

# TOWN



# NEWS

## Dallas Chapter – December 2024

Holiday Party -December 8<sup>th</sup>

4PM -7PM

Suzi Murphy's home

3317 Creekbend Dr. Garland, TX 75044



# **TOWN ACTIVITIES**

## **Mark your Calendars!!**

### **Wednesday December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas at the Arboretum 2024 from 12pm- 4pm.**

**Contact Allison at 214 728-5752.**

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### **Saturday January 4<sup>th</sup> First Hike**

**Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge Hagerman  
National Wildlife Visitor Center, 6465 Refuge Road,  
Sherman, TX 75092**

**Contact Shirley Meurer 972-890-2491**

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### **Thursday February 20<sup>th</sup>-Sunday February 23<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Palo Duro Canyon State Park**

**Contact Melissa Brown mbrown.mbrown@gmail.com**

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### **Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Brazos Bend State Park**

Brazos Bend State Park is a nature lover's paradise. The birding is phenomenal, and the alligators are very entertaining! It is about 300 miles and a good 5 hours from North Dallas. <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/brazos-bend>

Contact Shirley Meurer to secure your spot. 972-890-2491

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### **Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup>– Sunday March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Martin Dies Jr State Park**

#### **All TOWN Camping Trip**

### **Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>-Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Possum Kingdom State Park**

**Contact Nancy Lee [nlee002@tx.rr.com](mailto:nlee002@tx.rr.com) 469-264-4643.**

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### **Holiday Party -December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**4PM -7PM**

#### **Suzi Murphy's home**

**3317 Creekbend Dr. Garland, TX 75044**

**Directions - Take 75 north to Campbell Rd. Turn East on Campbell to Jupiter. Head north (left) on Jupiter. Turn right at the next light just past Big Springs Baptist Church, Heather Hill Dr .**

**Take your first left and follow around the circle to 3317. It's a grey 2-story.**

**TOWN will provide the ham. Bring your best covered dish.**

**Chinese Gift Exchange: Those who wish to participate in the gift exchange, simply need to bring a wrapped gift with an outdoor theme (spending limit of \$20). Outdoor gadgets and gizmos are always popular! One opportunity to steal from your friends!**

## Octoberfest at Cooper Lake State Park



*View from a tent*



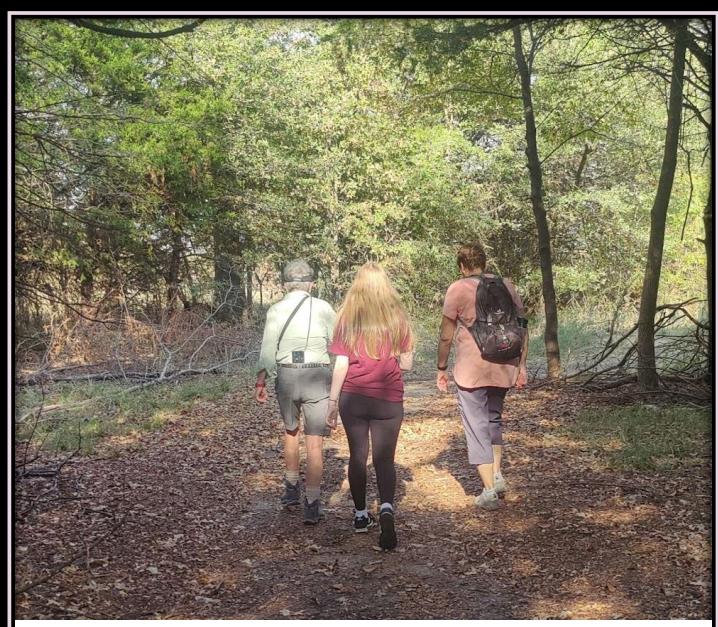
*Happy Halloween*



*Rosie, Marie and Emily ready for a Halloween dinner.*



*Friday night dinner theme was Octoberfest*



An afternoon hike



Ahhh



Pet Butterfly?



Cornhole



Dinner crew



Shirley and Mary on the water



Dinner out Halloween - Delicious Shrimp Fajitas at Tejanos Mexican Grill on the square in Cooper

## Copper Breaks State Park, a Stargazer's Dream

Twelve TOWN members had the opportunity to visit Copper Breaks State Park and enjoyed wonderful fall weather during the day perfect for hiking, with cool nights and clear skies perfect for stargazing.

Dark Sky International (formerly known as the International Dark Sky Association) has designated Copper Breaks as an International Dark Sky Park. This organization restores the nighttime environment and protects communities from the harmful effects of light pollution through outreach, advocacy and conservation. Dark Sky International has given Copper Breaks State Park a rate of 2 out a 10-point scale. Some of us tried to capture with our camera phones, the easily visible Milky Way. We were thrilled every single night and discovered so many constellations hard to see in the city's skies. We will be back for sure!

By Rosie Alaniz

*Hiking the Rocky Ledges Loop with the Pease River in the background. Marie, Shirley, Allison, Lois and Rosie.*



*Rosie and Melissa on the Rocky Ledges Trail*



*Ranger program on Texas Longhorns*



*Nancy kissing a longhorn*



*The Milky Way*



*Campfire illuminating the trees*



*Last night of camping under the stars*

## Lichens VS Moss

Most of us assume the fuzzy green stuff we see growing on tree trunks or rocks on the forest floor is moss. And while moss is a likely suspect, it could also be a lichen. So, what's the difference between a moss and a lichen?

Telling them apart can be difficult. It certainly doesn't help that some lichens have common names that include the word "moss," like reindeer moss, which is actually a lichen.

Making it even more difficult: Lichens and mosses frequently grow in close proximity to one another, often even on the same object. It's common to see both on the same tree trunk or rock.

Both mosses and lichens are considered non-vascular plants, but only mosses are truly plants, according to the US Forest Service. Lichens aren't plants at all. They are complex organisms formed by a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and an algae or cyanobacteria (or, in some cases, both).

That key difference — one is a plant, and one is not — is also the key to telling a moss from a lichen when you see them in the wild. Because they are plants, mosses will have leaves and stems; lichens will not. The leaves and stems may be tiny, but they will be present in mosses.

Mosses are among the most primitive plants on Earth, the ancestors of the trees, flowers, ferns and other plants that grow all around us today, the Forest Service reports. And while they do have the stems and leaves characteristic of all plant species, they do not have roots and do not produce flowers. Instead, mosses reproduce via spores rather than seeds from flowers. And instead of roots to anchor them in place, they have very shallow root-like structures called rhizoids.

Because mosses don't have roots, they can't transport water like other plants. This makes them very vulnerable to drying out, which is why mosses grow in wet or moist habitats. Lichens, on the other hand, can survive in a variety of habitats, from tropical rain forests to deserts to the frozen tundra of Antarctica, according to the Forest Service. In the absence of water, lichens will simply go dormant, turning dry and brittle, until water becomes available again.

Another difference between lichens and mosses — albeit one that's not visible — is that only mosses undergo photosynthesis directly. Because they are plants, mosses contain chlorophyll, which is the pigment that is essential for photosynthesis.

Lichens, on the other hand, can only accomplish photosynthesis indirectly. Fungi aren't plants and contain no chlorophyll, but the algae and/or cyanobacteria in a lichen do undergo photosynthesis, protection so the algae can survive in more harsh conditions than it could otherwise according to 21st Century Parks. In turn, the fungus provides protection so the algae can survive in more harsh conditions than it could otherwise withstand.

Both mosses and lichens play an important role in a healthy habitat, because they both absorb carbon dioxide and other pollutants from the air, 21st Century Parks reports.

Lichens, in particular, are especially valuable to humans because of their detoxifying effects. Because of this, their presence in an area is a sign of a healthy ecosystem. Scientists are able to study lichens and extract the toxins they have absorbed to determine the level of toxins present in an environment, according to the Forest Service.

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## Palo Pinto Mountains State Park is due to open by summer 2025

A former ranchland located 75 miles west of Dallas-Fort Worth is slated to become one of Texas' newest state parks. [Palo Pinto Mountains State Park](#), the 4,871-acre swath of land that was supposed to open in 2023 but was postponed due to construction delays, is now projected to open by summer 2025, [according to The Dallas Morning News](#).

The park will offer the usual array of outdoor activities, such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, paddling, picnicking, [bird watching](#) and stargazing. Once completed, the park will feature over 60 kinds of camping sites and 25 RV pads, each with an additional vehicle parking space. Once the park is fully open, it expects to welcome 75,000 to 100,000 visitors annually.

According to recent reports, animals spotted at the park include white-tailed deer, porcupines and bobcats.

"It's like a piece of [Hill Country](#) that's an hour from Fort Worth," park superintendent James Adams told the Dallas Morning News.

"We're just off the highway, but this place still feels like the Wild West sometimes."

Palo Pinto Mountains State Park will be the first new state park in North Texas in about 25 years. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department enlisted the help of the Texas Nature Conservancy to find land for a new state park in the area. In 2011, the department purchased the first 3,200 acres of the park using proceeds from the sale of property on Eagle Mountain Lake, north of Fort Worth. The city of Strawn deeded additional land, including the park's Tucker Lake, a few years later.

The park's opening comes at a pivotal time for the Lone Star State, which currently has 85 state parks. Across the system, state parks welcomed more than 9.3 million visitors in 2023, a 1.5 percent increase from the previous year. The Hill Country region welcomed more than 2.2 million visitors across 16 parks, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife data.

By [Allyson Ackerman](#) News Editor Nov 29, 2024 Chron