

Texas Master Naturalist - Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
January 19, 2011

Present: Koy Coffey, Anne Cassidy, Steve Clyburn, Vern Crawford, Cathy Downs, Reidun Hilleman, John Huecksteadt, Susan Longacre, Bob McKinley, Phyllis Muska, Lisa Williams.

Also attending: Sandy Leyendecker, Julie Murphy (from Illinois, friend of Vern Crawford)

President Phyllis Muska called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. Phyllis welcomed everyone and began by asking everyone to check their contact information for accuracy. She also recommended that the board stay with the same format (dates, times, procedures) which had been followed last year.

Acceptance of Minutes for December Meeting: The Board had reviewed the December minutes previously when they were distributed by email prior to the meeting. Cathy Downs moved to approve the minutes, and John Huecksteadt seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Cathy Downs presented the Treasurer's Report for December. She stated that our actual balance is presently \$8,243. We had \$2700 more in expenses last year, making the balance lower than the beginning of 2010. Vern Crawford moved to accept the report, and Susan Longacre seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Board and Chapter meeting schedule for 2011: Phyllis Muska stated that the board and chapter meetings would remain on the same schedule. **Chapter meetings are normally on the fourth Monday of the month; Board meetings are normally on the Wednesday before the chapter meeting.** The exceptions to this schedule are: In November, the Board will meet on November 14th (Monday) and the Chapter meeting will be November 21st. In December, the Christmas party will preclude the chapter meeting and the Board meeting will be scheduled for December 14 (Wednesday).

Chapter email address: Phyllis Muska reported that the Hill Country chapter has a general email address: hcmasternaturalist@yahoo.com Please let Phyllis know if you need to use it prior to doing so.

Role of New Class Rep to Board: Vern Crawford's (class of 2010) primary duties are representing the new master naturalists on the board of directors, participating on the New Class Committee and performing the duties of auditor for the class of 2011. Phyllis stated Vern was welcome to invite someone else from his class to attend a board meeting in his place if he is ever unable to attend.

New Webmaster: Dean Schmelling (class of 2010) has accepted the duties of webmaster for the Hill Country Chapter. Please send all postings which need to be made to the website to Dean. The chapter is most grateful to Dean for assuming this important responsibility.

David Langford gift: David Langford was recognized at the Chapter Holiday Party as a Friend of the Chapter. He was presented, at that time, with a gift card in recognition and appreciation for his contributions to the Chapter. David wishes to gift his Amazon gift card back to the chapter. After some discussion, it was decided to give the gift card to Lisa Williams, New Class Director, to use for the class of 2011.

Cathy Downs stated that we have a **tax exempt card from OfficeMax**. The card was given to Lisa Williams for use in preparing for the class of 2011. Any of the board members may use the number at OfficeMax to make purchases for the chapter. You may obtain the number from Lisa.

Phyllis Muska informed the board that **stationery for the chapter** may be purchased from the AgriLife bookstore. Several of the board members have an inventory of stationery which can be shared. John Huecksteadt suggested that we use a 'Word' template for the logo on the return address and send this to the board members.

Membership Director – Chapter Annual Report: Koy Coffey stated that the annual report was a team effort which involved many hours from Sandy Leyendecker, Julie Clay and herself. Sandy then explained the reporting of 'number of people reached'. Several board members pointed out that the mechanism for reporting this item was not accurate since every person involved in a project reported reaching the same number of individuals.

Clarifications: The project coordinator will report the number of individuals reached.

The volunteers working on the project will report the number of hours they worked. This is also the rule when covering trail miles or acres (LMAP leader).

Direct contacts – a presentation.

Indirect contacts – contact with the public at a booth.

Koy Coffey and Reidun Hilleman will write a policy statement and send to board members for review.

Sandy Leyendecker sends quarterly reports to the State on the chapter's volunteer efforts. It is imperative that people report their hours by the deadline. Otherwise the report may not accurately reflect our efforts.

John Huecksteadt offered a few corrections to the report, mainly typos. He stated that we needed to make an attempt to fill in ethnic percentages. Everyone agreed that those percentages were 99% white and 1% Hispanic.

Phyllis Muska thanked Sandy and Koy for their work on this report.

Speaker Evaluation Results: Reidun Hilleman presented the ratings for the speakers for the class of 2010. She stated that the ratings were good overall. None of the respondents thought that any of the speakers failed to provide appropriate information or weren't qualified. There were a few outliers, but nothing that would necessitate a change. Everyone generally liked the field trips, with Bamberger Ranch being the favorite and Hondo Creek being the least favorite – 86% favorable rating overall for the field trips. Reidun felt that any negative comments were

more personality traits of the individual class member. The board members stated that they would like to have an email summary of the results which Reidun said she would provide.

Review of Certification Requirements: Phyllis Muska noted that, in some cases, dragonfly certification pins were being awarded to class members before they had finished the class. She further stated that individuals needed to complete the required class hours since these hours plus volunteer hours were required to obtain Master Naturalist certification. The standard should be that the first new certifications would be awarded in December at the earliest, following the class commencement.

Other new class business: There is a **DVD available with pictures of the Class of 2010**. Class members will be asked to sign up if they wish to receive a copy.

2011 Budget: Cathy Downs presented a revised budget format which she, Phyllis Muska and John Huecksteadt had prepared. Cathy stated that the curriculum line item needed to be adjusted from 30 curriculum to 35. **We will need to purchase an additional 5 curriculum**, adding \$150 to that line in the budget.

Our income stream was addressed. At present, we have income from the plant sale at Down by the Riverside and our merchandise (HCMN hats, bags, shirts and gate signs). The merchandise is mainly purchased by our members. We are in need of other sources of revenue. There are a couple things we can do with our merchandise inventory. One would be to change the mix, the other would be to increase the inventory which would cost money. Three ideas surfaced to provide additional revenue: 1) Increase the budget to purchase more inventory. 2) Place PayPal on the website for donations. 3) Ask for membership dues. Communication with the membership would be necessary if any of these options are implemented. Susan would put the information on the website and in the newsletter.

Cathy suggested the line item 'Donations' be changed from \$1100 to \$600, then the other \$500 be placed in line item 'Project Grants'. This will be done.

Bob McKinley complimented Cathy on her budget presentation.

Upcoming Webinars – AT? - In the past, webinars have not been given AT. Since there are many more webinars available and it seems to be the classroom of the future, the board considered assigning AT to certain webinars relevant to Master Naturalists. Basic rules for this are:

1. Only webinars presented by our partners will be assigned AT codes.
2. Members are encouraged to view any previous webinars for their own enrichment, but at the present time, they are not approved for AT credit as they do not allow for interaction.
3. If anyone attempts to view a real time webinar (that has been assigned a code) and experiences technical difficulty so that it must be viewed at a later date, that webinar will still count for AT credit.

AT for Chapter Meetings: As long as the chapter meeting does not consist of internal business, an AT code will be assigned before the meeting.

Officers and Directors Reports:

2011 New Class: Lisa Williams reported that all speakers had been contacted and 80% have responded. The Kerrville Arts and Cultural Center has been reserved for the new class reception. Arrangements have been made again with the Lions Camp to hold classes there this Fall.

The only date available for the Bamberger Ranch field trip is October 30 which is a Sunday. The board felt that this was not a good day for this class trip. Plans will have to be made earlier for next year (2012) in order for the class of that year to be able to include this ranch in its schedule. Other ranches were suggested: Browning Ranch, managed by Scott Gardner, a friend of the HCMNs or Llano Springs Ranch which won a Land Stewardship Award in 2010. Koy Coffey offered to assist with this.

For the Hondo Creek field trip, Susan Longacre will contact the owner to set the date.

Bob McKinley suggested that the New Class Committee meet with the board to review the schedule. As an alternative, the class schedule will be emailed to the board to review. Bob also suggested that Steve Nelle be included among the speakers.

Volunteer Projects: Reidun Hilleman asked for a notice in the newsletter when a new volunteer project is introduced.

Vice President: Bob McKinley reported on the status of speakers at the chapter meetings for the next few months. In January Richard Heilbrun will speak. At the February meeting, Mike Tewes from Texas A&M Kingsville will be our speaker. Mike, who is an expert on the ocelot, will talk about cats of Texas. Bob has a speaker for March, but not yet for April. Also November is not yet filled.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM.

The next Board meeting will be **February 23, at 1:30 PM in the RNC Science Lab.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Cassidy
Secretary