

2014 TEEA Winner Civic/Community Category: Texas Master Naturalist Program

Narrator

When a Texas Master Naturalist looks at the landscape, they can't help but see what was...

M. Lee Brown, Member, Hays County Chapter

This was construction debris.

Narrator

...and what could be.

Dixie Camp, Member, Hays County Chapter

We put our rainwater collection tanks right over there.

Narrator

They're 8,800 strong. Spread out across the state in 42 different chapters. Volunteers who literally are the life blood of places like the remote Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Mark Hassell, President, Panhandle Chapter

Volunteers are probably one reason we can really stay open here. We've got 28,000 acres and only 14 employees.

Narrator

The program's a partnership between the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas A&M Ag Extension Service.

Michelle Haggerty, Texas Master Naturalist Program State Coordinator, Texas Parks and Wildlife

Last year our volunteers provided over 349,000 hours of service to the state of Texas valued at more than \$7.7 million. So as an agency, these are things that we can't do on our own.

M. Lee Brown

We all kind of do what's called for.

Narrator

M. Lee Brown joined the Master Naturalists in 2010. She helped turn a 64-acre donation to the City of Dripping Springs into a park.

M. Lee Brown

I see moms and dads with their children and they're showing them different things about nature, they're getting involved in it, they're bird watching. That is a pretty good reward.

Tom Hausler, Member, Hays County Chapter

Many of us are at the age that we want to give back a little and so this is a great opportunity to do that.

Narrator

Volunteers receive 40 hours of training and in return, promise at least 40 hours of service. But some go far beyond that number.

Larry Calvert, President, Hays County Chapter

I'll probably have 2,500 before the year is out.

Narrator

The impact of this program is written in ways both large and small across the geography of our great state.

Tom Hausler

You know, it's great to see the little kids get all excited because they found a bug. You're out in the middle of nature.

Michelle Haggerty

It really energizes me.