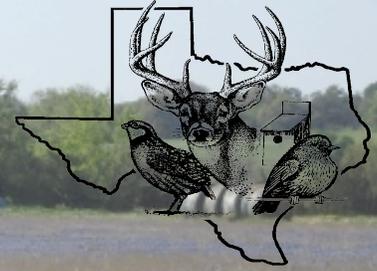


WASHINGTON COUNTY

Wildlife Society

1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, Texas 77833

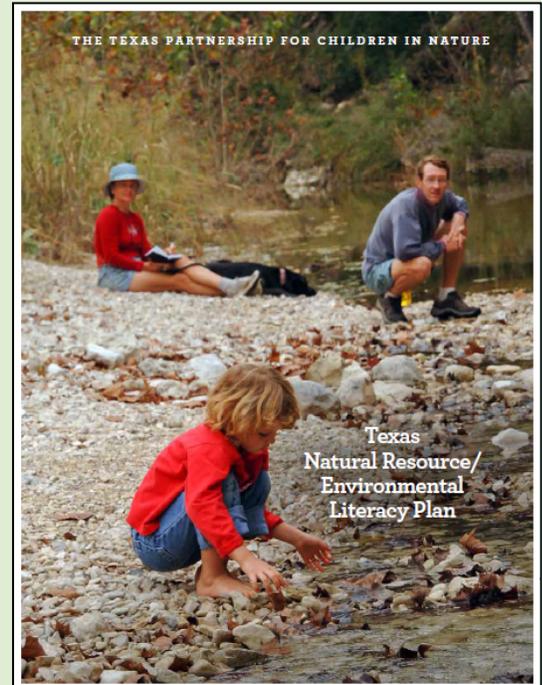
Telephone 979-277-6212 Fax 979-277-6223 www.wcwildlife.org

Building a Model for Excellence in Natural Resource Literacy

By Margaret Lamar, Greenvine Member

It's been an exciting year for outdoor education in Washington County and across the state. As regions across Texas look to increase children's access to outdoor experiences, Washington County is leading the way in that momentum. With the longstanding success of the Washington County Fair and its deep agricultural and hunting heritage, Washington County is known by many across the state as one of the strongest models for conservation education.

This past January, Texas took a bold step forward in creating a Natural Resource/Environmental Literacy Plan that will fuel the efforts of many schools and organizations for the coming decade. Mrs. Laura Bush unveiled this plan with a keynote speech that not only had the audience in tears, but even she teared up as she spoke of the importance of taking children outdoors. In an op-ed that ran in San Antonio and Houston that day, she stated, "The more time spent outside, the better the achievement levels inside our state's schools and classrooms. But this issue goes beyond achievement. We all, parents, educators, community leaders, and every Texas citizen, need to come together to find new ways to engage children with the natural environment. Our state's future depends on it. If we do not instill a love for the natural world and its care in our children, who will care for Texas in the years to come?"



It is precisely this call to action that Washington County is known for—connecting its youth to the land. Evidence of this can clearly be seen in programs at the Brenham ISD Outdoor Learning Center, the Grades 3-6 Outdoor Classroom program, and the Grades 7-8 L.A.N.D.S program, among many other school and community efforts that are going strong due to longstanding community/school partnerships. Brenham ISD's outdoor education is a flagship model for others in our region and across the state.

There is also a new effort underway with the Lake Somerville Resource Management Partnership, which has been formed to co-manage lake properties with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. One of the primary focus areas of the Partnership is to take outdoor education to the next level by increasing education opportunities at Lake Somerville. The Partnership aims to make use of all of the advanced talent in the area, including Texas A&M, to build a coordinated, multi-county approach to excellence in Natural Resource Literacy that will serve all children, land owners, and citizens for generations to come.

If you are interested in learning more about this effort or would like to get involved, please contact Margaret Lamar at gretalamar@gmail.com or at 979-551-0585.

To view the Texas Natural Resource/Environmental Literacy Plan, visit www.TexasChildrenInNature.org, and to learn more about Mrs. Bush's new conservation efforts, visit www.TakingCareofTexas.org.

