

# TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST



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

### **Texas Master Naturalist – Cradle of Texas Chapter**

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

#### **Board of Directors Meeting February 8, 2006 Minutes**

**Opening:** Attendees Carolyn May-Monie, Jan Kater, Barbara Burkhardt, John Thayer, Alice Sieling, Justina Dent, Carl Dodson, Jerry Eppner, Ellis Burkhardt, Jean Kater, Neal McLain, John Boettiger, Tom Collins and Tom Morris were welcomed to the meeting by President Ed Barrios at 8:09AM. The TMN Regional Meeting was held February 4, 2006 at Harris County Extension Office in Bear Creek Park, Houston with COT members Marty Cornell, Tom Morris, Carl Dodson, Neal McLain, John Thayer, Tracie Teague, Barbara Burkhardt, and Ed Barrios in attendance. President Ed Barrios encouraged more members to attend the next regional meeting and offered the floor to each attendee to voice feedback from the February meeting.

**Regional Meeting Feedback:** Ed Barrios suggested a good action item for our chapter would be forming an Interest Group Committee to understand interests and needs of our members. He will wait for the minutes of the regional meeting before initiating a discussion on this topic. Tom Collins stated a concern for separating Public

Volunteer Hours, which are TMN's objective, from Administration Volunteer Hours. He felt an update of Volunteer Service Hours is needed to check what proportion of our Volunteer Hours was spent educating or serving the public. Other members shared his concern at the conference. Carl Dodson reported a growing swell of support for increased representation from TMN Chapters on the TMN Advisory Board of Texas Parks and Wildlife and Extension Services. Barbara Burkhardt reported the regional meeting affirmed background checks are required at a cost of \$10 per person. Neal McLain informed us that not enough interest existed to put the issue of whether a chapter must use state database on regional agenda. John Thayer discovered that other chapters volunteer more hours in "citizen science" than do our chapter. Citizen Science covers backyard bird counts, bird banding, and other projects not involving public education.

#### **Final Membership Guidelines**

**Report:** Barbara Burkhardt reported that Connie Stolte edited changes to the suggested Membership Guidelines for COT TMN Chapter. Connie created the categories: Active Chapter Members and Inactive Chapter Members. Inactive members are for all practical purposes not COT members. The State By-Laws have not changed. A person who has attended the classes and completed 40 Volunteer

Hours is a Texas Master Naturalist whether he remains active or not. Our Chapter can only make this designation between our members. Carl Dodson expressed concern that this causes retention of members who are not active volunteers. Sonny Arnold asked for a copy of our proposed membership changes as state is revising state membership procedures. COT TMN Guidelines were amended to include the requirement that an annual meeting be held by a board representative with each inactive member to determine their status. Jan Kater proposed the board accept the proposed COT TMN Membership Guidelines. Tom Morris seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Background Checks:** Barbara Burkhardt stated that Paula Craig of the Texas Cooperative Extension Office will be responsible for obtaining background forms for COT members as she already does so for Master Gardeners. Cost will be \$10 per member. Background checks do not need to be repeated. A background clearance from Master Gardeners or a workplace may be used. Larry L. Miles Jr., County Extension Agent 4-H and Youth Development, will maintain records of completed background checks.

**Recertification:** Tom Morris reported that State By-Laws have changed on recertification. He discovered at the regional meeting that new members can recertify during the first year they receive their initial certification if they complete 8 additional Advanced Training Hours and 40 additional Volunteer Hours during that year. Eight members are now recertified in 2005: Mickey Dufilho, Jane Eppner, Jerry Eppner, Kerry Magee, Neal

McLain, Archie Pratt, Kermit Schlameus, and Alice Sieling.

**Volunteer Service Report:** Carolyn May-Monie needs a way to track members' areas of expertise and interests in order to direct them to volunteer groups. COT has eleven current partners. The 2006 reviews of 2 are complete: Brazos Bend State Park and Gulf Coast Bird Observatory. Carolyn has developed a new partner form that should allow more efficient pairing of volunteers and partners. The form tells us what resources, volunteer opportunities, and training opportunities the partner can provide to us. GCBO needs gardeners, and Bird Trunk Presenters for schools. (Volunteers with theater backgrounds are suggested, but not required.) An Approved Volunteer Opportunity List will be posted on the website. There is also a form section on the website to fill out to request board approval of volunteer service. No gift shop hours or fundraising hours are appropriate service. TMN Region does not approve being on call for a non-partner organization such as Wildlife Rescue. The region list of Actual Volunteer Service Examples is attached. Carolyn has Approved Advance Training List from 3 partners so far: Brazos Bend State Park - Interpretive Training, Special/Species Specific Classes, and Weekend Training Programs; Gulf Coast Bird Observatory - Smith Point Hawk Watch Raptor Workshop Sept. 15-17, 2006; Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue - Basic rescue Training, Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitation Workshop, International Wildlife Rehabilitation Workshops, Hotline Answering Service Training, Monthly Training on various topics.

**Advanced Training Report:** John Thayer reported a recent change in Brazos Bend State Park Administration

which now stresses trail maintenance. Every Tuesday and Thursday is a Brazos Bend General Maintenance Work Day. Purpose is to clear vegetation from existing trails. John would like a tie-in on the website between members and partner websites to better disseminate information. Carolyn mentioned problem tracking volunteer hours per partner. John suggested getting partners to keep records of COT member volunteer hours as they receive grant funding per documented volunteer hour. Problem: Some partners such as Innovene do not have grant funding and so would not necessarily track member hours.

**Member Communication:** A suggestion was made that Carolyn May-Monie and John Boettiger develop a survey of partner volunteer needs. Carolyn May-Monie will report each month to the board on status of partner needs and submit a short article outlining partner needs to the website and newsletter. Alice Sieling will mail the monthly newsletter and calendar to the three members who do not have e-mail.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jan Kater submitted the Final 2005 Year End Treasury Report. Next Meeting the Proposed Budget for 2006 will be presented to the board. Plans are to keep budget comparable to 2005 with \$2000 reserve account. Any changes will be in area of training needs. Tom Morris made motion to approve Final 2005 Year End Treasury Report, and Barbara Burkhardt seconded the motion. Motion approved.

**Membership Report:** Tom Morris announced that 105 members are in our current membership database.

Eighty-one members are certified Master Naturalists. Thirteen are uncertified members with volunteer hours working toward certification. Eight are uncertified members without volunteer hours. Of these, 5 have been contacted and will be turning in volunteer hours. Twelve members have turned in no hours in the past two years. Two members have asked to be removed from the membership database: Kay Blaha and Shirley Smith. No other changes will be made until members have been contacted by Barbara Burkhardt's committee. Barbara will create a contact letter which the board will approve. Achieving 2006 Certification was Joan Simonsen and Bob Woods. Achieving 2005 Recertification was Candace Novak. The Bronze Award was earned by Roy Morgan.

There will be no Board Meeting in March. A General Communication Meeting for members will be held at 8:00AM on March 8, 2006 at the Texas Cooperative Extension office before advanced training.

Input needed on which COT project to highlight for our 2006 Project Board: AI Childs' Texas Prairie Invasive Species Project, Birding Classes at College, Innovene, Brazoria Wildlife Refuge, Bird Banding? State Guidelines for this year are not yet published.

March 11, 2006 will be a Volunteer Council Meeting of Texas Master Naturalists in Ding Dong, Texas at Prairie View Camp, which is 7.71 miles South of Killeen, Texas. Volunteers are needed to participate in panels, assemble notebooks etc. Contact Barbara Burkhardt. Meeting Adjourned at 10:40AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Sieling, Secretary

## **Message from the VP, John Boettiger**

This month I'd like to highlight two COT programs: Advanced Training; and, a new program that I have dubbed Interest Groups.

### **(1) ADVANCED TRAINING (AT)**

Year-to-date (YTD) we have completed 4-hours of AT with two-hours each for: Oak Wilt (JAN '06) & Spotted Seatrout (FEB '06).

On March 8, the program will be Oysters (Sammy Ray, PhD, TAMU, Galveston) with 2-AT projected. Dr. Ray is "the man" when it comes to knowing about Texas Oysters. I am eagerly anticipating his presentation and then getting to "sample" some of his presentation items!

On April 12 (BP College Birding Class) and May 10 (Habitat Gardening), our own COT members will present to our Chapter at our regular meeting site in Angleton.

Kathy Adams Clark will present a "How To Photo" program for 1.5-hour of AT on June 14, 2006. We plan to offer a "pay-for-training" photo outing following our morning Chapter meeting. The fee will be \$16 each for a 2.5-hour "how to do it" class (The desired class size is 16 on a first-come, first-served enrollment basis. I will be the reservation chairman for this class, so either give me your check at this month's meeting; or, mail the check to: John Boettiger, 102 Pepperwood, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-4914. I will hold your checks

until the week of the class. I'll also maintain a "waiting list" in case there are more than 16 COT members signed up.

On July 12, Jim Renfro and several of our own COT members will present a two-year update on a local bird banding winter project that was conducted at Big Pond.

Currently, August 9 is "open" ... but, Mammals is being looked into as a possible follow-on to our Fall-2005's hurricane-interrupted Training Program.

Our own COT members will assist on October 11 (Astronomy), in a multi-location program with Judy James (Denis' wife) at our local Planetarium and on Saturday, at the George Observatory (Brazos Bend State Park, Rosharon, Texas). These astronomy presentations will offer as many as 5-AT hours for those attending the multi-segment training. Once again, our Fall 2006 Training Classes will serve as the basis for member AT in the months of Sep '06 (Wayne McAlister) and Nov '06 (Gary Clark).

Please check in frequently at our Chapter website for current updates and more specific details on our AT programs.

Neal McLain, our Webmaster, has done a great job of making the info available. Take advantage of his good works!

### **(2) INTEREST GROUPS** (currently in the "early stages" of coming together at COT)

The new COT IG Program currently has two "organized" segments:

**Photography** ... John Boettiger @ 979-297-5427;  
[John.Boettiger@RaymondJames.com](mailto:John.Boettiger@RaymondJames.com)  
**Sea Center Texas Volunteers** ... Carl Dodson @ 979-265-6329

Other IG areas that are "in progress" include:

**Habitat Gardening** ... Barbara Burkhardt @ 979-297-5386.  
**Astronomy** ... Tom Morris @ 979-297-4678  
**Birding** ... Jim Renfro @ 979-297-2119

In the future, my idea is that these IGs would become responsible for designing many of our monthly AT classes by focusing in on the particulars of the Outline for the month's Class; and, then helping locate the best lecturer(s) for the subject. The IG would also assist at the monthly class by providing support to the lecturer and by being available to "talk-the-talk" with other COT members.

### **A Message from C. May-Monle, Volunteer Service Chairperson**

The responsibility of the Volunteer Service Chairperson is to communicate in a timely fashion all the volunteer opportunities offered to our chapter by our eleven Partner organizations. The communication forum I have chosen is an "*Approved/Not Approved*" volunteer service form for each of the eleven Partners. As I personally meet with each Partner, I will submit the lists to each of you. These lists should:

1. Provide a picture of all the wonderful and varied volunteer opportunities available to you,

2. Point you in the right direction if you have not yet found a niche,
3. Identify something new and exciting that you might want to try,
4. Prevent confusion on non-approved volunteer activities. (Remember, the activities must support our mission statement and fall within the state volunteer guidelines).

Each of you should have already received the "Approved/Not Approved" list for four of our Partners. These lists are not all-inclusive. Many new opportunities will come up as the year progresses. Hopefully, you have identified several activities that might interest you. If you have, please take the initiative to contact the Partner organization. Remember, every hour of your volunteer time equates to grant money for the Partner organization.

At the March 8<sup>th</sup> general membership meeting I will announce several new volunteer opportunities that I am currently working on for you. However, if you cannot attend, don't worry; I will email the announcements also.

Thanks to each of you for all the wonderful things that you do for our chapter and our Partners. Keep up the good work and let me know if there is anything that I can do for you.

