

TMN-COT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 9:03 a.m. – 11:08 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.)	
		Bob Whitmarsh (Advanced Training Dir.)	✓
Chapter Advisor(s)		Oron Atkins (Volunteer Service Dir.)	✓
John O'Connell (AgriLIFE Extension)	✓	Connie Stolte (State Rep.)	✓
Paul Cason (TPWD: Sea Center Texas)	✓	Rose Wagner (Chapter Host)	✓
Guests/Other		Kathy Pittman (Class of 2020 Rep.)	✓
		Quorum	Yes

Approve Previous Board Minutes—Lisa Myers stated that the August Board and General Meeting minutes and September General Meeting minutes (there was no September Board Meeting) 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 August Board and General Meeting and September General Meeting Minutes	Don Sabathier	Kathy Pittman	Minutes approved by unanimous voice vote of Board members present

Motions—

Motion	Motion	Motion Seconded	Vote
Allocate the actual time accrued for the business portion of General Meetings, rounded to the nearest quarter hour	Connie Stolte	Lisa Myers	Passed by a majority vote of Board members present
Motion to approve the Survey of the Spiders of Brazoria County VPAR submitted by Melanie Hollinshead	Bob Whitmarsh	Don Sabathier	Passed by a majority vote of Board members present

Summary of September 28 TMN Presidents' Meeting—Bill Ahlstrom presented a summary of items in Attachment A.

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

Completed Action Items	Who	Comments
Find the portable loudspeaker system; possibly buy a new system for intern training (need cost information); decide on a system	Mary Schwartz	Mary purchased a portable system that is working pretty well for new class field trips; may need more receivers in the future
Spotlight a different COT member each month on Facebook and in the newsletter	Kathy Pittman	The first article, on Herb and Jo Myers, was published in the September newsletter; Kathy will periodically provide content as she receives it

Treasurer’s Report—Don Sabathier presented the September 2020 financial information, below. He asked board members to think about additions/modifications for the 2021 budget. He noted that due to the pandemic, there have been fewer expenses in 2020 than budgeted (no live meetings); however, the new speaker system was not in the budget.

Don added that we need to plan for the annual COT financial examination. The committee consists of the: Vice President, Secretary, Advisor, and New Class Representative. The committee decided to meet at the AgriLIFE building at 10 A.M. on December 4.

Oron asked about the status of the EcoFund Grant because Melanie Hollenshead could use some funding for her spider project, as outlined in the VPAR she just submitted (see below).

1 September – 30 September 2020, COT Treasurer Report

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$ 10,923.29
Revenue Summary	\$ 1,279.81 ¹
Expense Summary	(\$ 441.00) ²
<u>Ending Balance</u>	\$ 11,762.10

¹ Mostly New Class intern fees

² Board insurance

Bonus AT Day 2021—Lisa Myers suggested that we hold a virtual meeting for a half day (or more) and invite a paid expert to train or present as we will not have the expense of a free lunch. Bob Whitmarsh will form an exploratory committee [see New Action Item].

New Class Training—On behalf of Mary Schwartz, Kathy Pittman said that training is going well; one intern has dropped out; three field trips have been held so far; six or seven interns came to a trash pick-up day organized by the Salinases; today is ornithology training.

Allocating VT Time for Business Portion of General Meetings—Bob Whitmarsh indicated that he has no new links for AT opportunities. Bob questions allocating one-hour VT for the business portion at virtual meetings when they last about 30 minutes. There was some discussion as to how the one-hour minimum came about, but the board agreed that the actual time should be used [see Motion].

BOARD REPORTS and OTHER TOPICS

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

- **October**—No General Meeting
- **November**—Brian Roberts, Education Coordinator for the Wildlife Habitat Federation, speaking on “Restoring Native Prairies”; Nature Notes: Mickey Dufilho, speaking on “Chagas Disease: What a Master Naturalist Needs to Know”
- **December**—Class of 2020 New Class Project Presentations; 2021 officer election
- **January** (added later via email)—Wizzie Brown, Extension Program Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLIFE, speaking on “Bed Bug Biology and Management”; Nature Note TBD.

