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President’s Note

Happy Spring!

My yard is bursting with native plants. Self-heal, Bidens, Goldenrod, Lyre-leaf Sage, Dandelion, and the list goes on. The longer I am in the organization, the more I am learning about native plants. You are welcome to come out with a shovel or just to walk around. I learn something new every time we get together.

Nature in Focus has resumed with SLAMN providing educational information to kids and their parents. In March, we went to Booker Fowler and helped with the Paddlefish Spawning. We spoke with hundreds at the Garden Show about native plants and snails. We have started a Nature Walk at Sam Houston Jones State Park the third Thursday of every month. There is another Nature in Focus event being planned at Tuten Park in June. We are truly providing education and outreach to our community.

There are eleven students enrolled in the certification classes this year. It is a great group of people and I look forward to having many adventures together in the future. I encourage you to be a class facilitator and tag along.

Rendezvous 2023 was a Great Success! Our members stepped up and hosted a memorable event. From the food, to the tours, to the speakers; I received compliments on everything.

Thank you again to our speakers Scooter Trouclair, Andy Tingler, and Gary Kratzer. Please check out the pictures on Facebook, LMNA Rendezvous 2023.

Rendezvous 2024 will be hosted by NE Master Naturalists and will be held in the Monroe area. I hope you will join me there. The date is April 12-14, 2024.

Our Field Trip 'Birds, Bats, and Bog' happened on May 6. This was great fun in Cooter's Bog in Kisatchie to see the Jack-in-the-pulpits. See the article in this issue for more details and pictures.

We will be looking for individuals to be on the SLAMN Board for next year. We also need volunteers to handle the coordination of events, newsletter publication, and electronic media. Please let me know where you can help. I look forward to seeing you at the events.

Come when you can and get outdoors every day.

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

The Remarkable Resilience of Trees in SWLA

by Mary Sherk

Louisiana is famous for its beautiful, mighty trees, including *Magnolia grandiflora*, or Southern magnolia (state flower); *Taxodium distichum*, or bald cypress (state tree); *Quercus virginiana*, or live oak; *Nyssa aquatica*, or water tupelo; *Platanus occidentalis*, or American sycamore; *Liquidambar styraciflua*, or sweetgum; and *Pinus palustris*, or long leaf pine. Wildlife books and other printed media contain many photographs of them. Outsiders marvel at their beauty and more importantly, locals live and thrive among them.

Weather events in the past twenty years battered Louisiana, particularly in SWLA. The hurricanes in 2005 and 2021 (Rita, Laura, and Delta), ice storm of 2021 (Winter Storm Uri) and the historic May 2021 flood had downed or damaged trees throughout the region. Many of the trees previously mentioned had survived and some of them, particularly the live oaks, are centenarians with *Tillandsia usnesides*, or Spanish moss, hanging off their branches.



Bald Cypress. Photo by Mary Sherk



Long Leaf Pines. Photo by Mary Sherk

Trees that are fast growing, weak wooded and shallow rooted are generally victim trees. Because of these characteristics, they do not survive extreme weather events.¹ The known victim trees to SWLA are many, but the common ones are *Carya illinoensis*, or pecan; *Pinus taeda*, or loblolly pine; Eastern red cedar, or *Juniperus virginiana*; weeping willow, or *Salix babylonica*; and even citrus trees of various fruits. Multiple efforts have been in place in planting these trees. Lessons were also learned from previous weather events to help them survive future extreme weather events.

In conclusion, it is important to know what trees have survived to make it easier to plant them. Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries designated the long leaf pine trees as endangered, but locals have been working very hard on restoring the forests. The SWLA community has also been putting in a lot of effort to help restore the lost tree canopy to be enjoyed by future generations.

1. Hurricane and the Landscape “Prepare Your Site.”
www.lsuagcenter.com/nr/ronlyres/6027081f-70d8-468f-bbbb-b3dcb3f8bc46/13539/prepareyoursite3.pdf.

