

GBAC – TMN Board Meeting Minutes  
March 30, 2021  
Zoom Board Meeting

Attendees:

Pam House, Susette Mahaffey, Mike Petitt, Meade LeBlanc, Cindy Lienen, Patty Trimmingham, Jo Monday, Ellen Gerloff, Janet Mason, Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Walter Meyer, Kristie Huffman, Leann Criswell (alternate), and Sponsor Julie Massey

Guests:

None

This represents 100% of the voting members present.

The meeting was called to order by President Pam House at 1:02. She welcomed the board to the Zoom meeting.

Susette was presented with a photo book in appreciation of her service as President of the chapter.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The March minutes that had been emailed to the board members were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Walter and seconded by Patty to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Pam discussed the Conflict-of-Interest form, and the related policy from the by-laws. The scholarship committee and the volunteer service committee members will also be asked to sign, because they are delegated board authority.

Mike gave an update on the disaster plan. Mike will present the plan at the June chapter meeting and send a reminder in August. Maureen suggested that an article also be included in the Midden.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Pam's President report was as follows:

1. A researcher from UHCL has requested support from the chapter members for a Sand Dune Restoration research and outreach project. The letter is asking the chapter to sign on as a partner in the project. Julie stated that there is a lot of value to researchers to being affiliated with master naturalists, and when presented with such a request, we should consider what benefit the chapter gets from the project and whether we have the capacity to support it. Will the researcher agree to be a speaker or conduct an advanced training class? Julie said that it is important for the chapter to participate in research, as long as it is a good fit. Many times, the researcher is sending out requests in advance of the project being funded, so it is not guaranteed to happen. It is not likely we can ask the members if they are

interested in a project that is not yet funded, because the researcher typically does not want their project ideas made public at that stage. Furthermore, researchers often prefer to ask others (like master naturalists) assist with the communication and outreach aspects of the project. After reviewing the details of the project (no financial support requested, no specific volunteer commitments) Maureen made a motion to support this project, Jo seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

2. Pam then gave an update from the statewide presidents meeting.
  - Masks are now highly recommended, rather than mandatory, in compliance with the state guidelines. Indoor meetings require 100 square feet of space per person. 6-foot social distancing is required for outdoor activities, with no limit.
  - The recertification pins have been mailed to the chapters, and the special pins for 2020 will be sent by the end of the week.
  - The April 13 TMN Tuesday will be a major presentation, from 12 to 3 pm, about the impact of Winter Storm Uri on Texas wildlife. The state office is buying a larger license in order to accommodate thousands of viewers.
  - April 20, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, will be the next “Be the Change” diversity session.
  - Individuals will be asked to submit videos, poems, artwork, etc. addressing how nature has helped during a challenging year. A notification will be sent by the state office soon.
  - The TMN license plate has been approved. Of the \$30 extra fee, \$22 will go to the Texas Master Naturalists.
  - The annual meeting is scheduled for October 21-24. It has not been decided whether the meeting will be in person, online, or a combination.

Ellen asked how the 100 square foot per person limit affects use of classrooms and space at Carbide. Julie replied that action plans must be submitted two weeks in advance for any indoor gathering of groups larger than 10. Pam also stated that TMN chapters are not allowed to ask individuals their covid status.

Susette’s Past President report was as follows:

1. For the next 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in April, the meeting will start at 6:15, with the zoom meeting open at 6:00 so that people can visit. Leann and Ainsley worked on the slide show, that includes all the prior classes and a memorial to members who have passed. Julie will give a tribute to Dr. Johnson.
2. T-shirts will be ready to sell later this spring. People have also requested 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary pins which will be given to everyone who pays their dues this year.
3. The theme of the next Midden will be volunteer service, which is also the theme of the June meeting.

Mike’s Vice President report was as follows:

1. We will be operating under the most restrictive rules between the state, county, AgriLife, and TMN guidelines. The AT committee should consider some proposals, but they are not needed immediately. Ellen favors hybrid classes where distant members can zoom in to join in person classes.

Cindy provided the financial report. Patty made a motion to approve the report, Ellen seconded it, and all voted to approve the report.

Patty's membership report was as follows:

1. There are 506 members, and 33 outstanding who need to pay their dues.
2. Virtual AT can be counted in 2021, similar to 2020.
3. Trainees cannot log hours until their first day of class, which is a slight change from the current process.

Jo's volunteer service director report was as follows:

1. Jo is increasingly receiving requests for volunteers with specific skills, and sometimes the requests are at the last minute and only require a couple of people. Those requests are not practical to send to the entire membership.
2. The VS committee will meet in April.
3. Mel's store is moving to a sidewalk Saturday sale for the next 3 months. The sale will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday from 10-12.

Ellen's AT update was as follows:

1. There are 6 AT classes scheduled between April and June:
  - a. Enough Latin to go plant shopping.
  - b. iNaturalist app for the City Nature Challenge
  - c. Crabs of Galveston Bay
  - d. Brown Recluse Spider
  - e. Water pollution in Galveston Bay
  - f. Gardening for wildlife

Janet announced that the new class committee will meet on April 8.

Maureen provided her communication committee report as follows:

1. Facebook posts continue to be popular, especially information about sea turtle releases. The birding posts are also very popular.
2. The zoom team continues to be busy, supporting multiple meetings a week.
3. Beach Heroes is back. 3 schools want to reach approximately 400 students. Art supplies are needed because many art teachers lost their budgets in favor of covid supplies, and because students cannot share supplies.

Julie stated she has been asked to serve as the County Coordinator, in response to the passing of Dr. Johnson. If we need supplies or other support, ask Julie. Her relationship to our chapter will not change.

Pam commented that board meetings are more convenient using zoom, and perhaps in the future we would meet in person once or twice a year.

Two of our members, and one former member, were affected by the NASA condo fire. The individuals will be contacted to see if they need anything from the chapter.

Robin Kendrick-Yates will remain chair of the diversity committee and will no longer chair the emeritus committee.

Patty made a motion to adjourn, Susette seconded it, and all approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.