

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



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

Message from the Prez, Ed Barrios

First I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and that great things are in store for you and your loved ones in 2006. Also I want to thank the organization for selecting me to head the group for 2006 – I'm not sure how I misled you but I'll try not to let it happen again. As I said at the December meeting, I am proud to be involved in an organization that does so much good for the community. In 2005, our group of about 100 members performed 12,000 hours of volunteer work impacting 4,750 children and adults and untold injured animals!! Those are truly amazing statistics that we should all be proud of.

It is easy to be concerned about the local environment, ecosystems, flora, fauna, etc. but taking it to the next dimension to actually try and do something about it is special. That's what being a Master Naturalists is all about, not just being passionate but getting other people passionate.

Our society has destroyed a significant amount of the natural habitat that was native to Brazoria County and our habitat is so rich. We live in an area that has a sub-tropical climate and has coastal areas, estuaries, prairies, riparian forests and we are in a migration route for many birds – wow what more could you ask for. (Well ok, we have mosquitoes but no place on earth is perfect, right.)

I also want to recognize the ten or so people in our organization that I like to think of as Master Master Naturalists or like Yoda's (from Star Wars). We have some folks that know so much about the flora/fauna in our area it is just amazing. We have to somehow learn to tap these vast resources to help teach the rest of us – anyone know how to perform a Vulcan mind meld?

Finally, we need to have fun in 2006. We need to socialize and party and have a great time as we all perform our various volunteer endeavors that add joy and satisfaction to our lives. We had 66 people brave the rain to come to the December Hog Wild celebration and a good time was had by all. Tom Collins is planning to get us a deer this summer and Marty Cornell has agreed to smoke it so look for a summer celebration as well.

**Texas Master Naturalist –
Cradle of Texas Chapter**
<http://grovesite.com/tamu/tmn>

**Board of Directors Meeting
December 7, 2005
Minutes**

Opening: The meeting was called to order by President Carl Dodson at 9:00 a.m. Executive Board members present were President Carl Dodson, Vice-President John Boettiger, Treasurer Al Brushwood, Secretary Jan Kater, State Representative

Barbara Burkhardt, Past President Carolyn May-Monie, and Sponsor Connie Stolte. Among the committee chairmen and their committee members were Tom Morris, Marty Cornell, Neal McLain, John Thayer, Jerry Eppner, Ed Barrios, Jim Renfro, Justina Dent, Roy Morgan, Katherine Laney, and Jean Kater.

President's Report

• **Membership List** – The President opened the discussion with some ideas on what constitutes a member in good standing. This subject is of paramount interest since our COT By-laws and Policies and Procedures Handbook mention several requirements for continuing active membership – including who can vote at a business meeting, who can be elected to the Board, the effect on one's membership if a member does not re-certify each year, the status of a graduate who never certifies, and whether or not we should have an inactive member list for graduates who want to maintain their membership but who do not re-certify each year. We are the only TMN chapter that does not collect dues, and therefore does not have a monetary qualification for membership after the training fee is paid. Central to the discussion was the conviction that the Chapter was not trying to exclude inactive members, but rather to encourage them to be active.

A motion was made by Barbara Burkhardt and seconded by John Thayer to form a committee to study these concerns and propose clarifications in our by-laws and Policies and Procedures Handbook. The motion passed unanimously and five members volunteered to be on the committee: Jim Renfro, John Thayer, John Boettiger, Carolyn May-Monie, and Barbara Burkhardt: President Dodson

appointed Barbara Burkhardt to be the chair of the committee. She promised to present a report to the Board by the February Board Meeting.

Partnerships

Partnerships with other organizations were discussed, including the fact that close cooperation in carrying out chapter activities that are mutually beneficial now embraces over a dozen other organizations listed as our official Partners. The need to document these relationships with other organizations as they develop was also discussed. Jim Renfro reported that he and three other members have carried out such a relationship with Brazosport College, having submitted a Volunteer Project and Activity Request Form to the Chapter Board earlier. This past year he and John Thayer, Tom Morris, and Jerry Eppner presented a course on bird study as a part of the Adult Life and Learning Program at Brazosport College. And, they want to continue it in the future in official partnership with the college. A motion to this effect was made and seconded, and passed unanimously.

Vice-President's Report

Vice-President John Boettiger reported on the Advanced Training program this current year and training activities in the future. He referred members to the Chapter Website for details, including Advanced Training hours reportable for each activity. The website address is at the top of these minutes.

Secretary's Report

Secretary Jan Kater has charted the AT hours and volunteer hours (including travel hours) associated with chapter meetings in fiscal year 2005. If you need help in reconstructing the record of your involvement in these activities for reporting to Membership

Chairman Tom Morris, feel free to call Jan at 979-299-1449. Tom can also give you assistance with your reporting details (979-297-4678).

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Al Brushwood reported the chapter bank balance to be approximately \$2400. He distributed a Treasurer's Report covering Revenues and Expenses, actual and budgeted, through December 5, 2005. A copy may be obtained from Al (979-864-9618) or from Jan Kater (979-299-1449). After the annual audit, an audited version may be obtained for the entire year from either Al or Jan.

State Representative

• Regional Chapter Retreat in February 2006

Barbara Burkhardt, our State Representative, announced that there will be a Regional Chapter Retreat for Officers and Committee Chairs at the Harris County Extension Service, Bear Creek Park, Houston, Saturday, Feb. 4th, 2006. Contact Barbara at 979-297-4386 for more details. Advance registration with Barbara is required.

• Background Check

The State TMN office has determined that the local TCE office is responsible for the background check project. We have had no information from our local office about paper work or fees collection or the time frame for completion of this project.

Past President

• State TMN Annual Meeting Project

Past President Carolyn May-Monie, chair of the COT chapter committee that prepared the storyboard for our display at the State TMN annual meeting, announced that winning second place in the competition carried with it a \$150 prize. After consulting with Bryan Adams, Environmental

Education Ranger for Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuges, it was decided to spend the money for books that will help docents do their work at each station in the Discovery Environmental Education Program ("DEEP") for school children at the Brazoria NWR. A write-up on the project and a photo with more information on the presentation of the books to Bryan may be found on the COT website.

• Nominating Committee slate of nominees for the 2006 Board of Directors

Carolyn May-Monie, chairman of the Nominating Committee, reported that the candidates were announced in the December 2005 Newsletter, and will be voted on together with any nominations from the floor at the December 14 membership meeting. (Please see the December newsletter and the December 14th membership meeting minutes for more details.)

Training Committee Report on the COT 2005 Training Class

Training committee chair Marty Cornell reviewed the information he submitted to the December Newsletter editor Mary Helen Israel giving the accomplishments of the class members in fulfilling their training contract. There was much appreciation expressed for the work of the Training Chair and his staff, and for the dedication of the 2005 class members. (Please see the December Newsletter for the full report – now available on the COT website).

Projects

• New member Al Childs submitted a Volunteer Project & Activity Request Form for approval by the Board outlining a project "to monitor the prairie at Brazos Bend State Park in order to determine current health and investi-

gate establishing future prairie restoration management projects.” Project members will “document prairie grass, invasive plants, and disturbed areas along pre-determined transects.” Barbara Burkhardt moved that the project be approved, followed by a second from John Thayer and a unanimous vote of approval by Board members. Interested volunteers are invited to contact AI at 281-244-5373.

- Jim Renfro described an educational program on birds for school children that he is assisting with at the GCBO. He already has faculty and parents involved. Though he will write up a description of the program for our records, the project does not require a Volunteer Project & Activity Request Form since the GCBO is already a “Partner.”

Outreach

No activity to report at present.

Class Hosts

Out of town.

Webmaster

Webmaster Neal McLain thanked all who have sent in activity details helping him fill up the website with information the membership needs to know.

