

GBAC BOARD APRIL MEETING

Via Zoom

April 29, 2025

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

Mary Dobberstine, President, reminded members of the meeting date and agenda via email on April 22, 2025. The date was originally announced at the March board meeting. All meeting participants are able to communicate with each other via Zoom.

Mary called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

The quorum requirement was established by Lisa Hardcastle, Secretary.

Approval of Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Gene and seconded by Sharon to approve the consent agenda items. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

- **Chapter Hawk Watch Airshow and Outreach Event**

Jenny reported that 30 people attended the event, including both chapter members and the local public. Chapter members present included a mix of new members and long-time members. John and Lynn Wright were very welcoming to all guests. Attendees were eager to participate in both watching for hawks and learning about outreach. There were three outreach activities exhibited, Scat and Tracks, Insect Life Cycles, and a binocular activity. Overall, she felt that it was a successful event.

- **Dragonfly Bingo**

Mary provided an update on the dragonfly BINGO project, the goal of which is to promote the variety of opportunities available to chapter members. The BINGO “card” will include a QR code to the “What We Do” page on our chapter website. Some details still need to be worked out, but she is planning to launch the project at our June chapter meeting. Winners will be announced at the December chapter meeting.

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

Unfortunately, Mary has not been able to connect with Brandi to discuss this opportunity to work with local educators. While she feels this is a worthy endeavor, someone who can be a champion for it needs to take it on. Julie mentioned past trainings the chapter provided that were like “mini” master naturalist trainings. She

appreciated the fact that teachers were then able to share the experiences with their students.

New Business

- **Annual State Project Contest**

Mary shared that she plans to reach out to Lyn Porforio to showcase the pollinator garden at Exploration Green as our chapter's entry to the contest. Alternatively, the firefly team may be able to create an entry.

- **2025 HEB Pollinator Garden Grant**

A new grant project award has been announced for 2025. Applications may be submitted between April 1 and June 1. Mary announced that Mohammed and the Community Engagement Team are interested in applying for the grant. She did remind Mohammed that the application must be approved by the board prior to submission.

Officer Reports

President (Mary Dobberstine)

Mary reminded the board that chapter documents are being reviewed, and changes will be made by the state office. Gene is assisting her with this task. She also stated that the dates for the State Annual Meeting contests will be announced at the June meeting.

Vice President (Jenny Dudley)

Jenny has been working diligently to secure speakers for our upcoming chapter meetings. The following speakers are currently scheduled:

- June – Gary Seloff, Photography Through the Eyes of a Naturalist
- August – Ashley Jones, Southeast Texas Archeology
- October - Daniel Imrecke. Geology of Our Coastal Area

Additionally, Jenny shared that Brandi would like to speak to our chapter about what the Texas Sea Grant program is and what it does. She will gather more information regarding time requirements and the appropriate audience for this and report back.

Secretary (Lisa Hardcastle)

Nothing to report.

Treasurer (Meade LeBlanc)

Meade reported that the chapter received a contribution in Walter Meyers' name. Additionally, a contribution was made by Exxon/Mobil from the employee Volunteer Incentive Program. Most of the April expenses were related to the new training class and restocking the chapter store.

Immediate Past President (Gene Fisseler)

Gene yielded his time to Julie.

Director Reports

Advanced Training Director (Robin Novak)

Robin reported on past training opportunities. *Vultures: Birds with a Purpose* was attended by 70 chapter members via Zoom. An in-person training, *Getting Ready for City Nature Challenge*, was attended by only seven members, prompting a decision to initiate a minimum/maximum attendance policy for in-person training. Upcoming training events will include Melissa Felty, Texas Water Specialist on June 25, 2025, 6 PM via Zoom and Sasha Francis, *Living Corals Restoration Project* with live stream from lab, May 15, 2025, 6 PM via Zoom.

Additional topics being discussed for future training include fireflies, fish conservancy and bees.

Communication Director (Mary Dobberstine)

None

Community Engagement Director (Mohammed Nasrullah)

On April 26, the team met with Boy Scouts at Brazos Bend State Park and led a hike and discussion about ecosystems. On April 27, the team volunteered at Armand Bayou Nature Center's Earth Day Celebration. Upcoming plans include a Community AT presentation by the director of the Wood's Project on May 6; a Community AT on July 1 with the Green Muslims and work on a pollinator garden project at Exploration Green with the Clear Larke Islamic Center.

Membership Director (Tracy Walpole)

According to membership data, we currently have 237 active members. For the month of March, members logged 4,674.5 volunteer service hours and 470 advanced training hours. Of the 31 members of the 2024 training class, three did not finish classes, four have dropped out, 20 have certified, and three are currently working on certifying. Service milestone awardees are Julie Massey (250 hours). Mason Gilfoil (500 hours), and Mary Dobberstine (1000 hours).

Tracy wanted to remind everyone to include the appropriate opportunity description when sending emails to chapter members about volunteer opportunities.

Outreach Coordinator (Lisa Hardcastle)

Nothing to share at this time.

Training Class Director (Julie Massey)

Julie was happy to share that the last class for this spring will be held on Thursday. She reported that eight class members will certify by the June chapter meeting. The class enjoyed the new trip to Sea Center Texas.

Gene expanded on Julie's report by sharing that the class members have been very active and involved in chapter activities already.

Volunteer Service Director (Sharon Tirpak)

Sharon continues to respond to chapter members about the correct opportunities to use. She is also involved in new citizen science projects being undertaken by the chapter. She has sent an updated spreadsheet of opportunities out to some board members for review. She is not sure how to share this information effectively with the whole chapter via the website. Gene suggested that she get Ashley Rios involved.

Other Reports

New Class Representatives (Denise Correll, Terri Bell)

Terri was glad to hear that only three people from their training class are left to certify.

Chapter Advisor

Brandi was unavailable.

Announcements

None

Review Action Items

- Mary will work on finalizing the Dragonfly BINGO project.

Next meeting

- May 27, 6:30 – 7:30 PM; Mary suggested that we meet in person for the next meeting. Details will follow.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hardcastle