

**JULY 24, 2023 MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE  
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER**

**Meeting Location:** Riverside Nature Center

**Time:** 2:01 p.m.

**Attending in Person:** Jeff Schwarz, Kim Ort, Ron Scoggins, Patti Guin, Dot Maginot, Deb Youngblood, Mark Hults, and Jane Jamison

**Attending by Zoom:** Carla Stang and David Matthews

**Absent:** David Drake and Vern Crawford

**Non-Board Members Attending:** Mildred Dworsky, Larry Eskridge, and Paula Harley

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President Jeff Schwarz called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes – Patti Guin**

Secretary Patti Guin submitted the minutes from the June 26, 2023 Board meeting. On motion of Deb Youngblood, seconded by Kim Ort, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**REPORTS**

**Treasurer – Ron Scoggins**

Ron Scoggins gave a report on the general checking account register for the month of June, which revealed an ending bank balance of \$24,786.29. He specifically pointed out two donations that were made during the month. Pine Gates Renewables donated \$1,000 after a PGARP visit to their property. The donation is specifically designated for PGARP purposes. The other donation in the amount of \$100 was given by Cathy Downs and is unrestricted. He also submitted the 2023 Financial Report through the month of June. There being no questions or discussion pertaining to the Treasurer's report, Patti Guin made a motion that the report be approved. Deb Youngblood seconded the motion, and the report was unanimously approved.

**Vice President – Kim Ort**

Kim Ort reported that the program topic for the August Chapter meeting will be domestic and feral cats. The program will be presented by Grant Sizemore, Director of Invasive Species Programs for the American Bird Conservancy, New Braunfels, Texas. Kim also announced that Molly Keck with the Bexar County AgriLife Extension Office will be the guest speaker for January 2024 and her topic will be bees. She further stated that the topic for February would be about riparian issues, and she was lining up a speaker from the Nueces River Authority.

President Schwarz brought up last month's discussion about combining the Membership Recognition program usually held in December and the New Class Launch currently scheduled in November. He stated that the New Class Committee decided not to combine the two events, so President Schwarz instructed Vice President Ort to go ahead and find a venue and speaker for the Holiday/Membership Recognition event to be held in December. A brief discussion was held

regarding how expenses in connection with the recognition event were handled in the past. Following the discussion, Mark Hults made a motion that we have a membership recognition/holiday party separate from the Fall Class graduation during the month of December, date to be determined. Jane Jamison seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Vice President Ort stated she would search for a venue and speaker for the event and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

### **Immediate Past President – Carla Stang**

In connection with our Chapter Operating Handbook, Carla indicated that she is currently cutting and pasting all suggested revisions made by our members into one document. Once this has been done, she indicated that a side-by-side comparison of our document with the Framework document provided by the State will need to be made before submitting it for approval. President Schwarz asked Carla to try and have the comparison ready to present at the August Board meeting.

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

Jane Jamison reported that there would be a Zoom call for class members and their mentors on July 28<sup>th</sup> between 11:00 a.m. and noon. She also reported that Karolyn Andrews and Lori Fondren had created a Group chat for the 2023 Class, Mentors and New Class Committee and details would be provided in the Monday email. She indicated that there was also a Group chat created just for new class members. Jane announced that the new class sample notebook, which was prepared by Mildred Dworsky, was presented at the July 19<sup>th</sup> New Class Committee meeting. Other announcements included that the final class schedule was currently on the website and the class launch party would be held on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office in Fredericksburg. For further details, Jane provided the Board with a copy of the July 19, 2023 New Class Committee Minutes.

President Schwarz informed the Board that five TMN members plan to monitor the Zoom classes. Carla reminded the Board that auditing a class via Zoom cannot be counted as AT credit. Kim Ort brought up the fact that the annual Zoom renewal fee will become due on July 28, 2023. Treasurer Ron Scoggins stated that it automatically renews and the renewal amount was approximately \$70.

### **Membership – Dot Maginot**

Dot went over her written report which revealed there are currently 204 active members as compared to 228 active members at this same time last year. Dot reported that the total number of 2023 VMS entries as of July 20 is 186, the total number of recertifications for the month of June is 20, and total year-to-date certifications is 96. Dot also mentioned that she would have a membership outreach table set up at the Lost Maples Dark Skies event scheduled for August 12.

President Schwarz indicted that he compared VMS entries in 2022 to entries made in 2023 up to July 21, 2023, and discovered 22 people who have not put in any hours in 2023 but had recorded hours in 2022. He found that 10 of those 22 people who had recorded 663 hours in 2022 had a status change, leaving 12 people who had recorded a total of 594 hours last year but have not recorded any hours this year. President Schwarz then went over the list of names with the Board to determine why these people are no longer recording volunteer hours.

### **Communications – Mark Hults**

Mark reported that the website is still experiencing an issue sending mail to Gmail accounts and that the issue was turned over to FirstCall several months ago. He stated that a new repair ticket had been submitted and expressed his frustration about the lack of communication with FirstCall regarding the status of support tickets. Since his last report, the tool used to collect website statistics stopped operation and a problem ticket was submitted to FirstCall. The situation was corrected, but no communication was received letting him know that it had been corrected. A more detailed report with statistics for the past 30 days was submitted by Mark and can be found on One Drive.

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

In David Drake's absence, President Schwarz briefly highlighted David's written report which can be reviewed in detail on One Drive. President Schwarz reported that he has been in contact with Michelle Haggerty since the June Board meeting regarding volunteer service hours outside of our 10-county area. While discussions have been inconclusive, it was President Schwarz's understanding that Michelle had no problem with members obtaining volunteer hour approval for projects conducted in counties close to the Hill Country (such as Comal), but it was her opinion that volunteer hours should not be approved for projects undertaken in areas not adjacent to the Hill Country (such as Big Bend). Regarding volunteer project leaders, Mark Hults stated that Bob Hanson, the project leader for Canyon Lake Gorge is stepping down and a replacement for him will need to be made.

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

Deb Youngblood reported that there have been 299 training opportunities and 612 hours. She indicated that the drop in the number of AT events in July was expected, but the numbers were beginning to pick up for August. Deb reported that we can expect the number of available events to be lower in the fall as compared to January through May, as the return to school and holidays tend to limit the number of available events. She added that with conventions and conferences being held in the fall, sometimes reported hours make up for the fewer number of events. Deb further reported that she was in receipt of the agenda for the Annual Meeting and was currently working up VMS entries for attendees to copy and paste as they complete their VMS entries.

### **New Business**

Larry Eskridge, one of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteers at Kerrville-Schreiner Park Pollinator Garden, made a plea for help to the Board regarding the lack of volunteers to further maintain the garden. He indicated that the 10,000 square foot garden required at least 12 volunteers per week to maintain and they currently had only two or three volunteers that helped with the maintenance of the garden on a regular basis. Larry indicated that the park is owned by the City of Kerrville and people visiting the garden must pay to get into the park. However, he stated that they are not getting much help from the City other than they have provided an irrigation system to water the plants. Following a lengthy discussion about various ways to solve the problem and due to time constraints, President Schwarz indicated that he would discuss the matter further with Larry, and possibly include a representative of the City in that discussion, in an effort to help

resolve the problem. President Schwarz also indicated he would make an announcement at the Chapter Meeting about the project needing more volunteers.

Due to the meeting running longer than anticipated, Jane Jamison made a motion to adjourn. Deb Youngblood seconded the motion. The motion carried with seven voting for adjournment and one voting against. The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Patti Guin, Secretary**