Our Next Meeting
Our Annual Heard Tour!

Tuesday, May 2, 6:00 pm

The May meeting of the Collin County Chapter of NPSOT is our Annual Tour of the Heard Meadows and Woods.

Chapter Members lead members and guests on a tour of the Heard. Visit seldom-seen areas of the Heard grounds.

We will meet in the big circle patio in front of the museum entrance at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2. (Starting an hour earlier than usual gives us more daylight for a guided walk looking at the plants in the meadows and woods.) Shorter guided walks will begin at 7 p.m.

Family and friends are welcome. Remember that the longer tour can be a little arduous, but it’s a rare chance to go all the way out to the edges with a tour guide.

Dig out those hiking shoes, long pants, hats, water, and camera, and bring sunscreen and insect repellant as needed. (Are the chiggers out and about yet?) Perhaps even bring a notepad and pencil to make notes.

What will the Weather be like?

The latest forecast for Tuesday evening is a temperature around 77°, with clear skies and winds at 10 mph from the south. However, chance of rain will be increasing overnight Tuesday night into Wednesday morning. (Let’s hope that schedule doesn’t move up!)

You might expect some water puddles leftover from all the recent rains. Otherwise, it sounds ideal. We look forward to seeing you there!

Future Meetings

June 6: George Diggs on “Native Plants and Climate Change”

The June meeting of the Collin County Chapter of NPSOT will be Dr. George Diggs on “Native Plants and Climate Change”. The meeting will be held in Laughlin Hall at the Heard Museum. Doors open before 7:00. The program starts at 7:15.

Dr. Diggs is a Professor of Biology and Co-Director of the Public Health Program at Austin College in Sherman.
Our 15th Annual Stiff Creek Wildflower Walk & Potluck Brunch

Our 15th Annual Stiff Creek Wildflower Walk and Potluck Brunch is Saturday, May 13 at 9:30 AM. We will meet at 4545 CR 412, McKinney 75071. Bring a dish to share for brunch at about 11:30-1:00.

The location is north-east of McKinney as shown.
Last week's sale was the most successful in our history but involved a good deal of work on the part of volunteers, several from our Chapter and a number from the Master Naturalists, and the Heard staff.

In spite of the warmest winter recorded growers had difficulty this past season due to two exceptionally cold nights that wiped out most of their milkweeds and many of their perennials. We ended up having to source eight different growers to obtain most of what we wanted. Many plants were acquired only in the last few days.

Our volunteers did exceptional work this year arranging and moving 212 species and 8,300 individual plants. I particularly want to thank Tony Manasseri, who was there most days in spite of recovering from pneumonia, Randy Robinson, Debbie Hartman, Greg Hayden, Laura Ragan, and Debbie Canterbury who worked hour after hour, day after day. Many other volunteers provided excellent support and I am grateful to all. Virtually every volunteer provided our customers with helpful information on plant choices and characteristics.

I'm also highly appreciative of Carol Clark and Stephanie Jennings who made all of our signs. In addition Stephanie went far out of her way to find new sources for our plants and did a superb and imaginative job with our marketing. I would not want to attempt another sale without her help.

The money raised will be an important part of The Heard's budget and the plants sold will benefit many, many species in addition to our own.
From April 14-18, people in 16 cities across the nation were challenged to find as many plants or animals they could and document them on iNaturalist (app and website). In the Dallas area, 9 counties participated. Houston and Austin were also in the running. This challenge was a repeat of the one last year between Los Angeles and San Francisco where the iNaturalist app was born.

Over the 4 days across the nation, over 125,000 observations and 8,600 species identification were made with DFW easing out San Francisco on the last day to take the win for most observations, coming in at just over 24,000 observations from 504 people of which over 2,300 species were identified. Included in the DFW challenge area were two of our partners, The Heard and Connemara Meadows and many people individually doing observations in parks and areas around town.

At The Heard, we had about 8 Master Naturalist participate, either assisting teaching others how to use the app to find observations or going out on trails to document the biodiversity of the area. We ended up having a total of 20 people that added 412 observations of which 166 were identified to the species level. The Top 6 species identified were Diamondback Watersnake with 18 observations and the Pond Slider, Common Buckeye, thistles, spittle bugs and antelope horns tied with 5 each. Some interesting finds were the Least Skipper, Prothonotary Warber with leg tag, Luna Moth, Unicorn Prominent Moth, Big Ryed Toad Bug, Little Brown Skink, Spingwater Dancer and Green Dragon.

At Connemara Meadows, there was a smaller gathering where several people picked up iNaturalist for the first time and others helped in the hunt. Overall there were 137 observations with 79 species and 4 people recording them. Top observations included the Migrating Monarch with 7 observations, closely followed by the Coyote with 6. For the Coyote scat and tracks were recorded, but we also saw the Coyote from a distance when the mowing tractor spooked it out of hiding. Interesting finds were a Garter Snake, a Walking Stick (diapheromera), Lincoln Sparrow, Tweedy Trefoil, Anisota, Bird Dropping Moth and a Southern Plains Bumblebee.

In all of Collin County during the 5 day contest there were 1,852 observations covering 520 species from 91 people. Top observations were the Mallard (22), Diamondback Watersnake (21), Prairie Verbena (19), Cardinal (16) and Common Buckeye (16). Different sightings were the American Rubyspot, Lark Sparrow, Black Necked Stilt, Bewick’s Wren and Western Kingbird.

You might be asking ‘Why do this?’, but the reality is that citizen scientist programs are growing quickly and can be inexpensive way for a researcher to collect a variety of data worldwide. There are many programs already providing valuable data that rely on citizen scientist including Journey North and Monarch Watch for tracking Monarch butterflies. Ebird and Project Feeder watch for birds and even smaller programs just as the lost ladybug project. On Wikipedia, there are over 1000 projects listed that can be joined.


Collin County Observations:
https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?on=2017-04-14&place_id=any&project_id=heard&subview=grid&verifiable=any&view=species

While the challenge might be over, the quest is not. I would like to encourage everyone to participate in this project, as someone adding observations or someone helping others with Identifications. There is a lot of great information in this tool and we are building a history of what once existed in areas that may be paved over someday.

Here are links to the specific projects to see the top ID’s. Note that this can change over time as more is identified down to species.

Heard Project on April 15th only:

Connemara Project on April 16th only:
https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?captive=any&on=2017-04-16&place_id=any&project_id=6068&subview=grid&verifiable=any&view=species

DFW City Challenge Observations: April 14-18
Collin County NPSOT Newsletter

2017 16 City Challenge Observations: April 14-18


Interesting Finds with clickable links at the Heard:
Least skipper, Prothonotary Warbler with leg tag, viceroy, unicorn prominent moth, big eyed toad bug, little brown skink, Spingwater dancer and green dragon.

Interesting Finds with clickable links at Connemara:
Coyote, garter snake, a walking stick (diapheromera), Lincoln sparrow, Tweedy trefoil, Anisota, bird dropping moth and a southern plains bumblebee.

RESULTS

Overall (all 16 cities together):
Observations: 124,092
Species: 8,557
People participating: 4,051

The "big three" stats:
Most observations: Dallas/Fort Worth
Most species: Houston
Most people participating: Los Angeles

Above: Photo from the Heard hunt: Melanie Schuchart and Elly Titlow
Below: Photos from the Connemara hunt

Native Plant Society of Texas – Collin County Chapter
Upcoming Events in this Area

May 6, Dallas – Native Plant & Prairie Day. Plant Sale at White Rock Lake Bath House & Cultural Center 10-3

Native Plants and Prairies Day is coming to White Rock Lake on May 6th, sponsored by the North Texas Master Naturalists. There will be tours of a nice little prairie remnant, and other educational and fun displays and activities.

Fun for the whole family. See more details at: http://public.ntmn.org/native-plants-and-prairies-day-2017

May 6, Arlington – Spring Plant Sale at River Legacy Park 10-2

BOLO (Be On the Look Out)

If you see ferns growing in the wild within the Collin County borders, please document them with a photo and let Nelson Rich or Carol Clark know. She found one at Oak Point Park last week. Ferns are very infrequently found in Collin County (like four times!)

Wildflower/Nature Walks

There will be wildflower/nature walks at Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve on May 10th and May 17th. Last year, the flowers were spectacular in May. Meet at the building off Los Rios at 10 am to begin.
Orobanche ramosa, *Hemp Broomrape or Branched Broomrape* –

This is an invasive that is starting to make its way into Collin County over the last few years. I found this near my house and had posted it to iNaturalist and had it identified by Fran Woodfin. She suggested that we reach out to Dr. Nelson Rich who tracks plants in Collin County and he had not put it on his Collin County list yet. He did some and got a sample to take to BRIT (Botanical Research Institute of Texas) for official ID and to catalog.

Since I reached out to him, he was notified of 2 sightings in Plano and I pulled 2 sighting (Frisco and Richardson) from iNaturalist to share with him. He asks that if you see this plant to let him (or Melanie Schuchart) know.

Here is the posting on the invasive database where you can pull additional information.

Collin County NPSOT General information

The Collin County chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas meets the first Tuesday of January through October, in Laughlin Hall at the Heard museum. Unless otherwise noted, doors open at 7:00 and the program starts at 7:15.

The Native Plant Society of Texas is a non-profit organization with the goal to promote the conservation, research, and utilization of the native plants and plant habitats of Texas, through education, research, and example.

Thanks for your support.

email: collincountynpsot@gmail.com
website: http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/