

**GBAC BOARD FEBRUARY MEETING**  
**Via Zoom**  
**February 25, 2025**

**Attendees via Zoom:** Mary Dobberstine, Jenny Dudley, Meade LeBlanc, Lisa Hardcastle, Gene Fisseler, Sharon Tirpak, Robin Novak, Julie Massey, Tracy Walpole, and Terri Bell,

Absent members were Mohammed Nasrullah, Denise Correll, and Brandi Keller.

**Call to Order**

Mary Dobberstine, President, notified members of the meeting date on February 14, 2025, and agenda via email on February 21, 2025. All meeting participants are able to communicate with each other via Zoom.

Mary called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

The quorum requirement was established by Lisa Hardcastle, Secretary.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

- Board Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2025
- Chapter Meeting Minutes – February 6, 2025
- Financial Report for the period ending January 31, 2025
- Banking resolution changing authorized signatures to chapter's Amegy bank account to Marry Dobberstine, Jenny Dudley, and Meade LeBlanc

**Gene made a motion to approve the consent agenda items which was seconded by Jenny. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Old Business**

Review/Approve 2025 Objectives from Day Away

1. Develop and execute an educational program incorporating diverse methods, including a speaker's bureau with chapter members, aimed at engaging local educators.
2. Host two-chapter service events focused on promoting our mission of food, fun, and friendship.
3. Create an incentive program that encourages members to explore and participate in a variety of chapter activities.
4. Scholarships to be discuss further.

**Gene made a motion to approve the 2025 objectives as stated. Lisa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**New Business**

- The board discussed the upcoming Plastic Pollution Symposium which is scheduled for April 3, 2025. This event is important to our chapter as members

have volunteered more than 3,600 hours on plastic pollution programs. In addition, it was suggested that members of our Green Team attend the symposium. **Sharon made a motion to donate \$636.00 of restricted funds to the Plastic Pollution Symposium. Gene seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- The next item discussed was our chapter Hawk Watch Day: Wings Above LaPorte: GBAC Hawk Watch Airshow and Survey on March 29, 2025. Lynn and John Wright will be available to give a brief overview of identifying raptors flying overhead. Additionally, people will be available to help new birders with proper use of binoculars. Plans also include having outreach booths to demonstrate outreach activities to encourage members to volunteer for outreach events. An email about the event will be sent to chapter members soon.
- Discussion was then held on membership milestone plaques. Traditionally, once a member completes 250 hours of volunteer service, his or her name is added to a milestone wall plaque at Carbide Park, indicating the level of volunteer service hours obtained (250, 500, 1,000, etc.). Annually, names are moved to the highest-level of volunteer service hours the member achieved that year. If members die, their names remain on the plaque of the highest level they achieved. Although it is a cherished tradition to many members, the process does have a cost and several hours of volunteer hours are required to maintain the plaques. A brief discussion was held to determine whether to continue the effort and if so, possible changes that would make it less expensive and time-consuming. One suggestion was to increase the entry volunteer service hour level that the plaques reflect. Another suggestion was to encourage more volunteers to help with the process. No decision was made at this point.

## **Officer Reports**

### **President (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary announced that a Letter of Agreement has been made with Stanzi Seshier, the Camp Wild coordinator. In addition, she has been paid and started working on Camp Wild plans. Mary was happy to announce that she is working on getting after-hours access to the extension office building. Although she has not been invited to the State's chapter presidents' meetings yet, she is aware of the following meeting information: our governing documents will be reviewed this year; new brand guidelines will be issued; Texas Master Naturalist Tuesday events are open to the public; a call for speakers for the annual meeting has been issued; and a reminder regarding phishing and other scams has been disseminated.

### **Vice President (Jenny Dudley)**

Jenny reported that speakers have been lined up for the April, June, and October chapter meetings. She is still looking for one for the August meeting. Additionally, it has been

suggested that new class members be asked to volunteer for the April chapter meeting set-up and break-down. There will be advanced training offered this Thursday on the Nature's Notebook app. Clarification regarding the *Time to Restore* project was also discussed. Jenny clarified that members cannot receive volunteer service hours for time spent on the project on their own property. This is true of other citizen science endeavors such as eBird and iNaturalist. They can participate in the project using property other than their own for volunteer service credit, or on their own property without earning volunteer service credit.

**Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)**

Lisa announced that all Conflict-of-Interest Policy attestations have been received and uploaded on the chapter's Google Drive.

**Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)**

Meade sent board members a financial summary prior to the meeting. She also shared that we have received the H.E.B. \$3,000.00 grant through the state office for the pollinator garden project at Exploration Green.

**Immediate Past President (Gene Fisseler)**

Gene yielded his time to the Chair.

**Advanced Training Director (Robin Novak)**

Robin shared the results of a survey she sent to members regarding future advanced training. Members prefer Zoom trainings over in-person events, they prefer the 6:00 PM time slot and they would like presentations on the following topics: shells, photography and birding. Additionally, 50 members joined the whooping crane presentation and 73 attended the diurnal raptor presentation. An Eastern Bluebird presentation is scheduled for next week.

**Communication Director (Mary Dobberstine)**

Mary passed.

**Community Engagement Director (Mohammed Nasrullah)**

Mohammed was unavailable.

**Membership Director (Tracy Walpole)**

Tracy shared that she is now running membership results on the first Sunday of the month to accommodate chapter advisor Brandi's reporting needs. In January, members accrued approximately 3,000 volunteer service hours and 300 advanced training hours. Of the May 2024 training class, 28 of 31 have completed coursework; 18 have certified; and nine are working on certifying. Volunteer service milestones announced were: four members at 250 hours, one member each at 500, 1000 and 2,500 hours.

**Outreach Coordinator (Lisa Hardcastle)**

Lisa reported that the team is focusing on restarting the Speakers Bureau this year.

**Training Class Director (Julie Massey)**

Julie was excited to share that the first class was held last week, and it was great. There are 29 people in the new class.

**Volunteer Service Director (Sharon Tirpak)**

Sharon reported that she continues to direct members to the right opportunity to charge their volunteer service hours. Additionally, she is creating the opportunities for the new *Pollinators for Texas* (H.E.B. grant) project which will be added to the opportunity list soon. She also reported that she is working with Meade on developing guidelines for members wanting to participate in the *Time to Restore* project and utilize the Nature Book App.

**Other Reports****New Class Representatives (Denise Correll, Terri Bell)**

Terri was happy to report that the New Class Luncheon went well.

**Chapter Advisor**

Brandi was unable to attend the meeting.

**Announcements**

None

**Review Action Items**

Jenny will seek further clarification on volunteer service hours for citizen science and share with the chapter.

**Next meeting**

- Tuesday, March 25 at 6:30 PM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle