

**AUGUST 28, 2023 MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE  
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER**

**Meeting Location:** Riverside Nature Center

**Time:** 2:08 p.m.

**Attending in Person:** Jeff Schwarz, Kim Ort, Carla Stang, Ron Scoggins, Patti Guin, Dot Maginot, Mark Hults, Jane Jamison, and Vern Crawford

**Attending by Zoom:** David Drake and David Matthews

**Absent:** Deb Youngblood

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President Jeff Schwarz called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – Patti Guin**

Secretary Patti Guin submitted the minutes from the July 24, 2023 Board meeting. On motion of Ron Scoggins, seconded by Kim Ort, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**REPORTS**

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to the number of New Business items on today's agenda, President Schwarz asked that Board Members and Officers keep their oral reports short. More detailed written reports can be found on OneDrive in the 2023 Board of Directors Folder. Reports are listed in the order that they appear on the agenda.**

**Treasurer – Ron Scoggins**

Ron Scoggins briefly reviewed the General Checking Account Register for the month of July, which revealed a bank balance of \$23,439.49, with one check outstanding in the amount of \$73.32. He specifically pointed out that he included Microsoft 365 Business Basic with a zero balance on the description portion of the General Checking register so people would know in the future that there is no charge for the renewal of this item. Kim Ort made a motion that the report be approved. Vern Crawford seconded the motion, and the report was unanimously approved.

**Vice President – Kim Ort**

Kim stated that the only report she had was in connection with the End of Year Celebration, which will be covered in the New Business portion of the meeting.

**Past President – Carla Stang**

Carla reported updates to the Chapter Operating Handbook were 75% complete, and she has begun to send out individual Board and Director section comparisons from the 2017 version. She also reported that she is color coding the content to reflect new/updated information/changes. Carla indicated that she would like to send out the general information contained in the Chapter Operating Handbook (minus position duties) to all Board members for their review prior to the next Board meeting.

### **New Class Committee – Jane Jamison**

Jane Jamison gave a brief report on the progress of the New Class. She reported that the Welcome Reception went well but commented that a microphone needs to be used next year. Regarding the first Saturday class held at Riverside Nature Center, Jane indicated that the room at Riverside was too small for 33 students. In connection with the first Zoom class, Jane stated that there was a small issue with the speaker's link to Zoom (Mac to IOS), but the issue was resolved. She reported that in the future they plan to Zoom speakers before their presentation and have their presentations saved to OneDrive. Regarding VMS posting, Jane indicated that most of the students are logging in and doing fine.

Co-Class Director David Matthews gave an update on the Bamberger Ranch class tour. Because of the ongoing drought and extreme temperatures, the overnight stay has been canceled. He indicated that there would still be a tour of the ranch, but it had been slightly altered because of the heat.

### **Membership – Dot Maginot**

Dot submitted her written report which reflected the following 2023 year-to-date statistics:

Number of people inquiring about or interested in attending the next TMN class – 41

Members transferring in – 2

Members transferring out – 2

Members moving from inactive to active – 3

Members-in-training earning initial certification – 5

VMS in-training – 31

Active members in Directory – 206

Members reporting VMS entries – 188

Total YTD VMS hours reported – 18,370

Dot also included 2022 comparisons in her written report in each of the above categories.

President Schwarz had a question about the 2023/2022 year-to-date active members comparison reflecting 206 active members in 2023 as compared to 228 active members in 2022. Dot indicated that this was due to the recent removal of members from the roster who had moved away from the Chapter area or who had asked that their names be removed from the active membership directory. Regarding comparison of the total number of year-to-date VMS hours in 2023 and 2022, President Schwarz expressed concern that the statistics also indicated there were almost 2,000 less volunteer hours reported in 2023 as compared to the same timeframe in 2022. Some of this was due to loss of membership and transfers, but he mentioned that since COVID he has observed a continuing trend in this direction and work would need to be done to get more members to record their volunteer hours.

Recertification and milestone stats can be found in the written Membership report located on OneDrive.

### **Communications – Mark Hults**

Mark Hults stated that Catherine Gauldin helped in creating this month's Communications report, and Mark reminded all Board members that in addition to the website statistics to be sure and check out the Social Media section of the report. He further stated that the website is still experiencing an issue sending mail to Gmail accounts, even though this issue was turned over to FirstCall several months ago. A more detailed statistical Communications report and Website Change Log can be found on OneDrive.

