

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
February 21, 2007**

Present:

Dan Behringer, Cathy Downs, Betty Gardner, John Huecksteadt, Marilyn Murrmann, Phyllis Muska, Bill Perkison, Donna Robinson, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley

Absent: Jerri Workman

Note: The Board meeting scheduled for January 17, 2007 was canceled due to a major ice storm. Some discussion of agenda items was held via e-mail. No decisions were made.

The February meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by President Phyllis Muska.

Chapter Advisors for 2007: Phyllis announced that Mike Lloyd of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be our new advisor after Amy Sugeno moved away last year. Mike is a TPWD Natural Resources Coordinator for 11 State parks and natural areas in the Hill Country area. Mike lives in Bandera and works in the Kerrville TPWD office. Before moving here, Mike had been a Texas Cooperative Extension agent and had worked in Palo Duro State Park with TPWD.

Roy Walston, the Kerr County Cooperative Extension agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources will continue to be our TCE Chapter Advisor.

Treasurer's Report: Marilyn Murrmann reported we have \$4,788.69 in our bank account. Marilyn also provided a summary of our 2006 income and expenses by category. Copies of these reports are appended to the archival copy of the Minutes.

Refunds for Certifying Members of our Class of 2006: As an encouragement to achieve certification as TMNs between October 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007, the Class Fee of \$150 for the Class of 2006 included a \$50 deposit to be refunded upon a member's certification. Discussion occurred on the various ways this refund could be made. Betty Gardner moved to give the Class of 2006 members their dragonfly pin, TMN certificate, and a check for \$50 upon certification. The motion was seconded by Dan Behringer and carried.

The Board was pleased to learn that three members of the Class of 2006 will certify at our February chapter meeting.

Role for New Class Representative on the Board: After some discussion, the Board recommended that Bill Perkison might work with Communications Director Donna Snow Robinson on promotion of our chapter and/or work with Membership Director John Huecksteadt on membership work.

Class Fee for the Class of 2007: After some discussion, Dan Behringer moved to keep the 2007 class fee at the same level as the 2006 fee, which was \$150, with a \$100 class fee and a \$50 refundable deposit upon certification within 15 months from October 1, 2007. The motion was seconded by Cathy Downs and carried.

Application for the Class of 2007: Class Curriculum Director Cathy Downs is reviewing the 2006 application and updating the information with input from John Huecksteadt.

Class of 2007 Size: Cathy indicated that the Class Planning Committee was ready to accommodate up to 36 members in the Class of 2007.

Class of 2007 Application Period: Cathy announced that the training would begin on August 27 and end on November 14th. The typical application period would thus run from April 22 to July 12 to allow the Board to review the applications at the July 18th Board meeting. Applicants would be notified of their acceptance or non-acceptance on or before August 1.

Cathy suggested beginning the Application Period before the usual time at Earth Day (around April 22) in an effort to permit more recruiting, especially in Bandera, Gillespie and Kendall counties which tend to be under-represented in our chapter. It was noted that Bandera and Gillespie counties have substantially lower populations than Kerr County. This year Cibolo Nature Center is having an event on April 7th which would provide an excellent opportunity to begin recruiting members in Kendall County. The Board agreed to support an Application Period from April 7th to July 12th this year.

TMN Recruiting Brochure: Communications Director Donna Snow Robinson reported that she is updating our TMN recruiting brochure that contains specific information about our chapter and our training course. Membership Director John Huecksteadt will be ordering more copies of the generic State TMN brochure for use before and after the annual Application Period.

Texas Lions Camp Barter Request: Cathy reported that the manager of the Texas Lions Camp had suggested that instead of having our Chapter pay the rental fee for the classroom that he would prefer to have one of his staff members be a trainee in the class. The Board discussed this request. The Texas Lions Camp can be considered a partner with our chapter since they have given us a reduced-rate classroom rental rate and allowed us to hold Advanced Training classes there as well. Our Chapter has provided educational signage and plant identification for their Nature Trail. The Camp employee will have to submit an application for our class. There is no guarantee that any trainee will become an active TMN. The Texas Lions Camp has 500 acres of mostly undeveloped land to manage, and they do teach nature education classes for their 1,500 campers each summer. Thus the Board agreed that having a Texas Lions Camp staff member potentially becoming a member of our Class of 2007 would permit that person to carry forward our mission of teaching more people about the beneficial management of natural resources. Dan Behringer moved that we go forward with this barter agreement. The motion was seconded by Donna Snow Robinson and carried.

