

Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting a Success

Article & photos by Robin Gelston, Rio Grande Valley Chapter

I would like to shout out a big **THANK YOU to ALL** that helped with the 2023 Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Annual Meeting at the McAllen Convention Center, October 12-15, 2023. It could not have happened without you! Just a quick summary of events:

- *Over 475 People attended
- *Over 120 Advance Training presentations
- *Over 25 Field Sessions including pre and post sessions
- *42 out of 49 TMN Chapters were present

We earned \$8774 at the silent auction, in which the Rio Grande Valley Chapter receives 10 percent so approximately \$875. This funding will go directly into our bank account. Thank you, Tamie and the silent auction crew for making this possible!!



Well staffed silent auction table



A flurry of activity between sessions at the Annual Meeting

Our RGVC outreach table was right next to the registration table, so we were able to welcome all the TMN visitors to the Rio Grande Valley. Barb Peterson brought our merchandise, and we sold \$270 worth of T-shirts and other items. They really liked the Pelican T-shirt; I was really surprised. Thank you!!

Our RGV Pollinator Project was submitted for the 2023 Chapter Project Fair Award. They had some very stiff competition from four other chapters with multiple yearlong projects involving

multiple chapters. For just getting started in 2023, I think they did a tremendous job garnering third place and earning \$300 to further their project. Great job!!

Washed Up Texas brought a beautiful sculpture of three flamingos to ensure all who visited were aware of the plastic pollution problem in the oceans. It was beautiful.

The State brought eight screens to show the 25-year history of the Texas Master Naturalist Program from 1997 to 2023.



(Above) Washed Ashore flamingo sculpture



(Left) State display of the 25 year history of Texas Master Naturalist

(Below) Tree Walk display from Quinta Mazatlan

Quinta Mazatlán brought the “Tree Walk” - 12 beautiful screens about the native trees of the Rio Grande Valley.

To all that attended, I hope you had as much fun as I did meeting new friends, learning new ideas at the presentations, and discovering the wonderful native wildlife we have in the Valley at one of the field sessions.



A **special THANKS** to the Joni Gillis, Tamie Bulow, Mara Lee Moats, Diana Lehmann, and Betsy Hosick for the months of help getting ready for the TMN Annual Meeting. Without them lifting the heavy weight, the annual meeting would not have been the success it was. Thank you!!