

Nice to Meet You!

By Dustin McBride, Natural Resource Specialist

Howdy, Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge! I would like to take a moment for a long-overdue introduction. My name is Dustin McBride. I am the newest staff member at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge, serving as the Natural Resource Specialist and coordinator of the Restoration Greenhouse Program. I started this position in March 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic began to escalate, which ultimately forced us to temporarily shut our gates. Needless to say, my experience in my new role has been a bit out of the ordinary given the circumstances, but it has in no way diminished my excitement and enthusiasm to be here and contribute to natural resource management around the property.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, I spent most of my youth roaming around rural, small-town southern Indiana. I attended Purdue University and graduated in 2005 with a degree in Wildlife Science. I relocated to Texas in 2006 when I began working on my master's degree at Tarleton State University, investigating the current range and distribution of Brazos water snakes—a rare Texas endemic species. After completing my master's in 2009, I worked as a wildlife biologist in the private consulting arena for 11 years before coming to the Nature Center. As an undergraduate and early professional, I also worked short stints as a field technician for the Arizona Game & Fish Department and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

In my spare time, I enjoy being outdoors and away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. My wife and I go camping as often as we can and enjoy hiking, fishing, and exploring new areas. We are a dog-loving family and currently have a chocolate Labrador retriever and a French bulldog. Another hobby of mine is training dogs, retrievers in particular, for field work.

Prior to coming to the Nature Center, my professional career largely focused on the conservation and management of rare, non-game wildlife. I spent nearly eight years intensively studying and monitoring Brazos water snakes (the topic of my master's research). I have also had the opportunity to be involved on several other projects and have worked closely with many different taxa, from owls to bobcats, woodrats, bats, desert tortoises, box turtles, and numerous species of snakes, aquatic turtles, salamanders, frogs, and toads—even a few endangered plants.



Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge Natural Resource Specialist Dustin McBride at the Broadview Park Civilian Conservation Corps site. FWNC&R Staff Photo.

I am excited to be part of the great staff we have here at the Nature Center, and I am looking forward to adding my experience and ideas to the natural resource management program here on the property. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to leave a positive mark on the landscape for both wildlife and the people of our community to enjoy for years to come!

See ya out there!