

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
December 12, 2007**

DECEMBER 2007 Board Meeting

Present:

Dan Behringer, Cathy Downs, Betty Gardner, John Huecksteadt, Marilyn Murrmann, Phyllis Muska, Donna Snow Robinson, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley, Lee Kneupper, Annie Rendon, Martha Miesch, Warren Ferguson

Absent: Bill Perkison, Jerri Workman

The December meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by President Phyllis Muska. The Board meeting was held a week earlier than usual to avoid meeting nearer the holidays.

1. Welcome to New Officers and Board Members: President Phyllis Muska introduced Warren Ferguson as the 2008 Vice-President, Martha Miesch as the 2008 Treasurer, Annie Rendon as the 2008 Class Training Director and Lee Kneupper of the Class of 2007 Representative. Jim Stanley will return as Chapter President for 2008. (The Communications Director position was discussed later in the meeting: see Item 6 below.) The remaining Officers and Directors accepted a second term.

2. Chapter Holiday Party: Our holiday party, held on Saturday, December 1 at the restaurant in Lady Bird Johnson Park in Fredericksburg, was a great success with 71 attendees, including members, spouses and partners, and 4 guests of the Chapter. The total cost was \$192. The income for the event consisted of \$710 from ticket sales (71 tickets at \$10 each) and \$288 for wine & beer (at \$2.50/drink). Thus the total income was \$998, with a cost of \$92 to the Chapter. The hors d'oeuvres and cocktail party format facilitated members and spouses mingling to meet our new members and their spouses. The Board expressed its appreciation for the excellent work by members of the Holiday Party Committee, including Sharon Corley, Jane Crone, Phyllis Muska, Dan Behringer, Virginia Sawin, Mary Frances Watson, John Huecksteadt, Charlie Randal, Bill Burns and Sharon Rodriguez

3. Possible New Volunteer Project at Guadalupe State Park and Honeycreek State Natural Area: Advanced Training (AT) Director Dan Behringer reported that Craig Hensley, a TPWD Wildlife Biologist and Park Interpretative Specialist, had invited our chapter members to participate in a series of classes on topics such as bird banding, bird identification, astronomy, Project Wild, spring wildflowers, butterflies and river ecology. These classes have been approved as AT for our chapter. Some of these classes could prepare a TMN to volunteer at these TPWD facilities.

Dan noted that while our chapter has previously approved AT outside the four country area served by our chapter, most of our Volunteer Projects are within our Bandera, Gillespie, Kendall and Kerr county area. The Board discussed that this volunteer work would be for one of our TMN sponsors, TPWD, and involves natural resources. The Board felt that it was important to help our members find projects that interested them, especially for the members in the north and east of our area, who might benefit from having more projects to choose from. The Board did feel that if a potential Volunteer Project was in a county covered by another TMN chapter that we should contact that chapter to be sure that they knew about the project, could participate if they wished and didn't mind if our members worked on the Volunteer Project.

4. New Class Representative: Our Class of 2007 selected class member Lee Kneupper to be their representative on the Board of Directors. President Phyllis Muska noted that if the New Class Representative is unable to attend a Board meeting, he or she is encouraged to have another class member attend in his place to let more new members see what our Board does.

Lee will also be our new Database Manager maintaining our Chapter's Volunteer and Advanced Training hours on the TMN State database. Fortunately, Lee has prior professional experience with Access databases.

5. Clarification of rules about working for other organizations' Boards or in offices: The guidance from the State TMN office in the form of specific examples that are "Bad/Unacceptable, Better, Best" in 2006 have been very helpful in clarifying this area. Our policy had been that serving on the board of another organization, even if it was nature-oriented, did not count as TMN volunteer work. Last year we began looking at the actual work. For example, a Director for Riverside Nature Center (RNC) whose job is to organize semi-annual nature festivals with educational presentations can count his time as TMN Volunteer hours since it involves primarily nature education for the public, and RNC meets the TMN definition of a "partner", providing mutual benefits, such as low-cost meeting space and TMN provides volunteer work.

Jim Stanley indicated that Jane Crone had asked if working in the State Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT) office in Fredericksburg could be a Chapter Volunteer project. The duties include answering the phone and talking with visitors which often involve an inquiry on native plants. After some discussion, 2008 Vice-President Warren Ferguson moved that working in the State NPSOT office be approved as a Volunteer Project for our Chapter. 2008 Treasurer Martha Miesch seconded the motion, which carried.

. **Communications Director responsibilities:** Communication Director Donna Robinson indicated that she had taken on new responsibilities of other organizations which precluded her being the 2008 Communications Director; however, she is willing to continue to serve as our Internal Communication Chair and thus the editor for our Chapter newsletter. It will be necessary to appoint a new Communications Director. Donna has a submission deadline of the 10th of the month for the monthly newsletter.

7. Ideas for Replacement of External Communication Chair: Sharon Corley served well in this position in 2007, but cannot continue due to family health issues. Sharon obtained program information from the Vice-President, who provides our programs, wrote the press releases and e-mailed them to the thirteen newspapers in our four county area. While the Communications Director has in the past served as the Chapter's Internal Communication Chair, which entails writing the newsletter, there is now a need for an External Communication Chair. It is possible that in 2008 the Communications Director can serve as the External Communication Chair instead. The Communications Director also oversees the Special Information Distribution Chair who distributes TMN recruiting brochures to various locations in the community, personally and by mailing them to members in other counties who agree to place the brochures.

8. Potential Grant Opportunities for our Chapter: Past-President Jim Stanley suggested the possibility of providing some funding to help the Kerr County 4H teams attend competitive events. Recently Kerr County teams have won at the State level in Range Judging for 2 years and in Wool. Roy Walston had indicated that some 4H members need financial assistance to attend these events.

The Board agreed that this was a good potential grant, and that we should see if Kendall County had a similar need.

Secretary Priscilla Stanley noted that Riverside Nature Center is planning a series of raised beds to demonstrate the use of native plants in Hill Country landscapes. Often new residents come to Riverside for help in selecting plants for their landscapes. The beds will showcase native perennials for sun and shade and will be deer-fenced. Another adjacent bed will contain some of the same plants without fencing to allow visitors to draw their own conclusions on the impact of deer on the landscape. The Board agreed that this would also be a potential grant opportunity to contribute to the purchase of the native plants.

President Phyllis Muska shared the other potential grant ideas she had received:
Virginia Sawin proposed signage for the Fredericksburg Nature Center trails.

Jim Gardner proposed materials for work in Kerrville-Schreiner Park.

Cathy Downs proposed a kiosk for the Kerrville-Schreiner Park Butterfly Garden, which currently has programs in Monarch larval monitoring and as a Monarch way-station.

Cathy Downs also proposed funding for enhanced native plant gardens at C.A.M.P. Camp in Center Point.

Warren Ferguson proposed buying a laptop and projector for the chapter.

9. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Marilyn Murrmann reported a starting balance of \$5,970.75. The total expenses were \$1,073.11, including \$95 for two program speaker honoraria, \$40 for newsletter postage, \$50 for a tuition refund for a certifying member of the Class of 2006, \$196.42 for the Class of 2007 commencement lunch and \$691.69 for partial expenses for the Chapter Holiday Party. Income was \$710 from sales of 71 party tickets. The new balance is \$5,607.64.

10. Program for January 28th Chapter Meeting: Vice-President Betty Gardner reported that our January meeting will be "**A Tribute to Lady Bird Johnson: My Reflections**" by Dr. Damon Waitt, Senior Botanist at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin. Dr. Waitte also serves as the Wildflower Center's botanical authority and is the Director of the Wildflower Center's National Native Plant Information Network.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM for discussions between outgoing and new Officers and Directors. These discussions continued until 4:15 PM.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, January 23 at 1:30 PM at Riverside Nature Center. Hill Country Chapter members and Advisors are always welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla B. Stanley
Chapter Secretary