

Galveston Bay Area Chapter TMN Board Meeting
July 29, 2025
Via Google Meet

Attendees: Mary Dobberstine, Jenny Dudley, Meade LeBlanc, Lisa Hardcastle, Robin Novak, Denise Correll, Sharon Tirpak, Chloe Stifler, and Mary Jean Salzer.

Members Absent: Gene Fisseler, Mohammed Nasrullah, Tracy Walpole, Julie Massey, Anthony Soliz Rocha, and Mary McElligott.

Also Present: Pam House

Mary Dobberstine, President, initially announced the meeting date and time during the May board meeting and reminded members of the meeting date with a proposed agenda via email on July 15, 2025. All meeting participants were able to communicate with each other via Google Meet.

Welcome and Call to Order

- Lisa Hardcastle established a quorum.
- The board meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Mary Dobberstine.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Sharon made a motion to pass the Consent Agenda Items; the motion was seconded by Robin. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

- **Fall Chapter Event**

Jenny and Sharon updated the board with plans for two upcoming fall chapter events, designed to provide an opportunity for chapter members to come together in a productive and fun way. The first event will be on September 27, from 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Galveston Island State Park. Activities will include bayside planting preparation and beachside outreach activities. The second event will be October 4, from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. at University of Houston Coastal Center. The event will include invasive plant removal, wetland habitat restoration and greenhouse work.

- **Dragonfly BINGO**

Mary reminded the board that the Dragonfly BINGO contest, designed to encourage members to try new volunteer activities, is underway. She also announced that anyone participating in the contest will receive a prize – a sticker highlighting our chapter name with a scenic nature design.

New Business

- **Hill Country Flooding and Disaster Recovery Plans**

After the hill country flooding in early July, Mary reached out to the Hill Country TMN chapter to let them know our chapter was thinking of them and offering any

assistance that they need. The chapter responded and shared that they activated their chapter's emergency calling tree. Mary shared that our framework for emergency check in was last reviewed in 2022 and should be reviewed again. She also clarified that this is a process to reach out and check in with members, not to respond to emergency needs. Mary also suggested we include contact with our business partners in the plan.

- **Records Retention and Storage Room Cleanup**

Meade shared concerns regarding a lack of space in the storage room at Carbide Park and a need to purge unnecessary records to free up space. She recommends the Records Retention Policy be reviewed prior to action being taken. She will send out the policy to the board and responsible individuals can begin planning the purge of unnecessary records. She also recommends that records be retained electronically to the greatest extent possible.

- **Scholarship Committee**

Pam House updated the board with information on the scholarship committee's efforts last year. Instead of acting during the spring of 2024, the committee was delayed and accepted and reviewed applications in the fall of 2024. This meant that winners did not use the funds in our 2024 budget year. Pam is recommending that the next scholarship committee begin the process in spring of 2026.

Discussion was also held regarding soliciting donations to fund the scholarships. It was recommended that information be shared via The Midden to encourage members to donate for upcoming scholarship awards.

- **Annual Meeting Scholarship**

Jenny brought up the topic of providing subsidies for members to attend the state's Annual Meeting. In the past, our board has also provided a limited number of scholarships for members to attend. Our current budget includes \$200 for Annual Meeting scholarship at the discretion of the President. After reviewing past procedures, Jenny is recommending that the chapter awards the financial assistance to the chapter president, other board members or chapter members who are presenting at the meeting. The state also provides each chapter with a \$100 discount for one registration.

Sharon made a motion to give the \$100 registration discount, provided by the state, to the chapter President. Robin seconded the motion; The motion was passed unanimously.

Officer Reports

- **President** (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared with board members that Brandi's administrative assistant, Ashley Rios, will be leaving August 1. After discussing this via email with board members, it was decided to give Ashley a \$50 gift card to REI Co-op.

She also reported there is no update to the Sea Grant funding that Brandi had shared with chapter members via email earlier this month.

Additionally, Mary encouraged all to consider attending the Annual Meeting in October. The meeting schedule includes 130 classroom sessions, over 26 field sessions, networking opportunities, and AT hours. It is rewarding, energizing, and fun! Registration may open as early as August 1, so be ready to sign up if planning to attend.