### **Volunteer Service Projects – David Drake**

David indicated that he would like to finalize the criteria for approval of service hours outside of our 10-county area. After a brief discussion, it was decided that David will compose a motion incorporating the

criteria necessary for service hour approval. He indicated that he would then email it to the Board for approval prior to the next Board meeting. A more detailed Volunteer Service Projects report can be viewed in the Board of Director's folder located on OneDrive.

### **Advanced Training – Deb Youngblood**

In the absence of Deb Youngblood, President Schwarz submitted her written report which revealed the following statistics: Total # of year-to-date AT events submitted: 414; Total # of year-to-date hours: 897.25; Total events submitted through August: 339; Total # of hours through August: 711.25. Her report further revealed that August was a good month for advanced training opportunities, and she expected September and October to be good months as well. However, she also indicated in her report to expect November and December to have few AT opportunities available, and she encouraged everyone to complete their AT over the next couple of months. President Schwarz will make this announcement at the Chapter meeting.

### **Chapter State Representative – Vern Crawford**

Vern had nothing to report at this time.

### **New Business**

1. Bexar Audubon Grant Program – President Schwarz announced that applications will be accepted through October 15, 2023, for a Bexar Audubon Society mini-grant. Grants awarded range from \$100 to \$1000 for community conservation projects such as gardens, bird blinds, water features, bird houses, habitat improvements, etc. President Schwarz indicated that he would make this announcement at the Chapter meeting.
2. October HEB Foundation camp north of Leakey – Volunteer Request – President Schwarz announced that the HEB camp that takes place in October needs some help, and they plan to contact us soon about providing volunteers.
3. End of Year Party – Kim Ort gave a report on the end of year party to be held on December 9 at the AgriLife Extension Office in Fredericksburg. The timeframe for the event will be 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m., and refreshments will consist of appetizers and desserts. She announced that there will also be a silent auction headed up by Alice King. Dot Maginot will prepare a photo collage for viewing throughout the event. There was a discussion about how much money would be available to fund the event and Ron Scoggins gave a brief report on what had been spent in the past. Following the discussion, a motion was made that we spend up to \$750 on the end of year celebration. Carla Stang seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.
4. Setting up a Speaker's Bureau – Mark Hults stated that he had done some research and found four TMN Chapters that had a Speaker's Bureau. He further stated that he extended his research to include Master Gardeners and NPSOT. He found that NPSOT had over 100 speakers to choose from. He said they used forms that could be downloaded from the website to apply for a speaker. He stated that we could do something similar, making sure not to copy exactly what they had but just use the same concept. Mark said he could put something together for the Board to look at. Kim Ort added that in the past she first trained the speakers on whatever subject matter they were supposed to speak on before they spoke to the public, and that we could possibly do the same thing to make sure the speaker was knowledgeable about the subject.
5. State Meeting Preparation/Submissions – President Schwarz reminded the Board that August 31, 2023, was the deadline for Annual Meeting early bird registration. He then went over the following Annual Meeting Chapter submission categories:

Sponsorships – President Schwarz provided a list of the various sponsorships available, and a discussion ensued to determine which sponsorship we would fund. Last year, the Chapter donated \$500 and Frank Garcia matched that amount to total \$1,000. Kim Ort made a motion that we donate \$300 (Ecologist sponsorship). Mark Hults seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Silent Auction – President Schwarz stated to contact him if you wanted to donate anything to the silent auction.

Chapter Memorials and Photo Collection – Past President Carla Stang said she sent in 10 photos last year, so President Schwarz said anyone who had photos to please send them directly to him and he would forward them to the State.

President Schwarz then briefly went over the remaining categories which included a Project Fair Contest, Video Contest, and Photo, Art, and Media Contest.

Board members who indicated they were planning to attend the Annual Meeting were Jane Jamison and Deb Youngblood. Frank Garcia also indicated that he was attending. Jane Jamison volunteered to make a list of everyone going to see if there might be carpool and room sharing possibilities.

Treasurer Ron Scoggins reminded the Board of our \$750 annual donation to Riverside Nature Center.

President Schwarz then asked all Board members who did not plan to serve on the Board next year to please let him know as soon as possible. He stated that a slate of officers for next year would need to be in place 15 days prior to the last membership meeting. President Schwarz announced that he would be staying on an additional year and Ron Scoggins indicated that he would not be staying on for a third year.

There being no further business, Jane Jamison made a motion to adjourn, David Matthews seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Patti Guin, Secretary**