WCWS Contact Info:**OFFICERS for 2013:**

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Doodle Johnston, Society Vice Pres., (979) 278-3855,
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Richard Thames, Society Treasurer, (979) 278-3053,
rbthames@industry.net
Monterey White, Society Secretary, (979) 836-3418,
whiteoakfarm@gmail.com

WMA DIRECTORS for 2013:**Greenville WMA**

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Gary Lee, Vice-Director, (713) 208-5970, glee2614@comcast.net

Sun Oil Field WMA

Ward McDonald, Director, (979) 836-0823

Vice-Director - OPEN**Rocky Creek WMA**

Waldo Nienstedt, Director, (979) 289-2393
Jon Knapp, Vice-Director, (979) 289-5533,
jknapp@pachoustan.com

Post Oak WMA

Devin Holum, Director, (281) 807-0679, bismark98@yahoo.com
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RESOURCE CONTACTS:

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Stephanie M. Damron, TPWD Natural Resource Specialist II, Washington & Waller Counties, (979) 277-6297, stephanie.damron@tpwd.state.tx.us
Ben Garcia, NRCS District Conservationist, (979) 830-7123 ext. 3, ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov
Debbie Wellmann, Washington Co. Appraisal District, (979) 277-3740, debbiew@brenhamisd.net
Mark Marzahn, Washington Co. Environmental Dept. Director, (979) 277-6290, mmarzahn@wacounty.com
Ann Thames, WCWS Newsletter, (979) 203-3455, newsletter@wcwildlife.org
Jon Wellmann, Youth Liaison, (936) 419-3910, jonwellmann@live.com
Eddie Hines, WC Game Warden, (979) 412-3140, eddie.hines@tpwd.state.tx.us
Operation Game Thief, (800) 792-4263

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Gael and I hope that you are doing very well.



We enjoyed seeing so many WCWS friends at the winter meeting. Dr. Bill Eikenhorst's interesting presentation pointed out many of our continuing Society efforts and described important opportunities we have for positive local involvement during the near future. As always, we're thankful to Dr. Eikenhorst for his high standards and excellent leadership in striving to meet community goals. I agree with him, Washington County is a very special place.

It is clear to me that WCWS members have many diverse wildlife interests, and a wide range of priorities on how to interact with local wildlife. The reality is that this county is now more diverse than the wildlife. This presents challenges, but even more it presents opportunities.

I would like to welcome our newest society president, **Cindy Lyles**. Cindy and her husband, **Don**, have been members of Mt. Vernon since 2007. Please take time to meet Cindy at our next membership meeting on August 23rd.

The August meeting will be a scholarship fundraiser/raffle. This year, WCWS gave out four scholarships to Brenham ISD students in the amount of \$750 each. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend as all donations from the raffle will go towards funding future scholarships!

Thank you for everything, and God bless.

Brian Burke,

Past Society President

Upcoming Deer Study Workshop

Here is a great opportunity to hear some of the states best speakers on White-tailed Deer management. Registration form is included in this newsletter on page 5.

Note the deadline:

Pre-registration is April 10 - \$75.00
Late registration after April 10 - \$100.00.

ADDRESS CHANGES: For address changes, or to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact **Lindsey Franklin**, (979) 277-6212, lindseyfranklin@ag.tamu.edu.

Wildlife Management Plan for Better Habitat

Habitat management for better native plant communities that benefit endemic wildlife species is a noble concept, but many landowners do not properly plan their management endeavors. There is a logical sequence of steps that a landowner should follow once they have decided to plan or manage for wildlife. Not only is a **wildlife management plan** a must, but property owners need to think about their long term desires.

What are your goals? Decide exactly what you would like to do for wildlife and wildlife habitats. Do you want more individuals or a few game species, more birds at your feeder, better white-tailed deer, more ducks on your ponds, or a greater diversity of species in your woods. Do you wish to qualify for a wildlife tax exemption? First and foremost, write down your goals.

What do you really love to work with? Inventory the wildlife and habitats that you already have. After all, you have to know what you have before you know what you need to do. Spend time on your land learning how to identify both the vegetation and the wildlife. Keep a record of what you find and draw a map of the property that includes different types of vegetation, water, springs, cover and other key elements.

What am I willing to trade for wildlife? Diagnose problems and management needs. Decide whether you have the time and money to reach your objectives. Managing for wildlife may require passing up some firewood in a dead tree, modifying existing vegetation, planting some specific species to jump-start an enhancement project, giving up grass for grazing to allow bird nesting and whitetail fawning habitat, or taking land away from other use.

Design a plan. Include a map, a description of the species you wish to benefit, a summary of the planned activities and a

timetable for completion. This is where you identify the objectives — the management practices you will implement within a given time. Completing objectives allows you to achieve your goals. In addition, a timetable will help you put everything in perspective. At this point, consultation with a professional will help you design the right plan for your land and make sure that wildlife habitat benefits the most.

Carry out the management plan. Once you are aware of the management techniques available to achieve your objectives, put those tools into action. Many habitat management techniques can be found from the local department of natural resources. How you carry out your plan will depend on what species you are interested in and the current status of your land.

Evaluate your progress. Keep a journal of your management activities and observations and take photos. Learn how to count or estimate the abundance of species by using various survey techniques and from reading habitat signs. Objectives are always measurable. Without the ability to measure and record it may be difficult to identify changes over the years, even though positive changes may be happening right under your nose. Photos often show dramatic changes over a series of years in areas where habitat management have taken place. A journal will not only provide a yardstick by which to measure your success, but it will also be a source of enjoyment as you look back on the development of your land.

In short, decide what you want to do and then move forward with developing a wildlife management plan to guide you through the process of creating better wildlife habitat on your property. A clearly defined plan will keep you from jumping from project to project and give you a long term vision for the enhancement of your land.

Striving for Improved Communications

WCWS will soon start sending email messages to our members as the primary communication method. The Spring 2013 Newsletter is being distributed this way to test our email address records.

The goal is to provide significant benefits compared to mailing and calling, including:

- ☞ Substantial savings on printing, stationery and postage expenses,
- ☞ Announcements of upcoming events made earlier to allow better personal planning,
- ☞ Save staff and volunteer time, and
- ☞ Increase the ability to notify members of opportunities that become available around the community which are scheduled too late for mail notification.

Everything sent by email can be printed at home, if a paper copy is your preference.

Thanks for your support.

Prescribed Burn Permitting

Recognizing that prescribed burning can be part of practical and beneficial land management methods for reducing fuel buildup, improving wildlife habitat, controlling vegetation, and improving forage; Washington County has put procedures in place to allow prescribed burns during burn bans by permit, when they are planned and conducted by appropriately trained and experienced persons in compliance with a satisfactory burn plan.

A permit to conduct a prescribed burn is only required when a burn ban is in effect. Burn ban status may be checked online at www.co.washington.tx.us or by calling (979) 277-6200 ext. 120. To protect people and property, there are requirements that must be met before a permit to conduct a prescribed burn during a burn ban can be issued. Some of the main points are this. Prescribed burn plans must be in writing, and prepared and reviewed by an appropriately trained and experienced person associated with the Natural

Resources Conservation Service, South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association, Texas Agri-Life Extension Service, Texas Forest Service, or Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The owner or lessee of the property must have liability insurance covering prescribed burning at the burn location in an amount of not less than \$500,000. A physical address number for the property is required. To obtain or verify an address, contact Washington County Rural Addressing at (979) 277-6281. A map, written directions, GPS coordinates, and gate codes for the burn location must also be provided.

This is intended to assist emergency personnel in accessing the property should that become necessary. The prescribed burn may not be conducted until after written authorization has been issued. The permittee must notify the Washington County Commissioner for the precinct in which the burn will occur, the Washington County Sheriff's Office, and the City of Brenham Communications Center before conducting the prescribed burn. The

prescribed burn must be conducted under the supervision of a burn boss who is qualified to act as such by the organization that prepared and/or reviewed the burn plan. The permit application fee is \$25.

All outdoor burning is prohibited during a burn ban, except for very limited activities of which a permitted prescribed burn is one. Also, remember to be cautious when conducting any outdoor burning, even when we are not under a burn ban. For more information on prescribed burn permitting procedures or to get a permit application, contact the Washington County Environmental Dept. at mmarzahn@wacounty.com or (979) 277-6290. Guidelines on general outdoor burning at times without a burn ban are also available.

Mark Marzahn, Sun Oil Member
Environmental Director
Washington County
105 W. Main St., Suite 100
Brenham, Texas 77833

Texas Big Game Awards Coming To Brenham

Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA), a partnership program between the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), is a free hunter and landowner recognition program celebrating the important role that hunters and land stewards play in the conservation of our Texas wildlife resources. The program was started back in 1991 to promote big game hunting and sound wildlife habitat management in Texas. Twenty-two years later, regional Sportsman's Celebrations continue to provide the opportunity for outdoors men and women to celebrate our state's strong outdoor heritage with their families and the thousands of entries received over the years provide an extensive database of exceptional animals that can be used by TPWD to track the effects of weather and land use trends on big game species around the state.

TBGA is excited to be holding the Region 5,6,7 Sportsman's Celebration on May 18th at the Fireman's Training Center in Brenham. Many partners have been deeply involved in the planning of this event including TPWD, Texas AgriLife Extension, NRCS and Washington County Wildlife Society.

This year's event will include a number of activities for the whole family including educational seminars, hunter skills trail, regional trophy display, sausage making demonstration, technical guidance for landowners, falconry demonstration, local exhibitors, raffles, dinner, awards banquet, and much more.

WCWS members are encouraged to volunteer to help with various aspects of this event. Please contact **Larry Pierce** at Texas AgriLife Extension, (979) 277-6212, lw-pierce@tamu.edu.

