

Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
August 15, 2012

Present: Anne Cassidy, Daneshu Clarke, Steve Clyburn, Sally Garrett, Eileen Gotke, Reidun Hilleman, Tom Hynes, Phyllis Muska, Paula Smith, Priscilla Stanley, Floyd Trefny

Absent: Michelle Haggerty

Also Present: Dean Schmelling, Nina Wagner, Cynthia Burgin, Diane McMahon

President Priscilla Stanley called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm.

Proposed Chapter Website Enhancements: Dean Schmelling, Chapter Webmaster, presented the proposed enhancements for the website. Texas A&M is offering an upgrade to the operating system which runs the website. (WordPress upgrade) Some of the improved features are:

- Calendar would be easier to read
- Pictures of volunteer projects could be presented in slide show format
- More menu links
- Forms could be filled out on-line such as class applications

The intent of the upgrade is to preserve the existing information on the current website while adding features which would better "advertise" the work of the Hill Country Master Naturalists and make it visually more interesting.

The changes wouldn't happen all at once. The process will be to migrate the existing website to a new framework, then add other things. Texas AgriLife Extension Service, which co-sponsors the Texas Master Naturalists and provides website support, has already moved to this format.

Reidun Hilleman made a motion to start migrating over to the new system. Paula Smith seconded the motion. Discussion followed: Phyllis Muska commented that if Dean is willing to work with the new system, it makes sense to go ahead. Also, it is unclear whether reported volunteer hours would go into TPWD database from our website. Motion was voted upon and carried.

Acceptance of Minutes for July 2012 Meeting: Tom Hynes made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Reidun Hilleman. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Floyd Trefny presented the Treasurer's Report. During July there were enough checks coming in from new class tuition and silent auction items, that new deposit slips had to be ordered. The Holding Account is still static, but activity should pick up next month as people register for the annual meeting.

Reidun made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report; Paula seconded. Motion carried.

The July Budget Report presented by Floyd shows that income is ahead of what had been projected year-to-date. Year-to-date expenses are \$50 on the positive side compared to budget.

Chapter Laptop Computer Use Policy: The revised policy with a definition of "information resources" had been sent to all board members prior to the meeting. Paula Smith made a motion to approve the policy as rewritten. Phyllis Muska seconded the motion. Motion carried. The approved policy will be forward to Dean Schmelling for posting on the website.

Use of New Class Sound System to Enhance Laptop Speakers: Tom Hynes stated that the Chapter sound system can be used for the laptop with the appropriate cable hook up. Vern Crawford will acquire any cable needed. In the UGRA auditorium, a microphone will need to be used with the laptop presentation.

Donation to Muleshoe Farm and Ranch: Cynthia Burgin gave a brief overview of the Muleshoe Ranch project, emphasizing 2 items that are of primary need: 1) A 1000 gallon water catchment tank (\$500). Currently water has to be hauled in because the well has gone dry. 2) Purchase and have planted a large tree for the front yard of the farm house (\$425). Many of the trees on the property have died from oak wilt. A donation from the Hill Country Chapter for these items would come from a portion of the money raised at the chapter picnic silent auction.

Paula Smith made a motion to assign a \$925 from the silent auction proceeds as a donation to these Muleshoe Farm and Ranch projects. Reidun revised the motion to create a line item in the budget for income from the Picnic Silent Auction (\$1600), and make a donation to Muleshoe Farm and Ranch from this line item. Sally Garrett seconded the revised motion. Motion carried. Floyd will make the necessary adjustments to the budget.

The goal of the Muleshoe Farm and Ranch project is to provide ranching and farming education in the future. It is also an opportunity for our chapter to partner with this project as outreach.

Cynthia Burgin noted that the Muleshoe Farm and Ranch Project will be submitted to the state competition at the Annual Meeting.

Chapter Sponsorship at State Annual Meeting: Michelle Haggerty is asking for sponsorships from the Texas Master Naturalist Chapters for the annual meeting. Reidun Hilleman made a motion for our chapter to provide a sponsorship at the \$250 level. Daneshu Clarke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mentor Attendance at New Classes and Volunteer Time Reporting: Floyd began this discussion by stating how important it is to the long-term viability of the Hill Country Chapter to have quality volunteers. He believes that this is a result of having a high quality mentor and that the role of mentor is especially important as to the new trainee's participation in the Chapter.

Floyd had some concerns with the mentor guidelines provided at the recent mentor meeting. In particular he was not in favor of restricting the number of volunteer hours that a mentor could record for attending training classes. Some discussion followed pertaining to actual time spent with trainees during class time, capacity of the classroom, and unnecessary conversation at the back of the room while the speaker was talking. Because of limitations on the number of people the classroom will hold, Daneshu requested that mentors let her know if they will be attending a class.

Paula made a motion to table this topic until next board meeting. Reidun seconded and motion carried.

Mentor Program Discussion: Priscilla called everyone's attention to the suggestions by Ward Miller of ways to engage each mentee aside from attending the training classes.

Board Meeting Conflicts: Priscilla stated that there were potentially conflicts with 2 board meetings and the new class sessions in which Priscilla will be participating. The conflict on September 19 has been resolved and the board meeting will begin at the scheduled time of 1:30 PM. On October 17 the board meeting will begin **one half hour later at 2:00 PM.**

Officers and Directors Reports

Sally Garrett: All arrangements have been made for refreshments for the New Class reception on Monday, August 20.

Reidun Hilleman: The volunteer projects table has been updated on the website. The seldom used projects have been placed on the back page.

Paula Smith: Lenore Langsdorf, our new newsletter editor, has been working on the August newsletter. Paula will follow up with her.

Tom Hynes: Tom announced that the speaker at the October Chapter Meeting will be Dr. Keairns speaking on "Oil and Gas Drilling and the Technique of Hydraulic Fracturing".

Eileen Gotke: Presently there are 29 new class members. Six members earned awards in July. These will be presented at the September chapter meeting due the New Class Reception in August.

Phyllis Muska: Phyllis announced that it is time to select a nominating committee for officers and directors for the 2013 board. She will be contacting directors to find out who wants to remain on the board. Officers will be nominated and voted upon at the November meeting. Director possibilities will be identified and recommended to the incoming president.

Daneshu Clarke: Daneshu thanked everyone for helping get the New Class Committee to this point. Classes start on August 22!

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

The next meeting will be **Wednesday, September 19 at 1:30 PM at RNC.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Cassidy
Secretary