

MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
Alamo Area Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist
September 13, 2011

Members present:

Nancy Thoss, Evelyn Penrod, Joe Novy, David Reichert, Ron Tullius, Anton Hajek, Liz Robbins, Jessica Leslie, Nancy Brown, Wendy Thornton, Bill Woller, Jamie Daily, Nancy Phillips, Peggy York, Bryan Davis, Linda Gindler, Dwight Henderson, Ling Yin Liu, Lissa Martinez, Tom Brotheman, Howard Homan

The meeting was called to order by Liz Robbins at 5:26 p.m.

Liz noted that Barbara Harder could not attend the meeting, and Nancy Thoss would fill in today as Secretary.

August minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Jamie Daily

Jamie reported a beginning balance of \$3,621.20, total expenses of \$374.62 (Visa OfficeMax 3.00, Visa HEB 10.00, Jessica Leslie-books for speakers 45.00, Mini Storage 31.00, Nancy Brown 15.62, Background checks for Class 270.00), and deposits of \$3,913.00 (Class tuition), leaving a balance on 9/13 of \$7,159.58.

Treasurer's report stands as read.

Visitors: Primarily Primates Reps Address the Board

Stephen Rene Tello, Executive Director of Primarily Primates, Shelly Ladd, Enrichment Coordinator, and Ann, a volunteer, gave a brief overview of the 32-year old non-profit facility located near Scenic Loop Café on 78 acres. Possible areas where Master Naturalists could help the facility include invasive species removal, wildlife habitat restoration, plant surveys, bird surveys, and water conservation advice. Liz requested they resubmit an application to be an approved location to sponsor volunteer projects, with specifics on where they could use our help.

Unfinished Business

***Update on background checks, membership dues, and liability forms** which should be emailed/mailed to members ASAP with an accompanying cover letter and explanation

Due to extensive traveling the next several months, John Wolcott decided to step down as Chairman of the Membership Committee but still be on the committee. He recommended Nancy Thoss as his replacement to finish out his term. The Board approved the change.

Discussion focused on what had been approved at the last Board meeting. Linda stated we had approved to present a proposal of annual dues to the membership for a vote. After additional discussion today, the Board decided to present the dues proposal to the general membership at the annual meeting in November. Background checks and liability forms need to be mailed out soon. Liz and Linda are working on a cover letter. The

Membership Committee will be responsible for sending them out and tracking this information.

***All of the above to go into effect January 1, 2012**

The Board approved this by voice vote.

***Ways & Means Committee** – Before seeking any further funding, Jessica will continue to keep track of the donations and see if those funds will be a viable source for the monthly presenters' gifts.

Lissa suggested having a sign-in sheet or headcount to compare to the amount of donations received.

***Hours Coding – Richard Heilbrun & Linda Gindler**

Richard is the coordinator for the whole state, and Linda is our Chapter's contact. Due to a change in grants which fund the Master Naturalist program, the state is now requiring additional information, including the "look back period" of July 2009 – December 2010. Both the Hill Country Chapter and the Alamo Area Chapter are providing documents as a sampling of the hours data needed. Areas of concentration are educational, outreach, Chapter business, and technical guidance for this period. Those people selected for the sampling will sign affidavits verifying their hours.

Additionally, our Chapter needs a more secure computer program for hours tracking to avoid having everyone sign affidavits in the future. Richard said the state recently purchased a new software program which could be used for this sometime next year.

New Business

***Ron Tullius: SABot Garden Partnership**

Ron discussed the new partnership between the San Antonio Botanical Garden and our Chapter. For any classes taught there by a Master Naturalist from our Chapter, we will split 50/50 the fees received from the participants. Our Chapter will collect the fees and then cut a check to the Botanical Garden. There are 16 Saturdays available for classes in 2012, and two Saturdays are already taken by Master Naturalists from our Chapter. The usual fee for a two-hour class is about \$20 per person.

***Board of Directors & Committee Members Attendance Request**

On Thursday, Sept 22, at 2:00 pm, Liz has requested that Board members and Committee Members attend the Class 29 session that presents an overview of the responsibilities and activities of the various committees and positions. Students will be assigned to a committee unless you advise Liz otherwise. Per previous sessions, students will be divided into groups and rotate among the various committees. At least one representative is needed from each committee. David Reichert is in charge.

Liz also mentioned that this class activity will be presented at the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting in October as a means of getting new members involved.

***PHP/Conservancy Fundraiser – October 5, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. – Wendy Thornton**

Wendy discussed the Farm to Fork fundraiser that will feature snacks prepared from locally grown produce. The cost is \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. Tickets can be purchased online. Contact Wendy for more information.

Committee/Advisors Reports

State Advisors - Bryan Davis, Richard Heilbrun

Bryan reported that some job cuts have been made, but more will be coming in January.

Richard gave an update on the Bastrop fire. At this point it is 60% contained. He also noted that 17 TPWD employees had been displaced by the fire. Those wishing to help them can make a donation on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation website.

State Representative – Ron Tullius

Ron stated that information about the annual state meeting in October is available online. Unlike previous years, you can't reserve training classes in advance. It will be first come, first served until classes are filled. Our Chapter is offering a partial scholarship to attend.

Liz mentioned again our Chapter's presentation on Sunday at the state meeting on how to get more members involved.

Activities – Pam Ball

Not present.

Chapter Programs – Jessica Leslie

Jessica stated that the committee members will be meeting the end of September or early October to plan for next year's programs. Members can email her with suggestions for speakers.

Community Outreach – Lissa Martinez

Lissa quickly mentioned several items: (1) Green Spaces Alliance is having their annual fall Gala on October 13 (2) She is working on an October-January calendar of upcoming outreach opportunities (3) St. Mary's University has an new environmental science degree program that would welcome help from Master Naturalists (4) Working with Texas Public Radio and (5) Kathleen Whitten, Class 26, is currently working with St. Mary's students.

Historian – Nancy Phillips

Nancy can't attend the annual state meeting in October and needs someone to take the Chapter scrapbook to the meeting. Anton volunteered.

Hospitality – Nancy Brown

Not present.

Marketing and Technology – David Reichert

David reported that web usage was the same in August as July. He has also set up a snack list, blog, and class schedule for Class 29 on the web. Additionally, he sent out 3 evaluations with SurveyMonkey.

Membership & Pin Awards – Nancy Thoss

Nancy has pins ready for the meeting tonight.

Training – Pam Ball

Absent. It was noted that Class 29 has started.

Per an email Pam had sent out to the Board on September 1:

“I will not be able to attend the September monthly meeting. I wanted to communicate the Training Committee’s progress on a few retreat issues.

1. We have prepared thank you notes for each of the fall presenters. They are hand written communications and are signed by each Training Committee member. Each card will be handed to the presenter at the close of their presentation. 2. We have worked with Bryan Davis on an effort to compensate presenters who have extraordinary travel mileage (miles from their office to the class location). We have used AgriLife’s \$0.40 per mile compensation rate and the qualification of 60 miles one way. We will be emailing each speaker with this information along with an invoice example from AgriLife. We will request that those speakers who qualify for travel compensation invoice us accordingly.”

Special Committee Reports

Alamo Forest Partnership –Lissa Martinez

Lissa said they are looking at advanced training opportunities such as webinars. Also, November 12 is Arbor Day, with a theme of Drought. Contact her about tree projects. Finally, they want to hold a firewise training. The San Pedro Playhouse location was suggested. Lissa will email information.

LHI-MLAC – Dwight Henderson

Dwight noted that Peggy Oppelt with the LHI is in Class 29.

PHP/C – Wendy Thornton

Wendy stated the fourth Saturday programs provided by our Chapter will begin on September 24 with Dairy Day at Voelker Farm from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Bill Woller will speak on what life was like growing up on a dairy farm from his personal experiences.

The October program will be Batty for Bats.

Sales-TShirts, Decals, Lanyards – Pam Ball

Not present.

SARA – SABG – Ron Tullius

Ron noted that future mission reach hikes will be quarterly and will have a theme, such as a wildflower hike or a bird hike.

SARF – John Garland

Not present.

SEP-HCP – Susan Oualline

Not present.

Liz clarified that SEP is Southern Edwards Plateau and HCP is Habitat Conservation Plan.

Miscellaneous

Anton said the Bingo account will remain open.

Also, the Nominating Committee had received a few candidates for the November elections for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Liz encouraged anyone else interested in running for one of those positions to contact one of the committee members.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Approved

Nancy Thoss
Substitute Secretary for
Barbara Harder

Liz Robbins, President