

**Minutes of the GENERAL MEETING of the
Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter
WEDNESDAY June 13, 2012
AgriLIFE Extension Building, Angleton, Texas**

Attendance: 41 members, 1 guest.

Vice President Mary Holler called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Mary introduced visitor Martha Leavitt; Martha was an intern a few years back who was unable to complete her training.

Mary then gave an overview of the pending July 13th chapter outing on the Brazos Belle and began to collect ticket money for this trip. Details can be found on the COT web site.

Membership chair Jerry Eppner then passed out **Service Awards** to Leo Novak, who certified, and to recertifying members John Boettiger, Kathleen Murray, Jim Renfro, Susan Severance, and Joan Simonsen.

Jerry reported that the chapter **Google distribution list** will be revised in July to remove those who have been inactive for four or more years. Anyone removed from the list who wishes to be included should let him know.

Mary Holler noted that the top 100 **nature photographs from the 2012 Migration Celebration** will be displayed at the Brazosport Center for the Arts through the first week of July.

Outreach Chair Ruby Lewis reported that the last **Nature Night at the Library** was presented by Shane Kasson, manager of the San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge. Shane's talk on sea turtles drew an audience of 16 adults and 14 children.

The **Summer Library Program** in June, which features reptiles, began last week with three libraries (Alvin, Pearland, and Brazoria), drawing 520 people; 187 adults and 333 children. The Pearland program had people waiting over one hour before the 2:00 start because last year's event was Standing Room Only with those desiring to attend exceeding the capacity of the room.

Upcoming Outreach Events were listed by Ruby to recruit volunteers:

The July Summer Library Program will feature mammals as based on the TPWD "Wild in the City" format. This program will have six stations (skins, skulls, scat, footprints, a rubbing table, and a stamp table) designed for the children to roam and learn. Members were asked to help staff the tables for each two-hour session.

The Freeport Fishin' Fiesta will occur over the 4th of July weekend with COT joining Friends of the Brazoria Wildlife Refuges on Saturday, July 7th inside RiverPlace to staff our outreach tables and to display our collection of reptiles. The current number of members who have volunteered is adequate for this 10:00 am to ~6:00 pm session, but others are welcome.

Ed Barrios gave a presentation on the requirement to have background checks on all members who work with children; this need is based on the State of Texas Youth Protection Standards. Ed's presentation will be placed on our chapter website.

Although BISD requires, and will pay for, annual background checks on volunteers who interact with their students, it appears that they have not consistent in doing so. It was noted that such checks do not cover non-BISD events. Thus the COT board has decided to conduct such check through AgriLIFE, which will be valid for three years. The board has voted to pay the first \$10 per person fee. Members are required to fill out a Volunteer Application Screening Form either authorizing a background check or opting out of this check if they agree to do no volunteer work involving children.

Jami Geserick, Marine and Administration Office Secretary of the Brazoria County AgriLIFE office, will collect the forms and construct a database to keep track of all of the screening pass-fail results. Detail results of screening will be kept at the Texas A&M -AgriLIFE office and will not be readily accessible. If a candidate fails the screening, it is not yet known how one might get access to one's screening report or to appeal.

COT volunteers will be able to refer other organizations to AgriLIFE (John O'Connell if TMN or Corrie Bowen if BCMGA) for confirmation of their positive background check.

This general meeting ended at 9:52 and was followed by a talk on frogs by Jaime Gonzalez, Community Education Director, Katy Prairie Conservancy.

Submitted by

Marty Cornell

Secretary, Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter.