

TMN-Gideon Lincecum Chapter Meeting

September 15, 2012

Winedale Historic Center-- MEADOWS CONFERENCE ROOM

Winedale, TX

President Cindy Rodibaugh called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Prior to the business meeting a special guest speaker, Aaron Weishun, reported on the Youth Range Workshop at Texas Parks and Wildlife, Kerrville Wildlife Management Area. He found it an excellent program for youth science. Aaron also attended the 2012 Spokane, Washington HS Youth Forum and won the speech contest there. He got to go back to Oklahoma City and speak before some 1500 people. He talked about how his experiences, partly funded in part by our chapter, have taken him far. He has helped other youth judge range land and gained excellent experience about the land and how to best use and preserve it. In his Farm Bureau Speech, he emphasized why we're American, how our faith shapes us, and the benefits of our economic system. Free enterprise, he emphasized, is all about opportunity, not handouts. Opportunity comes with hard work and allows the individual to make decisions without government restrictions. Pivotal in that is our private ownership of land and of the methods of production. Freedom of choice, owner control, individual ownership, partnerships and corporations are essential to hard working individuals who want to make their own decisions. He felt four key areas which underlie our American way of life are private property rights, a profit motive, owner control of business, and freedom of choice. Of course in our system there are no guarantees of success but there is the freedom to try for success! Profit pays the bills, and allows us to invest further capital to take other risks and this grows our economy. With owner control, you will make some right decisions, but of course you can also make mistakes and do it wrong. But with freedom there is always another day to try again after having learned from your failures. In agriculture, for most, our enterprise is a sunup to sunset hard work day. But Aaron obviously feels this free enterprise system is preferable to waiting for a handout!

In response to audience questions Aaron reported that he is only seventeen and a senior at Columbus High School. He is thrilled that he is getting to make a difference both at home and across the country by his continued learning and application of his skills. His goals are to study at Texas Christian University for a Range Management Degree, and then get further education at Texas A&M specializing in protecting our environment and water. Cindy thanked him for coming to report back to us and all present wished him well in his future endeavors remarking what a talented and dedicated young man he is and what an asset he will be to the future of our country.

Acceptance of minutes from May 19, 2012

Cindy Rodibaugh called the business meeting to order at 9:16. The minutes from our last meeting had been emailed to members. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the minutes as presented.

Executive Committee Reports

President—Cindy Rodibaugh noted the Master Naturalist Annual Meeting is at Camp Allen in Navasota and encouraged everyone to attend even if for just one day. Attendance will be bigger this year so members were encouraged to register early. A scholarship offered to each chapter was discussed. After discussion the motion was made and seconded and passed unanimously for Bill Dudley to use this scholarship as our training coordinator to absorb and bring back as much information as he can.

Cindy reported that the Board met on August 29th and she brought the minutes of that meeting for members to see but noted the committee chairmen will be giving their reports today covering what was discussed at the board meeting.

Our web domain name, Gideon Lincecum, is rarely used anymore as we use instead our AgriLife designation instead. Dave Redden has been paying for this personally and the board decided we should contact the Lincecum family and offer it to them instead. This met with general approval.

Cindy attended the annual 4H banquet in LaGrange to represent the TMN-GLC, which supported two 4H members to attend camp at McKinney Roughs LCRA. She reports there are many fabulous kids in 4H who will make wonderful future leaders. The riparian restoration class was very interesting and Cindy is talking to the 4H coordinator in La Grange to encourage that program.

Several members went to Stephen F. Austin Park to see how we could help with various projects such as marking displays in the interpretative center, hiking trail management and providing assistance coordinating scout and school tours on nature walks as well as volunteer as weekend guides on the trails. Cindy felt we will learn ourselves as we assist in teaching others. Cindy brought a schedule and hopes our members can work with the park officials. You do have to sign up online ahead of time and they require a background check, all online, and with these you can qualify to go to the park and work. Cindy feels this will be a great place to get involved and reminded us that our volunteer hours put much needed dollars into the coffers of Texas Parks and Wildlife, who are our group's sponsors. Cindy reported that Barbara Swanson is a park employee and also a member of our group, but Cindy will have to check and report back on who precisely it is that we need to go through to volunteer. Perhaps Lisa Resneck? Stephen F. Austin will be added to our website as one of our activities so do count the hours you volunteer there. It was reported that the park has other great volunteers who you will enjoy knowing, for example there is a birder guy who was really wonderful and is a great resource.

