WASHINGTON COUNTY
Wildlife Society

1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, Texas 77833
Telephone 979-277-6212 Fax 979-277-6223 www.wcwildlife.org

WCWS Semi-Annual Meeting

Friday, August 24th, 2012

Washington County Fairgrounds Events Center

Social will begin at 6:00 pm with catfish, chicken tenders and all the trimmings served at 7:00 pm.

****** Free Will Donation Dinner ******

If you plan to attend, please call the AgriLife Extension Office by August 20th

(979) 277-6212

A dessert table will be available if you would like to bring your favorite dessert.

- Society FUNDRAISER and RAFFLE -

Our featured speaker: Steven Fulton, Ranch Biologist, Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve

Steven is a vital educational programming staff member of the ranch and his responsibilities are Land Stewardship and Education. Steven has a biology degree from Mary Hardin Baylor University in Belton, Texas, and he has work experience from the Nature Conservancy of Texas' endangered species and oak wilt programs. He is responsible for tours, workshops and all educational programs. He is also in charge of all the GIS/GPS mapping and research programs being implemented on the ranch. Steven has the perfect balance of someone who can operate heavy equipment and do physical ranching work as well as speak comfortably to the public, regardless of their age. Steven, along with J. David Bamberger, head up the ranch's recovery program of the federally listed endangered species, the Texas Snowbell. The Bamberger Ranch Preserve was designated as the lead institution to de-list this tree in 2003, and Steven built a large-scale greenhouse to not only aide in the recovery program but to also propagate other native trees and shrubs.

He is currently pursuing a graduate degree in biology at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. Steven's graduate research focuses heavily on the pollination of the Texas Snowbell.

WCWS Contact Info:

OFFICERS for 2012:

Brian Burke, Society President, (979), 836-5258, gaelbrian@hotmail.com
Robert Lehmann, Society Vice Pres., (979) 251-4340, rlehmanndeer@yahoo.com
Richard Thames, Society Treasurer, (979) 278-3053
Gael Burke, Society Secretary, (979) 836-5258

WMA DIRECTORS for 2012:

Greenvine WMA
Gene Bishop, Director, (512) 771-3322, gbishop@austin.rr.com
Vice-Director - OPEN

Sun Oil Field WMA
John Lammers, Interim Director, disctree@suddenlink.net
Vice-Director - OPEN

Rocky Creek WMA
John Anderson, Director, (979) 289-0041, sjanders@airmail.net
Mary Mann, Vice-Director, (713) 288-2081, mary-mann@sbcglobal.com

Post Oak WMA
Devin Holum, Director, (281) 807-0679, bismark98@yahoo.com
Vice-Director - OPEN

Sandtown WMA
Doodle Johnston, Director, (979) 278-3855, cj_cattle@yahoo.com
Richard Thames, Vice-Director, (979) 278-3053, rbthames@industryinet.com

Mt. Vernon WMA
Rob Johnston, Director, (832) 368-8076, robj709@gmail.com
Vice-Director - Ken & Lisa Fletcher, 512-627-8720, mountvernonwma@yahoo.com

New Years Creek WMA
George Bishop, Director, 713-305-5510, george_bishop@sbcglobal.net
Vice-Director - OPEN

RESOURCE CONTACTS:

Larry Pierce, Texas AgriLife Extension Agent-Agriculture/Natural Resources, (979) 277-6212, lw-pierce@tamu.edu

Stephanie M. Damron, TPWD Natural Resource Specialist II, Washington & Waller Counties, (979) 277-6297, stephanie.damron@tpwd.state.tx.us

Ben Garcia, NRCS District Conservationist, (979) 830-7123 ext. 3, ben.garcia@tx.usda.gov

Debbie Wellmann, Washington Co. Appraisal District, (979) 277-3740, debbiew@brenhamisd.net

