

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
July 18, 2007**

REVIEW OF JUNE ACTION ITEM STATUS: TWO ITEMS PENDING

Action item A. Check on the TPWD wildscape at the Kerrville office and improve its appearance.
- Priscilla Stanley -

Completed. On June 21, Priscilla and Jim spent an hour at the wildscape weeding, cutting boxelders etc.

Action item B. Publicize this project (care of the TPWD wildscape across from Albertsons) to see if other members might want to help. – Priscilla -

Pending This project does not have a regular workday, which makes it difficult to publicize. Work is done as the Stanleys have time available.

Action Item C: Check into how to list our chapter meetings in the Kerrville Daily Times Club & Organization Meeting Calendar – **Donna Snow Robinson or Sharon Corley - Pending**

JULY 18, 2007 Board Meeting

Present:

Dan Behringer, Cathy Downs, Betty Gardner, John Huecksteadt, Marilyn Murrmann, Phyllis Muska, Donna Robinson, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley, Jerri Workman

Absent: Bill Perkison

The July meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by President Phyllis Muska.

1. Class of 2007 Applications Update: Membership Director John Huecksteadt reported that he had 22 completed applications in hand, expected 2 more, and had just sent out 4 more applications to prospective members. John reported that all the candidates understood this is a volunteer program and expressed an interest in nature and wanting to learn more about its many facets.

2. Other Class Issues or Concerns: Training Director Cathy Downs reported that she has received the final confirmation packets, including biographical information, audio-visual needs etc. from all but 4 of the speakers. The binders for the State TMN Curriculum and our Hill Country Reference Manual have been purchased.

Cathy reminded the Board that the Class Planning Committee will be introducing our Class of 2007 to each other and to our members at the orientation class that will take place on August 27 at our August Chapter meeting, rather than having each mentor introduce his or her trainee. The Committee will need information on these trainees. Cathy also requested recommendations on members who might be interested in being mentors. Cathy Downs and John Huecksteadt will be holding a training session for mentors to explain their roles in making our trainees feel welcome in our chapter.

Action item A. Provide information on our new trainees for the mentoring program and for the article in our August chapter newsletter that introduces the trainees to each other and the membership – **John Huecksteadt - Completed:** John scanned all the applications and e-mailed them to all Board members.

Action item B. Write the welcome article for the Class of 2007 for our August newsletter – **Donna Robinson**

3. Refreshments for Orientation for the Class of 2007 at our August Chapter Meeting and for the First Training Class: Cathy indicated that the Class Planning Committee had planned to provide

refreshments for both the Orientation meeting on August 27 and the first training class on August 29. The trainees will then sign-up to provide refreshments for the remainder of the classes.

4. Treasurer's Report: Marilyn Murrmann reported we have a new balance of \$5152.81 in our bank account. A copy of the Treasurer's Report is appended to the hard copy of the Minutes. Expenditures were \$ 23.94 for dessert for our Member Picnic in June and \$51.95 for dinner for our May speaker and for appreciation gifts for 2 instructors and the owner of the private land for our Spring Creek Spring Field Trip and Advanced Training in Boerne in May.

5. Database Manager: John Huecksteadt reported that Nyta Hensley, our Chapter Database Manager, will resign at the end of 2007 after serving for 2 years, but will stay on to provide the data reports needed for our 2007 Chapter Annual Report to the State TMN Office due in January 2008. Nyta spends an average of 4 hours each month entering data, running reports and helping members report their data correctly. John indicated that the Data Manager position requires good Access skills.

Nyta wanted to remind our members to please sort their volunteer hours by project and then report the total hours for each project for each month. John has made a new improved hours-reporting sheet for both volunteer and AT hours that is now available on our chapter website at www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org.

6. Update the Chapter Volunteer Project List: Volunteer Project Director Jerri Workman reported that she has been updating the project list. She suggested putting a one paragraph description of our major projects on our website to better explain the volunteer project list that is already on the website.

Our July newsletter began highlighting Volunteer Projects by describing service opportunities at Riverside Nature Center and the Kerrville Schreiner Park. Newsletter editor Donna Robinson sent an e-mail to the coordinators of our volunteer projects soliciting additional project descriptions for the newsletter, indicating that our members had expressed interest in learning about more of our projects.

