

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
January 23, 2008**

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEM STATUS:

July - Action Item C. Communications Director Donna Robinson volunteered to edit volunteer project descriptions for use on our website. Please submit projects to her by the end of August. - **Donna Robinson - In progress:** Donna has received 3 volunteer project descriptions so far which have been published in the Chapter newsletter. None have been posted on our website to date.

October Action Item: Obtain information on ordering more Chapter T-shirts. – **Marilyn Murrmann - In progress**

JANUARY 2008 Board Meeting

Present:

Dan Behringer, Janet Csanyi, Warren Ferguson, John Huecksteadt, Martha Miesch, Phyllis Muska, Annie Rendon, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley,

Absent: Lee Kneupper, Jerri Workman

Guest: Donna Snow Robinson, Newsletter Editor

The January meeting was called to order at 1:30 PM by President Jim Stanley.

1. Review of Changes in Membership and Room Rental Rates at Riverside Nature Center (RNC): In the past, non-profit organizations that were group members of Riverside were able to have unlimited meetings with their \$50 annual membership fee. The 2008 RNC Board proposed increasing the room rental rate to \$75/hour for non-profit organizations. This would have cost TMN \$3250/yr which was double our annual income. Fortunately UGRA offers reasonable rates to nature-related non-profit organizations: \$15/day for the classroom and \$30/day for the auditorium, plus a \$25 after-hours fee for opening up and locking up. After the concerns expressed by RNC's non-profit members, and our reminding RNC of all the volunteer hours provided by our members, their new fee schedule was revised.

The current 2008 RNC non-profit rates for annual dues are going from \$50 to \$100. Our Chapter's renewal was paid in late 2007 so that this increase will not apply until late 2008. The revised rental fee for the conference room where we meet is now \$25/3 hrs, with no after-hours charge. Meetings in the Lawson Store or the Nature Science Lab will be free. Thus our schedule of 12 Board meetings and 10 Chapter meetings at RNC will now be \$550. Adding our 2008 membership fee of \$100, we will have to budget \$650 for meetings. If we hold Board meetings in the Lawson Store or Nature Science Lab, the total annual cost will be \$350. Advanced Training Director Dan Behringer moved that our Chapter continue to hold our monthly Chapter meetings in the RNC conference room and have the Board meetings in the Lawson Store. Treasurer Martha Miesch seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

2. When is our Annual Chapter Family Picnic: June or July? Typically it has been in June. Thus we need a speaker for July and not for June.

3. Changing the date of the May meeting: It was agreed to move the **May Chapter meeting** scheduled for May 26 (Memorial Day) one week earlier to **May 19th**. Thus the **Board meeting** would be moved a week earlier as well, to **May 14**. Jim Stanley will change our room reservations with RNC.

4. 2008 Budget: Our newly approved Chapter Operating Handbook requires us to have an Annual Budget. Treasurer Martha Miesch reviewed the income and expenses from 2006 and 2007. It is difficult to identify the previous year's expenses that are paid in January to give a direct comparison of income

and expenses for each year. While we are sorting out these issues, Vice President Warren Ferguson suggested that we be conservative in future spending.

New Class Training expenses for 2007 were \$3533.01 against a Class Fee Income of \$3750. These documents are attached to the archived Minutes.

5. Treasurer's Report: In the period from October 1, 2007 – December 31, 2007 the chapter balance went from \$6,166.58 to \$4,956.94. Expenses included the Chapter Christmas party, nametags for the New Class and Chapter membership at Riverside Nature Center for a total of \$1215.58. Income included \$288.50 from beer and wine sales at the Chapter Christmas party.

6. New Class Planning Committee: This Committee has held two meetings to date. The training will be on Wednesdays at the Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville as in previous years.

7. Website expenses: Communications Director Janet Csanyi reported that she had received a bill \$945.50 from our Chapter webmaster for web hosting on yahoo since 2004. Given our increased expenses in 2007 and 2008, the Board suggested paying half now and having Jim Stanley discuss this with Kim Whitaker, our Chapter webmaster.

8. Review of Grant Requests:

Virginia Sawin requested funding for trail markers for the Fredericksburg Nature Center to replace those lost in the major flood last summer. The total cost would be \$300.

Cathy Downs requested funding for an interpretive kiosk for the Butterfly Garden at Kerrville Schreiner Park. Construction materials for the 3-paneled kiosk with Plexiglas on the center panel would be \$261. Funding was also requested for 250 brochures on common butterflies and Hill country native butterfly plants at a cost of \$200.

Secretary Priscilla Stanley withdrew her request for funding for native plants to go into a new demonstration garden at Riverside to educate the public on how to landscape with native perennials and grasses. The Chapter's increased expenses, partly from the RNC room rental increases, limit the grants that we can make.

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

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

Treasurer Martha Miesch, a former teacher, proposed funding a mentoring program for two Kerrville public elementary schools for field trips to Riverside for nature education. Riverside charges \$3 /student for school trip programs.

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

After some discussion, including our increased operating expenses, Past-President Phyllis Muska moved to fund the Fredericksburg Nature Center (FNC) signage request. Class Planning Director Annie Rendon seconded and the motion passed unanimously. This request was chosen based on the substantial number of our members volunteering on this project, the exceptionally diverse natural native plant communities at FNC, the strong support provided to FNC by the City of Fredericksburg, and that we had not provided funding there before. Information was provided to the other requesters on other local organizations that might provide funding for their projects.

9. Program for February 25th Chapter Meeting: Vice-President Warren Ferguson reported that our February meeting will be on "**Land Restoration**" by Bill Nieman of Nieman Environmental and Native American Seed in Junction.

10. How to encourage greater involvement of our membership: Vice President Warren Ferguson suggested reinstating refreshments for our meetings. Refreshments had been discontinued due to a

lack of membership interest in volunteering to bring them, and our meetings now have an attendance of up to 60 people. A suggestion was made to discuss more Volunteer Projects in our newsletter to help our members identify a project that appeals to them. Secretary Priscilla Stanley suggested more field trips, including spouses and SOs whenever possible. Communications Director Janet Csanyi suggested that we need to raise our profile in the community by increasing our newspaper coverage for Chapter events, promoting our Land Management Assistance Program more, and getting the graduation of our New Class of 2008 and their Class volunteer service project in the newspapers. Additional discussion was saved for the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, February 20 at 1:30 PM at Riverside Nature Center in the Nature Science Lab (left side of the pavilion). Hill Country Chapter members and Advisors are always welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla B. Stanley

Priscilla B. Stanley
Chapter Secretary

2/16/08