Gael Burke, WCWS Office Secretary (979) 836-5258, gullywiatt@gmail.com

Ann Thames, WCWS Newsletter, (979) 203-3455, newsletter@wcwildlife.org

Jon Wellmann, Youth Liaison, (936) 419-3910, jonwellmann@live.com

Eddie Hines, WC Game Warden, (979) 412-3140, eddie.hines@tpwd.state.tx.us

Operation Game Thief, (800) 792-4263

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Gael and I hope that you're having a nice summer, and we especially hope to see you Friday, August 24th at our WCWS Summer Meeting. Come around 6:00 pm that evening to the Fairgrounds Events Center (1305 E. Blue Bell Road, Brenham; it's where we usually meet). We'll visit, eat a meal together, enjoy a presentation about interesting – and successful – land management at a ranch in Blanco County, and have fun trying to win some nice raffle items.

The speaker will be **Steven Fulton**, Ranch Biologist at Selah-Bamberger Ranch near Johnson City. The story of this 5,500 acre hill country ranch is fascinating, and their results are encouraging for land managers. Whether or not your favorite tree is a mountain cedar, don't miss this program.

You might wonder "Why are we having raffles at the Summer Meeting?" We're trying to raise money for our activities, and have some fun doing it. We are seeking – both from members and local merchants – as many donated items as possible for this raffle. Please contact me if you have an idea about a donation.

I like having a feel for how things are going. Among other species, Gael and I manage for deer. Deer population in our part of the county is low and it's hard to tell if we're making progress. Our state provides a lot of flexibility in the 1-d-1 open space & wildlife program, which means we have a lot of freedom in managing our land. With that freedom goes individual responsibility. I want to know if I'm helping increase deer population, or if my efforts are currently unproductive. Am I mowing too much area or at the wrong time? Am I choosing well for food plot crops? We have extraordinary support personnel around here to help us, including Texas AgriLife, Texas Parks & Wildlife and Washington County Appraisal District. There are also highly qualified private consultants in our county. There are other local organizations with goals like ours and with expertise they're eager to share. We don't need to stumble for lack of support in making land management decisions and then implementing them. Please, please contact me if you have questions or concerns. I'm not the expert, but I know them and want to help you.

God bless.

Brian Burke, gaelbrian@hotmail.com

ADDRESS CHANGES: For address changes, or to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact Gael Burke, (979) 836-5258, gullywiatt@gmail.com.

Summer 2012 Deer Spotlight Census

By Brian Burke, Society President

If you manage for deer, and especially if 'census' is one of your declared practices, then be attentive on your place as **Stephanie Damron** explains in her "Incidental Deer Observations" article.

Separate from deer census activities at your land, I invite you to participate in the annual Deer Spotlight Census for Washington County. The results of this effort can be very helpful in understanding our local deer population.

We will drive public roads around the county after dark to illuminate deer and record what we see. There's a set procedure and each count takes 2-3 hours. The dates each Wildlife Management Association will be studied this summer are:

1. Greenvine, July 31st and August 28th.
2. Mount Vernon, August 1st and August 29th.
3. New Years Creek, August 7th and September 4th.
4. Post Oak, August 8th and September 5th.
5. Rocky Creek, August 9th and September 6th.
6. Sandtown, August 14th.
7. Sun Oil Field, August 15th and September 11th.

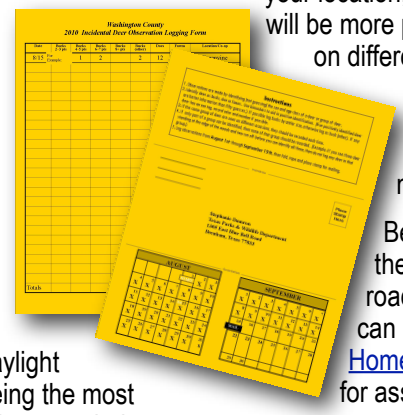
My experiences making these counts have been very enjoyable. Please contact me if you want to participate this year.

Brian Burke (979-836-5258, gaelbrian@hotmail.com)

Incidental Deer Observations

By Stephanie Damron, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

We are quickly approaching the time to log deer sightings. This activity is very important especially if you use census as a practice for your 1-d-1 wildlife valuation.



Incidental observations of white-tailed deer are used to determine herd composition (percent of Bucks, Does, and Fawns in the herd) and is often viewed as the most valuable data collected on a deer herd. A good sample of incidental observations can reflect the overall health and growth of the herd.

Observations can be made at any time during daylight hours with the early morning and late evening being the most productive. Observations can start **July 15** and be recorded through **October 1**.

Observations are made by **identifying** (not guessing) the type of deer observed. White-tail deer should be identified as bucks, does, or fawns. If possible, bucks should be broken down according to antler points. If it is not possible to count the points, list in the *Bucks (other)* column on the observation form. A pair of binoculars will be required to make positive identification.

These observations can be made during routine activities within your location, but making a special effort to collect this data will be more productive. If the same group of deer is seen on different occasions they should be recorded each time they are seen as this will not affect the ratio. But if a group of deer are observed and only part of the group can be identified then none of the group should be recorded.

Be careful as to indicate within which co-op area the observations are recorded, ranch names or road names are not needed. Co-op boundaries can be found at http://wcwildlife.org/WC_Wildlife/Home.html or you can contact **Stephanie Damron** for assistance.

The logging form enclosed in this newsletter can be folded and taped for mailing and returned to Stephanie Damron, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, for analysis. Any questions concerning this process should be directed to Stephanie at (979) 277-6297. Additional forms may be obtained at the TPWD office located at 1305 East Blue Bell Road.

Again, this an important activity for anyone with 1-d-1 wildlife exemption and you are encouraged to participate.

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Data

Blog post by Caren Cooper for *Scientific American*, July 3, 2012

Ever since Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, we celebrate with a day of relaxation, barbecues, and the pageantry of dazzling fireworks. Little known is that in 1776, Jefferson had a second great vision that shaped the United States. Like the Declaration, his second vision also relied on citizens relishing civic duty and claiming their right to be informed and educated in order to self-govern and curb corruption, privilege, and aristocracy. The Jeffersonian plan was to provide a thermometer to a deputy in every county in Virginia with instructions to log twice-daily observations of temperature and wind direction. This founding father envisioned what is nowadays called citizen science.

In the legacy of this tradition, in every state of the union, hundreds of thousands of people will be scientifically engaged this summer: observing, measuring, analyzing, checking. Don't be alarmed if your seemingly ordinary neighbors chronicle the sequence of flower blooms, measure gravestones, or count the pulsing of fireflies. Sharing observations is a collective scientific effort. Across all age levels and segments of society, citizen science is undergoing a revival as an American leisure-time tradition that was born with our Independence.

The Revolutionary War temporarily held up Jefferson's systematic statewide plan. But from 1776 to 1816, which includes his two terms as President, Jefferson and many of his recruits (including Lewis and Clark) kept a near complete series of weather observations. Those founding our independent nation had a friendly rivalry with Europeans about who lived on the better continent. But, as relative newcomers to the New World, they had little data to support their claims of superiority. It was Jefferson's patriotic chip on his shoulder, in a time before meteorologists and climatologists, which caused him to enlist citizens in data collection. In particular, weather records were a key part of his efforts to dash the theory of degeneracy: the idea that the temperature and humidity of New World produced animals that were smaller, weaker, and just plain inferior to their European counterparts. Jefferson used weather data, which included his 5 years in France, to show that America had a higher sunny-to-cloudy-day ratio than Europe.

Jefferson's plan was not formalized until 1870, when President Grant created a new federal agency and assigned it the responsibility to coordinate a volunteer weather observer program. This is today's National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Network which draws about one million volunteer-hours annually at 12,000 sites across all 50 states.

When poor weather forecasting led to disaster in the foothills of the Rockies in 1998, Jefferson's tradition expanded again with the formation of the Community Collaborative Rain Snow & Hail Network (CoCoRaSH). Radar (Radio Detection and Ranging) can estimate rainfall over large areas, but precipitation is highly localized. It can rain, snow, or hail on one side of the street and not the other. Nothing high-tech in the sky can beat a gauge on the ground. Now meteorologists, claims adjusters, attorneys, construction businesses, utility companies, mosquito control experts, farmers, and urban planners use the publicly accessible, fine-scale data from CoCoRaSH.

