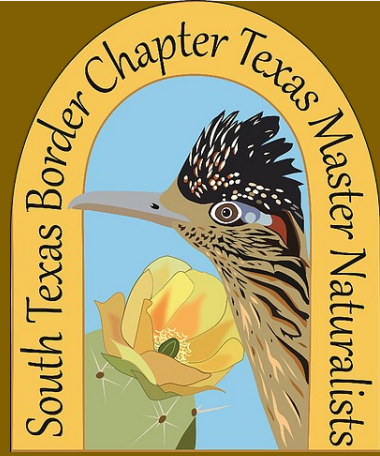


El Paisano

Newsletter



Life's better outside.®

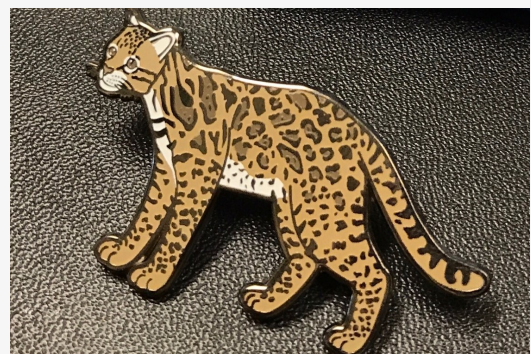


Soon, there will be more Ocelots in the Rio Grande Valley



Well, hopefully there will be more real Ocelots living in the thorn scrub here in the Valley. But, we do know for sure that there will be many new beautiful Ocelot re-certification pins awarded to STBC members this year. That's right, this elegant pin can be yours .

Members have only to pay their dues, complete forty hours of approved volunteer work and obtain eight hours of advanced training to re-certify and be eligible for this award. They should be available in February sometime.



Cactus Flower Pins for Donors

These finely crafted pins are available to members as an acknowledgement of and gratitude for donations above the \$15.00 annual dues paid to the South Texas Border Chapter. Please, think about making a donation as you are paying your dues.



The Supporting Member pin and Certificate of Recognition is available to members who donate \$25.00.



The Sponsor Member pin and Certificate of Recognition is available to members who donate \$50.00.



The Sustaining Member pin and Certificate of Recognition is available to members who donate \$100.00.



This Life Member pin and Certificate of Recognition is available to members who donate \$1000.00. This donation pledge may be made in installments of \$250.00 per year for 4 years. If the full donation is not completed, the donor will receive a certificate for the actual amount of the donation and may choose from any of the three lower level pins.

This pin is available to non-member donors



This Friend of STBCM pin is available to non-members accompanied by a Certificate of Recognition for the actual amount of \$25.00 and above donation. There are other awards available for the higher tier non-member donors.

The Class of 2018 Has Begun



Twenty eight students have started their journey to Certification. It is an experience that will make them more confident in their commitment to conservation and nature. There are presentations by local nature experts, field trips to Valley wonders, and discoveries ahead of you that will increase your knowledge and enhance your lives. The course will show you your own most inwardly satisfying way to contribute toward preserving the natural world. The action of each of us is like a small positive ripple of change. But, the cumulative action of our chapter makes a wave of change. The TMN program is a tide of change. Thank you, new members, for joining. We are glad to see you. Welcome to our quiet revolution.

Adventures in Volunteering

Ana Kennedy

One of the perks of volunteering at a nature center and/or attending a group field trip with the Texas Master Naturalists , is the unexpected surprises that come with it. You never really know what you're going to see and there's always something. Every time I go out to one of the nature sites, I'm always on the look out for a snake, preferably the elusive indigo. Well, elusive for me anyway.

So it was on a hot Tuesday morning at the McAllen nature center that I got my wish. I didn't see an indigo but a bull snake. We were moving heavy brush from an area and had been working for a while when I picked up a load of tree branches and I saw my new friend quickly slither out. I yelled to Raziel (employee of MNC), SNAKE!!!!!! He jumped into action and gently grabbed it. It was a young snake, not very big. Raziel was amazed at how friendly he was, and didn't try to bite. At the time, we weren't really sure what kind of snake it was, but Raziel was pretty sure it was non-venomous. He wanted to notify his fellow employees about the snake and asked me to hold it while he ran to get them. Gingerly I took the serpent and he quickly coiled around my hand. Raziel ran off and it was just me and my new friend. Fear melted away as I studied him



closely and realized, sadly, that most people would have probably killed this non-venomous, docile creature. We bonded and I named him Harry. Raziel returned with his colleagues and I introduced Harry to them. I learned later that bull snakes eat small mammals; mice, rats, gophers, squirrels, frogs, lizards, constricting the larger ones and swallowing the smaller ones alive. They retire into winter season dormancy in October and emerge in April from their hibernation. You can find them as far north as Canada and as far south as North East Mexico. An adult averages 4 to 6 feet in length, but some have been recorded to be as long is 8 feet. A fun fact is that they make great pets, once they become used to being handled. Their subs specific name "sayi" was given in honor of Thomas Say an American naturalist. This photo is of Harry and me or rather my hand. I'm hoping to see him again soon.

STBC Members in the Field



Pyramid Bush

Mirtala Rodriguez

Pyramid Bush is also known as Teabush, Raichie, Woolly Broomwood, Broomweed, Varita De San Jose, and many more.

Scientific Name: *Melochia tomentosa*

Family: Malvaceae, Globe Mallow Synonyms: (*Melochia tomentosa* var. *frutescens*)

Pyramid Bush is a member of the big Mallow Family, though before the days of genetic sequencing it was assigned to the mainly tropical Chocolate or Cacao Family, the Sterculiaceae. The Chocolate Family now has been lumped into the Hibiscus Family.

According to the Southwest Desert Flora Website, the *Melochia tomentosa* is rare in the U.S. It is only found in Hidalgo County in South Texas and Miami-Dade and St. Lucie Counties in Florida. In the Caribbean, Pyramid bush is native to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Its broadest range is Latin American, ranging from Baja California south to Brazil.

I have two of these shrubs that I planted in July of 2011 from a 1-gallon container. They were about 8 inches tall when planted, and by September 2011, they were almost two and half feet tall. I have decided to keep mine 3 to 4 feet high since I like them to be bushy and not leggy. I am contemplating not pruning one and letting it grow this year, just out of curiosity. In Florida, it grows up to 10 feet high, but many plants grow bigger there. I'm sure the Valley can give the



Floridians some competition. My Pyramid Bush, pictured here, is over the 4-foot ruler, but I prune it every year to keep it to between 3 and 4 feet tall.

I have decided to have plants that don't need a lot of water. If this shrub has survived in my yard, it's tough and is a low water consumer. With that said, I do have good soil and I mulch all my garden beds, but this sun-loving shrub can tolerate poor soil and is suitable for xeriscaping. According to the literature, it grows in rocky limestone hills and coastal thickets and it needs good drainage or it can develop root rot in wet soil.

Pyramid Bush, Cont

Mirtala Rodriguez

In our Valley weather, this shrub is a repeat bloomer, blooming from spring to fall, and keeping its bluish green to gray foliage all year long. If it were to freeze, it might die back. But don't worry if it freezes, it will come right back and should be two feet tall in about three months! If not, you should get some seedlings since it self-seeds. In digging out my seedlings, I noticed that even though they are small, they already have a long tap root. You should dig them before they get too big. This one is 6 inches tall with a root that is approximately 5 inches in length.



I have been fortunate enough to have been able to share my seedlings. The ones at the Master Gardener Educational Garden are doing great. They were just 6 inches tall when we planted them in May of 2016 in the area which is watered only by hand with a garden hose. They have survived two summers. I call that drought tolerant.

I have planted three more in my yard, can't wait for them to grow. I will be pruning them to keep them short and bushy. They do develop a hard woody reddish-brown stem as they grow tall. The nice thing about this shrub is that they begin flowering when they are quite small. This one in my yard is 12 inches tall and has been flower-

ing since it was about 8 inches tall. If you want bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, this is a shrub that will reward you with all these wonderful critters. Here is a picture of mine with a honey bee enjoying its morning meal. One season my shrubs were literally full of honey bees.

As you can see, the flowers are not large and showy, but inconspicuous, dainty and pretty. They have five petals and are pink-purple magenta with a yellow eye. The leaves have serrated margins, and are covered in short soft hairs with a silver gray hue.



Wolf Spider Motherhood

Ana Kennedy

We all have had our fair share of encounters with spiders. They're fine as long as they keep their distance, preferably a great distance. While volunteering at an area nature center, this was not the case. I came across a large wolf spider while weeding. I, apparently, had disturbed its slumber in the dead leaves. What made the spider worth noting, aside from its size, was that it had a white ball attached to it. The white ball, I later learned, was an egg sac. Female wolf spiders lay several dozen eggs and wrap them in silk, creating this egg sac. They carry the sack until the babies are born and then carry the babies on their back for several days thereafter. This particular spider did not seem very aggressive and quickly tried to scurry away from me and my work at hand, which made me quite happy.

Move along!!!

Some quick information about wolf spiders; they will only attack if threatened, and their venom is not harmful to humans. Only mild swelling and redness occur if you are bitten. They have excellent night vision and therefore hunt at night. They are mostly ground dwelling insects. Wolf Spiders are prey and an important food source for lizards and birds. They range in size from a quarter of an inch to over an inch.

Fun fact; South Carolina is the only state that has an official state spider, the Carolina wolf spider (*Hogna carolinensis*)



Nature Humor



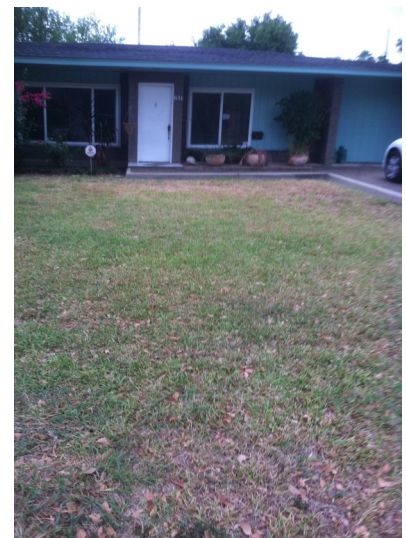
Turning My Nostalgic Garden into a Native Garden

Patricia Diaz



My husband and I moved to McAllen in August of 1978. We bought our house with a front and back lawn, the next year, in an old neighborhood. For almost 30 years my garden was a “nostalgic” garden, where I grew plants that reminded me of my mother and my summers at my grandparent’s ranch in Jalisco, Mexico, where their garden was self-sustaining. My grandmother kept about 50 or more potted geraniums with a rainbow of colorful flowers that adorned the big patio. The children’s job was to water the pots from a well. My mother had a natural green thumb. She tended to numerous potted plants and a small garden in my hometown with great success and no exceeding effort.

For 30 years I planted and tended to my own yard with little success. I lost plants because of a lack of water, as well as because of cold and hot conditions. It was hard work, and the loss of money and water were distressing. It made me sad to keep only the plants that were suitable for a climate totally different than the one in which I grew up. I was attached and wanted to recreate the beautiful gardens of my childhood memories. I realized it was a way to keep in my heart my life as a child. It was hard to let go of that and come to the realization that all had to change.

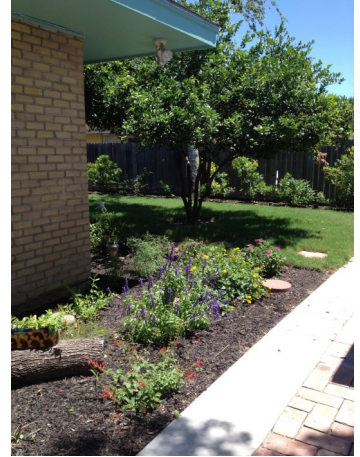


With the help of my son and daughter-in-law, who are established architects, and with my new knowledge as a Master Gardener, we redesigned the hardscape of my yard. We used old brick pavers from the house, framed with concrete borders. From around the newly built garage in the backyard, we removed all existing vegetation and most of the grass. Next, I, personally, planted a butterfly garden with Tropical Milkweed, Esperanzas, Firecrackers, and South Padre Island Mistflower. I, also, planted a rose garden with, mainly, Knockout Roses, Dwarf Powder Puff, Fox Tail and heirloom roses.

Turning My Nostalgic Garden into a Native Garden

Patricia Diaz

To cover my Eastern fence, I planted Esperanzas, Buganvillas and White Brush. On the South side of my yard, I planted Anacua Trees, Mimosa and Cuban Pea Vine. On the West side of my yard, I planted Buganvillas, a palm tree, and a vegetable garden with 5 fair-sized beds. My front yard has been a much greater task and is still a work in progress. I removed the Carpetgrass and added stones and desert roses. I used Oyster Plants as a border. I added Muhly Grass, Lantanas, a Potato Tree and an Olive Tree. There was already a magnificent tree there, in the front, when my husband and I purchased our home decades ago. I left it there. With these changes, my garden has brought all kinds of visitors, including hummingbirds, butterflies, lizards and even Chachalacas.



It was hard to let go of the idea of the garden I wanted, based on my childhood memories, but the rewards of accepting and embracing a new garden, made for the Rio Grande Valley climate, will help conservation of nature and my acceptance of a new life in a different place.



A Naturalist in the Whitehouse

Neil Cassady



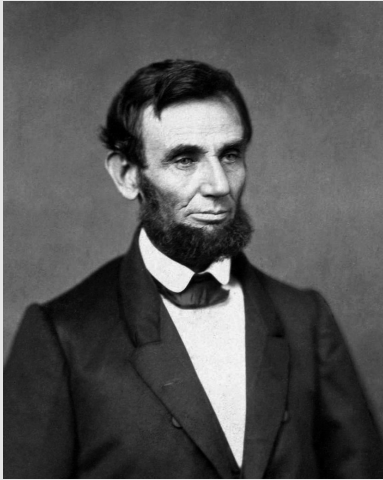
I know, I know. History is boring. You probably thought that in school, and may still feel that way. Some people think that Birding is boring. Some people think that Butterflying (Is that a word?) is boring. This piece of History isn't boring. I promise you. It has conspiracy, rioting mobs with torches and work tools, crusaders, and characters from "Deadwood". It is a story about the right man in power at the right time with the right ideas and the right plan to sell those ideas.

So, now you are probably thinking, "That sounds cool, but what has it to do with me?". The changes forced on the government and the citizenry of our country by Theodore Roosevelt led directly to the situation which exists in the Rio Grande Valley today. President Roosevelt pushed people to prepare the infrastructure for and participate in an activity which is now called ecotourism. Only about three per cent of the Rio Grande Valley remains in its original state. However, the wild inhabitants of and migrants through that small percentage of our territory attract five hundred million dollars of national and global ecotourism spending to our local economy. In the last year at nature centers across the Valley, I have encountered many people from foreign places like: Japan, Korea, Britain, Germany, France, New Zealand, Australia and Massachusetts.