Mary also mentioned that guest speakers who request donations should be made directly by the Treasurer from the Chapter rather than having members make the donation and request reimbursement.

Finally, Mary reminded the board of our Chapter Meeting on August 6. The guest speaker, Ashley E. Jones, will be discussing Texas Archaeology. Additionally, Laura Clark will share information about her recent snake bites and recovery. Information will be sent to chapter members soon.

- **Vice President** (Jenny Dudley)
Jenny shared that the Financial Review is complete and awaiting Brandi's signature.
- **Treasurer** (Meade LeBlanc)
Meade will be sending information to project leaders reflecting the amount left in the budget for the remainder of the year.
- **Secretary** (Lisa Hardcastle)
Nothing to share at this time.
- **Immediate Past President** (Gene Fisseler)
Gene was not in attendance.

Director Reports

- **Advanced Training** (Robin Novak)
Robin recapped past training events: *Texas Water Specialist*, *Successful Programs and Projects for Green Muslims*, and *Navigating the Tides of Change: Updates from CCA*. She also shared that AT events for the remainder of the year have been set. She is working on determining if Jace Tunnell, Director of Community Engagement at Harte Research Institute and popular Facebook personality, may be able to present at a chapter meeting or AT event.
- **Community Engagement** (Mohammed Nasrullah)
Mohammed was unable to attend tonight but shared via email updates for the board. These include: committee meeting on July 2 where they discussed obstacles to engaging non-GBAC members in our activities, possible outreach with local libraries and speakers from organizations such as Black Birders; the July 1

community AT event, *Successful Programs and Projects for Green Muslims*; a Collaborative DEI Group meeting he attended on July 17; and an update on the pollinator garden at the Clear Lake Islamic Center (received a donation of five pallets of moss rocks and a donation of two park benches).

- **Outreach** (Denise Correll)
Denise is checking for outreach opportunities, but she is not aware of any in the near future.
- **Membership** (Tracy Walpole)
Tracy was unable to attend but shared various reports with board members. As of July 6, 2025, the chapter had 253 active members, 18 in training, 30 associates (dues paid, have not logged hours), and 20 people interested in the program. Members logged 2,622.75 volunteer service hours in June and 243.75 advanced training hours. Carolyn Miles has reached the 5000 hour milestone. Under VMS notes, she indicated that there is no date yet for the planned VMS upgrades, but they are anticipated between now and the annual meeting in October. Additionally, the state will be deleting volunteer profiles in the VMS database after 10 years of inactivity. This will affect 165 of our inactive and deceased profiles. The hours will be available for reporting purposes, but the profiles will be deleted. This will likely become an annual event.
- **Volunteer Service** (Sharon Tirpak)
Sharon has been working on volunteer service hours for members who serve on nonprofit boards. She has obtained data from Tracy and is verifying that each organization listed is related to board activity at a nonprofit organization. Once this is complete, the board will need to approve these organizations. After approval, a list of these boards will be available on our website.
- **Communications** (Chloe Stifler)
Chloe will be sending out to chapter members a call for information and photos to post to our social media platforms. Additionally, a slide will be included at our August chapter meeting with information about her communications efforts.
- **Training Class** (Julie Massey)
Julie was unable to attend.

Other Reports

- **Class Representatives** (Anthony Soliz Rocha, Mary Jean Slazer and Mary McElligott - alternate)
Mary Jean reported that many members of the new class volunteered at Camp Wild.
- **Chapter Advisor** (Brandi Keller)
Brandi could not attend the meeting tonight but has been in communication with Mary.

Closing

- **Review Action Items**

- Mary will review and update emergency tree procedures.
- The scholarship committee will delay committee action until spring 2026.
- Meade will lead a review of records retention policy and assign members to oversee purging and storing electronic records.
- Sharon and Tracy continue to review volunteer service hours as they pertain to nonprofit board service.

- **Next Board Meeting**

August 26, 6:30 p.m.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. by Mary Dobberstine.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle, Secretary