January Chapter meeting approved as AT: After some discussion, Bill Perkison moved that the January program entitled “’Tis the Season for Burning” by Dusty Bruns, would qualify as **one hour of Advanced Training for our Chapter members who attended**. Dan Behringer seconded the motion and it carried. Dusty Bruns is the President of the Hill Country Prescribed Burning Association. His presentation included basic information on prescribed burning and its benefits in land management

Earth Day Nature Fair and Native Plant Sale at Riverside Nature Center on April 21: Secretary Priscilla Stanley described that while Down By the Riverside Nature Fair and Native Plant Sale in October is co-sponsored by our chapter and Riverside, the Earth Day event is co-sponsored by the Native Plant Society of Texas - Kerrville Chapter and Riverside.

Our chapter has begun our annual New Class recruiting at this Earth Day event by bringing our chapter booth and our Land Management Assistance Program display to attract attention to our recruiting and education efforts. This year the Earth Day theme is about water sources, management and conservation. Riverside has obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Kerrville a rain demonstration machine and an exhibit showing the negative impact of overgrazing native grasses. The NRCS is unable to attend the event to interpret these exhibits for the public, and thought that Master Naturalists might do this. The Board decided that it would be synergistic to have our TMN exhibits and rain and grazing management exhibits together. Donna Snow Robinson will assure that our TMN exhibits are at Riverside for the event and John Huecksteadt will recruit TMNs to man these booths in the shifts used by Riverside to facilitate volunteers moving between various jobs. The Nature Fair and Plant Sale runs from 8 AM to 4 PM. It should be noted that our TMN member Karen Millikan was able to obtain these two excellent exhibits from NRCS for this Nature Fair.

Archeology Fair: Phyllis reported that the Hill Country Archeology Association had asked for TMN support of their “Rendezvous on the River” Archeology Fair at Riverside Nature Center on Saturday, October 20th. Their letter indicated that they needed letters of support from two organizations to obtain a grant to fund the event. Our TMN – Riverside co-sponsored event, “Down By the Riverside” will be the Saturday before the archeology event. The support requested involved only sending a letter of support and having an exhibit at the event. After some discussion, the Board agreed that this event of 300 attendees offered another opportunity to introduce the public to the TMN program and our chapter. The letter of support will be provided.

TMN Chapter Annual Report: Phyllis thanked John and Priscilla for their work on the Annual Report, which is now available on our chapter website at www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org. Donna and John discussed the options for putting the appendices of member records on the website in a “Members Only” section.

Volunteer Project Clarification: John now provides technical support to the Fredericksburg Nature Center by managing their website. While this is not explicitly listed in the approved Project List it was decided that this would be covered by GL-04-A for the Fredericksburg Nature Center.

New Bird Project at Riverside Nature Center: Past-President Jim Stanley presented an opportunity for a new Volunteer project where our chapter would purchase hummingbird feeders and one or more TMNs would clean and fill them every three days and fill the bird feeders as well. Riverside would provide the sugar for nectar and the birdseed. The goal of this project is to develop new and improved birding opportunities for the public with the hummingbird feeders on the back porch with plenty of seating. This volunteer project would be included in KR-02-A for youth and adult education and visitor assistance at Riverside.

Proposed Plant ID Advanced Training (AT) in the spring: Jim proposed having our chapter offer three more native plant ID classes for Forbs, Trees and Grasses as AT for our chapter. If there was additional space, he also proposed inviting the Master Gardeners, the Native Plant Society of Texas and Riverside members to these classes. The classes might also be opened to the public. The Board agreed that educating more folks about native plants was always a worthy goal and part of our mission.

FAQ Update: Our chapter has had a Frequently Asked Questions document in previous years. Phyllis asked Priscilla to update this document. There was some uncertainty on the target audience for this document, whether it was for new members or all members. The Board decided that it should be written for all members and put in the new “Members Only” section of our website since it involves details of reporting hours, etc. which is not of interest to the public.

Promotion of the Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) in Fredericksburg: Phyllis asked Jim about plans to promote LMAP in the Fredericksburg and other areas. Jim indicated that we had had more participation in Gillespie County in 2006. There are TMN and LMAP displays in the Gillespie County Extension office. Later in the spring, promotion of LMAP will occur in one county at a time to assure that we have sufficient members to meet the demand. Jim will see if enough members are interested in this program to give the 6 hour LMAP 101 course again.

Parking Lot Lighting at Riverside: Vice-President Betty Gardner reported receiving a letter from the lady who fell in the parking lot before our November meeting thanking our members for helping her with their first aid. Betty was concerned that the parking lot should have additional lighting. Jim Stanley indicated that \$300 of low-voltage outdoor lighting had been purchased for the Riverside parking lot and was awaiting installation by volunteers.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, March 21 at 1:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla B. Stanley
Chapter Secretary