

Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter

Board Meeting

May 21, 2014

Present: Vern Crawford, Kathy Ward, Priscilla Stanley, Becky Etzler, Liz Ross, Bob Wiedenfeld, Rod Boertje, Stephen Bishop and Donna Oliver-Leep.

Absent: Sarah Hilburn, Diane McMahon, Lisa Flanagan, Michelle Haggerty

President Vern Crawford called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Vern reviewed the Agenda items for Board members.

Approval of April 23, 2014 Minutes: Becky Etzler moved to approve the April 23, 2014 Minutes. The motion was seconded by Kathy Ward. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report for April 30, 2014 Texas Master Naturalist Holding Account: There was one check (#1034) for \$490 that cleared in the TMN State Office Holding Account and the statement balance on 4/30/14 was \$17,669.07.

Treasurer's Report for the Master Naturalist, Hill Country Chapter Account had eight checks cleared for a total of \$543.14 and a \$100 deposit, giving a new balance of \$16,190.02. Kathy Ward moved to approve the Treasurer's Reports and Stephen Bishop seconded the motion. The motion carried.

New Electronic Funds Acceptance Capability on our Chapter website: Membership Director Becky Etzler reported that our Webmaster Kristie Denbow now has the Amazon funds transfer option live on our Chapter website to accept New Class tuition and donations to the Chapter, etc. We could now sell Chapter merchandise to our members online if we chose to do so.

Annual Chapter Picnic: Vice-President Kathy Ward who organized the Annual Chapter Picnic on Saturday, May 17 at the new Albert and Bessie Kronkosky State Natural Area reported that the event was attended by 29 people. Activities included hiking in the natural area where members collected fossils for a TPWD educational display. Another group of hikers was able to observe a rare golden-check warbler.

June Chapter Meeting and more: Vice-President Kathy Ward reported that Bill Carr, an expert botany consultant, will speak at our June chapter meeting on Monday, June 23. Kathy had hoped to have Andy Gluesenkampk speak on karst, caves, and cave critters, but Andy was unable to accept her invitation but he recommended Ben Hutchins, Texas Park and Wildlife Department speaker on the same topic for a future Chapter meeting. Ben accepted the invitation to be our speaker at our October 27, 2014 Chapter meeting.

Kathy is also seeking a suitable venue for our Chapter Holiday Party. Board members offered some possibilities to consider, including the Flagler Ranch on Route 21 toward Rock Springs, the Hacienda at Native American Seed in Junction and the large Pavilion in Ladybird Johnson Park in Fredericksburg.

2014 Class Update: New Class Director Liz Ross reported that the New Class Committee will meet on June 11 to assemble the notebooks and the resource bags for each trainee. Membership Director Becky Etzler currently has 11 applications for our Class of 2014. In 2013 we received 39 New Class applications, 14% in April, 14% in May, 29% in June and 43% in early to mid-July. Kathy Ward reported that a volunteer at the Albert & Bessie Kronkosky Natural Area is interested in becoming a TMN in our chapter. Vern Crawford reported that he has some friends who might be interested in becoming members of our chapter.

Mentors for our 2014 Trainees: Becky Etzler and Liz Ross reported that Mentors would be at the August 18 New Class Reception at the Kerr Arts & Cultural Center in Kerrville as usual to introduce their mentees to each other and to our members.

Recruitment of New Members from the Western Edwards Plateau (WEP) – Donna Oliver-Leep of Junction has been serving as our Chapter Liaison with the former members of the WEP Chapter. Scott Richardson, an organizer of the WEP Chapter, noted that the WEP Chapter once had 43 members. Donna explained that due to their very large service area, the WEP members tended not to be successful in finding meaningful, sustainable Volunteer Projects and did not volunteer at the South Llano River State Park (SLRSP). Becky Etzler suggested that Rufus Stephens, the TPWD Regional Manager based in Kerrville and our former Chapter Advisor who attended nearly every Board meeting in our early years to get us off to a strong start, might be able to identify some needs in the park that could help the park, as well as the WEP members become active volunteers, especially since some of them are interested in birding, and might be able to share that knowledge with park visitors by leading birding walks or docenting at a bird blind.

