

Texas Master Naturalist - Gideon Linsecum Chapter

Chapter Meeting January 23, 2021

Virtual Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by President Betsy Palkowsky. Officers Present were President and Vice President. There were 49 members signed in. The November 21, 2020 chapter meeting minutes were approved as printed.

President's Report – Betsy Palkowsky

Betsy thanked everyone for their continued support and volunteer efforts.

Nominations - A Nominations Committee (Chris Morrison, chair, Ken English, and Donna Mueller) has been appointed to submit a slate of officers for the 2022-2024 term. Election will be held at the November, 2021 meeting.

TMN Tuesdays 2021 - Virtual Advanced Training will be offered the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 12:00 – 1:00 by the state. February presenter is Doug Tallamay author of "Nature's Best Hope". These are approved for AT for our members.

Return to Service - Latest TMN guidelines are: In-person meetings are allowed. Masks are mandatory at all gatherings. Indoor events must provide at least 100 sq ft/per person attending event (e.g. 20 people, at least 2000 sq ft) to allow 10 ft. social distancing. Outdoor events require 6 ft. social distancing. Additional information is available on the state website <https://txmn.tamu.edu>

Treasurer's Report and Budget Review

The proposed budget was presented by Betsy and open for questions and comments. Chris Morrison reminded folks that while the income vs. expenses looks bad we do have considerable savings in the bank and we rarely spend all that is proposed. Judy Deaton asked that we remind everyone what the Memorial Fund is about which Betsy described to attendees. The budget was unanimously approved as presented.

Secretary's Report

Betsy reported that Linda has sent Code of Ethics forms to all Officers and Directors. They must be signed and returned annually.

Vice President - Mark Brown

Advanced Training topic for the January meeting will be white tail deer by Clint Faas, TPWD Wildlife Biologist.

March AT is open. Mark asked if the chapter members would be interested in having a solar panel expert talk to the chapter about the science and environmental impact of solar panels. Many members said yes and it was agreed that the March meeting would be on Solar power, he May meeting will be

with the Ducks Unlimited representative. July could be the CoCohRas presenter or we could arrange to have this done at any time as the speaker requested the meeting be a virtual meeting.

The Coastal Prairie Native Seed Project has been put on hold as they look for a new location to plant their crops. A call for help to collect seeds will be sent out soon.

Director Reports

Communications – Lori Buffum

Many thanks to our webmaster Sheri Wilcox for keeping the website up to date. Please let Sheri or Lori know if something needs to be fixed or added. The website team needs more volunteers, particularly for keeping the Event Calendar up to date. Our Facebook page continues to do well with great discussions and so much good information to learn. Please join. Thanks also to Jamie Lee Manning for her excellent newsletters with way more content than ever before. The Special Edition of the Newsletter honoring all our 2020 volunteer award winners was sent out about a week ago. Let Lori know if you are not getting the newsletters.

Marketing - Ken English

Publicity magnets are in and ready to be used at upcoming marketing events (Ken showed everyone the magnet). Ken will work with Kara Matheney regarding this year's "New Landowner Program" so that we can safely setup our tri-fold at the meetings. Because of Covid restrictions, we will be limited to two volunteers at each. He will put out a call for volunteers. Stacie Villarreal is the new Austin County Agent. Ken reminded us that members are the best marketing tool.

Membership - Chris Morrison

Chris gave an overview of 2020 activity. There were eight initial certifications, 43 annual re-certifications, five 250-hour and five 500-hour milestones. Members logged 5637.9 volunteer and 1363.5 AT hours. All who logged at least 1 volunteer hour and 8 AT hours will be receiving the special 2020 "GRIT" pin, probably arriving in February.

Training - John Gardner

There are 16 trainees in the class, which begins on Monday, January 25. John is excited we can meet in person again. The Washington County Fairgrounds Sales Building is booked for the first three meetings. This should be plenty of space for the second and third meeting. We will still do the first meeting virtually because instructions have already been sent out. Buddies will be identified during the first class. If you signed up to be a buddy please attend Monday's class.

Education – Donna Mueller

The Fayette County Ag Safety days will be virtual this year. Austin County is scheduled for in-person, but could change. Other counties have not scheduled theirs. Scholarship applications have been sent to all our counties. Donna will work with Kara Matheney and other county agents when the vetting process begins in May.

Volunteer Service Projects – Jaci Elliott

Jaci thanked everyone that has sent in their presentation description for the Virtual Project Fair. The Chapter Virtual Project Fair will be a few one-hour sessions (counts as AT) in February. Project leaders will spend about 10 minutes describing their projects and how chapter members can volunteer to help with them.

Project Updates

Cindy Rodibaugh said the next Fayette County Agrilife Center Garden maintenance day will be Feb 9th. She also said she has asked Scott Wiley if she can plant some milkweed plants. Since the project is too small to qualify for the milkweed grant she was wondering if another project would go in with her to purchase a flat of milkweed.

Mary Ann Butler said the next Adopt-A-Highway work day will be Feb. 10. She also said they have extra bags and vests for anyone that is doing their own highway pick-up (extension of this project).

Tom Shaughnessy said he will have a SFA park activity soon and will let folks know when it is.

Ann Ray reported on Indian Creek Park. Previously removed ligustrum has been burned by Burton Fire Chief. No more ligustrum can be put on the pile until after April 17.

Lori Buffum encouraged members to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, the City Nature Challenge, and other citizen science programs that use iNaturalist and/or eBird apps.

Volunteer Appreciation – Chris Morrison and Lori Buffum

Chris and Lori presented the names and faces of chapter members that have received initial or re-certification from Dec 4, 2019 (last time we had a Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony) through the end of 2020. Also highlighted were members that received their 250 and 500 hour milestones. Thanks to all who have participated in the last year.

Next Board Meeting is March 5, 2021 – Ken English volunteered his backyard for the meeting

Next Chapter Meeting is March 20, 2021 – location is to be determined. A chapter member asked if it could be virtual as well as in-person since some folks will continue to stay home.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

After a short break, a program on White-tailed Deer was presented by Clint Faas, TPWD Wildlife Biologist. There were 37 attendees signed in.

Submitted by

Chris Morrison for Linda Esco