The events of this century-old story led to the founding of organizations like The Texas Master Naturalist Program, with local chapters to which you may belong. At the end of the story is a pretty comprehensive list of the many national wildlife refuges, state parks, municipal nature centers, and some non-governmental nature operations. Please, think of Theodore when you visit them.

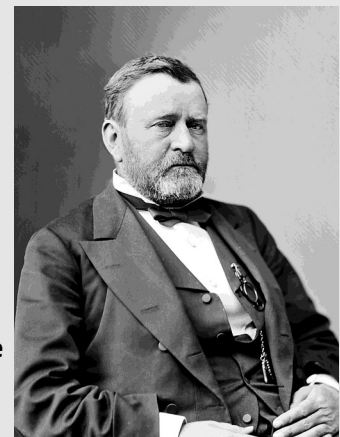
A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



In 1864 Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant ceding only the valley to the state of California with the proviso that it be preserved. In 1906, Yosemite was expanded and returned to the possession of the United States government at the urging of John Muir. At that point, the park became the place we know now.

Not much else was done in the way of wilderness preservation until 1872, when President Grant founded the National Park System by declaring Yellowstone the country's first national park. However, there was no provision to protect the preserved status of the park, and illicit hunting, trapping, logging, and prospecting continued to devastate the park.

The American people were not much inclined toward conservation in those days. The series of Homestead Acts passed by Congress from 1862 to 1909 offered free land all across the western United States to those willing to work for it. The natural world was an impediment to their westward push toward individual and familial prosperity. Like Leaf Cutter ants attacking a giant oak tree, American born and new immigrants swarmed westward, each taking a small bite out of nature. The prevailing attitude toward preservationism was, "Get out of my way. I am building a farm, ranch, business, town, etc. to secure my family's future".



If conservationists were a nuisance to the ordinary person, to the economic powers that were, they were heretics deserving to be burned at the stake. But, the prophets of doom were few and truly powerless. The writhing basket of twisting buzzing rattlesnakes which were the mining, logging, and railway interests, would strike out at any person attempting to restrict their rampant exploitation of natural resources. The biggest and meanest snake in the basket was the railway interest. They had the most to lose.

A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



Logging was another of the snakes in the basket. The railways needed unrestricted logging. Savage competition between suppliers kept the cost of millions of ties and hundreds of thousands of trestle trusses and beams cheap. Their rolling stock was made of wood; competition kept them cheap, too. Freighting logs and wood products were a huge part of the railway business in a country growing in population and prosperity. Homes, schools, stores and other wooden structures were popping up like spring wildflowers. Wooden furnishings were needed to fill them.

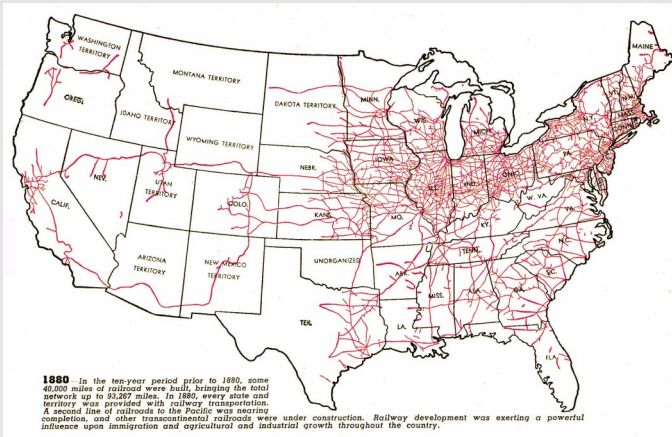
Wagons, buggies, farm implements, and fencing were made of wood, too. The bosses would use influence, intimidation, bribery, and worse measures to keep the pirates of the western forests raiding.

Mining was the two headed snake in the basket. Iron was one head. Combined with carbon, iron makes steel. Steel makes rails, fish plates, locomotive boilers, and wheels for railways. Freighting millions of tons of pig iron (giant iron ingots) from the smelters to the steel foundries edging the South side of the Great Lakes was huge business for those railways. But the shipping of the finished steel products was even bigger. That was real national distribution, and the shipping volume was even greater. Bosses would shield iron production from any government interference by its usual means and from labor disturbance by the worst of means, including massacre.



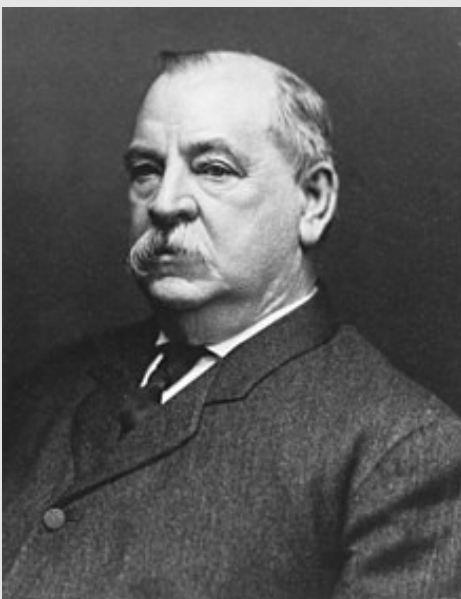
Coal was the other head of the mining snake. In a world powered by fire, coal was to that world as gasoline and electricity are to ours. Burning coal boiled water and made steam. Steam drove pistons. Pistons turned wheels. Without coal, railways would die. So would smelters, steel foundries, steam driven factories, home heating and cooking. Coal was the protein in the diet of American Civilization. It provided energy and the building blocks of life. The railways carried it everywhere. Freighting coal was a giant part of their business. Bosses would protect coal production from any disturbance by the most vicious of means. Murder and massacre were just a start.

A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



There were two land rushes during the 1870s and early 1880s. One we learned about in school. Millions of people were going West, risking their lives to change their lives. The sounds of wheels turning and plows scratching deafened the ears of the migrants to the cautionary caws and croaks of the conservationists like John Muir and Gifford Pinchot. The other Western land rush was accomplished with paper. The railways grabbed incredibly large chunks of open territory for free, using papers called charters.

The original charters for the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railways had included a land grant provision. For every mile of **completed** track, the government ceded miles of land on both sides of that track to the railway. However, in subsequent charters the land was ceded to the railways after the route was surveyed. The railways chartered and surveyed lines that they never intended to build, to get the free land. Many of the new land holdings were leased to Logging interests and Mining interests, even some Ranching interests. Times were pretty good in Railroadville because by 1887, the railways had collectively gained, by the survey method 81,000,000 acres. That's right— 81 million acres.



In 1884, honest and reform-minded President Grover Cleveland had been forced to intervene in a national railroad strike that paralyzed the nation's commerce. The Pullman Company, manufacturers and operators of railway dining cars, decided to cut employees' wages without lowering the rent on the company housing in which employees were *required* to live. The Pullman workers struck. Railway workers of all lines struck in sympathy. Bosses hired armies of thugs. Workers became thugs. Battles were fought with the death toll steadily rising. Railway cars were burned. Workers' homes were burned. The railways came to a stop. American commerce came to a stop. President Cleveland was required to intervene. He sent the U. S. Army in to operate railways and quell disturbances. The company thugs melted away. The workers refused to melt.

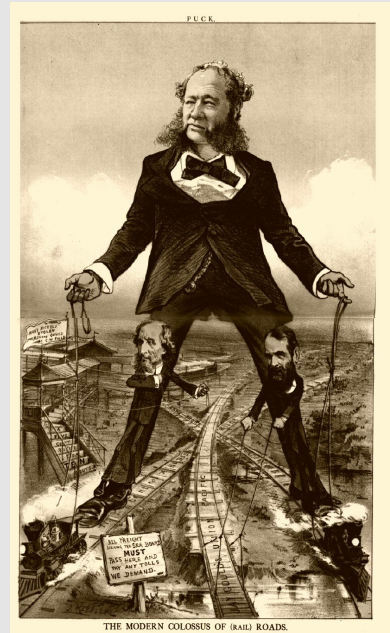
A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



SOLDIERS DISPERSING A. H. U. STRIKERS AND SYMPATHIZERS AT 49th STREET, CHICAGO.

The workers defied the President and continued marching and rioting. The Army did what armies do. They shot people. The shootings convinced the workers that it was their patriotic duty to return to the job of making American commerce work. Everyone was happy, but the workers. The Bosses were particularly happy because their worst *nuisance*, the government, had helped them defeat their absolute worst *enemy*, the labor movement.

The American people went back to work . They continued to go West, homestead farming, opening businesses in small towns, herding cattle and sheep. The people did not hear and did not want to hear the very lonely and totally ignored conservationists' *vox clamantis in deserto* (voice crying in the wilderness). The government went back to taxing and spending. The railroad Bosses sat smugly in their clubs drinking cold champagne. Then in 1887, news came that must have choked the Bosses in mid-champagne sip. The president had formed a commission to investigate their charter land grant holdings in the West. Of course, the commission found that the 81,000,000 acres were not legitimately held, so they were returned to the ownership of the United States. The people were happy. More and maybe better situated acres were now available for homesteading. The Railway Bosses were traumatized. Billions of dollars in future earnings had been snatched from their grasp. The defeated feel cheated. So the Bosses decided that no reform-minded maverick would ever gain enough power to hurt them again.



Theodore Roosevelt had exhibited a pattern of bad behavior for years. During his six years as Civil Service Commissioner, he demanded that appointments be based on qualifications and merit. He fought over that constantly with the powers that were and the entrenched bureaucracy. Upon leaving that job he became the Police Commissioner of New York City. He patrolled the streets at night in a long cape and large hat, keeping an eye on suspected corrupt cops. Then, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he cleaned up the corruption in the materials acquisition system and the rank promotion system. The man had quit his Naval job to join the Army when war was declared against Spain. He was the most famous hero of the Spanish-American war. In 1898, he easily won the office of Governor of New York. Immediately, he set about State reformation. To make things worse, he was a friend to all of the leading crybaby conservationist Cassandras. Roosevelt was a dangerous man.

A Naturalist in the Whitehouse

The industrial and political powers developed a plan. Play hard on Roosevelt's sense of duty and loyalty to convince him to run as President McKinley's Vice Presidential candidate for McKinley's second term. Roosevelt would have to resign from the office of Governor of New York State and that would clear the State for the old business-as-usual crowd. Simultaneously, Roosevelt would be trapped in an office with absolutely no power. Roosevelt took the bait, resigned and campaigned hard for McKinley. The ticket won and Roosevelt was immediately sidetracked. BRILLIANT!



Brilliant plans often go to Hell in a handbasket. The Sidetrack-Roosevelt plan got shoved into a handbasket on September 6, 1901 by anarchist Leon Czolgosz, when he shot President McKinley in the abdomen. That unlucky handbasket arrived at its destination on the day Theodore Roosevelt was sworn in as the 26th President of the United States. The Bosses knew that things would get tough, but Roosevelt was unpredictable. Who, what, and where would he strike? The corrupt inefficient government apparatus knew that Roosevelt would come for them, too. The voting public expected some changes. They had hopes, but had no idea what type of change or on what scale was in store. The small cadre of castout conservationists crossed their fingers and hoped for some change. But, in reality, nobody was ready for Tornado Teddy.

The scope and scale of Theodore's reworking of America is beyond the scope and scale of this article. Our concern here is the change Roosevelt made because he was a lifelong dedicated *naturalist*.

Gilded Age America engaged in two fads which caused the crisis that set President Roosevelt off on a naturalist rampage. Americans imitated the Victorian British frenzy of Nature collection. Glass-lidded boxes of butterflies and beetles were absolutely madly popular. Glass-fronted cases of emptied wild birds' eggs were an "in" thing to have. The other fad that contributed to the crisis was the wealthy lady's fashionista requirement of a hat which was elaborately decorated with real wild bird plumes. Sometimes, the more elaborate hats would have whole taxidermy-preserved birds. Cost was no object. Enterprising plumer and egger gangs were devastating the rookeries of egrets, terns, and herons on Pelican Island off the Atlantic coast of Florida. A local resident, in the employ of the Audubon Society, was harassing the gangs to no effect. The situation was dire.



A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



In 1903, Frank Chapman of The American Museum of Natural History in New York and William Dutcher of the American Ornithologists Union met with Theodore Roosevelt at his home, to plead for federal intervention at Pelican Island. The Audubon Society and the American Ornithologists Union had hired Mr. Paul Kroegel to harass the plumers and eggers with his sailboat and shotgun, but it was a losing battle. After Chapman and Dutcher had left, Roosevelt asked one of his advisors what could be done. The advisor said that the President could declare the Island a National Wildlife Refuge. Roosevelt simply said, "I so declare". Two weeks later, the paper work was done and Pelican Island National Wildlife refuge was created. Mr. Paul Kroegel, the sailing shotgunner, was later made a federal Game Warden.

Theodore was now on a conservation tear. During the years 1903 to 1910 he brought under federal conservation 230 million acres of land. There were 150 national forests, 5 national parks, 18 national monuments, 51 bird preserves, and 4 national game preserves. But, this was not as simple as just saying, "I so declare".

Conservation was not even a part of the national consciousness. Americans were into utilitarian thought. We need the wood to build homes, schools, barns and wagons. Log the forest! We need wheat for bread, beans and onions for soup. Our working livestock need hay. Plow the Land! We need iron and steel for tools. Mine the earth! Progress and prosperity were foremost in their minds. To the ordinary American, the conservationists seemed to be mostly of two types. There were the woods dwellers (Thoreau and Muir) with beards like billy goats, and Eastern banker and professor types like Pinchot, Grinnel, and Chapman in tweed coats. The American masses knew that neither the billy goats nor the tweed coats understood the real world. Business interests were not as interested in goods as the people were. They were interested in paper. Business interests were even less inclined to conservationism than the regular people were. Every single dollar invested in an enterprise must yield as much return as possible. Clear-cutting forests, strip mining mountains flat and building new mountains of slag by steel mills were efficient methods of making money.



If the people and the business interests were not conservation minded, the government sure wasn't going to be. They had foisted care of Yellowstone National Park on the U. S. Army. There were no departments or bureaus or commissions promoting any kind of conservation, never mind actively pursuing it. Theodore Roosevelt knew that selling conservationism to the public would be the key. He could bully the government into line. Business would fight, but would, in the end, have to comply.

A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



National Forests were President Roosevelt's weapons of choice in the fight. He created the forests and management mechanisms. Forest management advocate, Gifford Pinchot, was appointed head of the Bureau of Forestry, a new part of the Department of Agriculture. Forest Rangers were appointed to protect the forests from illicit logging, prospecting, trapping, and hunting. Roosevelt's first Ranger appointments were former members of the Rough Riders. They were men that the President knew to be honest and brave. The irritable ex-sheriff of Deadwood and former Rough Rider, Seth Bullock, was one of the first appointed. These were not guides, but hardened law enforcement officers on mounted patrol in the wilderness.