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

Impact Data	# Adults	# Youth	Total
YTD Totals—September 30	2,094	6,258	8,352
September 1-30	37	16	53

Period	VT Hours	AT Hours
YTD Totals—September 30	8,764	1,423
September 1-30	597	112

Recertification 2020	500 VT Hours Milestone
Marty Cornell Neal McLain Connie Stolte	Larry Kirby Linda Sluis

Volunteer Service Director—Oron Atkins noted the following opportunities:

- **TCWP at GCBO Workday**—October 15 and November 19, 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
- **BNWR Median Weeding**—TBD; contact Tom Schneider (Oron will get details)
- **Hudson Woods Apple Snail Removal via Kayak**—two trips weekly; contact Thomas Adams (Oron will get details)
- **Resoft Park Tree Planting**—October 15, 9a to 12p.

Mickey Dufilho noted that the **butterfly garden at the BNWR Bobcat Woods Trail** needs a lot of work. Oron said that the deteriorating fence around it had been removed; therefore, work on the garden might be futile given the hog problem; he will check with Curtis on this issue.

VPAR for Survey of the Spiders of Brazoria County—Oron Atkins presented Melanie Hollenshead's VPAR. She would like to train volunteers to study spiders in Brazoria County, beginning with the southern part of the county. She may request some funding for supplies—possibly via an EcoFund Grant [see Motion].

Bob Whitmarsh will contact Melanie for information related to AT, supplies needed, and the possibility of her presenting a training session at a future General Meeting or Bonus AT Day. He will invite her to the November Board Meeting.

State Annual Meeting Committee Update—Connie Stolte noted that planning for the Photo, Art, and Media Contest is complete except for voting, which will take place at the meeting.

Communications Director—Larry Peterson reported the following:

- He has added “Calendar” option to the website’s main menu to facilitate easy access
- There is a limit on file size on the AgriLIFE server, so we will continue to use the old site for archiving
- He is working on the best method for on-line payments; has decided to use Square, but there is a service fee. Therefore, we need to decide whether to increase amounts charged for such things as annual membership fee and new class training, or absorb the transaction fee [see Action Item].

Chapter Advisor—Paul Cason reported the following regarding Sea Center Texas:

- Spooktacular is on October 25, from 1p to 3p as a “Drive Through” event and involving some of their partner organizations
- The distance learning program is continuing
- They are planning to phase in volunteers
- They may need additional volunteers for special projects.

Chapter Advisor—John O’Connell reported the following:

- The county is now allowing 75% capacity
- He plans to develop virtual Water Fairs for schools
- There is a potential funding and volunteer opportunity with the Texas General Land Office for dune restoration and reef enhancement
- He will send information to the board on a possible oyster catcher habitat project
- He is doing a one-hour Seaside Chat for Texas Sea Grants; he will send information to the board.



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 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
Review and update partners webpage (see below also)	Oron Atkins	ASAP	Ongoing	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/Sep: No update
Update VPAR agreements	Oron Aktins	ASAP	Ongoing	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



				<p>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> <p>Sep: Bill has been contacted by City of Angleton attorney; he is to meet with him about Angleton Parks and Recreation Dept</p>
Executive Committee to meet and draft wording for harassment and accommodations for disability policies	Kristine Rivers		Ongoing	<p>State suggested that chapters provide a “welcoming atmosphere”; Peggy Romfh requested that accommodations for impairments be included</p> <p>Feb 2020: The Executive Board has not yet met</p> <p>Apr: Not discussed</p> <p>May: Connie has collected some wording; John O’Connell will provide the 4H volunteer policy</p> <p>Jun/Jul/Aug/Sep: No update; Paul Cason will provide Sea Center Texas’ policy</p>
2020 State Meeting Planning	State Mtng Comm: Bob, Bill, Rose, Connie (chair), John O., Kim Richardson	Oct.	Ongoing	<p>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</p> <p>Feb 2020: Committee meeting to be set up</p> <p>Apr: Not discussed</p> <p>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</p> <p>Jun: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachment A</p> <p>Jul: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachments A & B</p> <p>Aug: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachment A</p> <p>Sep: See Connie’s report in minutes and Attachment B</p>
Hold a brief training session on entering hours in VMS via Smart Phone	?	TBD	Tabled	<p>To facilitate the capture of more volunteer hours</p> <p>Apr: Not discussed</p> <p>May: No update</p> <p>Jun: Tabled pending in-person general meetings</p> <p>Aug: Bill says there are two sessions on this at State Annual Meeting</p>
NEW Action Item(s) Added at October Meeting	Who?	Due date?	Comments	
Annual Chapter Financial Audit at AgriLIFE, Angleton	Don Sabathier, Mickey Dufilho (chair), Lisa Myers, Paul Cason, Kathy Pittman	10a 4 Dec 2020	Mandated by TMN State	
Form Exploratory Committee for Bonus AT Day 2021	Bob Whitmarsh	Ongoing		
End of year virtual election protocols need to be developed	Past Persident Kristine Rivers, nominating committee, John O’Connell	9 Dec General Meeting	Per Sep 28 Presidents’ Meeting	
Board to determine whether to increase amounts charged (e.g., membership dues, training) to cover Square transaction fee or to absorb the fee	Larry Peterson and Board	Nov Board Meeting	Square fee is approximately 3% of each transaction	



