteers can work flexible shifts throughout the week, including mornings, afternoons, and weekends and receive discounts at the museum store and cafe; parking is available in a secure employee parking lot next to the building; a dedicated volunteer lounge contains secure lockers; and staff members are always assigned to the areas where Master Naturalists work and are ready to assist and answer questions.

iNat Species Feature

Cedar Waxwing

Bombycilla cedorum Photo by***: @jcat* on iNat**

As cold weather arrives in late autumn, hard-partying cedar waxwings show up in flocks. Their signature high-pitched whistles as they imbibe, possumhaw, cedar, and any other available berries signals "it's 5 o'clock somewhere." Fermented berries frequently send them careening into windows.

Native to North and Central America, they winter in the southern US and Central America. Before berries ripen, they will also dine on pollen and insects. Named after the red tip on the adult wings which resembles sealing wax, waxwings have sleek brownish-gray feathers and a yellow belly. Their black bandit-like eye mask provides notice that they'll skip the tab, leaving only partially digested berries as a tip. Cowbird parents who lay an egg in a cedar waxwing nest rue their decision. The cowbird fledglings rarely survive the all-fruit diet of a waxwing clan.

Have any weird, noteworthy and exciting observations, or see something incredible posted in the iNat community? Share it with *The Dragonflyer* at dragonflyer@ntmn.org!

Final Thoughts

The massive glaciers of the Icelandic landscape are both shrinking and disappearing. The glacier Okjokull (pictured on the left in 2003) disappeared in 2014.

Now it is just a path of ice on a volcano, known simply as Ok. A plaque was erected in 2019 where it used to be:

A Letter to the Future

Ok is the first Icelandic glacier to lose its status as a glacier.
In the next 200 years all our glaciers are expected
to follow the same path.
This monument is to acknowledge that we know
what is happening and what needs to be done.
Only you know if we did it.

Photos from Wikipedia commons.

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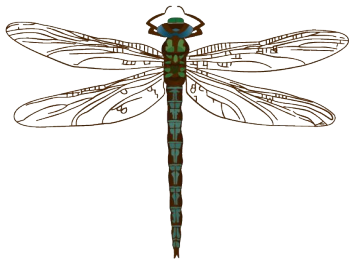
We encourage and welcome your submissions and questions.

Please contact dragonflyer@ntmn.org



The Dragonflyer is a quarterly publication providing educational and informational content for NTMN members, engaging with the organizations and groups with whom we volunteer, and fostering connections and conversations. In furthering our mission, think of it as the home for serious and substantive (even if frequently light-hearted) project reports and ecological exploration, analysis, insights, and deep-dives. Please reserve more routine chapter business, administrative news, and recognitions for other media (website, email, and chapter meeting announcements).