Photo: Tammy Sanders

In the 21st Century, Jefferson's legacy intersected with the Internet and mobile phones. The result has been a proliferation far beyond what he ever conceived. Instead of hopping a stagecoach to share observations with friends, with a few keystrokes observations are shared globally and archived in perpetuity. Citizen science is now a global hobby, connecting people and their real-world leisure observations to virtual databases.

People count butterflies in abandoned fields, tally washed-up garbage on beaches, record bird species at backyard feeders, and spend hours sitting at their computers classifying galaxy after galaxy (there are hundreds of thousands of them). Stalwart science militia called Invaders of Texas scour the countryside, eyes peeled for possible invasive species that may threaten the environment or economy, be they plant, bird, or mollusk. In London, the Bronx, and San Francisco, people use smartphone apps to document noise pollution, then direct local changes in truck traffic routes. North of the Arctic Circle, Inuit measure ice thickness. In the Himalayan high peaks, Nepalese villagers record snow leopard sightings and tracks.

Scientific knowledge is now widely co-produced through collaborations between scientists and society. Citizen science, with millions of hours of volunteer work, can stretch tight budgets, and collectively reveal large-scale patterns that scientists could never discover alone.

Continued on page 5)

Life, Liberty (cont. from page 4)

Citizen science gives people an unselfish, guilt-free reason to take a break, go outside, and slow down enough to observe their world. In return they gain discoveries, large and small, that they never forget. These activities may alter their lives and shape how participants view themselves, their environments and communities.

Science-as-hobby builds social capital, the properties of trust, norms, and personal connections that enable communities to thrive.

Without public participation, science can appear as a quagmire of jargon and uncertainty. With public participation, science encourages people to retain the child's pleasure of wonder and enchantment in understanding our world. Another reason that Jefferson wanted weather data was to develop a theory of climate, but his inspiration for it was a deep-seated love of the seasons. On weather collection, Jefferson wrote "Climate is one of the sources of the greatest sensual enjoyment."

Co-producing knowledge can bring political agency. Hobbyists who engage in science have the ability to enter public discourse, with their opinions and their data, when it really matters: when too many of our kids have asthma, when our quality of water is at risk, and when we want a future with sustainable energy.

This Fourth of July, make your leisure matter. Discover a ladybug, tag whale songs online, or monitor a local stream. Collaborate and feel a newfound capacity to influence decisions. Independence means we don't leave governing solely to career politicians; likewise, we shouldn't leave knowledge production solely in the hands of professional scientists. We have two intertwined legacies to protect—democracy and citizen science. Celebrate Jefferson's other enduring vision: become a citizen scientist.

About the Author: Caren Cooper, PhD, is a Research Associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She studies bird behavior, reproduction, and ecology at large scales using data from citizen science networks. In addition, Cooper works with social scientists to study why people get involved in citizen science and nature-based recreation. She has analyzed how citizen-science methods have been used to aid urban planning, e-governance, and policy initiatives. She is writing a nonfiction book about citizen science. Follow on Twitter @CoopSciScoop.

Why You Should Participate!

By C.S. "Doodle" Johnston, Director of Sandtown

Webster's Dictionary says participation is 1) to take part or share with others in some activity or enterprise; 2) the state of being related to a larger whole. Volunteers are vital to the existence of the Washington County Wildlife Society.

The Society, along with Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas AgriLife, NRCS, and other local resource advisors work with individuals to conserve over 45,498 acres of land in 7 WMAs throughout Washington County. In doing so, the Society reaches out to thousands of landowners, through 561 family memberships, who want to share their land with indigenous and migrating wildlife by offering educational meetings, field data collection and through our quarterly newsletter and website.

The Wildlife Society is governed by an elected Board of four officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) and elected directors from each of the Society's seven Wildlife Management Associations (Greenvine, Sun Oil Field, Rocky Creek, Post Oak, Sandtown, Mt. Vernon and New Years Creek). These directors and vice-directors are responsible for hosting two meetings for their WMA, and assisting with two general membership educational meetings each year. More importantly, they are the voice of the Society which manages the collective action that influences our activities and events.

Many of the Society's other programs rely significantly upon the dedication and expertise of members. **Member volunteers are needed** to serve on committees that maintain membership data, plan activities and programs, recommend changes to Society programs, and select recipients for WCWS awards. Society **members are also needed** to volunteer their time as editors of the Society newsletter and website and as hosts for the individual co-op and all-member meetings.

We do realize that not everyone who is concerned about wildlife habitat conservation has the opportunity to get out in the field and do something about it. Your yearly dues (only $20/year) and your generous donations are greatly appreciated as they help us fund member activities, youth scholarships, as well as maintain electronic and published communications ... BUT with your participation, think about how much more we could do to conserve our wildlife. We need your voice, your ideas, and your help. Call us, E-mail us, Tell us! We want your input. **We need your participation!**

C.S. "Doodle" Johnston, Director of Sandtown WMA, Home 979-278-3855, Cell 979-542-8262, cj_cattle@yahoo.com
Ann Thames, WCWS Newsletter Editor, Home 979-278-3053, Cell 979-203-3455, semahta@yahoo.com

Habitips

July

- Monitor/fluctuate water levels in wetland areas.
- Monitor grazing program to provide nesting cover and plant diversity.
- Continue to control feral hogs through hunting or trapping.
- Provide supplemental water for wildlife as necessary.
- Complete wetland dike repairs as needed.
- Defer grazing in some pastures to ensure adequate nesting cover for ground-nesting birds next spring.
- Start planning for fall youth hunts to assist in reaching wildlife management population goals.
- Clean your hummingbird feeders every three to four days.

August

- Monitor wetlands for signs of botulism. Notify TPWD of any disease problems.
- Monitor grazing pressure on rangelands and move cattle accordingly.
- Conduct spotlight deer counts.
- Roadside disking will promote germination of both warm and cool season forbs.
- Defer grazing in some pastures to ensure nesting cover for ground nesting birds.
- Provide supplementary water for wildlife when necessary.
- Clean and maintain bird feeders.
- Clean and maintain nestboxes when birds have finished. Prepare some boxes to serve as winter shelter.
- Increase the concentration of sugar in hummingbird feeders to prepare for migration.

September

- Prepare ground and plant winter crops.
- Conduct soil tests on food plot sites.
- Shred or disk sunflowers, millet or goat weed for dove feed.
- Shred around tanks to facilitate doves coming to water.
- Continue control of feral hogs.
- Begin flooding moist soil units for ducks.
- Defer grazing on some pastures to protect nesting cover for ground nesting birds.
- Hummingbird migration peaks this month, begin providing additional feeders for winter hummingbirds.
- operable.
- Clean your hummingbird feeders every three to four days.

We can help our friends at Lone Star Wildlife Rescue

By Brian Burke, Society President

You are likely familiar with the excellent wild animal rescue and rehabilitation services provided by Lone Star Wildlife Rescue near Bellville. At our Summer Meeting on August 24th there will be boxes to donate items LSWR uses daily. See their **Wish List** below and please consider helping.

