

Galveston Bay Area Master Naturalists

Board Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2019

Texas AgriLife at Carbide Park

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. George welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded us of the safety information about the building and exit routes. He said that he would forego a protracted safety information session in order to move forward with a very full agenda.

The board members present were George Kyame, Cindy Liening, Susette Mahaffey, Lynn Wright, Patty Trimingham, Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Julie Massey, Jo Monday, Ellen Gerloff, Tiffany Cummings and Cindy Saxenian. This represents 79% of the board who were in attendance. Janet Mason, Monica Duran and Luxie Mohammed were absent.

Old Business:

1. The minutes had no needed corrections. Patty made a motion to accept the minutes with Maureen seconding the motion. The minutes passed.
2. Chris Anastas has approached the board with a request that next year before the conference, the chapter make arrangements to have a van to take people to the conference. This needs to be done and announced well before registration opens. She thinks this would allow more members to attend. She would also like an email to be sent through the constant contact list to offer rides to chapter meetings for those who might need a ride.
3. Several board members offered information about the 2019 Master Naturalist conference in Rockwall. Patty said that the weather was perfect, and the sessions that she attended were very good. She said that there some small issues that could be corrected to make the field trips better. George said that he was happy with our award but is sorry that the Midden did not receive an award. Ellen said that the newsletter that won was bound like a fancy magazine. Ellen said that the app for the conference was helpful and required you to sign a code of ethics for the conference. There is a code of ethics for Master Naturalists, and we need to be sure to share it with new class members and perhaps the entire chapter. Ellen did comment that scheduling was a problem. The sessions were scheduled back to back with no time to move to the next session or take a break. Susette shared these notes from the President's breakfast.
 - They announced that the next conference would be at the Omni West Side in Houston next October.
 - They asked us to tighten up the VMS categories so that they were not so general. The volunteer committee has been working on that.
 - They asked each chapter to think about how we welcome people and make them feel comfortable and part of the chapter. They said that we needed to be proactive and have a conversation among board members about being welcoming and inclusive. They also said that we should not ignore bad behavior. Evidently one chapter had ignored the bad behavior of a member, and the bad behaviors caused other members

- to leave the chapter. They asked us to take time to discuss this and then share the ideas from the board meeting with Mary Pearl.
- They said that the MN license plate was still in the process of being made available. The process usually takes 3 ½ years, and we are just in year 2.
 - They raised over \$7,000.00 for the endowment which is nearly at \$50,000.00. We are guaranteed a return of at least 4% each year which is used statewide for special projects. To date all money is being reinvested, and the state program is looking to have an ambassador in each chapter to support the fund-raising effort.
 - 75% of the MN budget comes from federal funds, and the volunteer service that we do is our ‘in kind’ contribution to that grant of funds. The state level employees would like for all the VMS hours entered for this year no later than February 14, 2020 so that they can pull the data for reports. They also want the information for officer elections in the system as soon as possible, no later than mid-January.
 - Mary Pearl will be sending out a request for information about the spring training classes.
 - MN is transitioning at the state level to a new website in the new year, but the information will transfer easily into the new template.
 - Michelle Haggerty requested that we send a chapter t-shirt to them to include in a TMN quilt.
4. As a follow up for the scholarship, George has chosen 6 people who were former educators or have experience in that area to serve on the Ad Hoc committee for awarding the scholarship for higher education. He is writing rules for the committee to follow.
 5. At the December board meeting, we usually have lunch out. We need a place that has a quiet room where we can meet, eat and go over the agenda. George will check to find a place, and we will plan to meet at 11:00 on December 3rd.

New Business:

1. The discussion then turned to the 2020 budget. First Lynn went through the particulars of this month’s budget report. She went through each of the monthly reports and highlighted the points of interest. Lynn made a motion to put the \$800.00 that the Great Monofilament Adventure won at the conference for being the first-place project of the year in the monofilament budget. Jo seconded the motion, and the motion passed. Once the discussion was complete on the October treasurer’s report, Maureen made the motion to accept the report with Susette seconding the motion. The motion passed. There was a good bit of discussion about the items in the 2020 budget. In order to have a zero budget, some areas need to be cut. We shared ideas and places that could be cut. Lynn said that she would go home and implement the suggestions. We will vote on the 2020 budget in December. Jo did compliment Lynn on the work she had done on the budget, and the group concurred with that compliment. Lynn has done an outstanding job with planning the budget for the chapter!
2. The slate of officers for 2020 will be ready to be published by November 19. This is well within the guidelines of the bylaws.

3. The bylaws require that the new class director be appointed and voted on by the board. George wants Janet Mason to fill this position. George made the motion to appoint Janet with Jo seconding the motion. The motion passed.
4. Maureen did a recap of the P3 conference for the group. She wanted to recognize Stennie Meadours for the outstanding job she did in planning for the conference. Joanna also did an outstanding job in making name tags and helping with the organization of the conference. Our chapter was recognized by the keynote speaker Ken McQueen for winning the chapter project at the TMN conference. The conference had a wealth of speakers who covered a variety of areas. The attendance was around 140 people. Rick Becker spoke about our monofilament project, and Maureen Nolan-Wilde and Susette Mahaffey spoke about our Beach Hero program. Our chapter also had 3 posters available for the participants to view.
5. Since the 2020 TMN conference will be in Houston next year, our chapter will be one of 7 area chapters who will be expected to help in the mechanics of the conference. As we know more, we will share with the board and chapter.

Board Reports:

1. **President:** George shared that we don't have a policy in the chapter about volunteer service and mandatory attendance, but he wants people who volunteer for a particular task and can't attend to try to find a replacement. This can cause problems when someone is counting on you and you don't attend. George also asks that when people schedule an activity, please check the calendar to be sure that it doesn't conflict with other big opportunities. Conflicts make it hard to recruit enough workers for an activity.
2. **Vice President:** Cindy had nothing to report, but she has a list of possible speakers for next year. She will share that list with the incoming 2020 vice president.
3. **Secretary:** Susette said that she had covered her information earlier in the meeting.
4. **Treasurer:** Lynn had already given her report for the meeting.
5. **Membership:** Patty received the recertification pins at the conference. She will be giving those out at the December chapter meeting. We have 141 members who have recertified. There are 17 members of the new class who have completed their initial certification and 8 who have recertified. During the audit it was noted that 2 members had entered information before the volunteer event and one person doesn't enter a description of the volunteer service. Patty suggested that we simplify prairie and wetland restoration and use one category with multiple venues listed in the description. We congratulated Jo on reaching 4,000 hours of volunteer service.
6. **Volunteer Service Director:** Jo had nothing to report.
7. **Advanced Training Director:** Ellen said that we had one event left. This year GBAC has sponsored 8 training sessions which offered 20.5 hours of advanced training. For next year diurnal raptors is already scheduled. The last training is:
 - ✓ Why Ecology Matters-Part 4 by Cindy Howard. Demographic Techniques: how populations are determined. Saturday November 16. 9:00 – noon. Extension Office. 3 AT hours. Signup starts at October chapter meeting.
8. **New Class:** Tiffany and Cindy talked about the centerpieces their class are preparing for the December meeting. They are making progress on them.

9. Sponsor: Julie said that her new Sea Grant boss Cindy Lyle congratulated our chapter for our work that was on display at the P3 conference. Julie is going to invite her to attend our December chapter meeting. Julie will be sending out information for nominations for Treasure of the Bay awards to be given at the December meeting. Nominations are due by November 25th. Dolphin Challenge will be February 1st. Julie wants to pull together a small team to help with the project. She said that the \$9,000.00 that she will be given to put on the event will be deposited to Sea Grant rather than the chapter this year for safety reasons. Lastly, at the P3 conference, the Galveston Bay Area Texas Master Naturalists have been approached to participate in a NOAA Marine Debris Grant Proposal with the Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), Houston Area Research Council (HARC) and Black Cat Consulting (Amanda Hackney). They would want us to do transect surveys of the debris and to conduct cleanups to compare the effectiveness of mechanical removal. In addition, we are being asked to conduct surveys of the public and develop education programs to reduce marine debris. They asked what funds we could use to help them with the project. She will work with a few members to tell them what we would like to have out of the grant.

Patty asked about the plaques and if they needed to be taken to the December chapter meeting. We decided to leave them at Carbide and get them hung along the hallway.

Lynn made the motion to adjourn at 3:34. George seconded the motion and asked everyone to stand up to vote. The motion passed, and adjourned.