For more information on TBGA, visit www.TexasBigGameAwards.org

To register for the event, visit <http://www.texas-wildlife.org/resources/events/tbga-regions-5-6-and-7-sportsmans-celebration>



Texas Deer Study Group

Navigating the Deer Management Continuum



Life's better outside.®

Artwork courtesy of Mike Childress and TBGA



DAY 1 Registration begins at 7:00 am & dinner begins at 6:00 pm

- * Reflections on Stewardship - Dr. Dan McBride
- * Fundamentals of Deer Management - Ty Bartoskowitz
- * Plant/Soil responses to Fire and Drought - Steve Nelle
- * Range Management Considerations - Ricky Linex
- * Making a Feeding Program Work - Kent Mills
- * Economic, Ecologic, and Biologic costs of Feeding - Dr. Dave Hewitt
- * Emerging Research Issues - Dr. Randy DeYoung
- * Wildlife Management Association/Coop Perspectives - Warren Blesh
- * Trail Cameras for Surveys and Scouting - Ruben Cantu
- * Status Report on Antler Regs - David Forrester
- * Genetic Management Strategies using Breeder Permits, DMP Facilities, and Traditional Culling - Warren Bluntzer, Dr. Charles DeYoung, Don Draeger
- * Public Perceptions of Deer Breeding - Brian Murphy
- * Market Sustainability of Deer Hunting - Greg Simons
- * Perspective on CWD - Dr. James Kroll, Dr. Bill Eikenhorst, Mitch Lockwood

DAY 2

- * Field Tour on Quail Ridge Ranch with plant i.d., range interpretations, and deer necropsy. (www.quailridgeranch.com)

Agenda subject to change

Date:

April 18-19, 2013

Location:

Somervell County Expo & Texas Amphitheatre - 202 Bo Gibbs Blvd., Glen Rose, TX

Fees: (Fees include meals and handout material)

Pre-Registration (Before 4/10) - \$75

Late Registration (After 4/10) - \$100

No Refunds after 4/10

Hotels

Best Western Expo Center 254-897-1818

Comfort Inn & Suites 254-898-8900

Holiday Inn Express 254-898-9900

La Quinta Inn and Suites 254-898-0679

Name _____

Organization or ranch affiliation (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email (print CLEARLY)

For registration confirmation and all future communication regarding Texas Deer Study Group

Register online at
www.texas-wildlife.org

Mail form and payment to:
We're moving! Please call for mailing address.

Fax: 210-826-4933
Pay by phone: 210-826-2904

Early (Before 4/10): \$75.00

Late (After 4/10): \$100.00

Amount enclosed: _____

Payment Form: Check Visa
 AmEx M/C

Make Checks payable to: TWA-TDSG

Credit Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____ Billing Zip _____

Signature _____

Do you plan to attend Friday's Field Day at Quail Ridge Ranch? YES NO

For more information, contact
Helen Holdsworth at hholdsworth@texas-wildlife.org

Watch a Nest to Help the Birds

Scientists ask for your help to understand why some birds are declining

Over the past 30 years, some bird species have dropped in number (including Barn Swallows, Purple Martins, and Eastern Phoebes, which nest in Texas.) The cause remains unknown, though scientists believe it may be linked in part to declines in the insects that birds eat.

Anyone who loves watching birds can help scientists study and understand their plight by participating in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch citizen-science project (NestWatch.org).

"Every year, thousands of volunteers from across the United States monitor bird nests to help researchers track changes in bird populations," says Dr. Jason Martin, NestWatch project coordinator. "By keeping track of how many eggs birds lay and how many young they raise, anyone can contribute valuable data that may help lead to the conservation of these species."

"Recent population declines in North America's aerial insectivores are a growing concern," said Dr. Amanda Rodewald, director of Conservation Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Conservation efforts to halt or reverse these worrisome trends are unlikely to succeed until we fully understand the causes of decline. One thing limiting our ability to identify factors driving population declines is a lack of information on reproduction."

The nests of many birds are easy to find and observe.



Eastern Phoebe

Barn Swallows often plaster their nests onto beams inside barns and under bridges. Purple Martins use large communal nesting houses, and Eastern Phoebes frequently nest under porch eaves and in garages.

It's especially easy to observe nests built in nestboxes, opening the nestbox about twice a week during nesting season. Texas Bluebird Society offers a free nestbox to individuals who join for \$15 through Volunteer Distributor, Ann Thames in Carmine. (phone: 979-203-3455; email: semahta@yahoo.com).

Participating in NestWatch is free and easy. Information on where and when to look for nests and how to properly monitor them is available at NestWatch.org. NestWatch accepts observations for all nesting birds, so information about any species is welcome.



Save the Date!

Friday, August 23, 2013

Annual Summer Meeting and Raffle Fundraiser
Washington County Events Center

Margaret Lamar, a leader in connecting children and families to outdoor experiences and education in Washington County and the State.

Spring WMA Meetings

Sandtown Wildlife Management Association

DATE: Friday, April 12, 2013 - **TIME:** Social at 6:00PM, Meal at 7:00PM.

LOCATION: Burton Volunteer Fire Department on FM 1697 north of Burton

Meal and beverages will be provided by the WMA. Please bring a salad or dessert to share with everyone.

Ben Garcia, District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS will speak on Rainwater Conservation. **Jacob Weisuhn**, Earth Team Volunteer, will demonstrate the Rainfall Simulator.

Sun Oil Wildlife Management Association

DATE: Friday, April 12, 2013 - **TIME:** 6:00PM

LOCATION: All Sports Building at Hohlt Park, 2425 North Park Street, turn at Lounge Road off of 36 N. Building on left.

Fried chicken, potato salad, baked beans, and bread will be served with tea and sodas. Please bring your favorite dessert to share. Donations to cover meal expenses are welcomed.

Diana Foss will be speaking on Bringing Conservation from the Countryside to your Backyard.

New Year's Creek & Post Oak Wildlife Management Association

DATE: Friday, April 19, 2013 - **TIME:** Social at 6:00PM, Meal at 7:00PM.

LOCATION: Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park; 23400 Park Road 12, off FM 1155

A barbecue meal and beverages will be provided by the WMA. Please bring a dessert to share with everyone. Donations to cover meal expenses are welcomed.

Lexi Maxwell, a Wildland Urban Interface Specialist with the Texas Forest Services, will be speaking on wildfire prevention & preparedness.

Rocky Creek Wildlife Management Association

DATE: Saturday, April 20, 2013 - **TIME:** Social at 6:30PM, Meal at 7:00PM.

LOCATION: Rocky Creek Fire Station

A Hamburger meal and beverages will be provided by the WMA. Please bring a dessert to share with everyone.

Speaker will be **Dallas Renfrew** and his topic for the evening will be Firewise.

Please RSVP to **Waldo Nienstedt** by April 16th at 979-289-2393.

Greenvine Wildlife Management Association

DATE: Friday, April 26, 2013 - **TIME:** 6:00 PM

LOCATION: The Green Door; 5005 FM 2502, Greenvine

Meal and beverages will be provided by the WMA. Please bring a dessert to share with everyone. Donations to cover meal expenses are welcomed.

Mr. Jim Willis, of the Wildlife Habitat Federation, will be speaking on quail habitation & what is required to get this started on your property.

Southern Black Widow Spider (*Latrodectus mactans* Fabricius)

The body of the female is typically shiny black with red markings. On the underside of their rounded abdomen are two reddish triangles that may be united to form an hourglass shape. The male has the abdomen narrower, with white lines along the sides which is shown by immatures as well. Young spiderlings are orange and white, and acquire more black in later developmental stages (instars) until some have little or no red except the hourglass markings.

Adults of both sexes have been found throughout the year in buildings. They can be very common at some locations and times. During the course of a summer a female may lay several egg sacs. The egg sacs are white to tan or gray, pear-shaped to almost globular of tough papery texture, about 1/4 to 1/2-inch in diameter. Each egg sacs contain from 25 to 400 or more eggs. Egg sacs are suspended in the web where the female stands guard nearby. The second stage (instar) spiderlings typically emerge about 4 weeks after egg sac production. Newly emerged spiderlings are not cannibalistic until 10 to 14 days after emergence, whereupon they may suddenly become highly cannibalistic.



Widow spiders feed on a wide variety of arthropods. Red imported fire ants have been reported as their main food in cotton fields of East Texas. Boll weevils, grasshoppers, June beetles, and scorpions are also known prey. They are found in houses, outhouses, cotton fields, trash and dumps. Webs are commonly found in spaces under stones or logs, or holes in dirt embankments, and in barns, rural privies, and other outbuildings. The web is an irregular mesh usually built in a dark spot sheltered from the weather. The webs may also have a retreat, typically a 1/16 to 5/16 inch (2 to 8 cm) circular or semicircular silken tent. The spider spends most of the time in the retreat, venturing out onto the web for web maintenance or when attracted by prey vibrations. Webs are usually placed low to the ground.

Most notorious of all spiders in the United States; venom is highly virulent, but the spider is quite timid. Even when disturbed in its web it attempts to escape rather than to attack.



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