



TMN-COT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 5, 2020 9:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Via Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service’s Microsoft Teams Meeting license

President: Bill Ahlstrom called the meeting to order, presented the agenda and asked for additions or corrections.

Attendance—

Elected Members of Board		Present	Appointed/Other Members of Board		Present
Bill Ahlstrom (President)		✓	Kristine Rivers (Immediate Past President)		
Mickey Dufilho (Vice-President/Programs)		✓	John Boettiger (Membership Dir.)		✓
Lisa Myers (Secretary)		✓	Mary Schwartz (New Class Dir.)		✓
Don Sabathier (Treasurer)		✓	Larry Peterson (Communications Dir.)		✓
			Ruby Lewis (Outreach Dir.)		✓
Chapter Advisor(s)			Bob Whitmarsh (Advanced Training Dir.)		✓
John O’Connell (AgriLIFE Extension)		✓	Oron Atkins (Volunteer Service Dir.)		✓
Paul Cason (TPWD: Sea Center Texas)		✓	Connie Stolte (State Rep.)		✓
Guests/Other			Rose Wagner (Chapter Host)		✓
Neal McLain (Communications Support)			Kathy Pittman (Class of 2020 Rep.)		✓
			Quorum		Yes

Approve Previous Board Minutes—Lisa Myers stated that the July minutes had been sent to the Board for review, and the corrections suggested by board members were made. The minutes were approved.

Minutes Approval—

Motion	Motion to Approve	Motion Seconded	Vote
Approve the July General Meeting and Board Meeting Minutes	Mickey Dufilho	Don Sabathier	Minutes approved by unanimous voice vote of Board members present

Motions—

Motion	Motion	Motion Seconded	Vote
Approve cancellation of the October General Meeting as it overlaps the State Annual Meeting	Mickey Dufilho	Connie Stolte	Passed by a majority vote of Board members present

Action Register Review—Bill Ahlstrom led the review. [see COT Board Action Register at end of minutes.]

Completed Action Items	Who	Comments
Complete Volunteer at a Distance Idea Form (on State website)	Oron Atkins with Dave Brandes	For chapters to share ideas for volunteering during COVID-19 Jul: Oron says not much listed on state site; only four chapters have submitted ideas; anyone can submit but no guarantee it will be approved; Connie submitted water quality testing; Oron will submit our recent trash collection/analysis project

Treasurer’s Report—Don Sabathier presented the July 2020 financial information, below. He again reached out to John Minchert for 2020 dues; no response. Monies for Ecofund Grant GCBO signs have been disbursed. The Board insurance bill has been received.

1 July – 31 July 2019, COT Treasurer Report

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$ 11,178.84
Revenue Summary	\$ 24.16
Expense Summary	(\$ 0.00)
<u>Ending Balance</u>	\$ 11,203.00

TMN Policies and Procedures Annual Review Period—Connie Stolte will review 2017/2018 (current) version and asked board members to review as well. We did not submit any changes in the last review [see Attachment B].

Presidents Meeting August 10 (upcoming)—Bill Ahlstrom reviewed items to be discussed:

- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Virtual Volunteer Fair, September 2
- Annual Meeting: registration, contests, virtual 5k run
- Updates to CMOP
- Website transitions (completed)
- Return to Service updates, if any
- Community/Citizen Science Guidance documents (Bill will forward to board)
- Fall training classes
- YouTube Distance Basic and AT Training Hub
- Regional WebEx Accounts (Larry attended a recent overview meeting)
- Recertification Requirements

Don suggested Bill ask that AT hours from the Annual Meeting be applicable to the 2021 requirement.

Nominations for Members Emeriti—Lisa Myers proposed Pete and Peggy Romfh for this designation based on their extraordinary contributions to the chapter (as provided via email to the board). As the General Membership must be given two weeks’ notice of this vote, John Boettiger will provide information (supplied by Lisa) to members via email. Mickey will add to the August General Meeting agenda as an advance notice and will add to the September agenda.

BOARD REPORTS and OTHER TOPICS

General Meeting Programs—Mickey provided the following status on upcoming general-meeting speakers:

- **August**—Chris Kneupper, on “History of the Forts Velasco; Nature Notes, Mickey Dufilho, on “Pollinator Awareness Citizen Science Results.”

- **September**—Bryan Frazier, Director of Brazoria County Parks, on “Brazoria County Parks Update and Vision for the Future”; Nature Notes, Jackie Hicks on her Ecofund Grant
- **October**—Board voted to cancel meeting due to overlap with Annual Meeting [see Motion]

Membership—Data Manager Dave Brandes sent the July impact and awards data for inclusion in the minutes.

Impact Data	# Adults	# Youth	Total
YTD Totals—July 31	1,886	5,111	7,997

Period	VT Hours	AT Hours
YTD Totals—July 31	7,290	1,194

Recertification 2020	4,000 VT Hours Milestone
Denis James Kenneth Sluis Brenda Martin Linda Sluis Candace Novak George Valadez Lawrence Ruhr Rose Wagner	Oron Atkins

Training Director—Mary Schwartz said that planning for the fall intern training class, scheduled to begin on August 26, is proceeding. Five people have registered so far; three are from one family. There was a discussion regarding waiving the \$45 cost of the TMN book included in the registration fee if the family needs only one book, and most of the board agreed to a waiver. A preliminary training schedule has been sent to presenters and to Larry to post on the website. Lectures will be virtual, and most field trips will be in person. Mary has two meetings with the State office next week. Dick Schaffhausen will create a press release for the media and will post information to Facebook

Volunteer Service Director—Oron Atkins noted the following opportunities:

- **BioBlitz at Hudson Woods Unit, San Bernard and Brazoria NWRs**—August 7, 8, & 9, 7a to 12p; iNaturalist project <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/texas-mid-coast-bioblitz>
- **TCWP at GCBO Workday**—August 20, 9a to 12p; contact Chris Kneupper
- **GCBO Native Plant Workday**—every Thursday until further notice; 8:30a to 11:30a; contact Chris Kneupper
- **BCPD Trail Day**—third Thursday of the month; 8a to 12p; contact Mike Mullenweg
- **FOBWR Bobcat Woods Trail Project**—TBD; contact Oron Atkins
- **Trash Collection/Analysis Project**—self directed
- **Nurdle Beach Patrol**—self directed

Advanced Training Director—Bob Whitmarsh indicated that he has no new links for opportunities.

Outreach Director—Ruby Lewis announced the following events. Ruby suggested that we cancel participation in face-to-face outreach through October; Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges has already done so. The Board agreed and Ruby will notify organizations that we are interested in future events.



- **KBR Kids Day**—still planned at this point
- **Prairie Walk About at Galveston State Park**—Rescheduled
- **GCBO’s Hummingbird Xtreme Hummingbird Xtravaganza**—Virtual Event.

Communications Director—Larry Peterson presented the following report:

WEBSITE

- New website is ready for Board review and approval for launch (provide Larry with suggestions); new WordPress theme; he is working on archived files; secure area can be set up (member info)
- Regional training sessions completed on July 6, 8, 13 and 30; current GoDaddy website stable for the last month and being maintained by Larry; Oron and Bob are updating Calendar and events; the other web pages are being updated on both servers; there are 15 years of archived data on the tmn-cot.org site
- url for the new site is <http://txmn.org/cradleoftexas>; we may be able to change to a more abbreviated url such as cradle, tmncot or cot.
- Send presentations to Larry for posting

NEWSLETTER

Latest copy is posted on the websites through the menus or directly at <http://txmn.org/cradleoftexas/archives/newsletters> or <http://tmn-cot.org/Newsletters/index.html>.

BUSINESS CARDS

Business cards with TMN-COT logo are available for any TMN-COT member for \$16/100 cards + \$4 shipping. To order, contact Neal McLain at mclain@tmn-cot.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Our chapter will be hosting the State TMN Program Page; organized by Kathy Pitman
- Facebook page “liked” by 576 people (up by 643).
- Twitter @tmncot, 83 followers (up by 25); following, 8.

Take Over of State Facebook—Kathy Pittman is ready to take over on Sunday. She has received feedback from a few board members on the proposed schedule of postings.

Chapter Advisor—Paul Cason said that Sea Center Texas is operating within COVID-19 guidelines and with no volunteers. They are using a reservation system for visitors. Summer camp was virtual as was Coastal Brigade. The fishery is doing well and had its first ever summer strip spawn.

He said that SCT is also working on a diversity and inclusion plan and offered to share it; the goal is to diversify visitors and staff.

Cradle of Texas Board Action Register				
Open Action Item	Who?	Due Date?	Complete/Ongoing	Comments
Ask local libraries if they are interested in showing the displays prepared for the Bonus AT Day	Ruby Lewis	October	Tabled	To share information with the public and for COT PR purposes March: No update (Ruby absent) April: Ruby contacted the library system and they would like to display them at libraries that have space starting in August. Ruby will coordinate a schedule and transport by a TMN member June: Ruby said libraries said fall would be best; they need a container to hold the presentation boards for transport between libraries or we can transport; Ruby will work out details in September



				<p>Sept: no update Oct, Nov: Ruby not present Dec: Ruby not present Feb 2020: No action; Ruby will follow up Apr: Not discussed; libraries are closed May: Libraries still closed Jun/Jul/Aug: Libraries opened for limited hours/access; too soon for the displays</p>
Review and update partners webpage (see below also)	Oron Atkins	ASAP	Ongoing	<p>Sept: Oron has updated and will provide Neal with information to post on website Oct: Oron working to finalize changes Nov: Oron said that there will likely be 6 partners: USFWS Texas Mid-Coast Refuge Complex; GCBO; arts center complex at Brazosport College; Brazoria County Library System; Brazos Bend State Park; Brazoria County Parks Department Dave expressed concern that these relationships should be reciprocal Dec: Agreements being worked on Feb 2020: Agreements being worked on Apr: Agreements being worked on May: No update; Bill said Angleton Parks & Recreation Department wants to be a VPAR Jun/Jul/Aug: No update</p>
Update VPAR agreements	Oron Aktins	ASAP	Ongoing	<p>Sept: We have 16 partners; some paperwork is missing; Peggy Romfh checking to see if there is VT logged or not; the board agreed that agreements will be auto-renew with a 30-day cancellation clause and agreement contact information will be updated every two years Oct: Oron working with Pete and Peggy; there was some discussion about putting the planetarium and museum under one VPAR Nov: Oron is working to finalize Dec: Oron continuing to work on Feb 2020: Oron spoke with the Center for Arts and Sciences, which is in the process of consolidating all its entities; Oron will coordinate a meeting with them to discuss our relationship Apr: Oron is working to finalize May: Bill said Angleton Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) is applying to be a new partner Jun: Bill said that APRD is requesting changes to its VPAR that Bill will send to the board; Oron will follow up Jul: Bill said APRD will respond on/about August 1 Aug: No update; Larry asked whether we should pursue a partnership agreement with Flo Hannah Prairie, but this is covered as it will be managed by our VPAR with TPWD NWRs</p>
Find the portable loudspeaker system; possibly buy a new system for intern training (need cost information); decide on a system	Larry Peterson -->Mary Schwartz	Jan.	Ongoing	<p>Location of COT's system is unknown but was not acceptable; need to investigate intern-class needs Dec: speaker system has been found; Larry will test it but likely is not adequate for our training needs Feb 2020: Larry will determine training class needs and cost to meet them; Kathy suggested individual earphones for participants Apr: Larry has found one in the \$150-200 range that he thinks will meet our needs May: Larry asked to table this until late summer Jul: Mary will select a system</p>



				Aug: Mary researching a way for people to use cell phones/walkie-talkies/other on field trips; wifi access a consideration
Executive Committee to meet and draft wording for harassment and accommodations for disability policies	Kristine Rivers		Ongoing	State suggested that chapters provide a “welcoming atmosphere”; Peggy Romfh requested that accommodations for impairments be included Feb 2020: The Executive Board has not yet met Apr: Not discussed May: Connie has collected some wording; John O’Connell will provide the 4H volunteer policy Jun/Jul/Aug: No update; Paul Cason will provide Sea Center Texas’ policy
2020 State Meeting Planning	State Mtng Comm: Bob, Bill, Rose, Connie (chair), John O., Kim Richardson	Oct.	Ongoing	Need photo contest committee and volunteers; find/create easels for display; Field Trip Committee Liaison and trip ideas; session ideas; vendor ideas; silent auction items Feb 2020: Committee meeting to be set up Apr: Not discussed May: As of now, the meeting is still on; Bill needs volunteers to help with the photo contest (Kim has offered). Connie will coordinate a May 13 virtual meeting with committee members Jun: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachment A Jul: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachments A & B Aug: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachment A
Spotlight a different COT member each month on Facebook and in the newsletter	Kathy Pittman	Mar.	Ongoing	To honor the efforts of our membership and help us get to know each other Apr: Kathy requested information from several members; none has yet replied May: Kathy has put on hold Jun/Jul: No action Aug: Herb and Jo Myers to send info for Aug newsletter
Hold a brief training session on entering hours in VMS via Smart Phone	?	TBD	Tabled	To facilitate the capture of more volunteer hours Apr: Not discussed May: No update Jun: Tabled pending in-person general meetings Aug: Bill says there are two sessions on this at State Annual Meeting
NEW Action Item(s) Added at August Meeting	Who?		Due date?	Comments
None				

