

GBAC BOARD MARCH MEETING
Via Zoom
March 25, 2025

Attendees via Zoom: Mary Dobberstine, Jenny Dudley, Meade LeBlanc, Lisa Hardcastle, Gene Fisseler, Sharon Tirpak, Robin Novak, Mohammed Nasrullah, Tracy Walpole, Denise Correll, Terri Bell, Brandi Keller.

Julie Massey was absent.

Mary Dobberstine notified members of the meeting date and agenda via email on March 19, 2025. All meeting participants are able to communicate with each other via Zoom.

Mary called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The quorum requirement was established by Lisa Hardcastle, Secretary.

Approval of Consent Agenda

- Board Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2025
- Financial Summary for the period ending February 28, 2025.

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mohammed and seconded by Jenny to approve the minutes as written and the financial summary. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Plastic Pollution Symposium (PPS) Donation

The donation to the PPS has been made. Mary reported that we received a nice thank you note from the organizers. She also shared that there are additional restricted funds that can be used for the turtle hospital in Galveston.

Chapter Hawk Watch Day

Mary reported that she will not be able to attend the event this Saturday, but that Jenny and Lisa will be there. So far there have been 27 RSVPs indicating attendance. Fourteen of these attendees have offered to staff outreach tables. Mary is excited that members will have an opportunity to network with each other, experience hawk watch and practice outreach activities.

New Business

Passport Program for Trainees

Mary and Jenny shared plans for the program which is intended to encourage members to engage in a variety of volunteer opportunities. With the help of Ashley (Brandi's

assistant) they have created a BINGO card with a variety of activities in the squares. Discussion ensued regarding specifics of the program. The contest will first be announced to the new training class and then to all members at the June chapter meeting. The time limit for checking off activities will be late November, and some type of recognition of winners will be made at the December chapter meeting. Mary will share a draft of the BINGO card with the board and ask for suggestions to improve it before the program is shared with members.

Teacher Training Program in June with Texas A&M Extension/Sea Grant

Mary then reminded board members that one of our objectives for the year is to provide some type of training for teachers. Brandi then shared that last year she offered teachers a 2-day program called “Aquatic Wild”. This year she will be offering teachers the “Project Wild” program, which is similar, but the content is land-based. This training is very formal, including a book and complete curriculum for teachers to implement in the classroom. She has reserved two days at Carbide Park in June for the training. Because her training will only need one day, she is suggesting that the master naturalists use the second day to provide training to the teachers. Mary and Jenny will meet with Brandi to discuss this topic further.

Time to Restore Update

It was reported that Meade and Sharon have done a lot of work on the Time to Restore project. Many local native plants have been entered into the Nature’s Notebook database. An email has gone out to chapter members regarding project details. Three local native gardens will be involved in the project (Environmental Institute of Houston, Armand Bayou Nature Center, and Bayside Regional Park) and leaders have been identified (Martha Richardson, Sherrie Jackson, and Sandy Parker). Volunteer service hour guidelines for citizen science will be followed.

Officer Reports

President (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary shared the following information:

- On March 31, she will be attending Galveston County Commissioner’s Court sharing information about the volunteers and services of our chapter.
- At the TMN Chapter Presidents meeting she learned:
 - Service hour pins are back in stock, and orders can be placed.
 - The April 8 TMN Tuesday session will highlight virtual volunteer opportunities across the state.
 - HB 4948, a proposed bill to dissolve the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department will not be moving forward and it is business as usual at the state level.
 - Comments regarding our governing documents should be submitted by the end of April. Gene will be assisting with this process.

- Entries for the state annual photo contest will be due August 1 and entries for other contests at the state meeting will be due September 1. There was some discussion about an entry for the chapter project contest. It was suggested that Lynn Porfirio may want to enter the *Putting the 3 in 3A* project. An alternative could be the firefly project.
- It was recommended that chapters archive opportunities in the Volunteer Management System that are not being used.
- April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, so Mary and Jenny are working on promoting volunteer service by chapter members. They are proposing taking photographs of members and captioning the photographs with a “Why I Volunteer...” statement from the member. These will be shared on social media. Denise volunteered to help with the project.
- Mary proposed that we provide a cake or other treat in appreciation of our members’ volunteer service at the upcoming chapter meeting. It was decided that pizza will be provided instead of a potluck meal.