### **Request for assistance in recovering monofilament fishing line**

Greeting all,

I'm writing to request your assistance. On Saturday, March 25, 2006, the Annual River, Lakes, Bays 'N' Bayous Trash Bash will be held from 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. There will be eleven areas, some with multiple locations



designated for this event. The following is a list of the areas and sites:

(1) Armand Bayou; (2) Dickinson Bayou (Hwy 3 @ boat ramp); (3) Galveston Bay (O'Quinn corridor/Virginia Point, (4) Galveston Bay (Hwy 146 Boat Ramp in Seabrook); (5) Galveston Bay (TX City Dike); (6) Greens Bayou (Greenwood Park); (7) Lake Conroe (Cagle Recreation Area); (8) Lake Houston (Lake Houston Marina); (9) Little White Oak Bayou (Moody Park & Little Thicket Park); (10) Sims Bayou (Reveille Park, Glenbrook Park & Sims Woods); and (11) White Oak Bayou North (Ermel Elementary School).

I have ordered 12 monofilament recovery and recycling bins to be located at some of these sites. I'll need a volunteer(s) to help coordinate and spread the word that there will be collection bin for either monofilament collected during the clean up or brought from home. I have already committed to help man one site.

If you have are a Master Naturalist volunteer willing to man one of the collection bins, please contact me directly. I plan to develop some news releases to let the public know, but it would be helpful to know in advance which sites will be manned, so I can have a bin located at that site.

Any help will be appreciated!  
Be sure to check out the Texas Monofilament Recovery and Recycling website at <http://mrrp.tamu.edu>.

Sincerely,  
John P. O'Connell, M.S.  
County Extension Agent-Marine  
Texas Cooperative Extension  
Texas Sea Grant College Program  
Texas A&M University

2200 7th Street, 4th Floor  
Bay City, Texas 77414  
Office: 979/245-4100  
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E-mail: [j-oconnell@tamu.edu](mailto:j-oconnell@tamu.edu)  
URL: <http://matagorda-tx.tamu.edu/>

**NOTE:** There are two monofilament recovery and recycling bins located at Sea Center Texas – one by the Andrew Sansom Kid Fishing Pond and the other in the visitor parking lot, located so that it can be utilized as a “drive-through” drop-off point. These are maintained by Rainbo Johnson, COT member and SCT volunteer.

### **Membership Guidelines for the Cradle of Texas Master Naturalist Chapter**

#### **Active Member Categories**

Active members are those Volunteers who submit Volunteer Hours and/or Advanced Training hours to the Membership Chairman or attend or participate in TMN activities during the current year or for the prior calendar year.

#### **Texas Master Naturalist Member in Training:**

A volunteer member in training of an official class, from the first day of class to the completion of the training period. The status of member in training continues until the member in training has completed 40 hours of training and 8 hours of advanced training. The member in training has 15 months to complete the required hours.

Members in training who must drop out of a training class will be given preference in signing up for the next year's class. No further payment is required to complete training.

**Texas Master Naturalist Member:** A volunteer who has successfully

completed the chapter training requirements. This volunteer may have completed, or has yet to complete, their volunteer certification requirements (40 volunteer hours/8 hours advanced training) for a given year. This category also covers members who do not wish to re-certify each year, but wish to attend meetings and contribute some volunteer hours to the chapter.

Certified Texas Master Naturalist. A Volunteer who has completed class certification requirements or a previously Certified Texas Master Naturalist who completes the state or chapter minimum requirements (40 volunteer hours/8 hours advanced training) for the current calendar year.

**Inactive Members**

Inactive members are those Volunteers who have completed training, but who have not participated in any chapter activities during a calendar year or for the prior calendar year.

These members will be notified annually, in writing, by the Executive Board of the Cradle of Texas Chapter, to determine their level of interest in continuing as a Texas Master Naturalist. If there is no reply to the letter, then the member will be placed on the inactive member list.

An inactive member may become an active member at any time, by again participating in chapter meetings or volunteer activities.

A person who no longer wishes to be considered a member of the Cradle of Texas Chapter should state this intention in a letter to the Expectative Board. This person will be placed on the inactive list. If, at a later

date, a person changes this position, they can be reinstated to the chapter.

Adopted by COT Executive Board  
2/8/06

**2005 Year End Report from Treasurer**

At year end, 12/31/05, the COT chapter, TMN, had a bank balance of \$2,385.26. If you wish to see a detailed report of 2005 expenditures, see Jan Kater who has the final reports.

**Attachments to the March Newsletter**

Attached to the newsletter are two documents: A listing of Actual Volunteer Service Examples and a current chapter roster.

**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)

