



For Immediate Release – 06/08/2026

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Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalists Celebrate 26 Years and \$7 Million in Volunteer Impact One Chapter • One Coast • Endless Impact

ROCKPORT, Texas – June 8, 2026 – The Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Chapter proudly announced today that its dedicated volunteers have contributed more than \$7 million in documented service value to the Texas coast over the program's 26-year history.

The milestone was celebrated on Saturday, June 6, 2026, at the beautiful Barnhart Q5 Ranch & Nature Retreat in Berclair, TX, with chapter members, new graduates, and supporters. The event highlighted the chapter's deep commitment to habitat restoration, environmental education, coastal stewardship, and youth engagement across 8 coastal counties: Aransas, Calhoun, Goliad, Jackson, Matagorda, Refugio, San Patricio, and Victoria.

In its 26-year history, this chapter has made a lasting impact on the Texas mid-coast. A total of 349 certified chapter members have volunteered and recorded over 266,880 hours on projects that matter — from picking up a single piece of trash to living on Matagorda Island and writing books that allow the public to experience its ecosystem without disturbing the fragile soil.

“We've been fortunate to have extraordinary leaders among us — people like Ray and Kris Kirkwood, who created our non-profit status and are still with us today. We were especially thrilled to benefit from the guidance of Doc and Martha McAlister, who helped set the direction for conservation management that we still follow today.

The fact that we are all still here — educated by the very same principles they started 26 years ago — proves that a chapter's impact can be deep and enduring when we stay true to our mission” said Steve Furgeson, Chapter President.

The Texas Master Naturalist Program, a partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, trains volunteers to serve as stewards of natural resources. The Mid-Coast Chapter has been especially active in:

- Bird and Sea Turtle rescue and rehab
- Conducting large-scale beach and bay cleanups
- Restoring native habitats and planting pollinator gardens
- Delivering Environmental Education through programs like S.E.E.D. (Science, Environment, Education, Discovery)
- Supporting monarch butterfly conservation and bird migration awareness
- Providing technical assistance on watershed protection and sustainable landscaping



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New members who recently completed Initial Training were also welcomed at the milestone celebration, ensuring the chapter’s momentum continues well into the future.

For more information about the Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Chapter or how to get involved, visit: <https://www.midcoast-tmn.org/>



About the Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Chapter

The Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Chapter is a locally based volunteer organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of the natural resources of the Texas coast. Trained and certified by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife, chapter members contribute thousands of hours annually to scientific research, habitat restoration, education, and outreach — creating an enduring legacy of environmental stewardship.

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