

# NATURE IN SEGUIN PARKS

## Guadalupe Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program Chartered: July 2014

### Discovery Series

Outreach and Education in city parks to present value of natural areas in the lives of Seguin's children.

• Four programs in 2015 were presented on the last Saturday of the month.

- Discover What's Flying
- Discover What's Buzzing and Blooming
- Discover What's Swimming
- Discover the Forest (Developed as the 2015 class project)

• Each program was developed using a theme-based approach and is adaptable for other sites

• The Interpretation worksheet for each of these is available.



Tom and Jennifer present "Discover the Forest" 10/3/15

"We are talking to the children about discovering what's in the forest, or in this case, the park," Guadalupe Master Naturalist Pam Turner said. "We are discussing the animals, insects, birds and what's all living in the forest, and we are going to be comparing it to humans because it is much the same."



Betty, Clara Mae, Liz present "Discover What's Blooming and Buzzing" 5/3/15

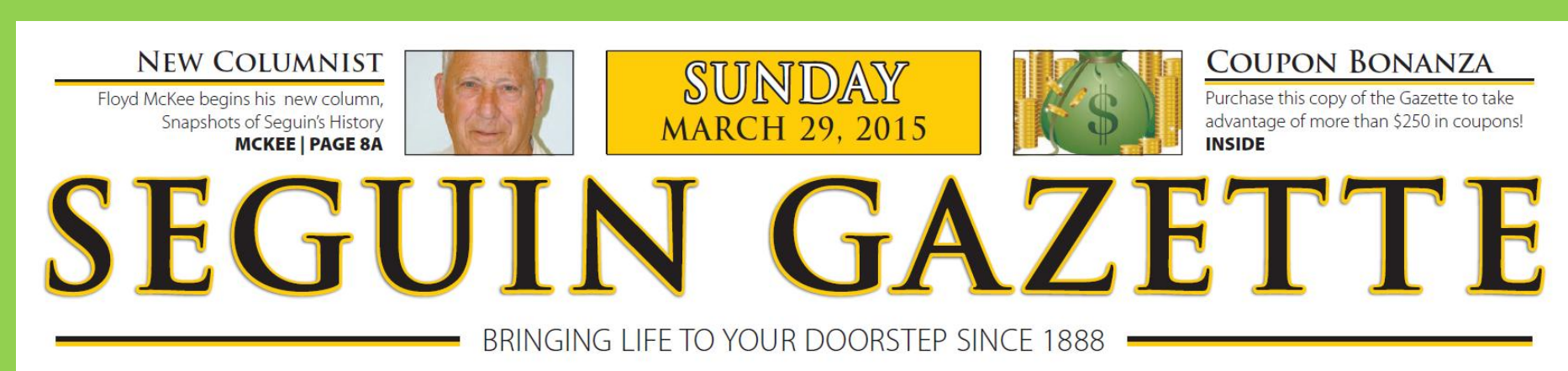
"Craig Hensley, (Park Ranger with TPWD), inspired us with his ideas and examples on reaching out to children"

Liz R., Elizabeth H. and Clara Mae M., Master Naturalists (2014 Class).



Monta presents "Discover What's Swimming" 6/27/15

Being outside in nature was one reason Jennifer Reinhard brought her two daughters, Abby, 10, and Maddie, 7. "I think it is good to just learn so much about nature," she said. "They sit inside so much and watch TV all the time so it is good to get out and learn new things." Gracie Gomez, who drove in from Pearland to visit with Reinhard, agreed about the environment. "It is so important to teach our youth how important it is to take care of the environment," she said. "We need to get our kids outside and moving around." Seguin Gazette 7/8/2015



Master Naturalists provide free, fun bird-watching classes for youngsters

**EYES TO THE SKIES**  
Master Naturalists provide free, fun bird-watching classes for youngsters

**FELICIA FROST**  
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SEGUIN — Emily Aralos, 6, smiled as soon as she spotted a cardinal that flew through the park on Saturday. SELOW RIGHT — Kayjay Taylor, 8, points out a bird she discovered in the group walk through nature near the Memorial Garden.

Aralos, and her grandmother Sylvia Marmolejo came to the park to participate in the Master Naturalist program "What's Flying?"

"I thought it was very nice for the kids. It teaches them something different," Marmolejo said. "This is a great opportunity to get them outside and it was the perfect morning for it."

Aralos was joined by about a dozen other children who were interested and eager in learning about birds and how to identify the different types.

"It was good," she said.

The program was the first in a series that is being presented by the Guadalupe County Master Naturalists.

"It is a great start to our series," said member Nancy Masterson. "It fulfills our mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program which trains us to be interpreters to the wider public and encourage people to get outdoors."

The program started off with a small group of parents and children, but quickly grew.

"We weren't sure there would be more than two people, so this was lovely," said Master Naturalist Clara Mae Marcot of the group of children and parents. "The parents with them just made this a great event. It was a great family activity."

