

GBAC BOARD AUGUST MEETING
Via Zoom
August 28, 2024

Attendees via Zoom: Gene Fisseler, Mary Dobberstine, Meade LeBlanc, Lisa Hardcastle, Pam House, Sharon Tirpak, Mike Petitt, Diane Humes, Mohammed Nasrullah, Tracy Walpole, Denise Correll, Sydney Jeffcoat, Terri Bell, and Brandi Keller. Also present was Laura Clark. Absent members were Corlis Simmons and Jesse Monzingo.

Gene Fisseler, President, notified members of the meeting date and agenda via email on August 25, 2024. All meeting participants are able to communicate with each other via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by Gene at 7:00 p.m.

The quorum requirement was established with 14 of 16 board members present.

Gene reviewed the proposed agenda with the attendees and no changes were made.

Review and approval of minutes:

The minutes of the July board meeting that had been previously emailed to the board were offered for discussion. **A motion was made by Sharon and seconded by Mike to approve the minutes as written/corrected. The motion passed unanimously.**

Officer Reports:

- **President (Gene Fisseler)**

Gene reviewed the dates for the remaining board meetings of 2024. Because the November meeting falls on the night before Thanksgiving, he recommended that the meeting be moved to the week before, November 20, 2024. There was no opposition to this change.

Next, he discussed the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting. He believes approximately 20 GBAC Chapter members will be attending. He reported that the organizers are requesting items to be donated to the Silent Auction. Pam shared that members attending the meeting typically donate items to the auction and she will be donating a basket of sea turtle related items.

Finally, Gene reported that Mary will share information in the next chapter meeting notice regarding a request for school supply donations for the Beach Hero program. Members will be asked to bring school supplies to the chapter meeting,

and they will be collected and distributed to schools participating in the Beach Hero program.

- **Vice President (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary attended the TMN Presidents Meeting recently. Topics discussed include:

- It was requested that all chapters follow branding guidelines set by the state. The logo and titles are trademarked. State approval must be obtained before adding them to t-shirts, merchandise, or fliers.
- Results of the training survey conducted by the state will be shared during a session at the State Annual Meeting.
- The state office is maintaining a list of speakers for training classes.
- The backlog on the 4,000-hour pins has been resolved and they are now available.
- Currently there have not been any submissions for the “Chapter Project Fair” contest. Our chapter’s submission will highlight the After School Bird Club. Mary will be meeting with Eowyn, Jenny, and Lisa this week to work on the submission.
- Members should be reminded that the Texas Master Naturalist title, chapter name, program or their membership should never be used in connection with advocacy or to invoke policy. Additionally, members may not use the title or certification for personal gain or profit. Furthermore, any public comments must be made as a private citizen, not as a Texas Master Naturalist.

- **Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)**

No report.

- **Treasurer (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary shared the financial report created by Meade. There has not been much activity in August other than the purchase of binoculars, bird guides and notebooks made by the after-school bird club. Additionally, the chapter has taken in more money than expected in August.

Meade reminded the board of the need to use the budgeted funds before the end of the year to invest in the programs we support.

Lisa made a motion to accept the report as presented. Tracy seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Immediate Past President (Pam House)**

Pam reported that the Scholarship Committee will be composed of Abhi Prasad, Jane Downs, Lisa Hardcastle, Julie Massey, and herself. The first committee meeting will be tomorrow night. The hope is to have information packets sent to

schools by the end of September, applications due later in the fall and recipients selected by December.

Director Reports

- **Advanced Training (Mike Petitt)**

Mike shared a written report with board members prior to the meeting. He reported that the chapter meeting presentation, Wild Houston by Suzanne Simpson, was well received. Upcoming training opportunities include “Water for Growing (and Hopefully Flowing)” on September 11, via Zoom; “Making a SPLASH: Bird Conservationists Addressing Plastic Pollution” at our chapter (hybrid) meeting on October 3; and “Taxonomy” on November 14, in-person at Carbide Park.

- **Communication (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary reported that the photo contest finalists have been selected and will be showcased at the October chapter meeting. She will be submitting names for the “In Memoriam” segment at the state annual meeting. Finally, she has met with Chloe to discuss details of the GetBACKTogether event. The outreach committee is interested in having membership/chapter information to share with the public that may be at the dike during our event. Another possibility may be an early morning bird walk. Gene suggested that the chapter provides either cookies or beverages for the picnic part of the event.

