

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
May 14, 2008**

May 2008 Board Minutes

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

Absent: Annie Rendon, Lee Kneupper

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

1. Brief review of the past week's events: The Board is responsible for the success of our Chapter. Thus, there is a general operating principle, common to most organizations, that all committees and actions are subject to review and approval by the Board, which has final authority over all Chapter activities. There seems to have been a misunderstanding in this regard with the Class Training Committee.

The Class Training Committee will meet next week. Cathy Downs, Class Manager in 2006 and Director of Class Training in 2007 will meet with the 2008 Class Training Committee and serve as a liaison with the Board.

OFFICER & DIRECTOR REPORTS:

2. June Chapter Family Picnic: President Jim Stanley reported that he and Priscilla had met with Leanne Beauxbeannes at the Hill Country State Natural Area (HCSNA) in Bandera and found the facilities to be excellent for our Chapter Family Picnic. Leanne is a member of our Chapter and also now works for TPWD at the Hill Country Natural Area in the education area and coordinating volunteers. The picnic site has picnic tables, shelters, a latrine and is located near a creek with hiking trails. The HCSNA Manager will allow our chapter free admission to the facility and free use of the picnic area. Leanne will give a presentation on the various volunteer opportunities available to our members at the HCSNA, which is already an approved Volunteer Project for our Chapter (**BD-04-A**).

Members will bring their own food and beverages for our Picnic on Sunday, June 22. At 3 pm, TMNs will lead a Nature Walk on trails along the creek for those interested. This Nature Walk and Plant ID will qualify at Advanced Training for our members. Other members can arrive at 4 pm, and picnicking will begin at 5 pm.

3. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Martha Miesch reported that the May starting balance was \$5,843.92. The expenses included: three \$50 tuition rebates to Class of 2007 members for \$150, and 25 copies of the State TMN Curriculum for the Class of 2008 for \$883.31. The income was \$50 from a donation by an anonymous member of our Class of 2007. The current balance is \$4,835.61. The Treasurer's Report is appended to the archival copy of the Minutes.

4. Kerr County Master Gardeners: Advanced Training Director Dan Behringer reported that the Kerr County Master Gardeners (MGs) will share their Advanced Training (AT) opportunities with our Chapter members. Dan indicated that he will review the programs and select those that are pertinent to TMNs, since MGs study topics such as fruit tree grafting and rose culture which is outside the scope of our programs. The Kerr County MG program is a magnet group drawing members from several area counties, as our TMN Chapter does. MGs have been attending our TMN AT classes on tree, forb and native grass identification at our invitation for two years.

5. Membership Director John Huecksteadt reported that he had updated the Application Package for applicants for our Class of 2008, including the cover letter and Training Class Schedule. He will send copies to the Board.

Brochures about our Class of 2008 recruiting period have been printed (250 to date) at 42 cents each for 2-sided color copies.

6. Communications Director Janet Csanyi reported that she is re-writing the news releases on the opening of our Class of 2008 recruiting period. She will submit them to the newspapers on Monday, not to compete with our monthly meeting article getting published. She is also overseeing the distribution of the brochures via members to numerous locations in our four counties.

Past-President Phyllis Muska suggested sending an e-mail to our TMNs about this month's program, since the meeting will be one week early to avoid the Memorial Day holiday.

7. Vice-President Warren Ferguson reported that our May program has been modified to include an additional speaker: Mike Kreuger, the TPWD District Manager, reporting on the deer management options available through TPWD, Kristine Ondrias, Kerrville City Services Manager, will discuss how the City Council made its decision on deer management in the Park and Tim Hufstader will report on the changes he has seen in the fauna and flora in Kerrville-Schreiner Park in his twenty-one years working in and managing the Park. .

Our June meeting will be our Family Picnic in the Hill country State Natural Area (see Agenda item 1 above). Our July program might be by the author of an article in the TPWD magazine on "Global Warming and Hill Country Wildlife".

In light of our budget limitations this year, we will begin inviting only out-of-town speakers to dinner before our monthly meetings, and will provide a suitable speaker gift for local speakers.

6. Grant request: Member Jim Gardner requested \$260 to build and install two wildlife water guzzlers in Kerrville –Schreiner Park as part of our volunteer project there. It is believed that these might lure the deer to the south side of the park where the whitetail deer harvesting will occur. After some discussion, it was decided to ask if the City, which owns the park, had been approached for any funds, since TMN has been supplying volunteer labor and some funding. The Board agreed to provide a grant of \$150 toward water guzzlers if the park was willing to match that amount. Our members are unaware that substantial expenses for our website and Riverside's room rental rate increases have negatively impacted our ability to make grants this year.

