

**GBAC BOARD OCTOBER MEETING**  
**Via Zoom**  
**October 30, 2024**

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

Gene Fisseler, President, notified members of the meeting date and agenda via email on October 26, 2024. All meeting participants are able to communicate with each other via Zoom.

Gene called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The quorum requirement was established by Lisa Hardcastle, Secretary.

Gene reviewed the agenda with the members present and there were no suggestions.

**Review and approval of minutes:**

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

**Officer Reports:**

**President (Gene Fisseler)**

Gene reported that approximately 20 chapter members attended the state meeting. Many chapter members were recognized for various awards and Gene was delighted that our chapter was represented so well. The chapter's Thunderbirders Youth Birding Project won third place in the Chapter Project competition.

Gene also mentioned that an email about Treasures of the Bay recognitions was sent to chapter members and nominations are due on November 4. Awardees will be recognized at the December meeting.

Finally, Gene shared that the chapter received a request to financially support an upcoming Envirothon event. After a brief discussion, Gene proposed that at this time we do not offer financial support, but members will likely want to support the event by volunteering their time. There was no opposition to this decision.

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

Mary shared that the December meeting planning is underway and an invitation will go out next week to chapter members. She will be preparing a video highlighting the chapter's activities this year. She also mentioned to the New Class Representatives that they will need to recruit volunteers to assist in setting up for dinner and for clean up after the event.

Mary also shared information of a new project, *Time to Restore*, which will need volunteers to track flowering and seed production timeframes for various native plants. The state coordinator, David Glenn, was a guest presenter at the state conference. She will send information to Sharon for approval as volunteer service hours. She is hoping to have David, who is also from Gulf Coast chapter speak at our February chapter meeting. She is also hoping to have Gary Seloff, a local nature photographer, speak at our April chapter meeting.

### **Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)**

Nothing to share at this time.

### **Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)**

Meade reported that there has not been much financial activity this month. Expenses have been approximately equal to income. She did propose making a "preview" budget for next year to discuss at the November meeting.

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

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

Gene reported for Pam. The nominating committee is submitting the following slate of candidates for the 2025 board officers, Mary Dobberstine – President, Jenny Dudley – Vice President, Meade LeBlanc – Treasurer, and Lisa Hardcastle – Secretary.

Gene also reported that the scholarship applications are due November 1, the selections will be made by November 15, and the winners will be invited to the December chapter meeting. Scholarship committee members are Pam, Abhi Prasad, Jane Downs, Julie Massey, and Lisa Hardcastle.

### **Director Reports**

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

Mike sent a summary of previous and upcoming AT events to board members prior to the meeting. He also highlighted *The Karankawa People of the Texas Gulf Coast* presentation on October 29. There were 111 participants and the feedback was positive. Mike also highlighted an upcoming in-person presentation, *Plant Identification from the Ground Up* at Carbide Park on November 14 at 2:00 p.m.

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

Mary was pleased to inform that Trish McIntosh and Chloe Dannenfelter have agreed to take over responsibilities for the chapter's Facebook page. In addition, she reported to the board that the position of Communication Director is vacant for the upcoming year.

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

Mohammed reported that at the state meeting he attended a session, "Belonging" that would be a great topic for a Community AT presentation. He also shared that the outreach booth for the ABNC event on November 9 and 10 is fully staffed.

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

Tracy provided board members with a summary report of membership data as of October 28, 2024. Members logged 1,965.5 volunteer service hours and 175 advanced training hours in October. Fifteen people from the 2024 training class have certified and 27 (of 31) have completed coursework. In addition, Lynn Wright has reached 5,000 volunteer service hours and Jenny Dudley has reached 500 hours.

She was pleased to report that there are 11 people interested in training. This number is in addition to the list that Gene keeps.

Tracy also mentioned that the recertification pin for 2025 will be the Greater Roadrunner, and the next state meeting will be in College Station.

Finally, Tracy shared that Brandi has a new administrative assistant, Ashley Rios.

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

Lisa reported on a successful outreach event at the Baytown Nature Fest, with approximately 200 visitors to our booth. Upcoming events include a Safety and Health event at NASA on October 31 and League City Ecofest on November 2.

### **Training Class (Diane Humes)**

Diane was not in attendance, but Gene reported that Julie Massey will be the new Training Class director.

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

Sharon reported that she has written an article about the Volunteer Management System for the upcoming Midden newsletter. She also continues to respond to chapter members' questions about volunteer service. Sharon has also worked with Gene to update our chapter website's information on volunteering with our partners. The information will include contact information for more information and examples of what volunteer activities are available.

## **Other Reports**

### **Chapter Advisor (Brandi Keller)**

Brandi was unable to attend.

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

Denise reported that an email was sent to classmates encouraging them to attend the social event (GiveBackTogether) in October. Also included in the email was encouragement to complete the service hours required for certification. Terri reported that one of the class members is confused about how to report hours through VMS. After a brief discussion about this it was recommended that she advise the member to ask his or her mentor or contact Tracy. Gene also suggested that an email be sent to all New Class members with a link to the Volunteer Management System training video and a list of suggestions for help.

## **Old (unfinished) Business**

### **Bat monitoring (Laura Clark)**

Laura enthusiastically updated the board about the bat monitoring project. All data has been uploaded to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department database. According to this data, there are six bat species in our area. She will be leading a bat project at a local high school over a two-day period soon. In addition, she will be meeting with the Seabrook Intermediate School Nature Club in December to present information on bats to the students. Furthermore, she will be mentoring a student there who is doing a science fair project on bats. In February she will give a presentation on bats to the La Marque Garden Club. Laura also shared that she has created ten science activities for outreach opportunities.

Laura then asked the board if money would be available to buy additional SD cards for the project. In addition, she would like to find volunteers to help in distributing the bat monitoring equipment next year. She was advised that it would be appropriate to compile and submit a proposal for project funding and a plan for staffing.

Finally, Laura asked that the board consider providing funding for four chapter members to attend a sea turtle conference in South Carolina with the Gulf Center for Sea Turtle Research. The board asked for more information about the expenses before making a decision.

## **New Business**

### **Camp Wild**

Sharon provided the board with an update on Camp Wild. Friends of Galveston Island State Park is partnering with Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE, a federal

summer break program) and Galveston Independent School District for the next two years. This partnership addresses the problem facing ACE and Camp Wild who find themselves “competing” for the same students during the summer. Merging the programs will result in moving Camp Wild from the first week of June to mid-July. The hours of the camp will also be reduced to three hours per day, but the camp will last for two four-day weeks. In addition, no meals will be served by Camp Wild. Volunteers from our chapter will still be needed to provide activities for the students.

### **Afterschool Nature Club**

Sharon also reported that she has approached the Rosenberg Library in Galveston to expand Eowyn Johnson’s nature club to students in Galveston. The library has agreed to provide a meeting space and materials for the club.

### **Announcements**

#### **Pollinators for Texas project**

Mary announced a new grant opportunity, funded by HEB, focused on supporting pollinator-related projects in Texas. The grant can be used to establish or enhance pollinator gardens, as well as to fund outreach initiatives such as programs, signage, and more. Mary is hoping that a group from our chapter will apply for a grant. Applications are due November 30, 2024.

#### **Action items**

Laura will provide more information about the request for reimbursement of expenses for chapter members attending the Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Meeting in Hilton Head, SC in February.

Laura will submit a request to include funding in the 2025 budget for the bat project.

#### **Next meeting**

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the next meeting will be November 20 at 7:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Mohammed made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle