

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
March 19, 2008**

March 2008 Board Meeting

Present: Dan Behringer, Janet Csanyi, Warren Ferguson, John Huecksteadt, Lee Kneupper, Martha Miesch, Phyllis Muska, Jim Stanley, Priscilla Stanley

Absent: Annie Rendon, Jerri Workman

The March meeting was called to order at 1:30pm by President Jim Stanley.

1. 2008 Chapter Budget: The Chapter has never had a formal budget before but is working on one for 2008 as required in our approved Chapter Operating Handbook. We do need to maintain a \$3,000 cash reserve. The Board wanted to target a balanced budget. Projecting last year's expenditures into 2008 with some increased expenses for meeting room rental and website costs, would require a \$2,986 donation to have a balanced budget. Since we have rarely had donations, this was not a reasonable expectation. Vice President Warren Ferguson stated that the best way to increase donations would be to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so that donations would be tax-deductible for the donor, and we would save 8.25% sales tax on some purchases.

The Board discussed the possibilities to raise money, including initiating modest membership dues, holding a homes tour, selling chapter tee-shirts above cost and having business place ads in our newsletter as sponsorships. The Board discussed options to reduce expenses, many of which are fixed. AT Director Dan Behringer suggested that we needed to increase our income rather than cut back on our programs. New Class Representative Lee Kneupper noted that a Chapter member, Billy Walker, who is an attorney, would be willing to obtain our 501(c)(3) status pro bono for only the cost of the filings, which were estimated to be about \$265 in Texas. Legal fees otherwise could run about \$500. Several other TMN Chapters are 501(c)(3) organizations. This would require a one time filing with the IRS to obtain tax exempt status and an annual report of donations. Donations greater than \$50 would need to be acknowledged in a letter giving our Tax ID number.

AT Director Dan Behringer moved that our chapter pursue 501(c)(3) status, Vice President Warren Ferguson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Three proposed budgets were reviewed. Dan Behringer moved to accept Budget 1, (a budget based on our 2007 expenses, requiring donations of \$1986 to achieve a \$1,000 deficit). Lee Kneupper seconded and the motion carried. It was noted that expenses would need to be monitored carefully this year.

2. AT Hours Reporting: Each AT opportunity is assigned a unique code to facilitate data entry and tracking of the AT events. Previously the AT entry was dependent on the Descriptive Name of the event. Many members reported a given event with a different name which led to a plethora of events being erroneously generated for a single AT event. The AT Director assigns the code when he approves the event and a table showing all the AT events and their codes is available on the Members Only area of our Chapter website.

3. Master Gardener Meetings as Possible AT: AT Director Dan Behringer reported that member Tom Collins had received a request from the Hill Country Master Gardeners (MGs) to approve their meetings as AT for our Chapter. Secretary Priscilla Stanley noted that just as all our meetings do not qualify as AT, some MG meetings on grafting fruit trees, growing roses etc. would not qualify for TMN AT. Dan will get the MG program in advance and determine whether each meeting is AT for our Chapter.

4. Newsletter issue date: Membership Director John Huecksteadt requested that the Chapter newsletter be issued earlier in the month, at least before the Board meeting, which is five days before the

chapter meeting. Our members, and especially our prospective members receiving the newsletter, need advance notice of the topic to be more likely to attend our Chapter meetings. Communications Director Janet Csyani agreed to discuss this with Newsletter Editor Donna Snow Robinson.

5. Request for a Grass Speaker: Warren Ferguson announced that the Kerrville Garden Club wants a speaker on grass and soils for October, November 2008 or January 2009. Jim Stanley will call their contact.

Update: Jim discovered that they wanted a garden ornamental grass speaker, not a native grass speaker and referred them to the Hill Country Master Gardeners.

6. Vice-President Warren Ferguson provided a list of potential speakers for Chapter meetings, including:

Texas Water Law by LCRA

Butterflies (has been given before)

Bats

Prescribed Burns (given last year by Dusty Bruns)

Raptors by Last Chance Forever rehabilitation group - \$500 fee not possible with our budget

Deer Management in Kerrville Schreiner Park – While our member Jim Gardner has been very active in a Volunteer project supporting this effort, the Board had a concern that having a meeting on this topic before the deer harvesting might be a divisive issue with the public. A meeting after the harvesting is complete would be able to tell the full story of the project.

Mammals by Richard Heilbrun, TPWD San Antonio

Early Texas Naturalists by member Lonnie Childs

7. April speaker: Warren announced that our April speaker will be Bobby Humphrey, the Natural Resources Conservation Coordinator with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA). He will speak on Erosion Control and the Creekside Project.

8. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Martha Miesch reported that the starting balance was \$6,599.11. The expenses included: \$50 Tuition rebate to Class of 2007 member Marilyn Knight, \$286.80 to Webmaster Kim Whitaker for web hosting expenses from 2003 and a grant to the Friends of Fredericksburg Nature Center for flood-friendly trail markers for their Nature Trail along the creek. The current balance is \$5,962.31. The Treasurer's Report and three budgets discussed are appended to the archival copy of the Minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Next Board meeting: **Wednesday, April 23 at 1:30pm 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 Stanley

Secretary

4/20/08