



Charter 2016

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Contents

President's Note.....	1
Native Plant Advocate.....	2
The Bird Corner By David Booth.....	3
Share our Travels: Grand Canyon Trip By Pam Langley.....	4
Rendezvous By Lori Marinovich.....	7
SLAMN CALENDAR.....	9

President's Note

The Seasons are changing. We are in a new year with new opportunities to enrich your life. Nature in Focus has restarted and SWLA Master Naturalists will again be involved with educating adults and children about the natural world around them. The people we talk with at these events are so interested in nature. Some of them are already doing what they can to support a healthy environment. People are mesmerized when we talk about butterflies and trees. They want to learn more about Southwest Louisiana.

I personally enjoy sharing my love of the outdoors. I look forward to meetings with Master Naturalists and sharing my knowledge with others. We have many great events planned for next year. I hope you will add the events to your calendar.

I am inviting you to join us. You don't need to know everything. I have found that there is always something you can teach and learn. I hope that you will share your love of the outdoors with others at upcoming events. You can change the world, one person at a time.

I'll see you out there!

Barbara Morris

If you have any ideas, questions, or comments, I would love to hear from you. 337-302-0168,
barbara080158@gmail.com

Native Plant Advocate

Featured Native Plant Advocate and Grower: Robby Maxwell

Robby Maxwell is a fisheries biologist with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and a longtime native plant advocate who spends a good deal of his free time fiddling around with native plants. Robby certifies native habitats in the southwestern portion of the state for the Louisiana Certified Habitat Program and maintains the map for the program. A native of Austin, TX, obtaining his B.S. in Aquatic Biology and M.S. in Aquatic Resources at Texas State University, Robby moved to Southwest Louisiana in 2010 to chase fish and start a family with his wife, Danielle, and son, Atticus. Like many biologists, he's always had a strong interest in plants and animals, and the more he learned about his adopted home, the more he was intrigued by the largely lost and forgotten prairies of Southwest Louisiana. Prairie conservation and freshwater conservation have a lot of parallels, after all. After fighting mushy ground with a lawnmower for a few years, he realized how ridiculous it all was, and began to restore a seasonally wet half-acre of their hectare homestead to prairie with mostly hand-collected seeds and plants in 2016. He has now revived over an acre to a more productive and beneficial state of native flora and associated fauna, in part due to occasional burns. Since 2021 he has been selling seeds and plants under the moniker Soggy Prairie Stalks and Seeds just to have a more organized way of getting native plants out on the landscape and recouping costs. He often says that he just fights losing battles for a living and for fun. However, he also believes that a cynic is just a disappointed idealist, and maybe we can still turn things around, eventually.



Robby, Atticus and Danielle at home on the Prairie

Thanks Robby, for promoting native plants across Southwest Louisiana!

The Bird Corner

By David Booth

Wintering Hummingbirds

Each winter, there are hundreds of western hummingbird species which travel to south Louisiana to enjoy the more temperate season here. As many as ___ species come to Louisiana from the west for the mild winters. They love flowers and feeders. This year I have had the pleasure of hosting at least four species of hummers. It started last winter when a Buff-bellied Hummingbird spent about two months in the front yard enjoying the available food. I believe that it came back this year, because it has exactly the same habits, hiding spots and demeanor. An ornithologist banded it this year so we will be able to recapture it next year to see if it is a returning bird.



*Buff-bellied Hummingbird,
photo by Charlotte Chehotsky*

Then a male Rufous Hummingbird showed up in the back yard feeding on flowers and a feeder there. It has been hanging around for about a month now but is not seen as

often as the Buffy. Then a Black-chinned Hummingbird started dropping by on occasion for the flowers and feeders. I see it every few days and believe that it is staying nearby but comes by for snacks. On one occasion, a Broad-billed Hummingbird stopped by and I got a couple of photos to ID it. It didn't stay but for a few minutes that I know of, but it made the fourth wintering species a new high for my yard. I love the Buffy. We visit on the front porch all the time and it vocalizes and flits between its' favorite bush, the Porterweed, the oak tree and defends its' feeder from the Black-chinned at times.



*Rufous Hummingbird,
photo by Charlotte Chehotsky*

As Nancy Newfield, a leading Hummingbird Expert, said many, many years ago, the secret of attraction is to have plenty of flowering plants available for the birds to use as a food source. I have mostly Firespike, Turk's cap, Sultan's Turban various salvias and Porterweeds as well as miscellaneous others. I don't have lush flower gardens, but I am working on it. Of course, I have nothing left following the deep freeze, except the cuttings I saved prior to the frost. Most of the plants will come back in the spring but for now, I will have to man the feeders faithfully because the birds are newly dependent on them.