Round Table Discussion and Whatever:

The meeting ended with the valuable sharing of ideas on various subjects, none of which reached the status of a motion. The review of current activities was particularly helpful in keeping in mind the fine tuning of programs like Innovene and ConocoPhillips.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan L. Kater, Secretary
Texas Master Naturalist
Cradle of Texas Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist – Cradle of Texas Chapter Membership Meeting December 14, 2005 Minutes

Opening: The meeting was called to order by President Carl Dodson at 9:05 a.m. Forty were in attendance, including recent graduates. The attendance list is on file.

Membership Committee chairman Tom Morris reported that approximately 100 COT Chapter members have served 33,000 volunteer hours since the chapter began five years ago, 11,000 of which were accomplished in 2005. Also during 2005, 2735 contacts were made with the general public. And 36 of the current members recertified. He then made the following awards:

First time certification pins to two members of the 2005 Training Class – AI Childs and Ruby Lewis.

Re-certification pins for 2005 in recognition of a minimum of 8 hours Advanced Training and 40 hours of Volunteer hours in any one year were awarded to Candace Novak (2004), Anna Hay, Becky McKinney, Durwood McKinney, Kat Laney, Ramah O’Gorman, and Sherry Summers.

Ed Barrios and Sherry Summers each earned a Bronze Award for 250 cumulative lifetime COT volunteer hours.

And Tracie Teague earned the Platinum Award for 2500 cumulative lifetime COT volunteer hours.

All were warmly applauded for their dedication to the goals of the Texas Master Naturalist program.

A Special Presentation was made by President Carl Dodson, who reviewed the fact that our chapter received the 2nd place award of \$150 for our exemplary learning project at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. The display explaining the project was set up in the meeting room for members to see. COT has used the award money to purchase a set of books for use by volunteer instructors participating in the Discovery Environmental Education Program (DEEP) at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge. The books were presented at the meeting to Bryan Adams, Education Specialist at Brazoria NWR, by Carl, Ed Barrios, and Carolyn May-Monie, Chair of the COT Chapter's Exemplary Project Committee. (See our COT website for a picture of the award certificate and the presentation of the books to Bryan).

Up-Coming Events were announced by several members, including a number of bird counts around the end of the month, and the next Advanced Training program at the Angleton TCE office January 11. (See our website for details and possible changes in the details).

A Review of the Year's Accomplishments and Appreciation of the Work of the Chapter's Officers and Committee Chairmen and their Committees was given by the President. His recollection of the challenges and victories recognized the dedication of all of our members

during a fruitful year of activity. Comments from the floor added to the humor and warm fellowship that characterized the chapter's activities.

Annual Meeting Election of Officers

The election began with a review of the provisions in the By-Laws and Policies and Procedures Handbook for nominating candidates. A Nominating Committee chaired by the Past President presents a slate of candidates, which can be augmented by nominations from the floor during the Annual Meeting. The slate of officers was presented by the Nominating Committee. They were:

President – Ed Barrios
Vice President – Tracie Teague
Secretary – Alice Sieling
Treasurer – Jan Kater
State Representative – Barbara Burkhardt

Nominations were open to the floor and John Boettiger was nominated for Vice President. There were no other nominations. Those elected are:

President: Ed Barrios
Vice-President: John Boettiger
Secretary: Alice Sieling
Treasurer: Jan Kater
State Representative: Barbara Burkhardt

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan L. Kater
Secretary
Texas Master Naturalist
Cradle of Texas Chapter

**Advanced Training Meeting,
Wednesday, January 11**

Kim Camilli from the Texas Forest Service will be speaking on Oak Wilt from 11 am until 1 pm, Wednesday, January 11 at the Extension Office. Kim is the Oak Wilt Coordinator for the State of Texas.

This is a joint advanced training meeting with the Master Gardeners.

Future Programs:

February 8 – David Abrego, SCT, will speak on “Speckled Sea Trout”

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
Newsletter	Mary Helen Israel
Sponsors:	Connie Stolte (TP&W) and Rich Tillman (Extension)