

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER Chapter News – April 2006 Editor, Mary Helen Israel

Message from the President Ed Barrios

We're back from three weeks in New Zealand seeing beautiful scenery, taking lots of pictures and drinking modest amounts of wine. It was quite a trip; we had advanced training on the Kiwi birds, green-lipped mussels, sperm whales and albatrosses – well if John Thayer approves that is. Fellow TMN-COT members Marty Cornell and John and Rosalee Marshall were also on the trip.

At the last board meeting, we had a great report from Carolyn May-Monie about the work she is doing with our partners. We are learning so much about what opportunities they have in terms of volunteer work and also for advanced training. When Carolyn is finished, we need to have some dialog about the number of partners we have. Our chapter is not large enough yet to meet all of the needs of our partners. As I see it, we have to grow faster, get more of our members involved, or recognize we cannot meet all of our partner's needs. It is going to be a good discussion when we get all the data. The good news is there are so many rich and rewarding volunteer opportunities that we can do in so many areas.

As a closing thought, if you have any ideas about things we are doing well as a group or things that we need to improve on, feel free to call me and let's talk about it. I've taken several

issues from our members to the board that I thought should be addressed. Feedback is the "breakfast of champions".

**General Meeting
COT – TMN
April 12, 2006
Social Time – 8:30 a.m.
Program: Birding – 9:00 am**

Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter

<http://grovesite.com/tamu/tmn>

**Board of Directors Meeting
March 22, 2006
Minutes**

Opening: Attendees Carolyn May-Monie, Jan Kater, Barbara Burkhardt, Alice Sieling, Carl Dodson, Rich Tillman, Jerry Eppner, Jean Kater, Neal McLain, John Boettiger, Connie Stolte and Marty Cornell were welcomed to the meeting by President Ed Barrios at 2:00 PM.

Volunteer Council Meeting Report:

Barbara Burkhardt attended the TMN Volunteer Council Meeting on March 11, 2006 at Prairie Haines Youth Ranch outside Ding Dong, Texas near Killeen. The Volunteer Council Meeting repeated the same issues stressed in the earlier TMN Regional Meeting. The State Advisory Committee is being reshaped

and the whole decision process being rethought. They are trying to establish whether the Volunteer Council Meeting is a duplication of the Regional Meeting, and so unnecessary.

Attendees were upset over the state-required background check. There was some confusion as to what the background check entailed.

Backgrounds are checked for past felonies; it is not a credit check.

Members who will not be working with children do not need to have a background check on file. TMN has a new Volunteer Background Check Form (revised 2005) and a Copy of *Youth Protection Standards*; they will be attached to the April Newsletter. A \$10.00 check to TMN-COT Chapter must accompany the completed form. If a member has previously been screened, there is a section on the form to complete and a new background check will not be necessary. However the form must still be completed and returned. Money will be due to state by the 20th of each month. [Editor's note: as of the publication date of this newsletter, the Background Check form and *Youth Protection Standards* have not been received from the state TMN office.]

Interest Groups: A letter was sent to the Board by Tracie Teague expressing confusion and alarm over the forming of Interest Groups in the TMN-COT chapter. Carolyn May-Monie had also received calls from members asking for more information about Interest Groups. Common concerns were Interest Group usurpation of individual member input into selecting Advanced Training Topics for general meetings and class trainings and the possibility of clique formation.

Interest Groups are not provided for in TMN-COT bylaws and have not been voted on by the board. John Boettiger conceived the idea of a list of TMN-COT

members who shared the same expertise or interests as a way for new class members to find existing members with the same interests and to involve existing members in Advanced Training selection. John has no Advanced Training Staff. These lists of interested members were used to determine topics for 2006 general meetings. For example: The Sea Center Interest Group decided on "Spotted Sea Trout" as the topic for the February meeting as it was a topic that had not been covered before. There has been a problem finding topics new to existing members. The Birding Interest Group has chosen "How to Prepare for and Present a Class on Bird Identification" for the April Meeting.