During the freeze, I would bring in the feeders after dark and put them out again by 6 am. I would have to change them out every hour or two to keep them from freezing up in that cold wind and low temps. But it worked. Hummers go into a slowed metabolic state called torpor on cold nights. It slows down their very high metabolism so they can last through the night. Otherwise at the rate they burn calories and their

fat reserve they would deplete all their energy at night and not survive. I was happy that all three of my visitors survived the 5 days of freezing.

It is not too late to get your own wintering hummer. Just put your feeder out using a 3:1 water to white sugar mix and replace it at least weekly in colder weather and more often when it warms up. Don't let mold grow, as it causes infections and can kill hummers. Then keep an eye on it. If a hummer shows up, then put out a second feeder somewhere else in the yard for other birds to use.

It's time now to plant your salvia and other seeds to get ready for the big influx of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds in April. It won't be long before they come through. Enjoy the birds! ♦

Share our Travels: Grand Canyon Trip

By Pam Langley

Last May some friends and I took a trip to the Grand Canyon. It was a breath-taking experience. I thought I'd share some of my pics from the trip. We flew to Las Vegas and rented a car there. So the trip began there.



Apricot Mallow blooming on a road side.

I wasn't expecting to see any flowers but was surprised to find many desert plants blooming.



Joshua Tree outside of Las Vegas

One of my many photos of the canyon on the right. And it is true when they say that a picture cannot do it justice. I tried and tried to take a picture that was even close to the real thing and I never succeeded.





Algebra, the mule I rode around the canyon rim shown on the left. Algebra was very well trained.

A view of the canyon from Algebra's back on the right.

Canada Geese on the rim shown below left. I was surprised to see them there!



Female elk, shown on the left, were all around the park. Locals said that female elk usually come down from the mountains before the males do. We did not see any male elk.





Colorado river seen from the air on the left. The pilot told us that the light green was shallow water and the darker color was deeper. Most of the river we saw was the light green color

And lastly, I just had to share the picture of the sea shells (looked like oysters to me) that were embedded in the canyon rim, shown on the right.

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Rendezvous

By Lori Marinovich

SLAMN will be hosting the Louisiana Master Naturalist 2023 Rendezvous. Here are some details as outlined by Lori Marinovich.

Location: Hackberry, LA

Mainstay Suites Hotel

700 Main Street, Hackberry, LA 70645

- o Hotel: Christine Smith 337-762-3128
- o Contract for 50 rooms at \$96 per night/2 nites or if only one night \$129 / night
- Rooms have 2 q or 1 K plus fold out couch, with kitchenette
- Includes Breakfast
- o Community Center Building will host ALL conference Activities.
- o RV options: Island RV Park, 1230 Main St, Hackberry, LA 337-762-3185
- o Cameron Parish Tourist Bureau: Carolyn Miller (SLAMN) 337-515-7155

Proposed Schedule of Events:

Friday

4:00 pm Raffles and Silent Auction are set up in the Community Building

4:00 registration begins

Social Hour from 5:00 - 6:30

6:30 Light Dinner and Speaker Introduction

Bette LMNA Welcome

Barbara Morris SLAMN welcome

Andy Tingler – Cameron Preservation, Author CONFIRMED

Scooter Trosclair – LDWF Coastal Ecology Overview

8:00 Gary Kratzer Stargazing -- night activity or social at Local Camp/ community park

7:10 is sunset. After speakers we all go to the park for stargazing.

Saturday

Lunch boxes in the field -- everyone to pick up box lunch at AM departure from central meeting space.

Water provided at each session location.

7:00am site sessions begin. Staggered every 30 minutes to various sites.

7 am; 7:30; 8, 8:30

Team leaders/ helpers needed for each station

1. Blue Goose Walking Trail - - Sara Baker McNeese Biology Reptiles
2. Sabine Refuge/West Cove fishing pier SLAMN LDWF Robby Maxwell
3. Sabine Wetland Walkway Scooter Trosclair LDWF
4. Peveto Bird Sanctuary SLAMN David Booth
5. Little Florida Beach SLAMN Carolyn Smith, Beth Rist

3:00 return to hotel

4 pm LMNA board meeting in Main Hall

5:00 Raffle and Silent Auction open

6:30 dinner

7:00 Business meeting, Dorman Award Ceremony, Key note Speaker

Sunday 10am -1pm

Option 1 meet at Soggy Prairie Stalks and Seeds

Option 2 Take Creole Nature trail through Cameron and up through Pintail loop to Maxwell Prairie

