

## El Camino Real Texas Master Naturalist Board Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2022, 11:30 am

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church meeting room

### Attendance:

Linda Jo Conn, Mike Conner, Carolyn Henderson, Catherine Johnson, Sue Ann Kendall, Donna Lewis, Liz Lewis, Lisa Milewski, Pamela Neeley, Don Travis

Time 11:30 until 1:30

### Agenda

- I. Open the meeting: 11:40 am
  
- II. Items to be discussed and voted on
  - A. Storage – let's buy a lockable cabinet for electronic equipment  
Question: what about when we move to the county? The cabinet will be movable. It's for Don Travis's electronic equipment.  
\$269 free shipping. Sue Ann moved to buy it. Liz seconded, and the motion passed.
  - B. Communications director – establish committee to take over the job(S) from Don Travis (except for what he wants to continue).  
What can Don still do? – noted below.
    - VMS descriptions should be done by people involved. Lisa will do it, since she is in the system anyway and it doesn't happen often.
    - Webmaster and managing content on Google Drive: Suggest Michelle Lopez – she will be contacted. Sue Ann is backup.
    - Managing Gmail list of contacts. Mike volunteers.
    - Presentation equipment setup. Liz is backup. Discuss with Gene Rek, Alan Rudd, Eric Neubauer, or Linda Burgess.
    - VMS opportunities, Lisa volunteers.
    - Zoom host, Sue Ann, Don as backup.
    - Don will continue temporarily as "Communications Director" until someone on the Communications Committee is elected and assumes that lead coordination role, and becomes "owner" of the published ElCaminoRealMasterNaturalist@gmail.com Google account with its various features and uses, and the coordination of the ongoing Communications Infrastructure plans and details (as noted on Library web page under COH section), and any of the left over duties that are not yet re-assigned. A work in progress.
    - Blog: Sue Ann, anyone else as backup.
    - Facebook page: Sue Ann, with Carolyn as backup.
  - C. Establish committee to plan graduation party on **April 28** although the date is subject to change depending on whether the students complete their hours in time.

- Kathy Lester is convinced they will make it. Lisa is concerned that they may not make it, so party date is tentative.
  - Liz, Catherine, Pamela, and Kathy Lester are the committee for planning the party.
- D. May Day picnic – decide whether we want to have a table and discussion items there. It's free. It's on April 30 on the Cameron Downtown Square.
- 10-6 on that day. Geared toward children. Music, games, food.
  - Vendors are free, so we could have exhibits of a table or two. Purple martins, spiders, plants from wildscape.
  - Pamela has two tables. Donna has the tablecloth. We may need another table or longer tables
  - Sue Ann moved that we do it, Donna Lewis seconded it. Motion passed unanimously.
- E. Make a donation to the church quarterly
- Sue Ann suggested something like \$100 per quarter. Others agreed. Liz pointed out it is optional, but they will be grateful.
  - Pamela moved, Linda Jo seconded, passed unanimously
- F. Establish mailing address other than AgriLife Extension office
- AgriLife says we can have a PO box, but if we do that, no one can send items by FedEx, as there would be no one to receive it. Carolyn recommends that we keep it at the AgriLife office. No vote, but there was consensus.
  - They are moving, but we will change the address when it happens.
  - Donna had postcards we used to give out a few years ago and wanted to know if we should make more of them. Don's suggestion is that the brochures be used instead, to which Mike concurred. There was consensus on using brochures.
- G. Recording training and volunteer hours for certain ongoing projects
- 15 minutes a day, 7 hours a month is what Mary Pearl recommends as the max, per a phone call with Carolyn.
  - This applies to CoCoRAS. Also, TMN staff are unhappy with people posting so many iNaturalist hours, but that's too bad, because people can still give them, provided they follow the guidelines about not observing on personal property.
  - Carolyn will send out an announcement of the guideline, with the expectation that members will comply.
  - Don notes: "I commented that our VMS Opportunities Document (on Web) and all online VMS Opp descriptions have notes in red for areas where either personal or public is supported, or just public, based on past confusions. And a link to a state document with more clarifications. (But worth discussing in a meeting, and in Carolyn's guidelines announcement including item a)"
  - Mike Conner made a statement. (Notes taken during his talk; corrections welcome) He thinks what he has to say is important. He has had trouble with all the rules from the very beginning. He used to be the person who approved the hours in the Brazos Valley TMN chapter. He wrote up instructions and pre-approved the activities. The problem is that the guidelines are not rational. The statement about anything on your private property is not allowed, other than a lot of exceptions. He says his

bluebird nests don't benefit him; they benefit bluebirds. He understands you can't get two things out of one activity. But a lot of the stuff seems arbitrary. Nest box monitoring takes a lot of time. He wishes we could be a little more rational, and that with 15 minutes of education at a meeting, people should be able to tell what is okay to do and what is not. The folks in charge of the Master Naturalist program decide what they think is fair, with no justification. He says this seems to be true of iNaturalist and other things. There is no simple or easy answer to it. It's easy to tell what is just benefiting you and what is for scientific research. The bylaws say we in our chapter get to interpret the guidelines and approve activities using our best judgment, not Minnie Pearl.

- Linda Jo said that one of the main problems is that the people in charge do not use the platforms or use them correctly, so they do not know what using them may entail.
- Carolyn proposes a meeting agenda item to explain what all the opportunities on VMS constitute. There was discussion, but consensus was to do this during a chapter meeting with not many other agenda items. Lisa thinks this may take longer than a meeting time.

- III. Log Cabin Garden in Lexington funding request from Sheri Sweet (reported by Sue Ann, whom she texted with her request). She requested \$200 for maintenance of the monarch waystation. One problem is that we are not funding projects for members. We use donations. Catherine has donated plants there once. We will donate more plants to them, says Catherine, who will contact Sheri on this.  
Update: Sheri said thank you for the offer of plants, but maintains that she also wants mulch, fertilizer, and compost. Sue Ann responded that perhaps Catherine and the Reks can work that out with chicken mulch donations. Sue Ann emailed Catherine and Carolyn with this information.  
Catherine reports that she will take care of all the needs of Sheri.
- IV. Former garden in Milano that has not been maintained: Alan Rudd can move the marker with his equipment. Debbie Harris will hold on to it in case we ever need it again. There were also other offers. What about the Catherine Bedrich memorial marker? Linda Jo suggests putting it on her grave. This gained consensus.
- V. Other topics:
- a. Carolyn: There is an idea to replace the girdled trees with eastern red buds in the future.
  - b. Lisa: Remember that people can hear you when you talk on Zoom.
  - c. Lisa: People who have not paid dues were removed from the list of active members, as the deadline was March 31. There are 35 active members paid and reporting hours.
  - d. Lisa: Make sure you have anti-virus software on your computer, since we work with sensitive private information.
  - e. Lisa (**I think**): If you have an activity that you send to Janice for the weekly email, please put what it counts as for VMS in the message you send her.
  - f. Donna: Micah Holcombe asked her whether we would donate a basket to the Lion's Club silent auction. Liz will make it. Unanimously voted to get the basket done and reimburse Liz.

- VI. Group hug to relieve the stress of discussing recording hours. Successful.
- VII. Close the meeting 1:30 pm  
Hours: VT 2, Administration Work, Board Meeting