



Texas Master Naturalist Brazos Valley Chapter
Meeting Minutes for August 13, 2015
Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History

Attendance: Elrey Ash, Olivia Ash, Dwight Bohlmeier, Melissa Brown, Amanda Chau, Mike Conner, Bruce Neville, Amanda Schwede, Steve Simcik, Betty Vermeire, Deb Wilson

Bruce brought the meeting to order at 5:28 PM.

Officer and Committee Reports

Secretary- Amanda Schwede - Sign in; no July 2015 meeting minutes to approve

Treasurer - Amanda Chau – Amount is updated on the web \$4278.69 with 48 members paid. What should we do with the \$155 for Jay Pritchard? That amount is not included in the previous amount. Bruce said he would talk with Deborah and get back to the committee. We had talked about naming the trail behind the museum and making signs for the trail.

Outreach – Olivia Ash, Chair – Excellent and largest turn out to date for Butterfly Release at BVMNH. Bluebird Society volunteers did well as well and got our BVTMN name out there.

Membership – Betty Vermeire, Chair – submit your July 2015 hours. The second quarter report was sent to the State Office in July. In the second quarter, 768.25 Volunteer Service and 67.0 Advanced Training hours were reported. Year-to-Date hours as reported by members are 1627.25 Volunteer Service and 258.0 Advanced Training. So far this year, two members of the Class of 2014 have certified, John Cupps and Terri Sandvik. Seven members have recertified: Jim Anding, Kitty Anding, Mike Conner, Katharine Cupps, Rick Laughlin, Sarah Laughlin, and Betty Vermeire. Four members are transferring to other chapters: Rick and Sarah Laughlin to South Texas Chapter, Barbara Pritchard to Capital Area Chapter, and Joyce Conner to El Camino Real Chapter. We must now submit signed time sheets to the State Office for audit on a quarterly basis, instead of just yearly. If I do not have yours with me tonight (or you were not here), I will mail them to you to sign with a SASE. Please return them ASAP.

Everyone needs to go to the state website and go through the tutorials. They will answer all your questions. Look up VMS and it starts on the first page.

Advanced Training – Laura Biddle, Chair – Reminder for members to check the BVTMN AT calendar for upcoming events. After an initial email about an event is sent out, it is added to the calendar for members to reference. The new TMN Chapter Management and Operations Protocols have changed some of the items that are pre-approved for AT credit; specifically, on-line based training will only be accepted for a maximum of 4 hours of the required 8 hours of AT hours. Educational TV shows, videos, DVDs, may not be approved. There are other details that need to be discussed. These changes are not currently reflected on the BVTMN website, which needs to be updated. AT Committee members also need to be updated on the member website.

What is the protocol to getting information out to members? Bruce said we will compile a list for the time being to send out until we update our website with the state guidelines. We need to get the changes for the operating handbook that will also include these. Criteria include interactive component-not just

watching a video. Probably once hours are submitted it will be too late but future hours should be correct. Only four hours can be used through June 2015 for such videos that did not include an interactive component. We have not approved the States operating handbook (June 4, 2015) and followed it but we have been using and following the old one that is about ten years old. So a live webinar attendance with interactive component is okay, but not viewing it later without discussion or it being live. An instructor and opportunity to participate in discussion is necessary for it to count. We are using this to revise our chapter operating handbook. It must build on the core curriculum (book). It says there will be a post-test to cover what is learned. New binder will not be ready until next year (not in time for our new Fall training class.) Our field trips are a more systematic approach. Look at our documentation and terminology. We could look at pre- and post-tests. We initially did both the first couple of years of this chapter. We can also use our AT to make up for what we are missing too.

Volunteer Services – Melissa Brown, Chair – The BVTMN webpage for volunteer committee needs updating: in particular on guidelines for reporting hours. Also, pre-approved projects need to be updated to show what is add The Lost Ladybug project and Hummingbirds at Home and to eliminate Box Turtle Survey and Black Tailed Prairie Dog Watch and to show Monarch Watch has become Monarch Larva Monitoring.

Host/Social – Deb Wilson, Chair – full tonight but Summer is a challenge to get people to volunteer. Thinks it will pick back up in Fall.

Program – Bruce Neville, Chair – August: What's That on the Bottom of My Shoe, or, A Selection of Common Insects of Our Area, by Bruce Neville; September: not committed; October: not committed; November: Native Bees, Michael Warriner; December: Holiday Party. I have feelers out for September and October. Marsha May is interested in giving her talk on Frog Calls, if we can work out dates.

New Member Training – Dwight Bohlmeier, Chair – Betty said we can group to nine curricula because that's how many she has in stock. Has two past trainees that never finished and have to start the training over. Couples can share one. New ones cost \$70. Dwight will send out information. New member training group will meeting again before this Fall's class starts. Betty also said she has received three applications and three more are promised. Do we want to start a Mentor Program with the Training Class? The description and Guidelines are in Appendix II of the revised Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Note that the guidelines state that "Mentors should develop a lasting relationship with their assigned new Members that continue following the training class...." and that "... a mentor's responsibility to his/her trainee never expires." Thus, this is intended to be a serious time commitment. We can start this and see how it goes. We may not have to do quite as much of a time commitment, especially if the trainee does not feel they need one-on-one meetings with another seasoned member/mentor. Might be a good thing for new trainees for the first year. Can see who wants to volunteer and who feels they need a mentor and pair those up.

Salter Farm is hosting Texas Regional Collaborative and the Brazos Astronomy Club 4 PM-10:30 PM Saturday, October 10th. We are welcome to come out and tour ahead of time. Master Naturalists are welcome. Same day as Boonville Days but later in the day than Boonville Days. So both can be attended.

New Business

Bruce Neville - Michelle Haggerty at the State Office recently sent the Chapter Presidents a list of "summer reminders." Among them was a link to a document called "Chapter Management and Operating Protocols." In reading that, I discovered that we are out of compliance with State guidelines in several areas, involving Volunteer, Advanced Training, and Program activities, at a minimum. I have attached the document, or you can find at the TMN State website under "Chapter Documents." I also received an email from the State Office about the new curriculum, which is not ready yet, but which contained the attached Basic Training Guide, which implies that our New Member Training is also seriously out of compliance. I have not heard of a chapter

being audited by the State Office, but I am concerned that we might not survive such an audit, if they were to conduct one, or that we might be put on serious probation if they did. I would like each of the Committee Chairs to review the relevant sections of these documents so that we can work toward coming into better compliance with the State guidelines.

Bruce Neville - As we adopted new Bylaws this year to match the mandated State wording, we need to review and revise the Chapter Operating Handbook, as well. I haven't had a chance to look at that again, but we'll need to work on that over the fall.

One of the things I'd like to revise in the Operating Handbook is the timing of the election of officers. There is a President's Breakfast at the state meeting in October. Those who have attended have found it extremely useful and have wished they had received the information more than two months before the end of their term. I would like to see us at least have the incoming President elected so that they can attend the state meeting and that breakfast, even if their term doesn't begin until January. Obviously, we can't do it for 2016, but I'd like to think about how we might adjust the timing for the future.

(Bruce) Booneville Days October 10th will need volunteers.

Another parks clean-up when it cools off. Amanda Chau took over and will wait for a cooler month this Fall.

Butterfly Garden at Lick Creek Park-The Andings have continued to water and maintain it. We will establish it as a regular volunteer project (It's an educational kiosk, service and ecological area.) The Andings will be in charge of volunteers and we can add it to the snack sign-up sheet when the Andings know it will be needed. Melissa Brown will send an email requesting volunteers and to contact the Andings.

Nominating Committee (Bruce)-State Meeting's President's Meeting...would like to consider who that will be in October so that person can go. So he would like to get the Nominating Committee together to get this decided.

(Bruce) Need to discuss autonomy of committees. Mike Conner said there's some latitude for committees and volunteering. Bruce said decisions should come to the Board before decisions are made.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 PM.