A chapter survey of all current members was suggested as a way of discovering Advanced Training topics for general meetings. Gulf Coast Chapter of TMN provides a list of outside Advanced Training Opportunities to its members. John Thayer, as our Advanced Training Chairman, would have the responsibility of providing a list for our members. Barbara Burkhardt made the motion that John Thayer conduct a general membership survey on topics of interest for TMN-COT Advanced Training Programs. Rich Tillman seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Further discussion revealed that board members do not understand the exact functions of an Interest Group. Marty Cornell and Barbara Burkhardt agreed to clarify the concept of an Interest Group and give a report at the April board meeting. Ed Barrios will contact John Thayer about the general membership survey.

Four recommendations were made:

- 1) A list of Advanced Training Opportunities should be available from the Advanced Training Chairman.
- 2) An annual survey should be made of the membership as to Advanced Training Interests.
- 3) A clarification of Interest Groups needs to be made to the general membership.
- 4) General meetings need more structure to allow discussion of topics covered in board meetings.

Volunteer Service Update: Carolyn May-Monie reported interviews have been completed with seven of our eleven partners: Brazos Bend State Park, Texas Mid-Coast Wildlife Refuge System, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue, Sea Center Texas, Varner-Hogg Historical Park, and Peach Point Wildlife Management Area.

TMN-COT has three new partners: Innovene, Brazosport College, and ConocoPhillips.

Peach Point Wildlife Manager, Todd Merendino, would like help from June 1st to late August for Mottled Duck Banding. No previous experience is necessary to net ducks, but lots of warm bodies are needed. Prairie Restoration and a Boxed Turtle Survey are other projects he is interested in starting.

Levi Jordan Plantation will have a walk-through for a small group on April 10th at 9:00AM. Call Carolyn May-Monie to sign up. The site will be surveyed to collect data for writing a site plan.

GCBO Spring Cleanup: Tom Collins wrote a letter to the board pointing out lack of TMN attendance at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory Spring Cleanup. Only

two members participated. He suggested a liaison member for each TMN-COT partner to focus on communicating that partner's needs to membership. The need is especially to make phone calls for that partner and recruit participation. There has been a lack of organization in the past on GCBO's part. A report was made from one volunteer who had driven out to GCBO and asked for work, but was told none was needed. Everyday projects such as trail maintenance have been neglected. Our Mission Statement lists "education and maintenance" as our objectives. We need to remember the maintenance!

Treasurer's Report: Jan Kater reported a balance of \$2237.88 in TMN-COT Chapter Account as of March 22, 2006.

Member Communication: Alice Sieling has mailed 15 letters to TMN-COT members who have not been active in two years. Of the members contacted, two have asked to be removed from the membership list: Al Clarke and Phyllis Walther. Terry Woodward's and Dawn Stubbs' letters were returned undeliverable. Five additional inactive members are working on their certification and will be turning in volunteer hours.

The next general meeting will be April 12, 2006 at 8:00AM in the Cooperative Extension Office. Next board meeting will be announced. Meeting Adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Sieling, Secretary

A Message from C. May-Monie, Volunteer Service Chairperson

Two documents are attached at the end of the newsletter: The Volunteer Survey and a list of Volunteer Upcoming Activities. Please read them carefully.

Remarks from the Vice President John Boettiger.

In early 2005, Carl Dodson (then COT President) and I agreed to get more COT members involved in presenting our monthly meeting AT-programs (member presentations are already the norm at the other Texas Master Naturalist Chapters).

So, in 2006, COT members will present the monthly AT-programs at four of our monthly meetings: Birding (April); Habitat Gardening (May); Bird Banding Update (July) and, Astronomy (October). Our September and November monthly meeting AT-programs will be included in the Chapter's Fall New-Member Training (with outings supported by COT members). Last year, in November, more than thirty members visited the "Big Tree" on an outing with David Rosen that was led by COTs Phil Huxford and Jim Renfro.

As you know, the Vice President of Programs is responsible for scheduling only AT at our monthly meetings. I personally believe our Chapter should make as many AT hours as possible available to our membership. Last year, I was able to present 25.5 hours of AT at our monthly meetings, thereby helping 50 (over 63%) of our 79 active members certify or recertify. Of the remaining 29 active-

COTs, fewer than five members needed more AT; while most (over twenty) needed more volunteer hours.

Other AT opportunities are provided by John Thayer on the ongoing basis (via emails and information posted at the COT website).

Please call either John Thayer at 979-297-5436 or myself (979-297-5427) if you need help getting more AT hours.

If you have topics that you would like to be considered for upcoming monthly meetings please let me know. Call me at 979-297-5427 or on my cell at 979-299-7734; or, email ideas to me at John.Boettiger@RaymondJames.com

CRADLE OF TEXAS OFFICERS

President	Ed Barrios
Vice President/Program	John Boettiger
Secretary	Alice Sieling
Treasurer	Jan Kater
State Representative	Barbara Burkhardt
Past President	Carl Dodson
Membership Chair	Tom Morris
Training Chair	Marty Cornell
Volunteer Service Chair	Carolyn May-Monie
Resource Library	Jim Renfro
Advanced Training Coordinator	John Thayer
Outreach Chairman	Jane & Jerry Eppner
Chapter Hosts	Jerry Krampota & Archie Pratt
Web-site Manager	Neal McLain
Newsletter Chairman	Mary Helen Israel
Sponsors:	Connie Stolte (TP&W) and Rich Tillman (Extension)

**Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter
Volunteer Service Survey
March 2006**

TO: COT Chapter Members
FROM: Carolyn May-Monie, Volunteer Service Chair

In an effort to better serve you and our Partner organizations, I'm sending out this simple survey for each of you to fill out. This information will help me match your talents and interests (current and future) with the needs of our Partners. Please take a few minutes of your time to fill out the survey and email it back to me as soon as possible.

- ◆ Name _____
- ◆ Where do you currently volunteer? (Please list your top 3 Partners.)

- ◆ What specific volunteer service activity do you provide?

- ◆ Would you be willing to participate in other volunteer service activities/projects?

If yes, what type of volunteer service activities would you be interested in?

- ◆ Do you feel you need additional training in the volunteer service activities that you are currently performing?

If yes, what type of training would be most beneficial to you?

- ◆ If you were interested in trying a new volunteer service activity, what specific training would be beneficial to you?

Thank you for helping me serve you better.

Upcoming COT Volunteer Activities April, 2006

Date	Event	Time
4/1/06	Earth Day at Brazos Bend State Park	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
4/3/06	Night Hike Practice Hudson Woods (For Team Members Only)	6:30 p.m.- 9 p.m.
4/4/06	BNWR 4 th grade field trip	9 a. m. – 2 p.m.
4/6/06	Night Hike at Hudson Woods (Open to the public)	6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
4/8/06	BNWR Migration Celebration	7 a.m. –4 p.m.
4/9/06	GCBO Migration Celebration	7 a.m.-4 p.m.
4/10/06	Levi Jordan Site Visit (Limit – 15)	9 a.m. - noon
4/11/06	BNWR 4 th grade field trip	8 a.m. –3 p.m.
4/17/06	Peach Point Site Visit (Limit - 9)	9 a.m. - noon
4/19/06	Sea Center Clean up day	9 a.m. - ?
4/25/06	BNWR 4 th grade field trip	8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
4/28/06	INEOS (Innovene) 3 rd grade field trip	8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
4/29/06	Adopt-A-Beach Clean Up at Quintana Beach	9 a.m. – noon

Please note that some of the dates have already passed, due to the timing of the publication of the newsletter.