Animal Food

- ☐ Wild bird seed
- ☐ Pedialyte (flavored)
- ☐ Science Diet cat food (feline maintenance light)
- ☐ Purina Kitten Chow
- ☐ Baby food meats (Beechnut chicken & turkey or Gerber chicken & turkey)
- ☐ Gerber mixed cereal
- ☐ Pecans
- ☐ Roasted peanuts

Paper & Plastic Products

- ☐ Paper towels
- ☐ Tissue boxes
- ☐ Large plastic trash bags
- ☐ Ziploc bags (quart and gallon)

Cleaning Products

- ☐ Bleach
- ☐ Liquid laundry detergent
- ☐ Dawn dishwashing detergent
- ☐ Liquid antibacterial hand soap

Miscellaneous Needs

- ☐ Clay kitty litter
- ☐ Towels and sheets
- ☐ Pet kennels
- ☐ Glass or plastic aquaria
- ☐ Cages/caging supplies
- ☐ Cage wire
- ☐ Heating pads
- ☐ Vet/medical supplies

If you wish to donate an item or money to LSWR, please contact them at (979) 865-0763. They receive no funding from state or federal agencies so they rely on your generosity to defray the cost of animal rehabilitation. All donations are tax deductible. Thank you for supporting their mission to care for native Texas wildlife!