Contact Melanie Hollenshead regarding: 1) AT for her Survey of the Spiders of Brazoria County Study VPAR; 2) presenting training at a General Meeting or Bonus AT Day; 3) invite her to the November Board Meeting	Bob Whitmarsh	ASAP	
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Vice President: Mickey Dufilho adjourned the Board Meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ladd Myers, Secretary

cc: Board Members
Crystal Andablo, AgriLIFE Secretary Crystal.Andablo@ag.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		X			
Mickey Dulilho	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Sabathier, Don	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Myers, Lisa	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X			
Advisors													
O'Connell, John	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N	X			
Cason, Paul		X		X	X		X	X	O	X			
Immediate Past President													
Rivers, Kristine	X	X	X	X	X		X						
Appointed Board Members													
Atkins, Oron	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	M	X			
Boettiger, John	X		X	X	X	X		X	E				
Lewis, Ruby		X		X	X	X	X	X	E				
Peterson, Larry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	T	X			
Pittman, Kathy		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	I	X			
Schwartz, Mary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N				
Stolte, Connie	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	G	X			
Wagner, Rose		X			X	X	X	X		X			
Whitmarsh, Bob	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Guests													
McLain, Neal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Lewis, Laina						X							

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A

Summary of September 28 TMN Presidents' Meeting

State Annual Meeting Update

- The WebEx platform will be used for the State Annual Meeting
- As of 09-27-2020, over 800 TMNs have registered for the state annual meeting – the highest count ever
- WebEx 'Chat' will be disabled during the state meeting. All interactive communications will be done using the Q&A function
- Sessions watched live with Q&A will count as AT. I also think I heard that sessions watched 'Post Meeting' will also count as AT. I need to confirm this
- Registration closes 10-02-2020 at 5 PM
- Virtual Field Sessions:
 - Oct. 8 – Mercer Botanic Garden will begin at 8 AM
 - Oct 13 – Field sessions will begin at 9 AM and run through 5:30 PM. Sessions led by COT will be held at 1:00pm – 2:30 pm – **Flo Hannah Prairie and the Follet's Strand Prairie.**

Other Presidents' Meeting Topics

- The Virtual Volunteer Fair link is still available on the State Website:
<https://txmn.tamu.edu/events-calendar/texas-master-naturalist-programs-virtual-volunteer-fair/>
Over 650 members attended the Fair
- Return to service requirements, as dictated by TAMU AgriLife/TPWD remain the same: indoor meetings are limited to 50% capacity of the meeting area, and a maximum of 50 members in attendance. Masks and social distancing regulations must be followed. State and local directives **ALWAYS** supersede TPWD/AgriLife directives
- Recertification Requirements will not be changed for 2020, but there will be an update made at the 2020 meeting
- End of year virtual election protocols need to be developed
- Prepare for an end of year virtual audit
- Chapter review of CMOP if changes are proposed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment B

TMN State Meeting Photo, Art and Media Committee Report

- The Photo, Art and Media Contest activities are almost complete
- The Contest Committee successfully accepted and approved contest submissions, including creating rules for the first ever virtual contest and establishing procedures to manage and approve the files submitted
Entries were accepted from September 1 until September 30 via an online entry form.
- All contest entries were processed, documented, approved if compliant with rules, and stored on the google drive for the State Office
- The State Office is in the process of uploading all the approved entries into the State Meeting app
- Meeting attendees will be able to vote for their top three choices in each category.

Number of entries in each contest category were:

- Photography
 - Birds 51
 - Wildlife 57
 - Plants 44
 - Scenic 40
 - Master Naturalist chapter at work and play 23
 - Digitally Enhanced Nature photos 19 (new category)
- Media
 - Newsletter 6
 - Brochures 2
- Art
 - Drawings and Paintings 9