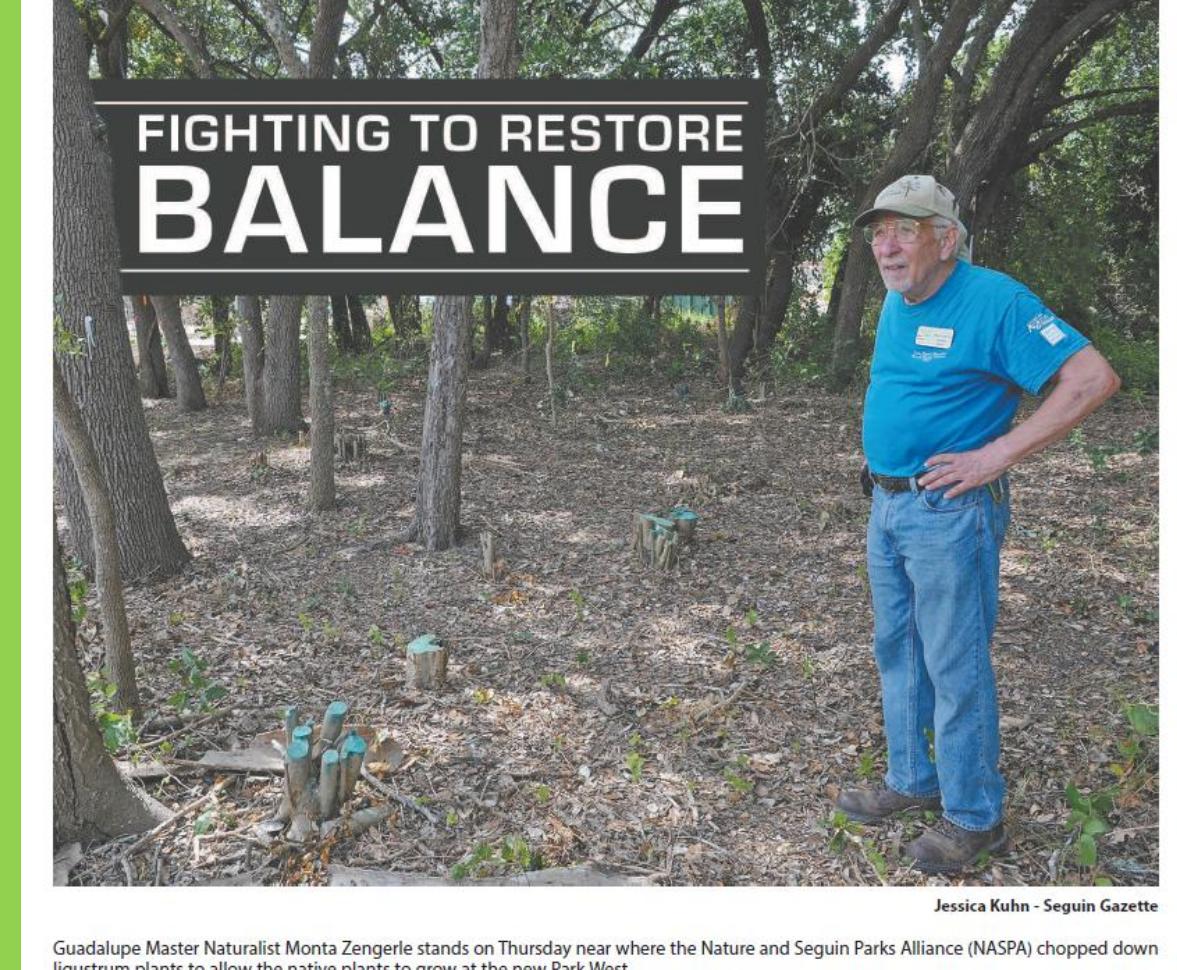
Masterson was thrilled to see everybody get involved.

"When we did the review at the end, the kids really got a lot of the children, workshop and activity class," she said. "The parents got into it too."

Having seen the program in action, Marcot and Aralos are ready for the next session.

"I think it is perfect to start them doing activities at this age," Marcot said. "We're looking forward to bringing her back to some of the other programs. It is very exciting and a good bonding experience."

The Master Naturalist next event will be held at the Seguin Central Park, where they will host a children's workshop and activity class, she said.



Groups work to save native flora, remove exotic plants

**FIGHTING TO RESTORE BALANCE**  
Groups work to save native flora, remove exotic plants

**JACK JONES**  
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SEGUIN — During back to the school year, Jack Jones, a Master Naturalist, led a group of children and adults to help restore the balance of native plants in the park. Jones said that the park is a great place to learn about the importance of native plants and the damage that exotic plants can do. He said that the group was able to remove many of the exotic plants and that the native plants are starting to grow back.

"It was a great day for everyone," Jones said. "The children were very helpful and we were able to make a big difference in the park. We will be doing more of these events in the future."