Vice President (Jenny Dudley)

Jenny reported that our April chapter meeting will have a presentation by a coyote expert.

Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa had nothing to share at this time.

Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)

Meade reported there were no major financial transactions during the past month. An invoice for Camp Wild was received. The chapter is paying the first \$2,000.00 of Camp Wild expenses (camp development provided by Stanzie Sesher) and then the Friends of Galveston Island State Park will be paying other expenses.

Immediate Past President (Gene Fisseler)

Gene had no information to share at this time.

Director Reports

Advanced Training Director (Robin Novak)

Robin shared that the Heritage Book Club completed reading and discussing *A Sand Country Almanac* by Aldo Leopold in February. They will now be reading and discussing *The Comfort of Crows* by Margaret Renke in April and May. Additionally, chapter member Ralph Fixel gave a presentation on Eastern Bluebirds in February to 58 attendees. On March 31, a presentation about Vultures will be given via Zoom. The chapter meeting in April will include a presentation about coyotes.

Community Engagement Director (Mohammed Nasrullah)

Mohammed reported that Pam House will have a booth at the April 27 Earth Day Festival at Armand Bayou Nature Center. Additionally, community presentations for May and June are being planned.

Membership Director (Tracy Walpole)

Tracy provided the board with the following information (as of March 2, 2025):

- The chapter has 233 active members (paid dues and logged hours), 31 associate members (paid dues, have not logged hours), 35 members in training, and 345 inactive members.
- Hours reported (February/YTD) – 2,690/6,482 volunteer service hours and 831.5/1,186 advanced training hours.
- The 2024 class began with 31 attendees; 28 have finished class hours, 18 have certified, five are working on certifying, and four did not pay dues.
- Volunteer service hour milestones met in March include 250 hours – Mary Warwick and Kathleen McClean, 500 hours – Eowyn Johnson, 1,000 hours – Mary Dobberstine, and 2,500 hours – Lisa Hardcastle.

Outreach Coordinator (Lisa Hardcastle)

Lisa reported that the outreach team met today. They discussed ways to reactivate the Speaker's Bureau. She has spoken with Cindy Howard about presenting to the speakers about tips to make their presentations more dynamic. This training would possibly overlap with advanced training and community engagement teams.

Training Class Director (Gene Fisseler for Julie Massey)

The training class is at the halfway point with five classes already being held and five more after this Thursday's class. The training class has been busy, and the presentations have been great. There has been difficulty with boat trips and tides. He is excited about the new topic and field trip to Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson.

Volunteer Service Director (Sharon Tirpak)

Sharon stated that Cynthia Hughes has requested the state provide information regarding the denial of the grant for Camp Wild and will share this information with Sharon. She continues to respond to members regarding reporting volunteer hours correctly. Patty Trimmingham and Tracy assist in responding. She also continues to work on the agencies list on our website, specifically tracking down contact information for questions about volunteering with the agencies.

Other Reports

New Class Representatives (Denise Correll, Terri Bell)

Denise and Terri continue to reach out to other 2024 class members, usually just before chapter meetings.

Advisor Update

None.

Announcements

Mary reminded Denise and Terri of the board's at-large role that allows the New Class Representatives to continue their involvement with the board and chapter leadership after their term is complete. She will reach out to each of them to determine possible roles for them soon.

Mary also reminded the board that Google Meets is a great alternative to Zoom for remote meetings and is free component of our Google for Nonprofits account.

Review Action Items

- Gene will review our governing documents.
- Brandi, Jenny, and Mary will work on the BINGO card.
- Jenny and Mary will explore the Teacher Training Program for June

Next meeting

- Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 6:30 PM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle