

Minutes: Rio Brazos Master Naturalist Chapter
October 6, 2016
Langdon Ranch Pavilion

BUSINESS: There was no formal business meeting.

The gathering was opened with a greeting and call to dinner by Joe Langdon. The Langdons had opened their place to the RBMN's again for a wonderful barbecue, with the members bringing the fixin's.

PROGRAM:

Terri Walker, of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service out of their Weatherford office, presented information on pollinators, especially native bees, butterflies and moths. Reporting 90% of plants need animals for pollination, she explained 200,000 species of animals are pollinators, and 199,000 of those are invertebrates. In a rating from Texas Parks and Wildlife, a ranking of 17 was given to bees, 7 was given to butterflies, and 6 was given to moths. The higher ranking demonstrated the importance of the native - most often solitary bees - as well as imported honey bees. The TPWD is the lead in the observation and protection of the Monarchs due to the great territory covered under parks management which is on the Monarch migration trail.

Terri spoke of habitat requirements and management practices to help assure continued healthy quantities of these valuable critters. Those include ceasing use of neonicotinoid pesticides, avoiding use of pesticides and herbicides on pollinator plants, planting food and shelter plants for bloom from February through November, and rotating tillage and controlled burns on 1/3 portions of land each year to ensure that habitats are not totally destroyed. Generally speaking, whenever we come in contact with these species, we should be mindful of their needs (food, shelter, water, and place to raise their young). If we observe, monitor and assess these requirements in our own habitat, and if we take the necessary actions to modify unfavorable situations, we can help these species survive and thrive.

Sources for further information are Xerces Society, Pollinator Partnership, and the NRCS. Terri's e-mail address is terri.walker@tx.usda.gov

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

October 8 Comanche Peak Native Arts Day from 9:00 – 12:30

October 14 (school kids) and 15 (Public) Monarch Event at the ANC from 9:00 - Noon
More volunteers are welcome for both events.

Dayna spoke of the "B" Event in Glen Rose on Oct. 1, saying 13 MN's participated in various booths.

Valerie Taber announced that BRIT and the Federal General Services Administration have produced new program regarding landscaping plans using native, low water use plantings called "High Performance Landscape." Volunteers are needed to tend, monitor, and gather data on one of 20 planted plots set up by BRIT. To learn more, contact Valerie, or go to the BRIT website.

Jim Crocker said there are still more Texas NatureTour Books available, Contact him.

Prairie Oaks Chapter is progressing in its development and will be in operation soon. This chapter will include Comanche, Erath, Hamilton and Palo Pinto counties.