

TMN – COT
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, February 2, 2011
The AgriLife Building - Angleton, Texas

Attendees: Ed Barrios, Dave Brandes, Laura Brandes, Barbara Burkhardt, Marty Cornell, Justina Dent, Jerry Eppner, Marlies Greenwood, Sandy Henderson, Mary Helen Israel, Mary Holler, Jerry Krampota, Ruby Lewis, Neal McLain .

Start Time: 10:02

February Agenda Review

The proposed agenda was accepted.

January Minutes were accepted as amended with e-mail corrections.

Review Action Register

Candace Novak is out of town, so her report on AT opportunities will be at the next Board Meeting.

More Award Levels

Ed Barrios conversed with Michelle Haggerty on the possibility of including an additional recognition level for service between 2500 and 5000 volunteer hours. Michelle responded that the Texas Parks & Wildlife leadership committee is indeed considering adding more award levels, including a 10,000 hour VT recognition pin. She is encouraging chapters to add awards as they see fit. The Board decided to include a discussion of such additional recognition levels at the March, 2011 board meeting.

Audit of COT Financial Books

Per the requirement in our Policies and Procedures (P&P) for an internal audit of the chapter financial books, Jerry Eppner and Barbara Burkhardt conducted this audit for both 2009 and 2010 and found the accounting to be clear and in order. Jerry Eppner moved that their audit be accepted with Ed Barrios seconding the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

State Report

President Barbara Burkhardt has submitted the 2010 COT report to TMN state. She said that, now that we are cognizant of reporting expectations, we need to ensure that the statistics of chapter activities be recorded and the data saved. One source should be used for each activity's numbers, e.g. Bryan Adams for DEEP, Netta Schindler for INEOS' Field Investigation Program, and Ruby Lewis for the summer program at county libraries. Ruby stated that the libraries keep good records of summer program attendees.

Partnership Agreements

Neal McLain noted that he now has copies of all known partner agreements, all but one dated 2006 and the one with no date indicated. These agreements indeed need updating. Neal will contact the designated administrators on these agreements and ask them for suggested changes. Neal noted that there is lots of redundancy in the current partner agreement format, and he will suggest changes in this format to the COT board.

Neal reported that the Project Request form is now on our web site in the word format.

Eagle Flight Cage for WR&E

Barbara Burkhardt has been unsuccessful in her attempts to contact Cheryl Rogers of Houston's Wildlife Rescue & Education for clarification on expectations of COT to help build a flight cage. **Barbara will continue to try to contact Cheryl.**

Treasurer Report

Treasurer Sandy Henderson reported a balance of \$5393.15 in the COT bank account.

Program Chair Report

Vice President and Program Chair Mary Holler, has arranged for Felipe Chavez-Ramirez* to speak about whooping cranes at our March general meeting. She subsequently received a response from Sarah Snell of the TMN Galveston Bay Chapter of their willingness to present their programs on Junior Master Naturalists and "Teners" (Dania Humes presenting Teners) at our March general meeting. Mary will talk to both Philippe and Sarah to have one of these topics moved to our April general meeting.

Mary is also working on other meeting AT suggestions, including a presentation on county mosquito control, and Bob Honig of the Katy Prairie Conservancy to talk about dragon and damsel flies using a nearby pond (GCBO?) for the meeting location. Noting that Bob would require compensation for his traveling expenses, it was pointed out that the board has authorized up to \$250 could be provided to a speaker upon his/her post-event submittal of expenses.

Candice Novak has offered to present a talk on parasites at our June general meeting. In July, we may have Robert Lookingbill to address hummingbird banding, or perhaps his work across the United States in banding raptors. October's intern training on wetlands and beaches could also serve as the AT for that month's general meeting, using Stahlman Park as the venue. One suggestion was to invite Teri MacArthur of the TMN Heartwood Chapter for an encore of her talk on mushrooms, last given at a COT general meeting circa 2007. **COT members will be asked via our newsletter to suggest AT topics to our Program Chair, Mary Holler.**

Project Reports

Migration Celebration

Ed Barrios reported that our needs for volunteers during the three-day 2011 Migration Celebration have substantially increased because of the addition of eight stations from Coastal Expo and the expansion of Sunday's activities. Ed is investigating potential sources for these volunteers, including the Spanish and Science Clubs of high schools in Matagorda County (potentially 50 students for the MC11 Saturday from Bay City), and the environmental clubs and honor societies at AISD and BISD. Ed also expects to get a large (~35) volunteer contingent from Brazosport College, as well as several AmeriCorps volunteers. Ed requests suggestions on how to train this expanded staff.

