

Lost Pines Master Naturalist Board Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2016

In attendance: Carol Brown, Julia Akin, Larry Gfeller, Frank May, Cat May, Kathryn Hedges, Marcia Karr, Michal Hubbard, Kelly Alecci, Marsha Elrod, Audrey Ambrose, Carroll Moore, Beth Freedman Moore, Paula Weisskopf, Joni Groom, Christa Chagra, Jim Estes, Joan Estes, and Bruce Siebert (via phone)

Meeting called to order by President Julia Akin at 5:30pm.

I. New Business:

A. Lost Pines Nature Trails (LPNT) – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bastrop County - Carol Brown

The Chapter became involved with the property in 2006 or 2007. A number of early Lost Pines master naturalists were involved in a number of projects, but involvement was not sustainable due to lack of resources so worked basically stopped until Frank and Cat got involved.

Friends of the LPNT's, a partnership of community organizations including our chapter, has been formed in order to create sustainable management of the property. Bastrop County will be taking over management of the property as of October, 2016. Because of this, the county is asking for an MOU in order to clarify our on going involvement at the site. The county is requiring the MOU from us prior to taking control of the park.

Carol has recommended that the board create a 3 person liaison team in order to communicate with the county and write the MOU. Carol, Larry and Julia have volunteered to be on the liaison committee. Frank motioned that the chapter proceed with the MOU and accept that 3-person committee. The motion was seconded by Cat. All in favor, zero opposed.

B. Board Retreat – Theme “Chapter Resources: People, Places & Things” - Marcia Karr

The 2016 Board Retreat will take place on Friday Sept 30 and the morning of Saturday October 1st, at the Lighthouse Inn at Aransas Bay.

The goal will be to build on the chapter goals set at last year's retreat by assessing all of our resources and focusing on how we can best use everything available to us in order to continue working towards those goals.

C. Keep Bastrop County Beautiful (KBCB)/2016 Bastrop River Rally – Joni Groom

The River Rally is going to be held on Sunday, Sept 25. The event will take place in one location – Fisherman's Park in Bastrop.

KBCB would like us to provide booths, exhibits, etc. for the Kid's Corner, and would like for the Jr. Master Naturalist program to have a booth specifically. The booths in the

kids' area are free, but there will also be booths that can be paid for as part of KBCB's fundraiser: \$100 (outdoor), \$150 (covered), and \$200 (indoor).

D. Bastrop Chamber of Commerce membership – Julia Akin

Julia presented the issue of joining the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce. It's \$100/year, plus a one time \$25 admin fee. Michal is already on the Chamber board and can act as our Chapter liaison if we decide to join.

Christa included the Chamber membership fees for Bastrop, as well as Smithville, Lockhart, and Elgin, in her 2016 Outreach budget. Frank made a motion to join the Chambers, Michal seconded. All in favor, zero opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Finance – Carroll Moore

Carroll distributed the most current finance report. Audrey mentioned that she spent \$300 on speaker gifts. Julia commented that we need to follow up on last year's audit recommendations.

B. Membership – Audrey Ambrose

Audrey reported that we currently have 68 members in good standing. She is going to look into whether or not volunteer hours have dropped since last year due to the new VMS system. She's also working on changing the Master Naturalist of the Year award application process.

Audrey asked for check approval for exiting board member gifts (embroidered director's chairs) in the amount of \$500. Michal motioned to approve, and Frank seconded, however, Larry, Marsha, Bruce and Beth were opposed. The motion did not pass. Michal modified the motion to reimburse Audrey for what she's spent and rather than use the chairs for the exiting board members, use them as auction items and as the Master Naturalist of the Year award instead. Kelly seconded this motion. All in favor, zero opposed. Exiting board member gifts will be re-considered.

C. Junior Master Naturalist (JMN) wrap up – Kelly Alecci

The JMN pilot program was a smashing success. The committee is starting to plan the full year program, which will begin in the Fall of 2016. The program will continue with the every other Thursday schedule. The full year program will include volunteer service projects, in addition to field trips and regular meetings.

The committee is still trying to determine the fee structure for the full year program.

D. Basic Training Program wrap up – Michal Hubbard

The program graduated 16 new members. Three of those graduated certified – Alan, James, and MariLee. The program received generally good reviews from the graduates.

Michal stated the need to make more effort to link the trainees up to volunteer and Advanced Training opportunities.

We need two or three more people on the Training committee. We also need to make it clear to the mentors that they get volunteer hours for any help given outside of training.

III. Old Business:

A. Decision making process for new projects – Kathryn Hedges

The resource committee has created a form, based on our other forms, for people to fill out in order to request chapter involvement and resources.

Kathryn has suggested that these forms go to the Vice President for review, who would then either immediately approve them or would forward them to the appropriate committee heads for approval. Michal motioned to accept Kathryn's proposal as developed in order to start trying it out, Paula seconded. All in favor, zero opposed.

B. 2015 Strategic Plan progress – Larry Gfeller

The final meeting for the 2015 Strategic Goals is on August 4th. This meeting's purpose is to close out the strategies established at last year's board retreat. Each goal committee head will report on each of their strategies and the progress they made on those strategies.

C. Central Texas Nature Fest – Christa Chagra

Christa said that given the geographic proximity of the different area chapters, it would be challenging to help with anything other than the day of activities.

If we are interested in trying to put on our own version of Nature Fest, we might want to see about partnering with an already established event, such as the River Rally event rather than creating something from scratch. It was suggested that we start with a smaller version of something in order to test how it might work.

Bruce suggested that despite what we chose to do ourselves, we should still participate in Goodwater's event.

D. TMN license plate – Julia Akin and Paula Weisskopf

We turned in our survey results. 70% of the chapter responded, with 65% in favor of buying a license plate; however, we were one of the only chapters to respond. This issue will be re-addressed at the annual meeting in October.

E. Biocensus progress – Paula Weisskopf

Paula received a request from a Lee county resident for a bio-census. She contacted

the Lee county chapter since the request came from one of their residents and they said that they don't have the capability to perform something like that, but they would like to join us if we decide to do it.

Marsha discussed performing bio-censuses on private property. She thinks at least three people should be involved, and that there should be some kind of liability release.

F. Michal reminded everyone of the Bluebonnet Electric Fire Mitigation Field Day on Sept. 15th.

IV. Approve Board Meeting Minutes from May 5, 2016 meeting

Kathryn and Kelly would like a sentence about the school stricken. Larry motioned to accept the minutes as amended, Beth seconded. All in favor, zero opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22pm.

Next Board Meeting: September 1, 2016, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, 5:30pm

Respectfully submitted on August 28th, 2016:

Marcia A Karr, Secretary
Texas Master Naturalist, Lost Pines Chapter