January 5 – Zoom Meeting

We will be requiring registration for the meeting, following the procedures other chapters are using.

Join the Collin County Chapter on Zoom for their January meeting on the 5th at 6:30 for social time, 7:00 for the presentation. You must register in advance. After registering you will receive instructions by email for joining the Zoom Meeting.

Here's the "Official" invite with link -
When: Jan 5, 2021 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
Register in advance for this meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoc-qtrTMrGdVgxzxssZzJhMShwFGcF

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

NPSOT Year End Letter, 2020
by Lorelei Stierlen, President Collin County Chapter of NPSOT

Hello NPSOT members! Well, 2020 certainly was not the year we had expected; but we have learned to ZOOM, do prairie walks, plant swap, and just about everything else in a virtual or safe social distance manner. Like our Blackland Prairie natives, we will endure the tough times and come back even stronger. As always, I want to thank each and every one of you for making my third and final year as President so wonderful. It is our shared love for our native flora that has kept us going during this adaptation to the ‘new’ normal.

We may not have been able to meet with groups and individuals in person, but we have found other ways to continue our mission of raising awareness and reaching out to the public to share the beauty of native plants. We weren’t able to sell seeds as we have in the past, but we hope that next year we’ll have even more demand for our natives given how many people have discovered the outside world and taken up gardening during the pandemic, so please continue to collect seeds for our chapter.

Please join me in warmly welcoming Valerie Dalton to the office of President of this chapter. I know she will do an outstanding job and help our chapter grow!
President’s Message, Collin County NPSOT Chapter, December 28, 2020

by Valerie Dalton

“Our mission is promoting research, conservation, and utilization of native plants and habitats through education, outreach, and example.”

Lorelei, December 25, 2020

Thank you, Lorelei, for all your hard work to restore our Earth! This image puts a smile on my face and hope in my heart. Lorelei serves on the board of the Blackland Prairie Raptor Center and donates countless hours restoring the prairie there. Cedars quake when they see Lorelei headed their way armed with a chainsaw. If she is not in Lucas at the BPRC prairie, you can probably find her at home, working on her prairie restoration in the middle of suburbia. She is ‘a force to be reckoned with’.

In addition to her work restoring prairies, Lorelei has served as our chapter President the past two years and is now our incoming Treasurer. As a nod to lifelong learning, I decided to add a ‘Word of the Month’ to my message. In honor of Lorelei, our first Word of the Month is:

“Agrostology” [ˌaɡrəˈstæləjē]
NOUN the branch of botany concerned with grasses.

Now I might be the only person out there that had never heard of agrostology, but it keeps popping up on the NPSOT Texas Flora Facebook page. Folks like John Snowden, Ricky Linex, Jenny Jenkins Pluhar of Canyon, Austin Kelly of Texas A&M, and Floyd Waller speak of either being an agrostologist or taking agrostology classes. So, I decided I needed to learn more, thus Agrostology is our first Word of the Month.

Here is a great story about Mary Agnes Chase, an agrostologist and a suffragist, born in Illinois in 1869. The Woman Agrostologist Who Held the Earth Together | JSTOR Daily

She was particularly interested in grasses because, as she wrote, they are “what holds the earth together.”

Hope you take a few minutes to learn about Mary Agnes Chase and find inspiration in her story.
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January 2021

Now on to 2021! Finally! At the beginning of 2020, who would have imagined our current situation? I do not know about you, but I really miss prairie walks, potlucks and gathering at Laughlin Hall to visit with everyone, listening to a great speaker and exchanging native seeds or plants with others. Folks have been so adaptive, learning Zoom and enjoying nature with members of their immediate family. But let’s face it, Zooming and Isolating (with a capital I) is draining and not at all satisfying. As a people person, I deeply miss the interactions with others. Considering that it is winter, and everyone is drawn inwards, I want to challenge each of you to spend some time reflecting on what Collin County NPSOT means to you. Let us plot and plan and heal.

“Winter is a season of recovery and preparation.”
—Paul Theroux

Look to past chapter activities – what was rewarding, educational, and touched our communities? What friendships have you built through the chapter? Did you build a garden at a school? Was it a long-term success? If so, what made it work? If it did not succeed, why not? Did a child learn about nature because of your NPSOT involvement? According to the Betsy’s scrapbook records, years ago various members grew natives from seed and documented their work and presented it to the chapter. How did that go? Is it worth repeating? Does anyone still have their report? I know many of you will recall activities of which I am totally unaware.

So, in addition to our first Tuesday of the month meeting for which Bill Woodfin continues to line up great speakers, I propose a second, less formal meeting with a dual purpose. **Purpose one** would be to have a round table discussion on a chosen topic. You could call it brainstorming or dreaming of what our chapter could accomplish. Here are some additional thoughts to ponder: what do you love about our chapter, chapter activities that have worked in the past, how we can attract younger people, what’s blooming in your garden, or how to balance nature with society’s desire for neatness and organization. Submit your suggestions for discussion topics to Valerie. **Purpose two** would be to give folks an opportunity to interact with other chapter members and get to know one another better. If you want to participate, just let me know. I imagine an informal meeting, with lots of laughter, thought provoking ideas and connecting with others. I have a Zoom Pro account and can set up meetings and email meeting invitations to anyone who is interested. The meeting dates and times are flexible – include your best meeting times in your email.

**Blast from the Past**

Betsy Farris, Past President and Treasurer, has maintained a scrapbook for the Collin County NPSOT Chapter since the early to mid-1990s. She graciously passed her collection on to me to peruse and to cherish. Since I’ve only been in the chapter for a...
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couple of years, I have enjoyed learning about past events. Somebody out there must know the story behind these two images from May 10, 2003. I can give you this hint – it was a field trip and picnic to Parkhill Prairie. These members are obviously enjoying their amazing find – a quite lengthy snakeskin. If you can shed (pun intended) further light on this story, please share with the rest of us. I would love to know if any of these characters are still in the chapter.

Nature’s Best Hope Books for Sale

Our chapter has 10 hardback copies of Doug Tallamy’s bestseller, Nature’s Best Hope, available for sale - $23. In this book, Dr. Doug Tallamy has delivered a deep and powerful wellspring of inspiration for the many people craving an opportunity to be part of transformative change for our challenged world. Contact Valerie Dalton to purchase.
Status of Wild Plants of Texas – NPSOT Challenge BioBlitz 2020
- Reported by Society President Kim Conrow

The Wild Plants of Texas – NPSOT Challenge BioBlitz ran from October 18 – October 24, 2020. As of December 25, 2020, 16,550 observations had been uploaded. These represented 1942 species with 2,275 observers for this project to document native plants of Texas. This BioBlitz was held in conjunction with the NPSOT Annual Conference 2020.

Of the 16,550 statewide observations uploaded to date for this project, a mere 265 (1.6%) were from 43 observers in Collin County. That is probably not a true representation of the wild plants in Collin County, but more likely an indication of the lack of involvement by our community. If you haven’t visited iNaturalist, consider checking out the [site](https://www.inaturalist.org). Our urban biologist Sam Kiesknick and others extol the value of iNaturalist data which they frequently use in presentations to governmental agencies. Consider adding your observations or helping with identifications. If you are a property owner trying to track species for grants or government reporting, there are some useful tools available.

Executive Director Search

State Board contracted with Mark Pape, a consultant, to identify an Executive Director for NPSOT. His report is due at the January 21, 2021 State Board Meeting. Our chapter submitted several criteria for consideration during the evaluation of candidates for this position.

Audit Committee – Reported by Betsy Farris, Chair

Betsy reported that the 3rd Quarter Audit was completed and there were no issues.

Advocacy – Reported by Clarence Reed, VP of Advocacy and Affiliations

Texas Children in Nature

Clarence reached out to Sara Coles of Children in Nature in Austin to discuss collaborative possibilities with NPSOT. Here is a link to the Texas Children in Nature website.

Survey/Identify Rare, Endangered Plant Species

Clarence contacted Matt Buckingham, TXDOT wildlife biologist in the Lufkin District regarding a TXDOT right of ways project to survey/identify rare, endangered and sensitive plant species.
Communications - Reported by Bill Hopkins

State VP Communications reported that the state website now includes downloadable native plant lists by region. The site also now includes a state wide calendar and local chapter events can be listed there by emailing events@npsot.org.

Education - Reported by Kimber Kaushik

Mary Horn created a 17 page coloring book of natives and pollinators that is available for download.

Kimber created a native plant Bingo game based on plants from NLCP classes that will be downloadable.

Many of the virtual presentations from the October 2020 annual meeting are available on the state NPSOT You-Tube channel. The 2020 Annual Conference video winners are available here as well. Take five minutes to check out Caroll Flournoy’s ‘Feast of the Bumblebees’ video. It is bound to bring a smile to your face. There is some overlap of the videos, with some recordings also listed under recorded Zoom meetings from March 2020 to November 2020. There is a range of speaker topics from ‘Managing a Native landscape in an Urban Institutional Environment’ to ‘Grasses of the Texas Hill Country’. There is some great content here!

Membership – Reported by VP – Administration, Pam Lienhard

Craig Coulter was appointed Membership Coordinator in March. He reported 2664 active members as of October 20. As of December 24, that number was 2593. The state sends the following reminders:

1. an email reminder is sent 60 days before expiration date. -- for example, December expirations received one November 1st,
2. a mail reminder is sent at the beginning of the month of expiration.
3. a final reminder is sent 15 days after the end of the month of expiration.

Each chapter has been asked to appoint a Membership Chair. If you are interested in volunteering to reach out to potential new members and contact members with expiring memberships, please email me at valerie_dalton@msn.com.

DISCUSS 2020 Annual Meeting and Planning for 2021

The 2020 virtual annual meeting had more participants than ever before. Several people requested that future meetings include the option for virtual attendance, even if the event was held in person. Current planning is for the 2021 Annual Meeting to be virtual, with different chapters in charge of each day’s presentations.

Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP) – Reported by Meg Inglis

In 2020, there were fewer cancellations and more graduates of the NLCP classes than in 2019, with a total of 507 graduates from six L1, one L3, and five bird classes. This was despite the fact there were no L2 classes due to the difficulty in providing the hands-on interaction inherent in its structure while
complying with COVID restrictions. Collin County was the host of the L3 class on October 31, 2020 via Zoom. Carol Feldman was the instructor offering sage advice on landscape design and presented the seventeen-page Maintenance Schedule Matrix that included all plants from L1, L2 and L3 NLCP classes. Valerie gave the plant talk and Carol Clark produced videos to create a virtual plant walk. Carol’s virtual walk required Herculean efforts on her part to overcome the technical difficulties that seem to plague Zoom prerecorded videos. Many students commented about the high quality of However, because the class was virtual, we were able to accommodate almost twice as many students. The Level 4 class, chaired by Suzanne Tuttle, ‘Stewardship of Native Plant Communities’ is slated for offering in the Fall of 2021. The online ‘Train the Trainer’ class will hopefully be available in late May or June. Our chapter board has expressed strong interest in hosting a Level 4 class and is looking forward to the opportunity to learn about this new curriculum. If you are interested in helping our chapter host this class, please contact me.

**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 before 7:00pm and the program starts at 7:15pm.

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/](http://www.npsot.org/CollinCounty/)

**John Worley**