Hit Me with Your Best Shot

By Dan Plummer

Dan Plummer would like to announce that entries are now being taken for ‘Hit Me With Your Best Shot’, the fifth annual Gulf Coast Bird Photography Competition sponsored by Gallery By the Lake. The call for entries was opened on April 28th and entries are being accepted through June 26th. The contest will be judged by Dawn Hewitt and Bruce Wunderlich of BWD Magazine. This year’s selected photos will be exhibited from Sept 29th through November 15, 2023 at the Gallery’s second-floor Historic City Hall exhibit space in Lake Charles. Cash prizes starting at \$400 for best in show will be awarded. New for this year is a category for entries shot on cameras with non-interchangeable lenses. More info at www.callforentry.org or contact Dan Plummer at gallerybythelakeswla@gmail.com or 337-842-6820.



Past 1st place winner of Hit Me With Your Best Shot

Next General Meeting – July 12

Brenda Lafleur, renowned photographer, will be sharing photographs and stories about her trip to Death Valley, Utah. While there, she observed the Death Valley Pupfish. Have you been to interesting places? Do you have a story and photos to share? Bring your jump drive. We would love to hear about your adventure.

Bats, Birds, and the Bog Field Trip

By Barbara Morris

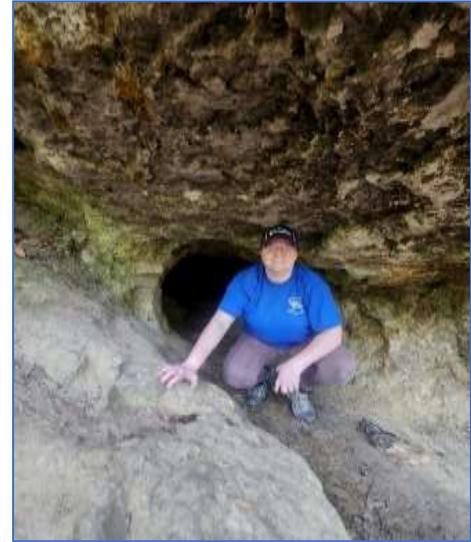
On May 7, we headed to Cooter's Bog which is located in Kisatchie National Park. It is about ten miles north of Pitkin. Our first stop was Wolf Rock Cave. It is said to be the only cave in Louisiana, although I think there must be a cave in the Tunica Hills. It is a cave that was utilized by the local indigenous people thousands of years ago. It is located at a very scenic location. Jamie Pope, Henry Schmutz, and Mary Sherk took a look inside. I was hoping

a bat would fly out, but no.

From there we headed back to Hwy 10. We stopped at various bridges to look for bats. The Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat is known to live under the bridges. They actually have maternity colonies.



Mary peering inside cave



Jamie Pope at entrance to Wolf Cave

Unfortunately, because of the high water, we were unable to access under the bridges. We did, however, have a thrilling ride through the forest on red dirt roads. I was afraid I would never find the blacktop.

We were able to easily spot nesting trees of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker because the longleaf pine trees are marked with white bands. They have inserted nesting boxes into the pine trees to help the population. Many trees were damaged during the recent hurricanes. One field was replanted with longleaf pines. It was great to see them growing.

Our final stop was at Cooter's Bog. It is just amazing to see a river of yellow pitcher plants. The plants are located on the south side about fifty feet from the road. It is definitely worth the drive and something everyone should see.



Woodpecker Home

Along the way we observed one deer, two turkeys, Red-cockaded woodpecker, Yellow-breasted Chat, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. We also saw native phlox, echinacea, wild orchid, and of course Pitcher plants.

So, I recommend you look up Wolf Rock Cave and Cooter's Bog. It is a nice day trip you can take family and friends.



Walking among the Pitcher Plants



Native Phlox



Pitcher Plants

Photos and story by Barbara Morris.

Calendar

2023	
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