Some volunteer projects have been closed for various reasons over the past 4 years, and other projects have coordinators who are no longer very active in chapter activities. The Board suggested that Jerri should list her name as Coordinator in these cases. Then if someone became interested in one of these projects, the member would contact Jerri and an effort could be made to find a new local Project Coordinator.

Action item C. Communications Director Donna Robinson volunteered to edit volunteer project descriptions for use on our website. Please submit projects to her by the end of August. - **Donna Robinson**

Action item D. Continue updating the Chapter volunteer Projects list. When completed, send to our webmaster, Kim Whitaker, to post on our chapter website in the public area, since we want the public to know that we are a service organization, and have many volunteer opportunities. **Jerri Workman**

7. 2007 Friend of the Chapter Award: Betty Gardner moved to nominate Bill Ward, who has taught our geology training classes and field trips, as well as leading chapter Advanced Training field trips to Canyon Lake Gorge and Spring Creek Spring. In addition to being a retired Geology Professor, he has substantial native plant expertise as well. Priscilla Stanley seconded the motion, and the motion passed. The award is a Copper Dragonfly and a recognition gift. The award will be presented at our December Holiday Party in Fredericksburg.

8. Accessible Trail Article for Our Newsletter and PR: John Huecksteadt reported on the progress of our volunteer project for building an accessible trail for people with disabilities at the Fredericksburg Nature Center. This need became apparent during our Class Project in 2005 when one of our members had very limited access to the facility. This project is sponsored by the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center.

John will provide information for our August newsletter, but there will be no press releases at this time. There will be press coverage at the public opening of the trail in September.

Action item E. Provide information to Donna Robinson on the building of the accessible trail for our September newsletter – **John Huecksteadt**

9. AT for the Class of 2007 – Special Request: Past-president and Class Planning Committee member Jim Stanley requested a one-time exception to our chapter policy of not allowing our trainees to count volunteer hours or Advanced Training (AT) until October 1st (about 5 weeks into their 13 week training). The rationale for this rule is that we prefer to emphasize the learning aspects of TMN to our trainees initially before going into all the rules about what counts and doesn't count, how to report hours etc. The current request is based on our desire to hold 3 optional Fall Plant ID classes (Native Grasses, Forbs, and Trees) as AT for our trainees and members as usual. These classes are conveniently held immediately after the training classes. This year there are several logistical issues in October involving our Down By the Riverside Nature Festival and Native Plant Sale preparations, a class being held in Fredericksburg instead of the Texas Lions Camp and instructor availability. The Board agreed to allow our 2007 trainees to begin counting AT hours for a class tentatively scheduled on September 26.

10. Down By the Riverside (DBTR) Nature Festival and Native Plant Sale on October 13th: We continue preparations for this annual educational event that our chapter co-sponsors with our partner, Riverside Nature Center. This event is also our chapter's annual fundraiser, and it provides funding for our programs and operating expenses. Jim and Priscilla Stanley have been representing TMN on the DBTR Planning Committee. Donna Robinson, Communications Director and Sharon Corley, our External Communications Chair, have agreed to provide assistance with the event promotion and publicity. TMN volunteers are currently signing up to help with the event.

11. Nominating Committee Schedule: President Phyllis Muska suggested advancing the schedule by one month so that the new Board members would have more time to observe and learn the duties of their predecessors. Thus, instead of having the officers elected in November, they would be elected at our October chapter meeting. Therefore, the Nominating Committee's proposed slate of candidates would need to be in the September newsletter and announced at the September meeting. The Board agreed unanimously.

12. Certificates of Deposit: Secretary Priscilla Stanley noted that the Master Gardeners, a sister organization to TMN, put some of their funds into a CD to earn interest. Our chapter, like most local non-profit agencies, keeps our funds in a free, but non-interest-bearing, checking account. Phyllis asked Treasurer Marilyn Murrmann to obtain information on the potential advantages and disadvantages of having an interest-bearing checking account.

Action item F: Obtain information on the potential advantages and disadvantages of our chapter having an interest-bearing checking account. – **Marilyn Murrmann**

13. Update on the Certification of Members of Our Class of 2006: Membership Director John Huecksteadt reported that 4 more members of the Class of 2006 would receive their certification at the July chapter meeting. Class of 2006 members have 15 months (from October 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007) to certify to receive a refund of their \$50 certification deposit. To date, 14 of the 26 class member have certified.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, August 22 at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla B. Stanley

Priscilla B. Stanley
Chapter Secretary

7/29/07

