15th Anniversary of El Camino Real chapter Texas Master Naturalist

Minutes for June 8, 2023

5:30 p.m. All Saints Episcopal Church

1. Welcome

A. Potluck was followed by a beautiful flower and butterfly-encrusted chocolate cake with cherry filling and cupcakes for dessert.

1. Introduction of guests

A. Mike Mitchell, former advisor; Paul Unger, first president, and wife Pastor Jan Unger. Tim Siegmund, current advisor, was unable to attend.

1. Program
   * + 1. Phyllis Shuffield introduced our guest speakers and told us a bit about how she joined the Texas Master Naturalist program.
       2. Ann Collins, a founder of the chapter, charmed the gathering with her story of how she ended up being a naturalist starting at a very young age. Her love of nature continued after she moved to Cameron, the Center of Civilization. She shared how she joined the chapter in the Bryan/College Station area. She then detailed how much work, tenacity, and grit it took to get this chapter off the ground. Now we know why Ann knows all the Latin names for wildlife.
       3. Mike Mitchell, who was our first advisor and still a Friend of the chapter next gave his perspective on how the curriculum and plan for the first class were developed, and how we grew. He did a lot of the work himself, since we didn’t have much funding at first. He’s still working various gigs related to wildlife after his retirement as our best ever Game Warden.
       4. Our first chapter president, Paul Unger, gave us an update on where he and Jan Unger have been in their RV travels. They have both continued to introduce people to the wonders of nature wherever they’ve gone.
       5. We gave a big cheer to all original members in attendance, who, in addition to those listed above, included Don Travis and Sandra Dworaczyk.
       6. The program provides 1.5 hours AT at a Chapter Meeting for VMS.
2. Regular meeting
   * 1. Donating books: some people brought children’s nature books to the meeting. There was also a sign-up sheet for books people want to buy. Members can also donate money to help us buy a few books for the Little Free Library at the county building, as well as to Milam County public libraries.
     2. Movie night – “Deep in the Heart…” is a PBS special about nature across the State of Texas. People can borrow it on DVD from Janice Johnson or watch it on YouTube. We might show it to our membership or others once we are sure that all legal regulations are complied with.
     3. We have learned that there are some uncommon flowers at the property of Clint Walker (of Walker Honey Farm) near Gause. We are invited to go see them, if we let them know we are coming. An email message with details was sent to the membership.
     4. Carolyn announced that the new student trainer for the next class is Alan Rudd. We thank him very much! He will be needing an assistant when it’s time to start planning, but that time has not been set yet.
3. Board members and directors reports
   * 1. Liz Lewis – VP: the speaker next month will be Laurie Mason or Michelle, on the Pines and Prairie Land Trust.
     2. Mike Conner – treasurer – not present. Balance is $4833.87.
     3. Sue Ann Kendall – secretary – Kim Summers moved to approve the minutes from the May meeting and Sandra Dworaczyk seconded. Motion passed.
     4. Lisa Milewski – membership -Recertifications:
        + 1. Patricia Coombs (preliminary and yearly)
          2. Janice Johnson
          3. Debra Sorensen
     5. Don Travis – communications – Don leaves for Maine next week. He shared copies of past chapter newsletter compilations.
     6. Pamela Neeley – AT authorizations - nothing new
     7. Donna Lewis – Project coordinator - Purple Martin field trip will be on June 24 from 10-12. More information will appear in the weekly announcement or other email.
     8. Alan Rudd – student training – nothing so far
     9. Linda Jo Conn, state cheerleader and iNat coordinator – she requested firm commitments from any who are interested in taking a grass identification class with Dale Kruse, who sure knows his grasses. There could be refresher courses after that.
     10. Catherine Johnson, hostess and Wildscape Coordinator – the next Wildscape workday will be June 17. Folks will go to lunch afterward.
4. Old business - none
5. New business
   1. Sue Ann Kendall took photos of members of each graduating class who attended the meeting.
   2. There will be a write-up of the celebration in the chapter blog.
6. Adjourn

.5 hours of VT for Chapter Meeting

1 hour VT Hospitality if you brought food.