

Minutes of the COT GENERAL MEETING,

WEDNESDAY October 12, 2011

Planetarium at the Center for the Arts and Sciences, Clute, Texas

Attendance: 43 Active Members, 5 guests: Neeta Allen, Maria Breazale, Abby Geisler, Joan Lorensen, Becky McClendon.

Start Time: 9:00.

COT 10th Anniversary Celebration: President Barbara Burkhardt began the meeting by thanking Ed Barrios and his committee for organizing the "Great Party" luncheon at the Lake Jackson Civic Center.

Chapter Elections: President Barbara Burkhardt opened the meeting by informing the membership that the nominating committee has just about finished their development of a recommended slate of candidates of officers and committee chairs to lead COT next year. She asked for anyone interested in one of these positions to let Dave Brandes know (Dave leads the nominating committee). Barbara made a special appeal to members of the northern part of Brazoria County to become active in chapter leadership.

Membership chair Jerry Eppner reported that 49 members have thus far turned in 7,970 VT hours, resulting in 102,010 hours of VT since the chapter inception in September of 2001. Unfortunately, this reporting is down significantly from last year, where through September of 2010 the chapter had 67 members reporting just over 13,000 hours of VT through the first nine months. Jerry encouraged members to turn in their time.

Jerry presented recertification pins to Andy Smith and Sandy Henderson, both who qualified at the end of September. Jerry also presented a certification pin to Marlies Greenwood and a recertification pin to Pam West; they had qualified earlier but had not been at a meeting to receive their awards.

Intern Training: Barbara Burkhardt introduced our five guests noted above and stated that training classes are targeted to start around the first part of February.

Policies and Procedures: Barbara Burkhardt presented two proposed modifications to the Addendums of the Cradle of Texas Chapter Policies and Procedures. These modifications have been sanctioned by the COT board of directors and require approval by a majority of the membership.

John Boettiger moved to "eliminate the existing Addendum #9". This motion was seconded by Roy Morgan. The question was called with no discussion and passed by voice vote with no opposition.

Having eliminated Addendum 9, Tom Morris motioned to amend Addendum #1 with this wording "**Volunteer Service Hours:**

Chapter members are encouraged to volunteer with our partner and sponsor organizations. All projects and activities sponsored by our partners are automatically approved for volunteer hours credit provided they are not specifically forbidden by our state organization. An example of a forbidden activity would be fund raising. Please consult our **Volunteer Project and Activity Lists** available on our web site for examples of approved activities and activities not approved. Projects and activities for credit are limited to Texas. Our state organization also requires that TMN members report their volunteer time as a log with the date, activity and hours for approved projects."

This motion was seconded by Ed Johnson, was called with no discussion, and passed by voice vote with no opposition.

Outreach: Chair Ruby Lewis reviewed a plethora of chapter outreach events that occurred in September and that will occur from now to the end of November:

- ✓ The COT reptile show at the Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravanganza on the mornings of September 10th and 17th were well attended and much appreciated by the public.
- ✓ At the instigation of COT member Jeanie Manry, Ruby organized a "Coastal Expo" event on September 22nd at St Timothy's Church in Lake Jackson for their "Gathering Place" program. This program brings demented seniors and their caregivers together for outside activities, giving relief to their tedious regime. Six COT volunteers worked with 14 participants and felt it was a very worthwhile experience. The Angleton Gathering Place organization has asked for this program, but no commitment has been made.
- ✓ Ed Barrios' entomology talk on September 26th for Nature Night at the Angleton Library was attended by 27 people and will probably be repeated at other libraries.
- ✓ Saturday, October 15th will be the Grand Opening of the Dow Woods Unit of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge (SBNWR). This event celebrates the completion of two loop trails totaling 2.4 miles that meander through mature Columbia Bottomland forest with sections along Bastrop Bayou. Naturalist guided tours for the public will be led at 9:00, 11:00, 1:00, and 3:00. Ceremonies will start at 2:00 and be followed by light refreshments. COT has been asked to promote the volunteerism of their organization and will be stationed next to the display of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges. Kathleen Murray and Barbara Burkhardt volunteered to help Ruby staff our station. COT volunteers will also handle parking and serving refreshments for the expected +100 guests. Ed Barrios is coordinating volunteer activities. All members are asked to attend.

Marty Cornell reported that over 1,400 hours of volunteer effort (worth over \$14,000 of in-kind contribution) have thus far been given to the development of this trail, with over 86% of this time coming from COT members. Most notably, the boardwalk crew led by Kirby Rapstein amassed 631 hours VT, equating to 44% of the total. This team included Gerald Forrest, Billy Heck, Archie Pratt, and Don VanDragt.

- ✓ Although not a COT effort, Ruby announced that Curtis Jones of the SBNWR will be the speaker at the October 24th Nature Night at the Angleton library (7:00 pm). Curtis' talk will be about reptiles and feature his collection of snakes that are indigenous to this part of Texas. This talk is approved for one hour of advanced training.
- ✓ The DEEP program at the Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge is short on volunteers for the October 25th and 27th sessions, and members were asked to help. It was noted that new participants would receive AT for their first session [typically five hours].
- ✓ The Sea Center Texas "Spooktacular" will be held on Sunday, October 30. COT will probably participate in conjunction with the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.
- ✓ Heritage Day at Brazos Bend State Park will be held on November 5th. Ruby stated that this is a welcomed event for COT members in the northern part of Brazoria County, and that recruitment of other volunteers will not be likely, but all members are welcome to help.

- ✓ The Brazoria County Parks Department will hold their second Nature Day at Hanson Park on Saturday, November 12th. Unlike last year, which was plagued with The Facts publishing the wrong day for the event and with competition from Lake Jackson's Festival of Lights, this year's event portends to generate respectable attendance. Ruby and Ed Barrios will coordinate the COT effort, and a signup sheet was passed around. Lunch will be provided by the Parks Department.
- ✓ The Festival of Lights will be held on Saturday, November 19th. The COT booth will be contiguous with the booth of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.

TMN State Meeting: Members were reminded of the state meeting coming up at the end of October; by now rooms at the Mo Ranch Conference Center are probably all reserved.

The business meeting ended at 9:44 am and was followed by the presentation of Judi James on Our Fall Sky. This talk is worth a credit of one hour of AT.

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