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

Mohammed reported that he is working with two speakers for upcoming events. The first speaker will discuss challenges individuals with disabilities encounter when accessing the outdoors. The second speaker will speak about the life of the Karankawa people, early inhabitants of the Gulf Coast.

Additionally, he hopes to have a booth at the Galveston Sandcastle Festival in September and the JEDI team will have a booth at the ABNC’s Fall Festival in November.

- **Membership (Tracy Walpole)**

Tracy shared membership notes and impact data from August with board members prior to the meeting via email. In summary, the chapter has 242 active members. Two new members transferred in from other chapters and one of our members transferred out to another chapter. In August, members accrued approximately 1,262 volunteer service hours and 131 advanced training hours. She predicted that the chapter would exceed last year’s hours. Two members obtained initial certification and six recertified. She announced that Walter Meyer reached the 1000-hour service award level. August impact summary included nine opportunities, 13 volunteers and 84.75 impact hours.

Tracy also reported for planning purposes, that 108 people attended our December meeting last year.

- **Outreach (Lisa Hardcastle)**

Lisa met with the Outreach Committee on Tuesday. There are several upcoming events in the fall. Lisa will send an email to the chapter members requesting volunteers. The committee is excited to have outreach information at the chapter's event in October. Lisa also shared that there was a discussion at the committee meeting about proper procedures for reporting impact data. After a brief discussion, it was decided that updated information will be shared with members via the Midden.

- **Training Class (Diane Humes)**

Diane and Cindy Howard will meet next week to discuss the upcoming training class. The training class will be held on Thursdays during the day beginning in February. She also mentioned that the state is selling textbooks for \$10 each, but we do not need any.

Diane also wanted to bring up the nominating committee for next year's officers. She will include a request for volunteers in the upcoming Midden. As past president, Pam will lead the committee.

- **Volunteer Service (Sharon Tirpak)**

Sharon reported that she met with Tracy and Janet Diaz to review opportunity titles used by the chapter. They wanted to make sure the opportunities were listed correctly and remove those that were not being used. The updated list will be published on the chapter website.

Other Reports

- **Chapter Advisor**

Brandi reported that the Master Gardeners have a fall festival on October 12 that she would like our chapter to take part in. Recently she attended a 4-H banquet and was pleased to present some awards. She also spent a week in Savannah, GA at the Sea Grant national conference, which she reported was her favorite conference she has ever attended. At the conference, she made a brief presentation on the Beach Heroes program. She also enjoyed connecting with other Sea Grant agents and learning what they do. She was pleased to connect Laura Clark with The Galveston Daily News which resulted in two articles about the GBAC TMN Bat Project. She encouraged the chapter to let her know of any programs or activities that may be of interest to the community so that she can contact local media. She also reported that she plans to coordinate the Dolphin

Challenge competition in the coming year. Finally, Brandy was sad to report that her administrative assistant, Tammy, had resigned.

- **New Class Representatives (Denise Correll, Sydney Jeffcoat, Terri Bell)**

Denise reported that she sent an email to the New Class members encouraging participation in the GeTogether event. She also reached out individually to one member who later was able to certify. Sydney will send out the next email to members.

Old (unfinished) Business

- **Bat Monitoring**

Laura expressed appreciation to Brandi for connecting her with The Galveston Daily News that resulted in two articles. She also shared that she will be presenting information on the bat monitoring program to the Seabrook Intermediate School Nature Club in December. In February she will present to the La Marque Garden Club about the project. In addition, she is meeting with Clear Creek ISD staff to discuss plans for the research classes she is working on. Finally, she reported that several bat species have been “authenticated”, putting GBAC TMN on the research map!

- **After School Bird Club**

Lisa reported that binoculars, field guides and journal notebooks have been purchased for the clubs. For the 2024 – 2025 school year, we will have six volunteers leading after school bird clubs at four elementary schools.

New Business

Tracy asked if the chapter needs to find a new Hospitality Lead now that Penny has moved. It was decided that the duties have been fulfilled in other ways, so no designated person is needed at this time.

Tracy also brought up the Treasures of the Bay awards and inquired about the process. It was decided that information will be shared via The Midden in September and an email will go out to the chapter later in the fall.

Announcements

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, September 25 at 7:00 p.m.

Review action items

None

There being no further business, Pam made a motion to adjourn. There being no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle