

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter  
Board Meeting  
June 20, 2007**

**REVIEW OF MAY ACTION ITEM STATUS: ALL COMPLETED**

**Action Item A.** Purchase 7 *Water from Stone* books from the Bamberger Ranch, and have them signed - **Betty Gardner - Completed**

**Action Item B.** Make acknowledgement plates for each book – **Phyllis Muska - Completed**

**Action Item C:** Send out a reminder to our members and prospective members receiving our newsletter of the change in meeting location for May, with a map to help folks not familiar with UGRA find it – **Phyllis Muska – Completed - 5/16/07**

**ACTION ITEM D:** Send a list of TMN volunteers for the Earth Day event to Donna Robinson to include in our newsletter expressing appreciation for their volunteer service– **Priscilla Stanley – Completed 7/14/07**

**JUNE 20, 2007 Board Meeting**

**Present:**

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

**Absent:** Cathy Downs, Bill Perkison, Jerri Workman

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

**1. Wildscape Project at TPWD office in Kerrville:** Vice-President Betty Gardner had investigated a report to her that the TPWD Wildscape needed some work, and the sign indicates that it is maintained by Master Naturalists. She determined that our chapter had inherited this project after the 2004 TMN State meeting project installed the wildscape several years ago without a continuing care plan. To date, the only volunteers on this project have been Priscilla and Jim. Priscilla had spent 2 hours in the wildscape in late April. We agreed to publicize this project to our membership in hopes of attracting additional volunteers. Since it is a wildscape, it is a naturalistic setting, thus volunteers must be able to differentiate between the small native plants and native grasses and the weeds and invasive grasses. Fortunately, the wildscape is relatively small and can be weeded in just a few hours every 6 weeks or so (except during this unusual monsoon-like weather).

**Action item A. Check on the wildscape and improve its appearance. - Priscilla Stanley**

**Completed:** On June 21, Priscilla and Jim spent an hour at the wildscape weeding, cutting boxelders etc. They found 4 small plant identification signs had fallen over. These were removed for repair. The wildscape looks quite good since all the rain we have had even brought back the native passionflower vines we haven't seen in 2 years. The coral honeysuckle vines, caged by TPWD, are also doing well, despite being in planted in shade. The deer have not eaten all the leaves off the possumhaw this year as in previous years. Two *Salvia greggii* died from the wet soil and were removed.

It should be noted that several TPWD employees have watered the wildscape, and Teresa at the TPWD office explains the desired maintenance to the workers from the local jail who have done a very careful job in the wildscape.

**Action item B. Publicize this project to see if other members might want to help. - Priscilla**

**2. Treasurer's Report:** Marilyn Murrmann reported we have a new balance of \$5228.70 in our bank account. A copy of the Treasurer's Report is appended to the hard copy of the Minutes. Expenditures were \$175 to purchase 7 copies of the Bamberger Ranch Preserve book on land management to donate to the 7 public libraries in our chapter's four county area, and \$50 for gifts for speakers at our chapter meetings.

**3. AT for May meeting?** The Board agreed that two chapter-sponsored events last month qualified as Advanced Training for our chapter members who attended.

**Our May 21<sup>st</sup> chapter meeting on "Our Vanishing Texas Springs" by Chad Norris, of the Water Resources Branch of TPWD, qualifies as one hour of AT.**

**The follow-up Field Trip to Spring Creek Spring in Boerne, led by Dr. Bill Ward and Susan Sander for geology and native plants qualifies as 2 hours of AT.**

**4. AT pre-approval policy:** A Chapter Management Guideline from July 2002 was found requiring that all AT must be pre-approved before a member attends the AT. This document dates back to before our first class began and before we had any officers or Board. A communication with the first Chapter President, Sandy Pena, indicated that this had not been their intent. Thus the Board voted unanimously to change this provision to “The AT Director must pre-approve all AT opportunities before a member reports the hours. This allows a member to attend a course and then provide information on the course content to the AT Director for a determination of whether or not the course meets the requirements for AT. If so, then the member can report the time in the course as AT.

The Board noted that it is most desirable for a member to share the information on classes that are potentially AT with the AT Director in advance to allow the AT Director to determine if the class is AT, and if so, then share information on that class with all chapter members.

**5. Membership Director’s Report:** John Huecksteadt reported that of the 43 names on our prospective member list, 6 had missing or incorrect mailing or e-mail addresses. From the 37 application packets that he had successfully mailed to prospective members, he had received 7 completed applications to date. This was comparable to some earlier years, since folks tend to wait until the deadline. John worked with our Communications team of Sharon Corley and Donna Snow Robinson put a second article in the newspapers and our newsletter announcing the upcoming closing of the 2007 Application period to become a TMN in our chapter. John also sent a friendly e-mail reminder to those who had received, but not returned, an application.

**6. Concerns About Additional Publicity for Our Chapter Meetings and Internal Publicity for Our Volunteer Projects:** While our Communications Committee has done an excellent job getting articles on our Chapter programs in the newspapers in our 4 county area, our meetings are not showing up in the Kerrville Daily Times Community Calendar. In the past, this has required a separate submission to a different department at the newspaper.

