

## **GBAC BOARD FEBRUARY MEETING**

### **February 27, 2024**

**Attendees via Zoom:** Gene Fisseler, Mary Dobberstine, Meade LeBlanc, Lisa Hardcastle, Pam House, Sharon Tirpak, Mike Pettit, Diane Humes, Mohammed Nasrullah, Tracy Walpole, Lynn Porfirio, Jesse Monzingo and Corlis Simmons.

This meeting was called to order by Gene Fisseler at 6:01 pm. Gene welcomed all and explained that he was ill and asked Mary to assist in facilitating the meeting.

Mary Dobberstine reviewed the meeting agenda.

A quorum was established with 85% of the Board members present (Lynn and Jesse arrived after the establishment of quorum).

The minutes of the January Day Away Board Meeting, previously emailed to the Board were offered for discussion. **A motion was made by Pam to approve the minutes as written and seconded by Mike. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Officer Reports:**

##### **President** (Gene Fisseler):

Gene and Mary participated in the TMN Presidents call today. The main topic discussed was the fall conference and timeline for release of related information. Gene sent his notes about the meeting to Mary who will fill us in on the rest. He feels that at the six week point things are going well.

##### **Vice President** (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared additional information from the TMN Presidents call. The state office is considering conducting a training survey to gather information on how chapters across the state are facilitating new class training. As part of the information gathering, they are planning to hold a Director's Round Table in mid-March. The TMN Tuesday for March will be rescheduled to March 5 due to a scheduling conflict. Tech Tuesdays will be restarting. Additionally, April will be busy with Volunteer month activities, the solar eclipse, Virtual Volunteer Fair, City Nature Challenge and the Birding Classic. Chapters need to keep in mind all these events as they plan. Mary wants us to consider our business partners who may want to participate in the Virtual Volunteer Fair to reach volunteers who may need indoor/remote volunteer opportunities. Also mentioned on the call were concerns about continued issues with the VMS.

Mary also shared that the April Chapter Meeting is ready to go. Brett Sweezy will discuss *Movement Behaviors of Sharks at the Flower Garden Banks*. She has used

Canva to create the flier for the meeting and shared that we all have access to the software for chapter needs. Additionally, the Financial Examination Committee is currently conducting a review of financial records and will make a report to the Board soon.

**Secretary** (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa is planning to create a “secure list of all websites, social media platforms, email distribution lists, apps, data storage sites, financial accounts, and any other tools the chapter uses to conduct business (including login and password information)” per the *Chapter Operating Handbook*. She will send out an email to the chapter explaining the project soon. At the April chapter meeting she will speak with members in attendance that have such information. She will follow up with members not at the meeting who need to provide information.

**Treasurer** (Meade LeBlanc)

Meade distributed the *Financial Report* to the Board prior to the meeting. On the income side, donations came in from Exxon Mobile that had been backlogged for several years. There were no significant expenses in February, but January expenses included the cost for the December meeting dinner (original check was lost) and new chapter badges.

She also sent a *Temporarily Restricted Funds* report. Meade wanted to bring attention to the restricted funds earmarked for scholarships, Sea Turtle Hospital and Bayside Regional Park. Discussion followed about the best way to ensure that the restricted funds are used appropriately. The Bayside funds need to be spent before the 2024 chapter budgeted funds are used. Pam and Sharon will talk to the Sea Turtle Hospital about how best to use funds targeted for use there.

**Pam moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented and Gene seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Immediate Past President** (Pam House)

Pam shared that she touched based with the people that were on the scholarship committee last year. Unfortunately, some are unavailable this year, so she is looking for a couple of new members. She plans to have the committee set up soon and start work by April 1.

**Director Reports**

**Training Class** (Diane Humes)

Diane is pleased that there have been three successful training classes. However, she is aware of people involved in the last class who have tested positive for Covid. It is possible that there are others that also have Covid. She brought up the possibility of

moving to virtual training for this week's class and rescheduling the Saturday class. An additional factor in rescheduling Saturday's class is that ABNC has contacted her regarding the possibility of extremely low tides Saturday that could prevent the use of the pontoon boat.

After discussing our ability to "go virtual" in the time allowed, all agreed that it would be best to meet via Zoom on Thursday night and reschedule the Saturday class to a date in May. Communication will go out in the morning to class members, presenters, and mentors. Mentors will be asked to follow up with mentees to verify they have received the information.

### **Advanced Training** (Mike Petitt)

Mike shared his report listing both previous and upcoming AT opportunities. He highlighted the successful *Ghost Wolves* presentation that 122 people attended. He also mentioned the Chapter Meeting presentation by Nancy Angell which 68 in-person attendees and 52 remote participants. Upcoming presentations include *Insect Restoration* on March 5 via Zoom and *Is Taxonomy Really Taxing?* at Carbide Park on March 22. He also mentioned that in-person trainings are limited to 50 attendees.