Vice President—Margaret Lamar reported on the fun Austin field trip. It was a great mix of social time and learning. The schedule was ambitious! There was a guided tour and free time at the LBJ wildflower center, the West Cave Reserve Canyon had exciting surprises—wild orchids,

even in summer, waterfalls, caves where members saw bats looking into a hole in the cave. It was very ecologically diverse. As they made their way back out of the canyon, there was a lot of plant id time, then a meal and bat tour with a really interesting guide. Margaret reported that seeing the bats from the water silhouetted against sky at sunset was remarkable. Overall she felt this was a great outing combining field experience, social time, and having great fun! This was a different format than usual field experience and it was felt we should do something like this at least annually. Others present agreed that we should do more outings and that getting out of our local ecology also was a good thing. Margaret felt that this made summer, which is otherwise often a down time, more active and interesting. The general consensus was to plan another summer outing next year and Margaret said she would organize that again.

Margaret also reported that the median age of those visiting parks in Texas is 55 and up and that this makes it even more important to form partnerships to get children into nature. She reported that regional coalitions are forming to do that. There is one in Houston and in Austin there is a children in nature collaborative. Here we're looking at Lake Summerville, and Margaret feels this region needs its own children in nature collaborative in schools. Master Naturalists are helping with conceptual ideas and will be invited to be part of the work on the ground. Some examples are health projects with children, nature and health, a mobile outreach bus with healthy food, healthy nature unit to parks, churches, schools, and talks about wildlife in that space. She feels MN are people who know what to look for, to interpret wildlife and help others id what is there, etc. Foundations and organizations are being approached for grants and some are allowing their employees to work in this program but currently it is unfunded. MN's are being called in to help offer classes, educational trunks in school, etc.

Margaret has been surprised in her work to find children reporting back that they have never had a walk in the woods and they are grateful for the outing. She finds this surprising because Brenham is not exactly a city but parents don't have values anymore to take their children out in nature. She feels that as MN's "we're sort of a flagship" even in the rural communities.

Margaret requested our board consider us being involved as a mentor for the teachers or facilitators of projects and queried about the hours of study on our part, which this would require. She felt we should get hours for education when we study to be a person of authority on a certain topic. Cindy Rodibaugh concurred saying preparation can be called volunteer hours and there was some discussion that it could be classified as AT hours if it is hard research involved such as reading books. Cindy felt we could count it for either, but cautioned everyone to remember that if you count time as AT hours, then over 40 hours there is no benefit to Texas Parks and Wildlife as there is with volunteer hours. Those wanting to count as AT hours were asked to specify what you are training for and what you have done in the training. For example Top 10 research can be counted at AT. Obviously this needs to be real research, not just watching TV but if you are unsure then check with others about how to count your hours.

Lastly, Margaret felt that an education track along with conservation issues, etc. might help encourage people to commit to MN training and be something helpful to talk to them about

at recruiting. She felt that the idea of connecting children to nature might encourage more to come and be Master Naturalists.

Treasurer—Carol Daniels reported a balance of \$10,377.30. The last training expenses have come in, hospitality from graduation, etc. She reported on the board's discussion of new class expenses, which have been running at a loss. The board's recommendation is that class fees will have to be raised to \$160 per person or \$300 per couple. It was felt that an early bird discount would also be desirable. After Dec. 1st it was decided the price would rise to \$175 per person and \$325 per couple, if materials are shared by the couple. This would mean we could turn a slight profit rather than losing money. The Board also looked at last year's dues, donations, and corporation donations, etc. Income, even if everyone pays, is projected to be a smaller amount because we will have fewer matching monies, donations etc. It was felt that we need to carry our mission but not be extravagant. After discussion it was felt that we would hold the dues to \$25 per person or family if paid by Feb. 1st, but after that raise it to \$30 per family so we can both plan for the year and get money in a timely manner. A committee printout was available to see an overall expenses breakdown. The members present were in agreement with the new fees and dues suggested by the board.

Committee Reports

Membership—Carol Daniels reported 888.5 volunteer hours turned in for the second quarter. See report.

Kathy Cihlar received her certification pin and was commended for her fabulous articles in our newsletter. It was reported that the newsletter has been lots of fun to read and everyone felt she does a very good job.

Highlights of membership are that Toni Platt recertified and received her 250 hours dragon fly pen. John Platt and Carol Daniels received milestone pens for 500 hours and Randy Reddemann has reached 1000 hours.

After discussion it was felt that the Field Trip was designed as a social however if anyone was one or two hours short of AT you can use those to supplement and could count the amount of time spent in programs on the 3 tours as 3 hours AT. This was approved and the rest approved to be social time and thus does not count.

Tom pointed out that at the MN annual convention AT is a major part of the state meeting. Many presentations are equivalent to attending several training classes and if you are presenting as a volunteer, those hours count as volunteer hours. Attending the presentations and learning there is counted as AT hours. Margaret Lamar is, for example, doing a presentation on children and nature Friday night at the state meeting and that is volunteer hours for her. The MN Agenda is posted online and all are encouraged to attend and enjoy this great function while gaining AT hours.

Carol Daniels reported that we have to redo our hour worksheets because they must be correctly signed and dated. We need to redo our sheets where we got our records caught up and date them for the time of the work, not the time of latest submission. Please SIGN your

sheet and date it, 2010 if it is for 2010 hours, etc. We may be on an electronic system early next year. If that happens and you report electronically, then at the electronically signed portion of the file be sure and change the date at each quarter when you sign them. Do not use the same date! Resubmit and sign in for today's meeting also. The sheets go to Larry Pierce who is our sponsor. Cindy thanked our membership chairman for her hard work in getting all our records up to date and filed.

Training--Bill Dudley sent his report to Nita Tiemann to be presented. So far five speakers are confirmed. They are still looking for a birder and making good progress on the schedule. Classes will be held at Winedale and we are signed up for the AgriLife Building in LaGrange for the days when Winedale is not available. Nita offered her B&B for presenters so that they can sleep over on the two nights we have to meet in La Grange. Cindy Rodibaugh pointed out that the AgriLife facilities are free and that helps our budget. Training is also looking at another Fish and Wildlife guy who could do the plant presentation also as a backup plan. January 28 is orientation and April 29th set for graduation. The classes will be scheduled on Monday nights, from 6-9 pm, as last year. Several members shared information about possible presenters. Marian Webber who is with the State Audubon Society was recommended.

Website---Madeline Johnson has been reviewing other MN websites with the objective of improving ours. TX AgriLife is upgrading the server so we have an opportunity to upgrade our website. Madeline would like to consider a new format and needs info from users and non-users. Her objective is to streamline the site: opening page, overview of who we are as a chapter, members page link, volunteer info, AT info, form brochures, anything a member would be interested in and not password protected. Meeting dates have always been there but usually on front page. Interested in becoming a member page...recruiting, next training session, form/application, etc. Then have a resources link. Links across the top of the page reduced from 7-8 to 4. Most common problems are finding the forms. Links would drop down to forms. Feedback was that online forms do work. Upcoming events, forums, calendar what most said they use. Madeline will try to do a Google calendar if you want it and it can link with your phone. Want just basic calendar, meetings, training, and scheduled work days that OUR chapter schedules. Permissions for committee heads to update their materials is probably only thing going to be protected. Communications issues discussed. One possible solution suggested was to set up an auto email to membership. Madeline appealed to members to send any pertinent dates or info you have to update the website. The newsletter comes out only every other month and things need to be listed sooner. An active calendar means people can see who we are and what we are doing.

Madeline wants it to be engaging. A popular new format is to have a slide show where we could showcase things. Madeline would be happy to do this but said one of her biggest problems is that she needs photos and now that she doesn't personally go to a lot she isn't taking her own photos as much anymore and needs those from others. Please submit photos to Madeline!

Cindy Rodibaugh prompted everyone to use the website and to give feedback of other ideas which would make you use the website more. She reminded everyone that the resources page

has a lot of links. If you have ideas about how you would like to organize the resources page please see Madeline.

Margaret Lamar inquired if we want to provide resources for children on our website or newsletter? Perhaps links out to other sites for children? She felt that might be appropriate especially for home schoolers. There was some discussion to limit it to the top websites or you'll have too many links and often not to good sites such as video games links, etc. Dave Redden felt we might rather put a list and list WHY you think that link is good in a brief sentence. For example: "This link is a good one for butterflies in our area."

It was discussed that as a resource for new users you get one shot at a website and it has to engage them quickly. A slide show format allows you to do that and means the whole page is always dynamic. There was some discussion that we represent a certain geographic area and some chapters have chosen to become experts on their geographic area and have on the website that sort of info along with recruiting and being a resource for the area. This would however be a big project and require multiple people to be involved.

Charlotte Von Rosenberg reported working with Jim Willis, a founder of the Wildlife Habitat Federation and Jim Blessinger, a rural mail carrier in Austin county, who knows where every patch of prairie is. LuAnn and Lefty Yarnold, Charlotte and Jim Weatherly met up in Industry to look at native prairie remnant sites--there is one near downtown Cat Springs. Satellite pictures show if has never been ploughed-meeting one of the criteria for determining native prairie. The process of investigating native prairie requires going on private property and scheduled visits must be planned with owner which requires knowing how many people will show up, so please let Charlotte know if you'd like to be part of this process and she will call you regarding where and when to meet up. Charlotte could coordinate a list and deal with the responders.

Prairie Committee--Belinda Weatherly sent her report to Cindy to be presented. Charlotte Von Rosenberg and Belinda have been very active. They have been touring to identify native prairies along with Jim and have identified three; the owners have been contacted and offered a sign. Our outreach continues to pay off as few years ago, at Cat Spring, the chapter presented signs to 5 landowners who have native prairies. There is information on the website to help people ID flora and grasses. Information on an Oct 19th program on native grasses and prairie registration for \$15 was also discussed. Cindy had a phone number available for preregistration. Jim monitors the blue bird boxes and had nothing to report at this time as the boxes are dormant.

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Charlotte know if you'd like to be part of this process and she will call you regarding where and when to meet up. Charlotte could coordinate a list and deal with the responders.

Charlotte added, on November 9, 2012, at Cat Springs, Jim Willis has organized a program that will relate to cattlemen and wildlife management as it will highlight prairie restoration efforts used in his inspired development of a wildlife corridor that extends almost to the Atwater Prairie Chicken Reserve. Also, the Brenham Greenhouse project is starting up. Now is the time to collect seeds on your property...parsons pea, arm weed anything. We're now getting the seeds ready to plant at the greenhouse. Ripe seeds should fall off when you touch them. Charlotte brought several labeled bags of seeds for members to take home. Cindy R reported attending a program at Atwater Prairie Chicken Reserve and received training on how to collect seeds and propagation by the plant materials center in Kingsville. Their germination rate was abysmal. The germination of our first plantings at the greenhouse was great! Feedback from members on plants adopted at our May meeting did well and went to seed!

Recruiting--Judy Deaton reported that it is going well so far. We have had a presence in newspapers and the word is going out through members. Judy encouraged members to look for community events coming up where we could go and be a presence for recruiting.

Social--Janet Jarrell needs help on where we can have the Christmas Social. 1st weekend of December 8th Plan on 60-70 people. 40 members attended last year's party. Suggestions offered included St. John's Church in Burton, and VIP room at the Washington County Fair Grounds. In addition to social time, we will have a short chapter meeting for the election of board members for 2013. Nominations are being accepted.

Program committee --Debbie Copeland reported today' program will be presented by Peggy Wallace and Valarie Boug. Two announcements were published La Grange paper and a "blurb" was printed in the Round Top news for public participation.

Volunteer Activity Reports

Outdoor Classroom: Margaret reports activity is happening even without funding. The community support great. Land days gets lots of volunteers, TPW days need more volunteers coming consistently. Lots of October dates coming up. ML will get out those dates to volunteers and they count on us. Those will be at Nails creek. ML will send to CR to send on to everyone and put it on website.

Fyi-Round Top Library Summer Series: Susan Solari thanked the Round Top Library for their partnership. The space was free to us and it helped us and them. There was lots of interest in the programs and different people came to different programs. We are still getting feedback. Donations more than covered the costs of speakers. She wondered if a freewill donation jar for our speakers might also be a good idea. She encouraged anyone interested in Top Ten presentations to come forward as that is the sort of thing we would love at the library. It is a great way to get AT and Volunteer hours while getting our MN chapter notice. She thanked all who made this a success.

Houston Toad Training Survey: Toni Platt reported not enough people had signed up for training for future surveys.

Festival Hill: A workday is planned for the Sept. 26th at 9 a.m. at Festival Hill to cut down various invasives.

Newsletter: Carol Paulson reported that we had a short newsletter and that she appreciates all photos and news! Please email it to her and she is happy to put it all together with dates, features, etc. Carol said she is happy to publish the newsletter!

Nominating Committee Cindy Rodibaugh chairs this committee and has been contacting some people for next year. However, if you know of somebody who would like to take a position or think they would be a good fit for a position please let Cindy know. This is an ongoing process!

Members were reminded of the Lone Star Water forum,s which will be presented again this year in October. All are encouraged to attend.

There was discussion of a new app for birders available on Smartphones and the i-phone for 99 cents. Peterson's guide to birds is available at the aps store and the Audubon guide is \$30 dollars, so you might want to check out this initial offer, which includes pictures, info background and everything on one page. It was also reported that the President of Midcoast's MN group does migratory bird tours on the weekends.

Motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 11:18.

Respectfully submitted,

Lemae Higgs, Secretary