Our chapter Volunteer Project list contains approximately 60 projects (some project numbers include several projects, such as at Riverside Nature Center). The brief description in the Project table doesn’t provide members with enough information about a project to get them interested in participating. The New Class Curriculum Planning Committee plans to have one project coordinator speak to the trainees for 5 minutes about their project during each of the training classes.

It was also suggested that we could highlight a Volunteer Project of the Month in each newsletter to better explain our volunteer opportunities to the membership. The Volunteer Project table does list the TMN member serving as Project Coordinator for each project so a member could contact them, however it would be better to have more information available to our members to help them understand all the options available to them.

**Action Item C:** Check into how to list our chapter meetings in the Kerrville Daily Times Community Calendar – **Donna Snow Robinson or Sharon Corley**

**7. June and July chapter meetings:** Vice-President Betty Gardner reported that the June 25th chapter meeting will be a “Bring Your Own Picnic” at Phyllis Muska and Dan Behringer’s ranch. There will be a program at 5:00 PM on “Water Catchment for Potable Use” including a presentation and tour of their successful system, with the picnic around 6:00 PM, followed by an optional nature walk on the ranch. The Board decided that it would be easiest for everyone to bring their own food (vs. a potluck supper). The chapter will provide soft drinks and dessert.

Our July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting will be a presentation on “Conservation Easements and Land Trusts” by Carolyn Vogel of the Texas Land Trust Council in Austin.

**8. Library Donations Distribution:** The seven copies of *Water from Stone* by Jeffery Greene, which is a biography of David Bamberger, are being taken to the seven libraries within our four county area, including Fredericksburg, Kerrville, Harper, Medina, Comfort, Bandera and Boerne, by our members.

**9. Identifying the Partners with our Chapter:** President Phyllis Muska suggested that the Board review which of the organizations that the Chapter works with are and are not partners, defined by TMN as organizations providing a benefit to our chapter in return for service provided by our chapter.

**Riverside Nature Center is a partner** since we can hold all the meetings we want there each year for one \$50 non-profit organization membership fee, which is ~30-fold below the market rate for meeting rooms. Riverside also serves as our 7-day a week call center for landowners requesting Land Management Assistance Program site visits by our chapter members. Our chapter provides volunteer service in many capacities to Riverside.

**Cibolo Nature Center is a partner** because they allow a multi-chapter, Central Texas TMN Holiday Party at their facility with no charge each year. Our members participate in several volunteer projects at Cibolo.

The **Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville is a partner** because they have given us a discounted rate on the class training room in return for our identifying plants and making and installing signage on their Nature Trail. This year we will be having a Texas Lions Camp employee in our TMN Training Class in exchange for free room rental. The employee will be teaching nature to campers and learning about natural resources which will be beneficial in making land management decisions on the camp grounds. This employee will be an active TMN in our chapter.

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) is not a partner. We provide service to UGRA, but they do not offer any discount to us on room rental or provide any other benefit to us.

Fredericksburg Nature Center (FNC) is an excellent nature center with true native habitat. Our members enjoy volunteering there. FNC is not a partner because they currently have no facilities to offer us. Our meetings in Fredericksburg's Lady Bird Johnson Park shelter require rental fees payable to the city.

Thus, our chapter currently has three partners in 2007.

**10. Progress on the “Members Only” Area of our Chapter Website:** Our webmaster, Kim Whitaker, with the assistance of John Huecksteadt, a member and IT professional, has completed the “Members Only” area of the website. This area will contain Board Minutes and other information not of interest to the general public. This blind page can be accessed at [www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org/pricklypear](http://www.hillcountrymasternaturalist.org/pricklypear) This information will be e-mailed to our membership after the documents are available on the blind page.

**11. Speaker for the UT Retired Faculty and Staff group at Mo Ranch on November 9, 2007:** This group will be coming from Austin to Lost Maples State Natural Area and then on to Mo Ranch to spend the night. Jim Stanley has agreed to provide an after-dinner PowerPoint presentation at Mo Ranch on “Land Management in the Hill Country” including Deer and Oak Wilt.

**12. New Chapter Data Manager Will Be Needed:** Our Data Manager, Nyta Hensley, told Phyllis that she will continue her data entry duties until 2008, when we will need a new Data Manager. Nyta has held this position for the last year and a half. She has done a superb job of entering all our data in the State TMN Database and tracking all the Volunteer hours, AT and awards for our 121 members. This is an enormous and complicated task. The Board sincerely appreciates her service to our chapter, and her advance notice.

**13. 2007 Friend of the Chapter Award:** Phyllis Muska asked Board members to be thinking about possible candidates for our Friend of the Chapter award that is given to a non-chapter member who has provided exceptional service to our chapter. The award is a Copper Dragonfly and a recognition gift. Phyllis noted that past recipients have been: Susan Sander, Kip Kiphart, Bill Lindemann, Rufus Stephens and Amy Sugeno.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.

**Next Board meeting: Wednesday, July 18 at 1:30 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla B. Stanley  
Chapter Secretary