### **Communication** (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared a question from Tracy and Patty about a direct contact for inquiries to our website. She offered to be that person for now, but that may need to change over time. She also reminded us that Google Meet, a virtual meeting application like Zoom, and other applications are included in our non-profit account. She also reminded the Board that the chapter received two informational panels from the state office to enhance booth displays. She shared that the panels would be ideal for outreach activities. The panels are stored in the storage room.

### **Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity** (Mohammed Nasrullah)

The JEDI team is working on creating *scat* and *tracks* kits for JEDI events. Chris is working on a monarch butterfly kit. He also has someone making the wingspan activity into an app. The Juneteenth event will be on June 15 at the same location in Galveston as last year. He is working with Moody Gardens to partner with them on events held there. Also in the works is an Earth Day event and an insect event on June 28. Additionally, he is working with someone to do a presentation on accessibility and creating an accessibility initiative for our chapter.

### **Outreach Committee** (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa held the first Outreach Committee meeting Monday with ten attendees. She would like to gather with the team at Carbide Park to locate materials mentioned at the meeting that are available for outreach activities. The committee would like to make kits for outreach activities at event booths. She would also like to work more closely with the DEI committee as their efforts seem to overlap.

### **Membership** (Tracy Walpole)

Tracy shared her report with the Board prior to the meeting. As of 2/24/2024, we have 641 members, with 259 considered active. Data for 2023 reflected that the chapter had 228 members report hours, including 45,336.75 volunteer service hours and 4,099.25 advanced training hours. An included pie chart shows that natural resources management accounted for 46% of hours; field research, 18%; training and education, 11%; public outreach, 10%; administration, 9%; and nature/public access 6%.

February data as of February 24, 2024, include over 5,000 volunteer service hours and almost 1,000 advanced training hours. Advanced training hours in February were almost five times the number from January. One member has completed initial certification and 17 have re-certified. Additionally, one member reached 250 hours of volunteer service hours.

### **Volunteer Service** (Sharon Tirpak)

Sharon announced that Janet Diaz will be on her team to review requests for volunteer service approvals. She is looking for one additional person to help. They have approved several recent programs, including school bird clubs, cleaning native habitats at the zoo and acoustic monitoring of Texas bats. Patty and Tracy have been helpful in providing historical background information. She has questions about requests for programs that are already approved, renaming programs, and tracking programs. She plans to meet with Tracy and Patty to get more information. Another topic to discuss with them is the organization of the Volunteer Service webpage, including the nomenclature of sponsors and organizations. Gene suggested that Julie Massey might be able to help her with that as well. Diane asked that she give us time to look over what she plans as there are some things that we can change and some that come from the state, which we cannot change.

### **New Class Reps Spring 2023** (Corlis Simmons, Lynn Porfirio and Jesse Monzingo)

Nothing to report. They are aware that classmates are working towards certification.

### **Old Business**

- The 2024 Objectives from Day Away Board Meeting were reviewed. **Pam made a motion to adopt the objectives. Mohammed seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.** They are attached to this document.
- After school bird club – information was sent to Board members to review. We can discuss at a future Board meeting.

### **New Business**

- 2024 Big Event – Mary met with Laura Clark, Jessie and Sharon to discuss plans. More information will come later.

- Big Thicket Field Trip – Nancy Angell, who presented at our February chapter meeting has offered to host an Ecotour of the Big Thicket. Mary will send information out to the chapter to see if there is interest.
- April Chapter Meeting Items – Mary is planning the meeting, if you have any items for the agenda let her know.

**Other:**

Gene reported that he has been working with Ginger Benson at Carbide Park and she is extremely helpful.

**Next Board Meeting:** March 26 at 6:00 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle

## **Galveston Bay Area Chapter 2024 OBJECTIVES**

1. Look for opportunities to share TMN training with local teachers - for example, open invitations to ZOOM Advanced Training offerings, conducting a TMN-hosted, one-day field experience at Armand Bayou Nature Center, Galveston Island State Park, or Exploration Green.
2. Conduct a GBAC-wide volunteer service/social event – for example, a GBAC-only Prairie Planting, a GBAC-only beach clean-up with American Bird Conservancy, or a GBAC-only Marsh Mania event with Galveston Bay Foundation.
3. Explore and assess amendments to Chapter governing documents to allow New Class Representatives to continue Board service with different roles through the end of the calendar year.
4. Welcome, and help transition in, a new Chapter Advisor.
5. Carry forward objectives from 2023:
  - Continue Outreach Committee focused efforts on development, coordination, and support of outreach presentations made by Chapter members to other organizations and the community.
  - Continue focus on JEDI, identifying volunteer opportunities for weekends, evenings, and at home, and by adding a JEDI component to all programs.
  - Continue to implement/standardize our recently revitalized Scholarship Committee framework.