Additional activities- Ongoing in the meeting Hall or near headquarter hotel

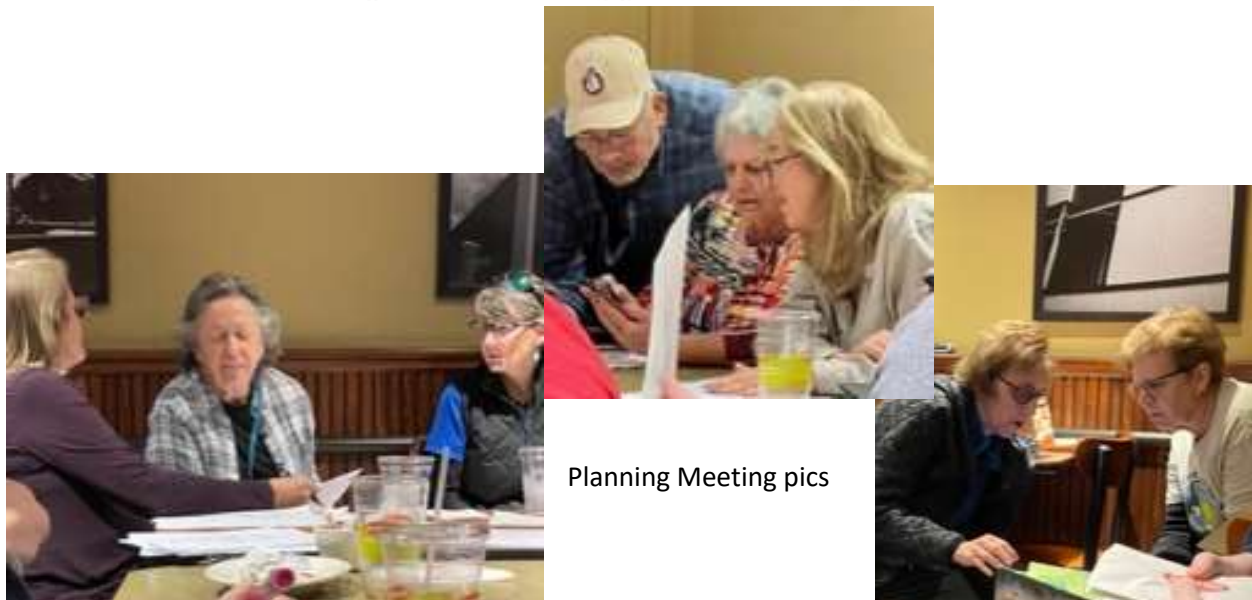
- LMNA photo contest- Facebook? LMNA
- Book Sales
- Silent Auction
- Raffle
- Hands On activity for the last session Saturday 2-4 pm slot? Build something session?
- I-naturalist scavenger hunt?
- Booths

All SLAMN members are encouraged to get involved with Rendezvous this year. Let's show other Master Naturalists our wonderful corner of the state and load on lots of hospitality too!

Our highlight will be the Creole Nature Trail. If you are not that familiar with it, now is the time to learn! You can download an app that can start your exploration.



Louisiana's Creole Nature Trail All-American Road is a hands-on opportunity to experience one of America's untamed natural wonders near Lake Charles, LA. Feel inspired and amazed as the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road leads you into the unsurpassed splendor of Louisiana's renowned coastal wetlands, wildlife refuges, and rippling marshes.



Planning Meeting pics

SLAMN CALENDAR

Dates shown in Red are class dates.

2023	
Jan 14	Nature in Focus, Tuten Park Topic: Trees
Jan 21	Class: Applied Natural Science
Feb 4	Class: Biology / Ecology
Feb 11	Nature in Focus, Tuten Park Topic: Backyard Habitat
Feb 18	Class: Backyard Habitat
Mar 1	Board Meeting Tuten Park
Mar 4	Class: Bird Study
Mar 8	Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery Event (TBA)
Mar 11	Class: Fungi and Mushrooms
Mar 18	Nature in Focus, Riverside Park Topic: Birds
Mar 24-25	SWLA Garden Expo Booth, Burton Coliseum
Apr 1	Class: Aquatic Inverts
Apr 5	General Meeting Social – 5:30, Meeting – 6:00pm
Apr 8	Field Trip (TBA)
Apr 9	EASTER
Apr 21-23	Rendezvous Hosted by SWLA Master Naturalists, Hackberry
Apr 22	Class: Coastal Ecology, Hackberry
Apr 29	Class: Herpetology
Apr 27-May 1	City Nature Challenge
May 13	Class: Cajun Prairie, Gray Rance
May 20	Class: Riverine Ecology and Fish
May 27	Class: Longleaf Pine Savannah
May 26-28	Allen Acres Annual BBB (Bogs, Birds, Butterflies, Baygalls)
June 7	Board Meeting
June 10	Class: Outreach / Graduation
July 12	General Meeting Social - 5:30, Meeting – 6:00pm
July 15	Field Trip – Family Fun Day
Sept 6	Board Meeting (Nominations for Board Members and Committees)
Oct 4	General Meeting (Election of Board Members and Committee Assignments)
Oct 7	Field Trip
Dec 6	Board Meeting
Dec 6	Board Meeting