President: Bill Ahlstrom adjourned the Board Meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ladd Myers, Secretary

cc: Board Members
 Crystal Andablo, AgriLIFE Secretary Crystal.Andablo@aq.tamu.edu



Attendance 2020	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Elected Board Members													
Bill Ahlstrom	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Mickey Dulilho	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Sabathier, Don	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Myers, Lisa	X	X		X	X	X	X	X					
Advisors													
O'Connell, John	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Cason, Paul		X		X	X		X	X					
Immediate Past President													
Rivers, Kristine	X	X	X	X	X		X						
Appointed Board Members													
Atkins, Oron	X	X	X	X		X	X	X					
Boettiger, John	X		X	X	X	X		X					
Lewis, Ruby		X		X	X	X	X	X					
Peterson, Larry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Pittman, Kathy		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Schwartz, Mary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Stolte, Connie	X		X	X	X	X	X	X					
Wagner, Rose		X			X	X	X	X					
Whitmarsh, Bob	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Guests													
McLain, Neal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Lewis, Laina						X							

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A

TMN State Meeting Photo Art and Media Committee Report

- Committee meeting weekly
- Registration opens for the state meeting August 5; fee is \$55
- A Photo Art and Media Contest announcement has been posted on the state website; Lisa will put in newsletter; Bill also planning promotion
- The final draft of the contest rules was completed. Thank you to Kim Richardson and Bill Ahlstrom for getting these drafted and complete. Thank you to Lisa Myers for proofreading!
- Accepting entries September 1-30
- Ribbons need to be purchased for the new, digitally-enhanced photo category. A vendor has been contacted for a price quote
- Susan Conaty's virtual field trip to the Nash Prairie has been cancelled; however, Mike Lange will likely be giving a virtual tour of the Flo Hannah Prairie and Folletts Island Strand Prairie.

Attachment B

August State Representative Report

Input for changes to programs guiding documents is due by September 4. Below is the information that the state office sent to chapter presidents and state representatives.

Annual review period open for the TMN CMOP and COH documents:

Mid-summer marks the time when we notify our chapters that we are preparing for a review of select state program guiding documents. The documents we are seeking your chapter's input on for the 2021 TMN and calendar year are the Chapter Management and Operating Protocols (CMOP) and the Chapter Operating Handbook (COH). These documents are attached as MS Word documents to assist with your chapter's review. (The documents also exist in PDF form on our TMN state website at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>) With this message we are communicating the opportunity for your chapter to provide suggestions for improvements and edits that your chapter believes to be necessary. The following will aid in a smoother review process for all.

- Your suggestions should be submitted to our state office **no later than September 4th**. (Any suggestions received after this date will have to be filed and saved for the next year's review process)
- When submitting your suggestions for changes, **please submit a redlined copy using 'Track Changes' in MS Word** to Michelle at mmhaggerty@tamu.edu and your file title submitted should include the document name, your chapter's full name (no acronyms) and 2020 review (or suggestions)
- We are currently operating on the 2017/2018 versions of our program guiding documents
- Where your chapter believes a change needs to be made please draft specific verbiage. We request that your chapter also include notes on that redline copy explaining the need, implications and justifications for the changes suggested and reference sections, articles, and page numbers of supporting documents where needed. This info will be used by the committee as they review and consider changes to the document(s).

PLEASE NOTE:

- These documents are long-term guiding documents of the program. We do not expect COVID-19 health and safety precautions and issues to be addressed by these documents. Those ever-changing policies will be sent out as interim guidance and will not be part of this review.
- After the summer review period, we will work to make edits as needed and send draft versions for your chapter's review prior to the December update. It is our intent to have the end-products published and ready for you in December so that they are ready for your chapter's implementation in January of the new 2021 calendar year when your new officers officially take office.
- Though there will not be any changes made to the TMN Bylaws for the 2021 TMN operating year, we will continue to collect your chapter's thoughts on edits for a future (TBD) update of the bylaws. Please feel free to send in your TMN bylaws change suggestions with justifications and explanations in the same manner as requested above.
- Currently, at the committee level, we do not have any expected areas of change for the documents that we have been mulling over yet.