It's going to take years and years of effort, but they've got a really good start already in here clearing out some areas that were just being choked with exotics. They are opening the canopies so that the natives can actually grow, and they have found just beautiful live oaks out there in the woods.

**JACK JONES**  
Parks and Recreation Director

**PLANTS - 1**

were used by the ancient people who lived here in the precolonial period. "Typically, it will and the early Texas settlers help this park be more native, more natural and more beautiful," Masterson said. "It will also help the Master Naturalists to expand on their native plant classes, normally geared toward educating children about nature and the outdoors."

The group, which included children and adults, worked to remove the park actually went out of its way to position one of the soccer fields to accommodate for the park and having native plants long gone. Masterson also had the parks and recreation department, mentioning the program itself. Jones said that the park is a great place to learn about the importance of native plants and the damage that exotic plants can do.



Relationships developed:

- Seguin Parks and Recreation Department
- Guadalupe County Master Gardeners
- Native Plant Society of Texas
- Nogales Garden Club
- Texas Lutheran University
- TexasInvasives.org

**TAKEAWAY**  
Master Naturalists are on the way to help with work days to try to get rid of Chimberly, ligustrum and bamboo.

Jones said, "You have lots of live oaks, red oak and other native trees out there that are beautiful, but you can't see them because of the bamboo and the ligustrum, and you have to pull it up, really. You can't get rid of it all, but you can limit its growth. Right now, it's out of control."

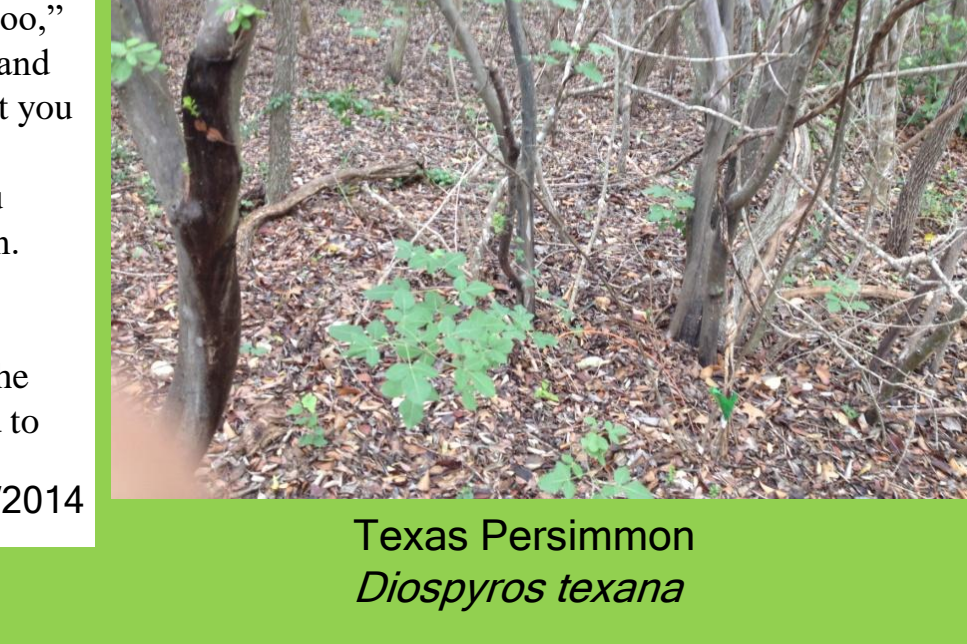
Without the help of the Master Naturalists and the other volunteers, the city would be hard-pressed to find a solution...  
Jack Jones Parks Dir. Seguin Gazette 4/22/2014



Texas Lutheran University - Student Volunteer Day

**PLANTS - 3**

been added how NADRI work in very redwood, acknowledging how his office should have the resources or time to dedicate to the entire plant removal. Jones said, "They are opening the canopies so that the natives can actually grow and they have found it very helpful to see and hear from the people who are helping with the work."



Texas Persimmon Diospyros texana



Invasive trees ready for the city shredder

- Five community events
- 55 children
- 53 adults
- 102 Master Naturalist outreach hours



\$500 Grant through the 2014 Help Seguin Shine Program



- Twelve community events to rescue native plants and to remove exotic plants
- 208 Master Naturalist service hours
- 60 Community Volunteers for an additional 180 service hours

## Keys to the Success of this Project

- 1) Develop Relationships with Partners
  - a) Meet them
  - b) Listen to their needs
  - c) Seek common points of interest
- 2) Seek funding in the community
  - a) May not require 501-(c)(3) Non-Profit status
  - b) Local funders respond well to reaching the community and collaboration within the community
- 3) Provide the message to the local press
  - a) Press releases
  - b) Offer to be interviewed
  - c) Invite press to events
- 4) Follow a process - Make it Happen

Please take a handout with additional information or contact the Guadalupe Chapter <http://txmn.org/guadalupe/>



Mission - to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