Update: Vice-President Warren Ferguson spoke with Jim Gardner who said that the park would match whatever funding TMN provided up to \$260. By e-mail vote, the Board agreed to grant the \$150 agreed upon at the Board meeting.

7. Signs at major volunteer sites: Recently the Board approved a grant request for \$20 for a sign to indicate that the native plant garden at a Fredericksburg school is being maintained by our TMN volunteers. Members asked we should put these signs at other projects stating "This site is maintained by Hill country Texas Master Naturalists", starting with Riverside Nature Center. Two concerns were discussed: 1. Some locations, such as Riverside, have policies against such signage to maintain the aesthetics of the landscape. 2. Some chapter projects are not maintained as regularly as we might wish, and we would prefer not to have a TMN sign on the projects that do not reflect well on our chapter.

8. Kerrville Daily Times has not been publishing our monthly meeting press releases:

Communications Director Janet Csanyi will speak with the Lifestyles reporter.

Update: The reporter discovered that our e-mail press releases had been going into her spam folder which she doesn't check. The reporter gave Janet another e-mail address which will hopefully remedy the problem. We cannot fulfill our mission of educating the public without newspaper articles inviting the public. Fortunately we have had better coverage in the other newspapers in our four county area.

9. Fundraising by having an admission fee for the TMN special presentations: Periodically our chapter members give presentations for the public at Riverside and elsewhere. We could charge a \$5 fee to the public as Riverside does for their presentations to help this year's chapter budget. Board members had a concern that this might reduce our audience which is contrary to our mission of sharing information on the management of natural resources and natural areas with the public. Another option is to let

Riverside sponsor the event and collect admission fees from non-TMNs, then we would not have to pay the room rental fee. We still do not want cost barriers to reduce our outreach, and sponsoring our own classes might help with our recruiting.

10. Board member duties: Last month, President Jim Stanley had asked Board members to provide him with a list of what they actually do in their job. This will have two benefits. It will be helpful to the Nominating Committee and 2009 President as they seek new Board members. It will also be valuable input for the upcoming review of the Chapter Operating Manual (COH). Jim had received these lists from only three Board members.

Jim requested that a COH Review Committee be formed including Past-President Phyllis Muska, Membership Director John Huecksteadt and Treasurer Martha Miesch to reconcile how work is actually done in our chapter with the contents of the COH. The focus of the original COH Committee had been to merge the COH from several other chapters with the template provided by the TMN State office and make it reflect in general how our chapter operated. Subsequently the new COH led to some difficulties because it did not explicitly include specifics such as the Board having oversight of all Committees and how Committees were formed. The COH Committee will be more specific about who should be responsible for which jobs, especially where different functions work together.

11. Board approval for Volunteer Projects: Volunteer Project Director Jerri Workman asked for clarification on when new projects needed Board review. The Board agreed that only potential Volunteer Projects that had some possible controversial aspect needed consultation with the Board.

12. Working toward our 501(c)(3): Vice-President Warren Ferguson summarized some of the requirements to be a 501(c)(3) and a non-profit corporation. We need Bylaws, a description of what our people do, an annual meeting, an annual report, provide letters to donors, read and approve Minutes at each Board meeting and more. Past-President Phyllis Muska will check with Michelle Haggarty of the TMN State Office on whether we can amend the State-provided TMN Bylaws if necessary to conform to the 501(c)(3) requirements. We will also have \$275 to \$300 in filing fees. A chapter member who is a lawyer has agreed to provide the legal work *pro bono*, which is exceedingly helpful; to our chapter.

13. Continued Discussion: Board members discussed areas of the Chapter Operating Handbook that needed further clarification. It was noted that some duties have time constraints, such as having all the necessary documents from several functions reviewed and ready to begin recruiting in April etc. In a volunteer organization with a high rate of turnover in these critical positions, it would be helpful to more clearly define these requirements, including deadlines for each necessary document for each function.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, June 18 at 1:30 pm at Riverside Nature Center in the Lawson Store (first building on the right near the pavilion). Hill Country Chapter members and Advisors are always welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Stanley

Secretary

6/14/08