Lone Star Wildlife Rescue

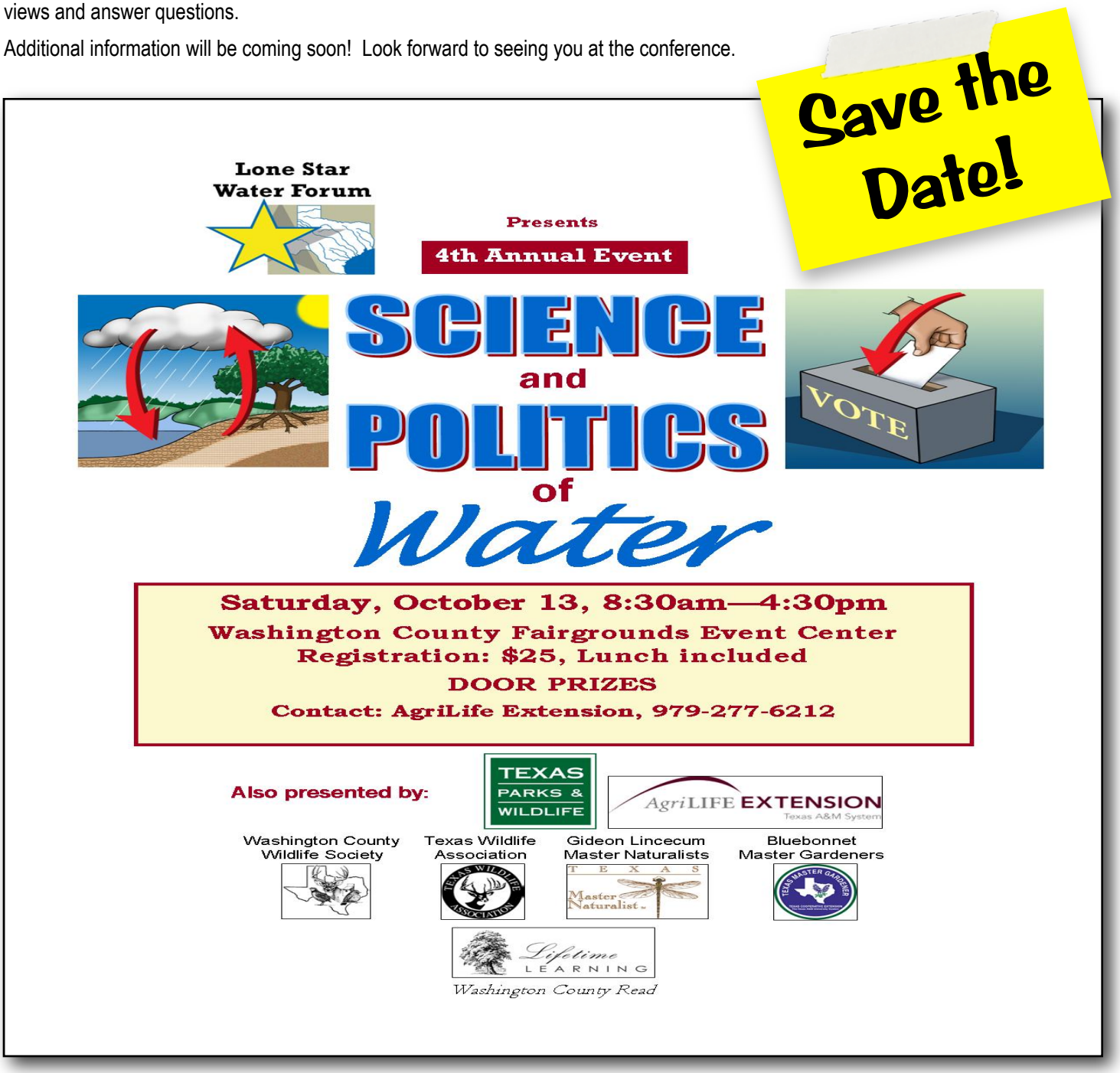
P.O. Box 1121 • Bellville, TX 77418

4th Annual Water Conference

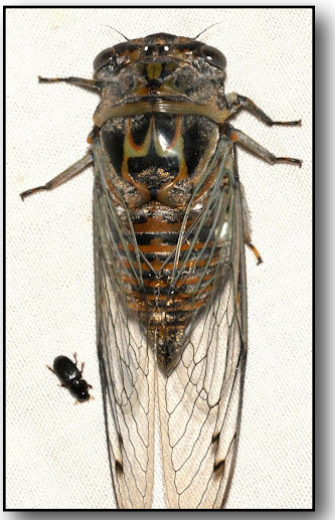
Lone Star Water Forum

Last year was a huge success, and this year will be even bigger. None of us will be able to avoid the impact of science and politics on our fresh water supply. We will start with the State Climatologist, **Dr. Nielson-Gammon** about its science, followed by a surface water discussion from the Brazos River Authority's **Brad Brunett**, and then **Larry French** from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) will explain groundwater. The future's not ours to see, but the decisions about water will be made by today's politicians and will impact our children's quality of life. So, after lunch the Governor's Legislative Director, former **Senator Ken Armbrister** and the Vice Chair of the State Senate Committee on Natural Resources, **Senator Craig Estes** and one other will have chance to state their views and answer questions.

Additional information will be coming soon! Look forward to seeing you at the conference.



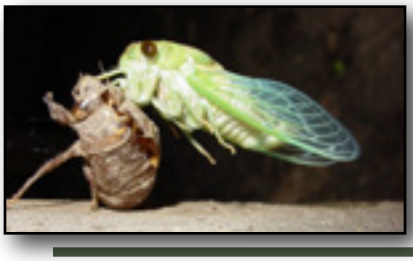
Cicadas *(Tibicen spp.)*



Texas Dog-day Cicad
(*Tibicen texanus)*

The world's loudest insects are cicadas. Cicadas are commonly referred to as locusts which are technically grasshoppers. This common reference began when early North American settlers encountered mass emergences of periodic cicadas. Using the Bible as a guide to plagues of insects, the closest match they found was locusts and so the name stuck...

The common dog-day cicadas appear in late summer and have life cycles of 2 to 5 years. Female cicadas insert clusters of eggs into the twigs and small branches using a saw-like egg laying structure (ovipositor). In 6 to 7 weeks, small nymphs hatch from the eggs and drop to the ground. They burrow into the soil, seeking tree roots. As they molt through several growth stages (instars), they may burrow several feet down. Fully developed nymphs burrow out of the ground at night, leaving a 1/2-inch hole behind them. Under some conditions, the exit hole is associated with a mud cone or chimney 3 to 4 inches high. The nymphs climb onto tree trunks, low plants or other objects. Adult cicadas emerge from this last nymphal stage through a crack along the back, leaving the light brown cast skin behind. Adults can live for 5 to 6 weeks.



Male cicadas rest on tree trunks and branches and "sing" to attract females, producing a periodic whine by means of two special vibrating membranes in the sides of the abdomen. Females do not sing. Adult cicadas do not feed on leaves, and may suck juices from tender twigs. Nymphs feed on the sap from tree roots. Texas species are not considered to be plant pests.

Cicada emerging from nymphal skeleton

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