In an attempt to help the former WEP members feel more welcome in our Chapter, Vern suggested that our Board hold a meeting at the South Llano River State Park on June 18 at 3:30 pm and then hold an informal event at the Texas Tech Field Station in Junction where the former WEP members could join us at 5:30 pm if they wished. Update: The June Board meeting was moved to the Junction Library to be followed by a Reception for our new members from the former Western Edwards Plateau Chapter and others who might be interested in becoming members of our Chapter. Many thanks go to Donna Oliver-Leep and Becky Etzler for securing the Junction Library for this meeting, handling the publicity in the Junction newspaper and providing our Board members with driving instructions to the Junction Library.

2014 New Class Recruitment: Membership Director Becky Etzler expressed concern that although April 1 is the formal beginning of recruiting our trainees each year, there have been no articles to recruit 2014 trainees in the 19 newspapers in our area. This is a major concern since our selection of trainees occurs at our July Board meeting (Wed, July 23). It is beneficial to our trainees and our Chapter to fill our New Class each year with 30 to 35 trainees. It is critical that this information on our annual New Class training to become a TMN in our Chapter get to the newspapers in our area ASAP. Possibly information used in 2013 could be obtained from Paula Smith to be updated with 2014 information and sent out to the same newspaper contacts that Paula used last year, or perhaps to Kristie's newspaper contacts if she has them in all of our four counties and our new counties.

Becky reported that in 2013, 56% of our 39 applicants reported that they heard about our training to become a TMN from friends, 28% learned about it in their newspaper, 5% from our TMN bumper stickers, 5% from our award-winning colorful recruiting brochure and 2% from the radio. June and July have the greatest influx of applications, so speed is of the essence now for letting prospective members know of our annual Training Class. Often folks learn about the training (15 weeks), but want to think about it a while before signing up. Thus it is very important to share this information as soon and as clearly as possible.

Donna Oliver-Leep has contacts with the two ladies working at the Junction Eagle, the newspaper in Junction.

New Transfer Members: Becky Etzler reported that we have two new TMN transfer members, David Black and Bob Moore. She ordered their green Chapter nametags today.

Continued Excellent Volunteer Activity by our Members: Becky noted that our members are very active with their volunteering and reporting their efforts to our Data Manager, Sandy Leyendecker. Thus 23 members will be re-certified at our June Chapter meeting and other members will be receiving various Milestone pins.

New Volunteer Project in Harper: Becky also reported that there is a new Chapter Volunteer Project for creating and maintaining a native plant garden at the Harper Library. The Fredericksburg NPSOT Chapter consulted on the new native plants for this garden and provided a \$500 grant toward the cost of the garden.

Amazon Smile: Stephen Bishop reported that if we sign in on Amazon Smile when we shop on the Amazon website that our Chapter can receive 0.5% of the purchase price of whatever we buy.

Recruitment Activities: Bob Wiedenfeld took some brochures to the Cibolo Nature Center's "Almost Native Plant Sale" and to Old Tunnel State Park in April. He also brought some brochures for the Board to hand out at various locations. Bob will also create a press release about the Chapter's application process and send it to the local newspapers in our service area.

Holiday Party: Vice-President Kathy Ward has been looking for a location to book for our Holiday Party to be held on December 13, 2014. She will check on the Hacienda at the Native American Seed Company in Junction and several other possible venues. We will discuss this further at the May Board meeting.

Officer and Director Reports:

Stephen Bishop – Volunteer Projects Director had been asked by Sally Garrett to approve maintaining "The Native Healing Garden" at Riverside Nature Center as a Volunteer Project and Sally Garrett would be the Projector Coordinator. Stephen asked Sally to come and talk to the Board about her request in May. Sally did not attend our May Board meeting.

Our Chapter has 8,182.95 Volunteer Hours as of March 31, 2014.

Donna Oliver-Leep: Nothing else to report.

Rod Boertje: Nothing to report.

Kathy Ward: Nothing else to report.

Liz Ross: Nothing else to report.

Bob Wiedenfeld: Bob will work on getting the New Class recruitment articles to the newspapers in our service area.

Priscilla Stanley: Nothing else to report.

Vern Crawford: Nothing else to report.

Meeting Decisions:

*Approved the April 2014 minutes

*Approved the Treasurer's reports

*Changed the June Board meeting on Wednesday, June 18 at the Junction Public Library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priscilla Stanley

Taking Minutes at the request of our Secretary Sarah Hilburn who is traveling.