Theodore created so many National Forests in 1907 that Congress passed a law to limit his ability to unilaterally create forests. However, the momentum was already positive in the public's opinion, so Congress passed conservation legislation on their own and at the request of the President. Congress created more government management infrastructure and defined usages allowed in the forests. They even protected more land areas. The United States Government was now fully on board the conservation express.



Only Theodore Roosevelt could have changed the national consciousness as quickly as it spun. One year, no one cared about preserving nature. The next year almost everyone was on board. It took a larger than life super salesman to make that happen. Teddy was all of the things that most Westerners should have hated. He was born in New York City into one of oldest monied families in the country. Roosevelt had traveled to Europe several times as a child and lived for half a year in Germany. He was educated at Harvard and Columbia as a lawyer. Westerners trusted casual ladies and gamblers more than they trusted lawyers. Then Theodore had become a politician, another of Western America's least trusted professionals. As a person, he spoke high Victorian style words in a patrician New York accent. Mr. Roosevelt's voice was high-pitched, too. When he had come West as a young man, he was clad in buckskins tailored by Brooks Brothers.

A Naturalist in the Whitehouse



Westerners forgave Theodore all of that because he had been one of them, for a time, in the 1880s. They had come to respect his incredible mental and physical toughness and courage. He respected their ways and their hardiness. When it was time to go to war, Roosevelt called all of the best of the West to his unit. There were Cowboys, Indians, and Mexicans; tough men all. There were a few polo players from New York, too. But, most Rough Riders were men of the West. The Westerners, also, liked his no nonsense attitude and sense of fairness. They felt like the man in the White House was a man like them. Westerners were among his strongest supporters.

They began to waver when Teddy was camping with John Muir in Yosemite. One Oregon legislator asked why Roosevelt didn't declare the entire State of Oregon a National Forest and be done with it! When the people were beginning to worry about all of the land taken out of production, to allay their fears, a new dam and irrigation project would be announced for a river in their State to encourage farming. Many times Theodore would show up at a town near the new National Forest, with reporters following in line like ducklings. He would praise the citizens and say he shared their pride in their land. He would tell them to plan for hotels, restaurants, train stations and outfitting companies. Tourism was about to start. He would often question why anyone would want to go to Europe to see the crumbling works of man, when they could come to America and see the majestic works of nature. He predicted that the Europeans would come to our country to see our land's natural beauty. They did. Roosevelt got away with the largest conservation land grab in history by changing a nation's psyche.



Bless Audubon, Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Pinchot, and Bandelier. But, next time you visit a National, State, County, or Municipal nature center, you should truly thank President Theodore Roosevelt, the naturalist in the White House.

Nature Centers

Cameron County

Harlingen Arroyo Colorado (Hugh Ramsey Park) World Birding Center PHONE: 956-216-5951 (Harlingen P & R Office) ADDRESS: 1001 S. Loop 499, Harlingen, TX 78550 WEBSITE: www.myharlingen.us OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Open from Dawn to Dark FEE: Free

Laguna Atascosa Wildlife Refuge Phone 956-748-3607 ext 111 for visitor center ADDRESS: 22688 Buena Vista Blvd, Los Fresnos, TX 78566 WEBSITE: www.fws.gov/refuge/laguna_atascosa HOURS: Refuge is open 7 days a week during daylight hours (sunrise to sunset). Visitor Center: October to April open 7 days a week, 8 am to 4 pm. May to September open Thursday to Monday. FEE: Per vehicle \$3

Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve The Nature Conservancy PHONE: 956-546-0547 HOURS: Call for Seasonal Hours

Resaca de la Palma State Park World Birding Center PHONE: 956-350-2920 ADDRESS: 1000 New Carmen Blvd, Brownsville, TX 78521 WEBSITE: theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Wednesday to Sunday, 8 am to 5 pm FEE: Adults \$4, TX Resident (over 65) \$2, Children 12 & under

Sabal Palm Sanctuary PHONE: 956-541-8034 ADDRESS: 8435 Sabal Palm Road, Brownsville, TX 78521 WEBSITE: www.sabalpalmsanctuary.org HOURS: 6 days a week, 7 am until 5 pm Closed on Wednesdays FEE: Adults \$5, Children \$3 (12 & under)

Sea Turtle, Inc. PHONE: 956-761-4511 ADDRESS: 6617 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, TX 78597 WEBSITE: www.seaturtleinc.org HOURS: Open 10 am to 4 pm Tuesday to Sunday (closed Mondays). In Summer, hours extended from 10 am to 5 pm FEE: Donations Welcome—Adults \$4, Seniors \$3, Children (over age of 4) \$2

South Padre Island Birding & Nature Center World Birding Center PHONE: 956-761-6801 ADDRESS: 6801 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597 WEBSITE: spibirding.com OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: 9- 5 for the Building Boardwalks are open Sunrise to Sunset FEE: Adults \$6, Seniors (55 & over) \$5, Students (13-18) \$5, Children (4-12) \$3

