

**Texas Master Naturalist – Hill Country Chapter
Board Meeting
September 17, 2008**

September 2008 Board Minutes

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

Absent: Lee Kneupper, Annie Rendon

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

1. Acceptance of Minutes for August Meeting: Board members agreed that we were waiting until after the 501(c)(3) AT course at the State meeting in late October to pursue obtaining 501(c)(3) status for our chapter. The August Minutes were amended to reflect this correction.

2. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Martha Miesch reported Expenses this month of \$200 for Class tuition rebates for four members of the Class of 2007 who certified, and \$336.90 in New Class expenses for a total expense of \$536.90. Income included \$1,450 in Trainee Application fees. The closing balance for September is \$8,550.56. The Treasurer's Report is appended to the archival copy of the Minutes.

3. New Class Guidelines Update: Last month, Past-President Phyllis Muska and former New Class Director and former Class Manager Cathy Downs updated the New Class Guidelines document to be consistent with the updated Chapter Operating Manual of 5/29/08. Phyllis and Cathy discussed the proposed changes with the other Board members to be certain that all functions represented on the Board felt their responsibilities relating to New Class training were accurately reflected in the updated New Class Guidelines.

This document contains the presentations given and the presenters from several previous years of New Class training for review by each New Class Committee. Communications Director Janet Csanyi suggested that the Board review these training topics and provide recommended training topics and preferred presenters. This would save the New Class Committee significant effort and address Board concerns about some important topics not being included in some years. The Board agreed that this was an excellent idea and Board members will send their suggestions to Janet.

4. Nominating Committee: Past-President and Nominating Committee Chair Phyllis Muska reported that she and her committee of Gracie Waggener and Anne Cassidy recommended the following candidates as Chapter officers for 2009: President: John Huecksteadt, Vice-President: Jim Gardner, Secretary: Gracie Waggener and Treasurer Martha Miesch. The Board thanked Phyllis and her Committee members for all their efforts in obtaining such an excellent slate of candidates.

5. Down By the Riverside Native Tree and Plant Sale & Nature Festival Status: Secretary and Plant Sale Co-chair Priscilla Stanley updated the Board on the status of our only annual fundraiser, our co-sponsoring of the Down By the Riverside (DBTR) Native Plant Sale and Nature Festival with our nature partner, Riverside Nature Center. About 25% of the plants (mostly trees and shrubs) have been hand-selected by Andy Pesez, Jim Stanley and herself at three native plant nurseries between here and San Marcos to assure that we have the best possible selection of plants for our sale. Additional purchases will be made the week of the sale, which is Friday, October 3rd for the TMN and RNC "Members Only" Pre-Sale and Saturday, October 4th for the public sale.

DBTR Planning Committee Chair for the Nature Presentations Cathy Downs obtained three excellent speakers for the Nature Festival, including Dr. Bill Ward on the "Discovery of the Canyon Lake Gorge", Chapter members Phyllis Muska and Dan Behringer on "Rain Harvesting During a Drought" including an outside presentation as well around the newly installed Riverside Nature Center rain harvesting system,

and Chapter member Tom Collins on "Hill Country Butterflies" including a walk-in exhibit with live butterflies.

Our chapter members, including the New Class, have volunteered for 77 two-hour shifts so far for this two day event. Riverside members are volunteering as well.

6. New Class Committee Status: Former New Class Director and former Class Manager Cathy Downs reported on the progress of the New Class Committee after the third training class earlier today. She noted that after some initial glitches, the training is proceeding well. Several Board members, who are attending the New Class training to meet our new members and evaluate the presenters, agreed that our trainees are enjoying the classes which are going well.

7. Volunteer Projects: Volunteer Project Director Jerri Workman had two requests for new Volunteer Projects to discuss with the Board. A member of the Class of 2008 wanted to volunteer at Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation in Kendalia in Kendall County. This non-profit organization rescues wildlife and cares for some sanctuary farm animals and exotics, such as African lions, primates etc. The Board agreed that the work currently being done by our new member of hand-feeding young opossums, squirrels etc. in the nursery met the TMN mission of "promoting the beneficial use of natural resources" in preparing these animals for release back to the wild. The Board noted that work with livestock or other exotic animals would not be acceptable for TMN Volunteer hours under the TMN State Volunteer Guidelines.

Two chapter members had manned a booth in Austin teaching the public about bats. These members volunteer at the TPWD Old Tunnel in Kendall County and were doing this work in support of Old Tunnel Manager Nyta Hensley, thus this work would be reported under the Old Tunnel project number of KL-03-A.

8. AT Codes for the TMN Annual Meeting: AT Director Dan Behringer noted that there were many AT courses being offered at the State meeting next month. Our chapter now assigns AT codes to each AT event to facilitate correct reporting of the event in the TMN Database. The Board agreed with Dan that it would be desirable to assign one code to cover all AT courses at this State meeting. This action is expected to facilitate reporting by our members by simplifying the reporting process.

10. Chapter Holiday Party in December: President Jim Stanley reported that member Jean Parreira had agreed to work on the Holiday Party being hosted this year by Kendall and Bandera members. Jean reserved the large meeting room at Cibolo Nature Center in Boerne for Saturday, December 6th from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm at a cost of \$250 with the approval of the Board.

Jean asked if the party should be a potluck or catered. The budget approved by the Board earlier this year included \$500 for the chapter Holiday Party. The Board agreed to let Jean choose whether the party should be a pot luck or catered, noting that the chapter had had both options in previous years, as well as a hybrid version where the chapter purchased a ham or turkey and the members brought side dishes and desserts.

11. Helping with Texas Lions Camp Hurricane Evacuees: The Texas Lions Camp has been very generous to our chapter in allowing us to use their excellent meeting room for at least four years for our New Class training at a cost far below market rate. Recently the Texas Lions Camp hosted nearly 500 special-needs evacuees from Hurricane Ike in Houston. They asked TMNs to provide help serving meals to their clients. The Board shared their request with our chapter members, indicating that the Board would consider at the September Board meeting whether this work would count as Volunteer hours. After some discussion, the Board decided that this work really didn't meet the State Volunteer Project guidelines, however this work was very important to our partner, the Texas Lions Camp, and to the well-being of their clients. Our members have provided significant hours of service for breakfast, lunch and dinner and consider it a humanitarian opportunity to help folks who really need it.

12. Chapter Projector: This year no one on the New Class Committee has a PowerPoint projector to use when the presenter does not bring his or her own projector, which caused a problem on one

occasion. The Class Manager asked if a projector could be purchased for New Class training use for about \$550 of donations. Board members had concerns that a higher quality projector might be needed that would be more expensive. Also, folks who do not own a projector often are not aware of the proper procedures to use and handle them, which can result in expensive damage. Theft can also be a concern. Some member would have to be responsible for keeping the projector at their home. Then there would be the need for policies on whether it could be used for other TMN presentations or other organizations. Having the chapter own a projector does not seem feasible at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Next Board meeting: Wednesday, October 22 at 1:30 pm at Riverside Nature Center in the Nature Science Lab. Hill Country Chapter members and Advisors are always welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Stanley

Secretary

9/17/08