

**JUNE 26, 2023 MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE
TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST HILL COUNTRY CHAPTER**

Meeting Location: Riverside Nature Center

Time: 2:06 p.m.

Attending in Person: Jeff Schwarz, Kim Ort, Carla Stang, Ron Scoggins, Patti Guin, Dot Maginot, Deb Youngblood, David Drake, Jane Jamison, and Vern Crawford.

Attending by Zoom: Mark Hults and David Matthews

President Jeff Schwarz called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes – Patti Guin

Secretary Patti Guin submitted the minutes from the May 22, 2023 Board meeting. On motion of Kim Ort, seconded by Dot Maginot, the minutes were unanimously approved.

REPORTS

Treasurer – Ron Scoggins

Ron Scoggins gave a report on the general checking account register for the month of May, which revealed an ending balance of \$24,281.11. He specifically pointed out the large expense item for May was the purchase of the two new computers, and the large income items were the plant sale proceeds of \$1,219.16, and the Exxon-Mobil donation of \$500 which is designated entirely towards the Old Tunnel project. Ron expressed concern about the possibility of the organization having a negative balance at the end of the year if we continued down the current spending track. Dot Maginot inquired as to the status of the grants that we recently applied for, and President Schwarz responded that we did not receive one.

There being no additional questions or discussion pertaining to the Treasurer's report, Carla Stang 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 she had made some additions to programming for the year as follows: July – Prairie Dogs; August (unconfirmed); September – She is negotiating with a speaker to talk about invasives; October – Damsel and Dragonflies presented by Mark Caesar. Kim stated she was thinking about having a panel discussion on the topic of feral cats for the November program and sought the opinion of the Board on whether this was something she should pursue or stay away from. After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that this would be a good program topic for the month of November.

Immediate Past President – Carla Stang

Carla Stang indicated she had nothing new to report.

New Class Committee – Jane Jamison

Jane Jamison reported on the success of the mentor meeting that was held at Herff Farm on June 19, 2023. Only three of the 29 mentors were absent, with three attending by Zoom, and the remaining mentors attended in person. Jane announced that Phil Youngblood will be offering Zoom assistance to all mentors and members in training the first two weeks in August to ensure everyone is comfortable with Zoom prior to the first class. Jane reminded everyone of the Volunteer Fair being held on August 19 from 10:30 to 11:45 at the Riverside Nature Pavilion and reported that the New Class Committee would be serving breakfast to the new class members prior to the start of the event. Jane further reported that the new class launch event is set for November 11, 2023, at the AgriLife Extension Office in Fredericksburg. A discussion followed about possibly combining the launch with the annual membership recognition event usually held in December and Jane said the committee would investigate the matter.

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 further reported that the number of VMS entries in 2023 as of June 23, 2003 is 186, and the total number of recertifications for the month of May is 27, bringing the yearly total of recertifications to 76.

Communications – Mark Hults

Mark orally reported that the website and Chapter Outlook are experiencing an issue sending mail to gmail accounts. Mark stated that our addresses are no longer considered safe. He further stated that it was going to take an update to convince gmail that we are a safe address. He said that everything else goes through except gmail. Carla Stang indicated that she sent out a test email this date and everyone with a gmail address received her email. Mark further reported that the problem with the calendars not being available on mobile devices has been fixed by FirstCall. A more detailed Communications report with statistics for the past 30 days was submitted by Mark and can be found on One Drive.

Volunteer Service Projects – David Drake

David Drake went over his written report, which included information pertaining to the approval of service hours outside of our 10-county area. Since this item was added to the agenda under New Business, it will be covered in more detail later in these minutes. David reported that the lead for the Apache Tree Project has been changed from Constance Weaver to Jack Davis, and that the lead for the Hill Country State Natural Area has been changed from Eldon Sheffer to Janis Arterberry. Additionally, David stated that he needed to confirm the project lead for Cibolo Nature Center because the current project lead, Rita Boardman, will no longer be serving in that role. The Board suggested that he contact Ms. Boardman directly to confirm that she no longer desires to continue in this role before choosing a replacement. David indicated in his report that according to Katy Kappel, the Lutheran Church Pollinator Garden project has been canceled due to a lack of volunteers. According to David, other projects in progress include the Volunteer Fair, Lost Maples Dark Sky event set for August 12, and the Great Texas Wildlife Trails Adopt-a-Loop project. President Schwarz stated that he had sent a lengthy letter to Lisa Marler with an explanation of how the Adopt-a-Loop project could be pulled together.

There was a lengthy discussion about how to match new class member interests with approved projects and make new, approved, and scheduled projects more visible to our members. President Schwarz stated that one way would be to send out an e-vite connecting them to the various volunteer opportunities.

Advanced Training – Deb Youngblood

Deb Youngblood reported that the number of available ATs has dropped significantly for July despite her efforts to locate events, and that the heat was responsible for most of the ATs currently available being webinars or hybrids. She further reported that to date 286 events have been logged totaling 587 hours.

Chapter State Representative – Vern Crawford

Vern Crawford indicated he had nothing new to report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. The Board discussed the remaining 2023 goals. No motion for approval was made or vote taken at this meeting.
2. In connection with the approval of projects outside Chapter boundaries, President Schwarz indicated that our proposed guidelines were sent to Michelle Haggarty on May 30. She responded by asking for examples. Examples were submitted on June 2, and additional examples were sent on June 9. Michelle's initial response was that this could not be approved because that would require all Chapters in the State to have the same guidelines. President Schwarz indicated that he would be talking to Michelle more about this matter soon.
3. President Schwarz then reviewed the upcoming Chapter meeting agenda, which included a reminder of the 10,000-hour pin recognition celebration for Tom Collins and several announcements that he would be making at the meeting. He brought up that there was a request made by non-New Class Committee members or mentors to audit the Zoom classes. There was no objection made by the Board on this matter. He also announced that there would be a Moondance at Cibolo Nature Center on July 15th, and an invitation to attend was extended to the Board. He said he would also be inviting other local Master Naturalists to attend.,

There being no further business, on motion of Vern Crawford, seconded by Dot Maginot, the meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Minutes taken and submitted by: **Patti Guin, Secretary**