South Padre Island Sealife Center PHONE: 956-299-1957 ADDRESS: 110 N. Garcia St, Port Isabel, TX 78578 WEBSITE: www.spisealife.org HOURS: Winter Daily from 10 am to 3 pm (closed Tuesdays). Summer Daily 7 days a week from 10 am to 4 pm FEE: Per Person \$3 (all ages)

UTRGV Coastal Studies Lab PHONE: (956) 761-2644 ADDRESS: 100 Marine Lab Drive, South Padre Island, TX 78597 WEBSITE: <http://www.utrgv.edu/csl> HOURS: Monday-Friday 1:30pm-4:30pm Free

Hidalgo County

Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park World Birding Center: PHONE: (956) 584-9156 ADDRESS: 2800 S. Bentsen Palm Drive Mission, TX 78572 WEBSITE: tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/bentsen-rio-grande-valley OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Park is open 7 am – 10 pm daily Park Store: 8am – 5 pm daily during peak season (October – May) FEE: Adults -\$5; Children 12 & under free

Hidalgo County Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park World Birding Center: PHONE: (956) 584-9156 ADDRESS: 2800 S. Bentsen Palm Drive Mission, TX 78572 WEBSITE: tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/bentsen-rio-grande-valley OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Park is open 7 am – 10 pm daily Park Store: 8am – 5 pm daily during peak season (October – May) FEE: Adults -\$5; Children 12 & under free

Edinburg Scenic Wetlands World Birding Center: PHONE: 956-381-9922 ADDRESS: 714 S. Raul Longoria Road, Edinburg, TX 78542 WEBSITE: www.EdinburgWBC.org OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Office: 8 am to 5 pm, Mon – Sat. Grounds: 7 am to 5 pm Mon, 7 am to 6 pm Tues – Sat. Closed: Sunday. FEE: Adults \$3, Seniors & Students \$2, Children 5 & under free

Estero Llano Grande State Park World Birding Center: PHONE: 956-565-3919 ADDRESS: 154 Lakeview Drive, Weslaco, TX 78596 WEBSITE: tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/estero-llano-grande OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Park open daily 7 am – 10 pm (HQ Hours 8am – 5pm) FEE: Adults (ages 13 & up) \$5, Children 12 & under free

Frontera Audubon Sanctuary: PHONE: 956-968-3275 ADDRESS: 1101 S. Texas Blvd, Weslaco, TX 78596 WEBSITE: www.fronteraaudubon.org HOURS: Tuesday-Saturday 8 am to 4 pm, Sunday 12 pm to 4 pm, Closed Mondays FEE: Adults \$5, Seniors (65 & over) \$4, Students (13 & over) \$3, Children 12 & under free

McAllen Nature Center: PHONE: 956-681-3333 ADDRESS: 4101 W. US Highway 83, McAllen, TX 78501 WEBSITE: www.facebook.com/mcallennaturecenter HOURS: Call for seasonal hours FEE: Free

National Butterfly Center: PHONE: 956-583-5400 ADDRESS: 3333 Butterfly Park Drive, Mission, TX 78572 WEBSITE: www.NationalButterflyCenter.org HOURS: 7 days a week, 8 am to 5 pm FEE: Adults \$10 Adults, RGV Residents & Winter Texans \$5; Children (ages 11-5) \$2.50, Children (ages 4 and under) free

Old Hidalgo Pumphouse World Birding Center: PHONE: 956-843-8686 ADDRESS: 902 S. 2nd Street, Hidalgo, TX 78557 WEBSITE: theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Monday to Sunday, 9 am to 8 pm FEE: Free

Quinta Mazatlan World Birding Center: PHONE: 956-681-3370 ADDRESS: 600 Sunset Drive, McAllen, TX 78503 WEBSITE: www.quintamazatlan.com OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Tuesday to Saturday 8 am to 5 pm, Thursday nights until dark FEE: Adults \$3, Seniors & Children \$2, Children 4 & under free

Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge: PHONE: 956-784-7500 ADDRESS: 785 Green Jay Road, Alamo, TX 78516 WEBSITE: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/santa_ana/ http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Lower_Rio_Grande_Valley/ HOURS: Monday to Sunday 8 am to 4 pm FEE: Per vehicle \$5.00

Valley Nature Center: PHONE: 956-969-2475 ADDRESS: 301 S. Border Ave, Weslaco, TX 78596 WEBSITE: www.valleynaturecenter.org HOURS: Tuesday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm, Saturday 8 am to 5 pm, Sunday 1 pm to 5 pm FEE: Adults \$ 5, Seniors \$ 3, Children (under 12) \$ 2

Starr County

Roma Bluffs World Birding Center : PHONE: 956-849-4930 ADDRESS: 610 N. Portscheller Street, Roma, TX 78584
WEBSITE: www.theworldbirdingcenter.com/Roma.html OR theworldbirdingcenter.com HOURS: Call for seasonal hours FEE: Free

Falcon State Park: PHONE: (956) 848-5327 ADDRESS: 146 Park Rd 46, Falcon Heights, TX 78545 WEBSITE: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/falcon> HOURS: 6am-10pm daily FEE: \$3 per person, 12 years and under free

