

TMN-Gideon Lincecum Chapter Meeting

March 17, 2012

Winedale Historic Center-- MEADOWS CONFERENCE ROOM

Winedale, TX

The meeting was called to order at 9:23 A.M. by President Cindy Rodibaugh. The minutes from the January 21, 2012 meeting had been distributed via email. No corrections were noted. A motion was made by Lefty Yarnold and seconded by Chris Morgan to accept the minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Committee Reports:

President—Cindy Rodibaugh Cindy again encouraged everyone to enroll on the State MN list to get announcements from Michelle Haggerty. Any volunteer or AT events listed there are already approved even if they do not come from our local chapter. She reminded everyone that there are several good opportunities for AT and volunteer hours listed there. She noted that on April 1st some classes at The Lady Bird Wildflower Center in Austin may be able to be used for AT or Volunteer hours, but please check first for each activity to see which are approved or not.

Cindy encouraged submitting projects and info to the Naturalist Newsletter, 'Reverchon Naturalist' (Instructions for submissions are on the website- <http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/bio/reverchon.html>.) One of our members won in the past with a promotion of a native prairies project.

The Budget Committee of Cindy Rodibaugh, Margaret Lamar, Carol Daniels, Dave Redden, Larry Hilgers, our previous treasurer, and Ed Koslosky met and the Chapter budget is set with \$10,510 dollars of approved expenses. However, we only had \$6000 income this year. Cindy appealed to anyone who can get matching funds or grants to please do so. She noted that we've never had fund raisers before but that isn't to say we can't! We're volunteers and there is a strong feeling among members that if we start projects we have to keep up with them. Lemae Higgs asked if we are a 501C3 and there was some discussion about that. Margaret Lamar felt we should have someone to be a development coordinator and start a development fund. After some discussion it was hoped that maybe someone will come forward, possibly out of the new class, to undertake this. Cindy asked us to be alert to possibilities for funding and to check our previous employers, for those members who are retired as well as others.

Vice President—Margaret Lamar welcomed new class members attending and encouraged them to stay involved both at meetings and volunteer projects. She said they were hoping to have a show and tell of our current projects at the graduation

ceremony so that new members can see and sign up as volunteers for our projects. She also hopes to have a mentoring system in place where people call up and encourage new members both to projects and meetings.

Margaret said a fun outing is being planned for June. This year's recertification pin is a bat and was designed by our member Jan Redden. It was thought a field trip to Austin Bat sites, which might include a visit to the Lady Bird Wildflower Center's, or a local café might be fun. We could explore, go on an organized guided tour, have lunch and then have an afternoon off or take the Capitol Cruises on the lake for \$10 each and see the bats. This is a one hour bat tour and afterwards we could have dinner together. Others present thought this a great idea so Margaret is going to co-ordinate this.

Treasurer—Carol Daniels reported a balance of \$12795.73. We have enough to make our budget but she cautioned be careful how you spend! She reported as had Cindy that income of about \$6000 last year means we are budgeting for more than we have as income. Chris Morgan pointed out that if we do get donations, we need a letter of acknowledgement to be used as tax deduction on their filing forms. Carol is going to check on whether we are a 501C3. Janet Jarrell also felt we need a letter of introduction when soliciting donations. It was discussed how this might be prepared. Carol reported that we do file every year with the IRS and she thinks that is under the State MN 501C3 approval. A motion was made, seconded and approved to receive the treasurer's report as presented.

Committee Reports

Prairie Committee: Belinda Weatherly reported that they have met and had a lot of good brainstorming ideas. They are trying to see if there is a natural sequence of projects, not really a priority list, but to see how to tackle projects. The date of the next meeting is not yet set. On one of the next meetings they hope to have a greenhouse tour. March 31st is being considered. Charlotte sent a photo of the baby grasses coming up! A piece of equipment discussed for identifying native prairies might be a ground sensor devise or ground penetrating radar which costs an estimated \$5000+. With it you can identify disturbed ground, archeology sites, etc. There was a request for someone to write a grant for that. Cindy also showed a poster used at a recent New landowners class to educate landowners who might be interested in the program. In the past we have developed criteria to identified native prairie remnants and provided signage. Currently, it was reported that we have a list of 7 properties which are awaiting evaluation. Some things we can see now and others we can see later on as the grass comes up better. Class members are welcome to join and learn these new skills and it does make for a fun outing. Margaret was interested in mentoring to have high school kids coming along with this sort of project. Cindy said that we have a good working relationship with the high school and we are actively involving students. The rainwater

harvesting equipment added to the greenhouse was the result of a project idea for the engineering students. It was asked that the schedule when established be published to our whole membership and Belinda agreed to do so.

Bluebird Trail at Winedale: Jim Weatherly reported that it is time to clean and repair blue bird houses. We have 11 at Winedale! Three nests already have eggs even though it is early in the season. Several questions by members led to suggestions of: 1) Hang a bar of soap in the top of the nest to keep out wasps, 2) sometimes it takes a year or two before the nests will be used. The birds often arrive in late January but don't nest until later in the summer. 3) Birds will also raise more than one hatch. When fledglings fly clean out and they will reuse the nest. We have one bluebird house that seems to be the favorite and a male who watches over it 12 months of the year!

Recruiting: Judy Deaton thanked everyone who helped. Our next class now has 29 signed up. The committee is looking at cost of printing brochures to be used for finding new recruits. Judy reminded us that anyone can recruit!

Training: Toni Platt was unable to attend but emailed her report. Six classes are left and some may be field trips in the community. Some scheduled events are:

March 31st Tour at Quebe Farms looking at plant diversity. This is a Saturday from 9-11 a.m.

April 14th 1 p.m. Dave Redden and Marshal Anderson will host a Winedale tour with information on preventing fires on your property. Janet and Cindy highly recommended this.

April 21st. 1-3 p.m. Tree ID at Oak Thicket Park (LCRA) with Daniel Lewis.

Soil test is not on calendar yet.

Membership: Carol Daniels reported 106 dues paying members and already two members have initially certified for 2012.

Advanced Training: No report as Dave Redden was unable to attend.

Programs: Debbie Copeland said our biggest program need is to figure out how to get projector to work today! Future programs being considered are:

May 19th Christine Uhlman who is a groundwater specialist from Texas A&M and Paul Fahrenthold, who is a retired EPA employee with PH.D. in chemistry. He is now studying weather and climate changes.

September Bug lady Valerie Bough will be asked.

November 17th program. There is a problem with November program that it is too close to Thanksgiving and few tend to show up. Also October 23rd is the state meeting which is two days and intense. After discussion the consensus was not to cancel the November meeting and encourage attendance at the state meeting held at nearby Camp Allen this year. Expense for the conference is high and it was suggested that we could car pool. That way you can do just one day and others recommend the day when the speakers come. However, it was noted that this event is well worth it for AT and volunteer activities which are also available. Judy Deaton offers a guest room for two people nearby if anyone is interested.

January 2013 Black bear (released in Arkansas are migrating south to the piney woods) and also more Mountain Lions are seen. It was suggested we have an annual program where we ask other chapters to come. Wildlife members who come to public forums pay \$25 to attend for the day. On prairies Larry Highsmith does a webcast program on wildlife evaluation and workshop at A& M. It was suggested that we might get him to come here for a workshop. Cindy said she did a tour with him at Oak Thicket where he does about 3 hours in the classroom then go out in the field with his dogs. Maybe it is time to put him back in the loop here. Also it was mentioned that we've had a seed collecting team from NRCS in Kingsville and they might be useful again.

Debbie also reported that Flo Oxley wants to come back and do a serious training class! She is retired from Austin Wildflower now and teaches at the community college. She really loves what she does and it shows. Thus her presentations are intense and she makes it fun! A serious drawback is that she only has Friday nights available and lives in San Marcos.

Newsletter: Carol Paulson was unable to attend but sent Cindy a report. She is looking for pictures of unusual wildflowers for our April Newsletter. Even if you can't ID them she'll have a mystery section!

Social: Janet Jarrell reported that 8 December is set for our Christmas party. It was suggested that we contact the church in Burton again. The Chapter will again provide the meat and we bring dessert, salad, veggies, etc. Helping counts as volunteer hours. Graduation is Monday, May 7th at 6:30 p.m. We will have a social, a shared meal and graduation about 7:30. The Chapter is providing meat, pork loin, and members are asked to bring pot luck of salad, veggies, etc. Cindy will provide the cake. Family members are welcome!

Volunteer Service Projects: If you have any questions regarding whether you can record hours for volunteer effort, please contact Ed Koslosky. A sign-up sheet for Adopt a Highway on Saturday March 24th was passed around. It was noted there is lots of tall grass so beware of snakes. Be sure to be aware of poison Oak and ivy, dress

appropriately, heavy shoes, long pants, no shorts...this is not a clean job! The county has not mowed the road and it is steeply sloped. The stretch is on Hwy. 159 between Ruttersville and towards the Jersey Barn. St. John's Lutheran church is available for parking, but please park out close to the road not near the building. Please go to website and look at the required safely video!

Active projects: Greenhouse project was talked about earlier by Belinda Weatherly.

Margaret Lamar: Brenham elementary project. Dave is working hard at the outdoor learning center to get it to take off. There are so many sections, a garden for first grade, water collection, and the greenhouse. Margaret reports that the District level representative is now on the steering committee and this will help so much. She had a day long tour with this man who is advocating for this program. He has a 60 acre garden himself. The kids who have a lot of outdoor learning will be linked in with those who don't and to prevent this being a problem we're working on a district plan to promote outdoor learning, stewardship, conservation, etc. It is apparent that the children are not knowledgeable and there is a huge need to connect them to nature. We've missed two generations and there is a huge gap. But last year we had 23 involved and this year we have 150! So we are really on fire with this project. The garden is growing all kinds of stuff and this is really exciting for everyone. They don't have a workday scheduled at the moment but everyone is journaling and also working individually. They hope to have opened another section in April and May.

Susan Solari sent in her report on the Blue Bird program with Brenham elementary kids. She showed them eggs, birds, and laminated pictures. They are making inroads there with education about the birdhouses that are there around the campus.

Also, Susan has put together a program called FYI series at Round Top Public Library. These will be evening programs at the library. Program on master naturalists, on prairies, etc. June 12 will be Dave Redden on using your well water efficiently and how this may affect your neighbor. He will also cover how not taking good care of your soil means aquifers which are low, etc. July 10 is unconfirmed, and August 14 will be Susan Rigler, a certified rehabilitator, who will be talking about raptors and will have one with her. The general public can attend and all programs are at 6:30 p.m.

Indian Creek Nature Trail: Randon Dillingham has resigned his commitment to lead this group. Nothing has been done since last fall. This project is in Burton, behind the Cotton Gin and owned by them. We have partnered with them to do two acres. There is water now and it needs a good cleanout. The Cotton Gin festival is April 21st—only one month away! Cindy feels we need at least one work day maybe two between now and then to at least clean up the trail somewhat. She will send emails for dates. Many hands will make it quick and we'll have a priority list also so that it looks nice during the festival.

Our sign is out there and we have it as a project so we need help on this to make it work well!

Festival Hill: Judy Deaton reported that the metal sign is completed and ready to go into the ground. A lot being done. They need 3-4 people to do the heavy work and a workday to help get it in the ground. They will do a blanket request later on. They are waiting on the smaller signs, think they have something that might cost less and have posts already attached. They have been looking at different labels as possibilities, laminate, etc. to ID all plants. We need a picnic working day to go out and take out some invasives. She reminds us that we're responsible for whole property not just the trail!

Our next meeting will be Saturday May 19th.

Adjourn A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lemae Higgs, Secretary