

**Texas Master Naturalist-Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
December 16, 2009**

Present: Laura Baker, Dan Behringer, Julie Clay, Steve Dodge, Cathy Downs, Jim Gardner, John Huecksteadt, Susan Longacre, Bob McKinley, Martha Miesch, Phyllis Muska, Sandy Pena, Tom Schall, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley, Gracie Waggener

Absent: Koy Coffey, Will Lummis

President John Huecksteadt called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. John welcomed all the new incoming Board members and visitors.

1. **Acceptance of Board Minutes for November Meeting:** The Board reviewed the November Minutes. Jim Gardner moved to approve the Minutes, and Jim Stanley seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
2. **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Martha Miesch presented the Treasurer's Report for November. The report was complete except for the expenses for the upcoming Holiday Party on to be held on December 19. Martha will turn the books over to Cathy Downs, incoming Treasurer, in January after the audit is complete. Steve Dodge moved to approve the Report, and Tom Schall seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.
3. **Holiday Party:** Martha Miesch reported to the Board that the Holiday Party plans were in order. The attendance response has been excellent. Last Chance Forever Bird Conservancy will present a program with their birds. Plans have been made to direct parking, and Julie Clay will re-send the invitation and map to members.
4. **New Class Committee:** John Huecksteadt and the Board thanked Bob McKinley for his excellent work as the Class Director for 2009, and the many hours Bob dedicated to the project. They also thanked him for his generous financial gift to the Chapter.

Bob reported that he is working with new Class Director, Tom Schall, to transition Tom into the job. Bob has been updating the Class Guidelines, finishing his duties as the Class Director. He will continue to keep up with the status of class members who need make-up work, and look for opportunities for make-up classes. He will be passing on the archival boxes to Tom.

Tom Schall reported that he has four members committed for the Class Committee for 2010, with one more member contacted, but not yet committed. Those agreeing to serve are Mary Frances Watson, Laura Baker, Reidun Hilleman and Norma Bruns. The first Committee meeting is scheduled for January 13.

Tom asked the Board to approve the starting date for classes as August 25, and ending November 17. This schedule would decrease the classes by one session, to 10 from 11. The Board approved the new schedule.

5. **New Class Guideline Revisions:** The New Class Revisions would set the classroom hours to a minimum of 45 hours, plus the field trips. It was suggested that some classes be reduced to minimize repetition in subject matter, and those topics be moved to Advanced Training afternoon classes, so interested students could obtain their eight hours of Advanced Training while in class. This was based on recommendations from the 2009 class.

Some changes in the level and order of the classes were recommended, including a session on how to use the Chapter website, and where to find information. The Board also discussed New Class budgets, speaker gifts, commencement lunch, class topics and speakers. A motion to approve the changes was placed by Tom Schall, and Julie Clay seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

6. **501(c)(3) Update:** John Huecksteadt reported that all the paperwork for the application to the I.R.S. was complete, and would be mailed after the Board meeting. Once the Chapter receives approval from the I.R.S., the Chapter will then have to apply to the State to be exempt from State sales taxes. Once this is done, the Chapter will be in a position to accept donations.

7. **Chapter Cookbook:** Phyllis Muska reported that there was a question of the Chapter printing and selling the Chapter Cookbook at Riverside Nature Center. It was decided that since the cookbook was on the Chapter website to download and print, selling the book would not be in our interest.

8. **TMN Fence Signs:** Phyllis Muska presented the sign prototype for the Board's approval. The sizes and prices were discussed by the Board. The sign will be debuted at the Holiday Party, with order forms on hand, and on the website to print and mail.

9. Officers and Directors Reports:

Advanced Training Steve Dodge reported that the AT Codes listed on the calendar were working very well for the Chapter, especially as some AT codes are listed after the event.

Steve also brought to the attention of the Board that there will be an upcoming forum presented by the Hill Country Alliance, Texas Wildlife Association, and several wildlife organizations, to cover ongoing Hill Country issues. This will be on February 22 and 23, with a reception on the 22nd at Becker Vineyards to honor David Langford, who is a noted Hill Country resident.

New Class Representative: Laura Baker reported that she is happy to have the opportunity, and is quite excited to serve on the Board for 2010. The Board welcomed her to her new position.

Communication Director: Phyllis Muska reported that she has transferred information to Susan Longacre. The Board welcomed Susan as the Communications Director for 2010.

Vice-President: Jim Gardner informed the Board that the Guzzler that was approved for Kerrville-Schreiner Park was going to be built. He also reported that bow hunting was in progress at the Park. There have been eleven deer harvested so far. The deer are more scattered this year, due to the Park banning the feeding of the deer.

A new project that will be coming up will be the rehabilitation and revegetation of Town Creek in the areas owned or controlled by the city of Kerrville. This will be a joint project that the Hill Country Master Naturalists will head up, and work with the Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society, and the horticulture classes from Tivy High School and Schreiner University.

Incoming Vice President Sandy Pena has been looking at speakers for the monthly meetings. In January, she has on the schedule the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife to address the power lines crossing the Hill Country. They will discuss the impact of the lines on natural resources and endangered species. In an effort to get the information out to the public, Sandy is looking for a larger venue for the January meeting, as she expects a significant public turnout.

The speaker for the meeting in February will be Mark Klym who will discuss hummingbirds.

Past President: Jim Stanley expressed his concerns with dropping classes from the New Class Schedule, and “dumbing down” the classes. He also expressed concern about having too much AT, and how many would be committed enough to attend, considering the long classroom hours already required.

He would also like to resume the Chapter Field Trips, and would like them to be in conjunction with the LMAP Program, which needs more volunteers who are trained. The Board will consider someone to head up this project.

Membership Director: Julie Clay reported that she will be turning over the Chapter records to Koy Coffey in January, and that the transition should be smooth.

Volunteer Projects: Priscilla Stanley reported that the Chapter again has new projects. CC-14-A will combine several Monarch Watch projects into one Chapter wide project. Enchanted Rock State Natural Area will have volunteers to take tour groups to the top of the dome, and to explain some of the features of the area. They are also working to preserve the vernal pools, and hope to be able to install signs to inform people of their fragile state. Kristie Denbow has established another new project at Kendall County Natural Area.

With all Board business completed, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, January 20, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. at Riverside Nature Center in the Nature Science Lab. All Hill Country Chapter members and advisors are always welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Gracie Waggener

Secretary