

Minutes of the COT GENERAL MEETING,

WEDNESDAY August 10, 2011

AgriLIFE® Extension Office, Angleton, Texas

Start Time: 9:03 39 Members and Interns signed the attendance list.

### **COT 10th Anniversary Luncheon**

President Barbara Burkhardt opened the meeting by reminding the membership of next month's general meeting, which will be a luncheon to celebrate our chapter's tenth anniversary. Signup sheets are to be completed to indicate the number of lunch tickets (\$15 each) and commemorative T-shirts (at \$10 each) that are desired with payment made at today's meeting or paid to Stephanie Taylor at the extension office. Tickets will not be sold at the event.

Ed Barrios, chair of the planning committee, reviewed the agenda for this celebration, which will take place starting at 10:00, Wednesday September 14th at the Lake Jackson Civic Center. Our special guest will be Michelle Haggerty from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department; Michelle is the state coordinator for the Texas Master Naturalist program. The deadline for ordering shirts is the 19th of August.

**Membership** chair Jerry Eppner reported that Donna Graham and Bob Long have certified as TMN. Recertification was accomplished by John Boettiger, Justina Dent, Jerry Eppner, Phil Huxford, Archie Pratt, Carole Wenny, Pam West, and Sheila Williams. Archie Pratt also reached the 500-hour level of volunteer service.

Jerry proudly announced that we made it in our quest to achieve 100,000 hours of volunteer service before our 10th anniversary celebration (actually 100,768 hours to-date). 47 members turned in 6710 hours this year. Jerry is working with the state organization to recognize VT from 2009 and 2010 belatedly turned in by tardy members; the goal is for these members to be able to use these hours in their path to higher level service pins.

Jerry reported that Andy Smith is now an official member of our Cradle of Texas chapter, having transferred from the TMN Mid-Coast Chapter. Andy is an active volunteer at Sea Center Texas.

### **Summer Library Program**

Mary Helen Israel reported that participation in the COT-run summer library program achieved a record high attendance. In June, programs were held at nine Brazoria County Libraries, with 450 children and 214 adults participating. In July, 914 children and 450 adults attended the 14 programs on reptiles at 12 county libraries. This adds up to 2,028 people for both programs. It is intended to add the West Columbia and the Lake Jackson libraries to the program next year.

### **Training**

Barbara Burkhardt announced that there would be no fall training class this year as we have not been able to replace Laura Brandes as training chair; Laura had to resign because of health reasons. The next class is targeted for the spring. Three people who indicated an interest in the fall classes have been invited to participate in COT activities. Members were encouraged to recruit people who will not only take the classes, but who also are likely to become active volunteers.

## **Tenners**

Jeanne Manry reviewed the Tenners program being developed by Tom Morris and herself. Eighteen categories will each have a top-ten list that includes characteristics of the wildlife of Brazoria County. One category will be covered in a 15-minute presentation at each COT general meeting

## **Nominations for Chapter Officers**

Barbara Burkhardt noted that Past President Dave Brandes will be forming a nominating committee to suggest a slate of chapter officers for next year. Members were asked to let Dave know if they would be interested in a leadership position in our chapter.

## **Refuge Junior Naturalists**

Barbara Burkhardt mentioned the pilot program of the Texas Mid-coast NWR Complex that conducted a Refuge Junior Naturalist program this summer. Science teachers from BISD nominated 30 students for this program designed for 5th and 6th graders. Each student was required to submit a short essay on why they wanted to participate; 15 students were chosen. Instructors for this pilot were all employees of the USFWS, with the exception of COT member Kirby Rapstein. It is likely that additional help will be sought from COT for next year's program.

## **Dow Woods Open House**

The Dow Woods Unit of the SBNWR will celebrate its opening with an open house on Saturday, October 15th. Dignitaries from the Dow Chemical Company, Brazoria County, and Texas Parks & Wildlife have been invited. Many COT volunteers have been involved in building the unit's trails, pavilion, and other facilities. The new 40'-wide octagon pavilion had its first use yesterday (August 9, 2011). Work is progressing on finishing the SE trail, which will be done in time for the open house. COT members are encouraged to attend.

## **TMN State Meeting**

Members were advised to sign up early for rooms and AT sessions that will shortly be offered for the 2011 TMN state convention at Mo Ranch, October 21st through 23rd. The Dow Woods trails will be our chapter's project that will be presented this year.

This business part of the general meeting ended at 9:36, and was followed by a compelling review of bird banding by Kay and Robert Lookingbill in a presentation "Avian Research by Bird Banding."

Submitted by Marty Cornell, Secretary, Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter