

Lost Pines Master Naturalist Board Meeting Minutes

March 2, 2017 – Blue Bonnet Electric Coop Headquarters

In attendance: Marcia Karr, Marsha Elrod, Julia Akin, Audrey Ambrose, Kaye Sapikas, Larry Gfeller, Paula Weisskopf, and Allen Guisinger

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm by President Marcia Karr.

New Business:

1. **2017 Planning Retreat**, set date and brainstorm locations – Group discussion
 - The board considered several options, but reached no decision on location or date.
 - Julia volunteered to come up with some options and communicate with the board via e mail to accelerate the decision prior to the next board meeting.
 - Julia noted that we should also think about the budget for the retreat.
2. **20th Anniversary Project** – Julia Akin
 - Julia presented information about the 2018 anniversary of TMN. They want to collect stories from each chapter, including video interviews with members. They provided a video kit and some suggested questions we can use.
 - Julia will be handling and conducting the interviews with selected members. Joan Estes has agreed to help Julia.
 - Who should be interviewed? All input is welcome.
3. **Annual Meeting Project Block Activity** – Julia Akin, Marcia Karr, and Audrey Ambrose
 - Marcia noted that we have an opportunity to present the track block activity that was created for Texas Wildlife Day as a chapter project for the annual meeting.
 - Julia, Marcia and Audrey are involved, but it would be good to get other chapter members involved.

- There are also opportunities for chapter members to present on specific topics at the annual meeting.
 - It was suggested that the chapter might consider scholarships to the annual meeting in order to encourage chapter representation via presenters. **We should be prepared to vote for specific amounts for scholarships at the May board meeting.**
4. **Board Meeting Dinner Assignments** – Marcia Karr
 - May – Larry Gfeller
 - July – Allen Guisinger
 - September – Audrey Ambrose
 - November – Marsha Elrod
 5. **Old Projector** – Marcia Karr
 - Michal has requested direction on what to do with our old projector screen.
 - The board agreed it should be offered to our state parks.
 6. **Wilderness First Aid AT by Erin Belenky** – Marcia Karr
 - Erin has proposed offering an advanced training course on basic wilderness medical first aid preparedness covering things like snake bites, tourniquets, pocket first aid and splints.
 - The board agreed that this was a good idea.
 - It could be presented at the monthly chapter meeting as AT. July would be preferred for that presentation.

Ongoing business:

1. **Sharing Chapter Documents Online** – Kaye Sapikas
 - Marcia noted that she has had many requests for documents recently so this could be important.
 - Kaye asked us to define the objectives. The board discussed possible examples of need.

- Kaye will further explore the technical options to create a virtual “library” for shared communications.
- She asked if we are willing to pay for a service. The board was willing based on reasonable cost.
- It might be limited to use by the board and special committees.

2. **Private Water Testing** – Marcia Karr

- Marcia mentioned a scenario that could be relevant – testing stock ponds on private land for microorganism changes based on livestock vs. wildlife management (e coli).
- Marsha Elrod will research the cost of equipment to do biological testing.
- It would be wise to survey the chapter for interest.
- Allen noted that currently they are NOT testing for bacteria at Lockhart State Park.

3. **Wildlife Rehabilitation List** – Audrey Ambrose

- There has been interest in knowing how injured or abandoned wildlife should be handled.
- At the January meeting, we discussed that Audrey would talk to Cat May about this.
- She noted that rehabbers have to be licensed by the state TPWD and that there is a wildlife rescue relocating from Austin to Elgin that will take animals.
- Audrey has collected a large amount of information on agencies and licensed individuals. Marcia will look at placing some of this on our website.
- It could be a topic for AT.

4. **Training Member Contact Information** – Marcia Karr for Chrissy Wise

- Many of the new trainees have not yet entered their contact info.
- It is important because background checks need to be done to work in state parks.

- Kaye mentioned that we will be screening volunteers for approval of working with children. Kaye will urge compliance.

5. **Free Dues for Past Presidents** – Audrey Ambrose

- **MOTION: Marsha Elrod moved that all past presidents be exempt from our chapter dues for life. Allen Guisinger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**
- Julia suggested that we revisit how much it costs to support the chapter, so that we can make rational decisions on the amount of dues we charge.
- There was some discussion about the issue and it was noted that we have a healthy balance of about \$14,000 in our account now.
- Allen suggested that we tell members that they can propose any worthwhile expenditures for the chapter since we do have money available.
- Marsha will consider the question of defining chapter operating costs.

6. **Financial Report** – Marsha Elrod

- Marsha Elrod (Treasurer) reported on her analysis of our financial reporting.
- She has worked hard trying to get QuickBooks to work with limited success. After studying this in detail, Marsha has set up a new chart of accounts which will better help us understand our finances.
- **She will endeavor to provide a financial statement for each chapter meeting.**

7. **Project updates:**

- **Yegua Knobbs** – Larry Gfeller
 - Larry reported that we need to be careful in our planning with PPLT.
 - It is important that we survey the membership to see how many people are going to camp and/or attend the daytime activities. There are maximum numbers allowed.
 - Paula noted that we need to be clear with PPLT on what to expect from our visit.

- **Photo Contest** – Larry Gfeller
 - Larry said that the committee decided to use McKinney Roughs as our natural site partner. They have agreed.
 - We have also secured at least one sponsor – Precision Camera – out of Austin. They have offered to manage the program for us.
 - We need to decide which 2 day weekend.
 - The event will be open to the public and give exposure to both McKinney Roughs and LPTMN.
 - Do we want it to be more than a photo contest? i.e. AT training opportunities for members and public, hikes, tracking, biocensus, etc.. Input is welcome.
- **Zedler Park South Trail** – Allen Guisinger
 - Allen reported that the Luling City council has formally approved our trail project.
 - We will be marking out the trail route on Tuesday, March 7 and the Bridge Maniacs will build the trail on March 22.
- **Bluebird Trails** – Allen Guisinger
 - Allen reported that he and Jim Estes conducted a successful advanced training with 7 students at LSP and installed 12 nest boxes there.
 - The program is likely to expand to include management of boxes at other locations. Marcia noted that this should probably require an additional AT course.
- **Bio-surveys** – Marcia Karr
 - Kathy McAleese is leading this program.
 - She has completed two biocensus hikes at McKinney Roughs. Marcia said they were very interesting and educational.
 - There is an iNaturalist project started for this program and we have logged over 140 observations already.

- Hikes will take place twice a month on alternate Tuesdays and Sundays.
- Marcia noted that we are also working with Zedler Park and Lockhart State Park to look at removal of invasive plants.
- Pines and Prairies Land Trust is interested in having us help them with biocensus work as well.
- **Interpretive hikes** – Marcia Karr
 - Benjamin Kanten has a good system for scheduling hikes at the state parks; however, Louise Ridlon seems to be having a hard time getting leaders for her hikes at Lake Bastrop South Shore.
 - It was suggested that the Lake Bastrop South Shore hikes be integrated into Benjamin's program. Training would be needed for that location and there are some different rules for leading hikes at LCRA properties.
 - We agreed that our interpretive hikes with the LCRA would benefit from more organization.
 - Marcia will reach out to Louise on these issues.

8. Approve Minutes

- **MOTION: Larry Gfeller moved to approve the Board Minutes of January 5. Julia Akin seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously with no changes.**

The meeting was adjourned by President Marcia Karr at 8:01 PM.

Next Meeting: May 4, 2017 at 5:30pm at Bluebonnet Electric Coop. Headquarters