Camp Mohawk Camp

Richard Hurd of the Brazoria County Parks Department will again offer a summer camp, this year from June 13th to June 17th. He would like COT to again run activities at this summer event using the five-station content from last year. Richard asked that COT appoint a program coordinator to work with him; Laura Brandes volunteered for this task. He wants us to recommend age groups and a maximum participant limit; the board discussed 20 participants for each of the five stations. Richard understands that he needs to be more proactive in promotion of this camp.

Summer Library Program (SLP)

Ruby Lewis reported that the summer library program is almost set, with eight presentations in the Coastal Expo trunks scheduled for June at 11.5 libraries (the Clute library has yet to respond). Ruby will ask for volunteer sign up about one month before the start of the program.

The July SLP will feature reptiles, and 12 sessions have been scheduled thus far. In order to accommodate working parents, the Lake Jackson Library will offer a session on Saturday, and the Brazoria Library will host an evening and an afternoon session. **The SLP will be described in our newsletter.**

ConocoPhillips LEEP

In order to revise this program, Barbara Burkhardt, Neal McLain, Phil Huxford, and Mary Holler will **meet with ConocoPhillips on February 10th** to revise a partner agreement using an agreement format revised by Neal McLain. They will clarify that it is CP's responsibility to deal with the Sweeny ISD.

CP has asked that COT providing "training" to interested CP employees; we presume that this request is for training on the specific topics taught at LEEP. COT has no desire to provide a full TMN intern training program to CP personnel.

Committee Reports:

Outreach:

Ruby Lewis reported that Ed Johnson will organize COT's display and staffing for Sea Center Texas' Nature Day on March 5th, while she will organize COT's participation at Brazoria's Heritage Day to be held on this same day. Ruby would like to use plates of animals and leaves for rubbing, and stated that it would be convenient for COT to have their own set of plates for such events. Laura Brandes commented that a set of plates cost \$8.95, which prompted Marty Cornell to move, seconded by Dave Brandes, to authorize Ruby to spend up to \$150 for nature plates and accessories needed for this rubbing exercise.

It was decided that we do not need to purchase a second table-top display board, as extra displays are often available from our partners, e.g. Sea Center Texas. However we do need to mimic and expand the content of our displays. **Marty Cornell will work with Ruby on this task.**

Kathy Speights, via an e-mail request, would like to work on a chapter scrap book. The board supports this project.

Training

Although the City of Surfside will allow our free use of their Stahlman Park Pavilion for our Bays and Beaches training class, we will be required to submit a \$300.00 damage deposit, which would be returned (the check will be shredded) after our use of this facility. David Brandes moved, and Ed Barrios seconded for the treasurer to issue this check; the motion passed with no dissent.

Laura Brandes stated that there are 20 people listed to attend this evening's initial 2011 intern training class. She noted that our ads published today, and that there was an article in The Facts this morning and another in the Brazoria County News.

Miscellaneous

Mall Mural

The Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges are sponsoring (\$300) COT member Jane Eppner's project to paint a mural of area wildlife on a corridor wall in the Brazos Mall. For this support, the Friends organization will be mentioned on the mural. A Project Request form on Jane's project was submitted to the board for approval. Ed Barrios moved, and Mary Holler seconded a motion to accept this project request; the motion was passed unanimously. Dave Brandes moved, seconded by Ed Barrios to provide up to \$300 on this project, so that TMN-COT would also be recognized on the mural. The motion was unanimously approved.

Happy Birthday to Us

In preparation for COT's tenth birthday party on September 14, 2011, Barbara Burkhardt will be inviting Michelle Haggerty and Sonny Arnold to attend. [Note from Wed 2/2/2011 4:24 PM "I heard back from Michelle and Sonny. They have both accepted the invite to the Sept. meeting." Barbara Burkhardt]

Details are to be developed, but we will also invite all that have gone through the TMN-COT training and send special invitations to members of the founding class.

Dave Brandes did some mining of COT VT since 2001 and found that 17 out of 140 people who have completed intern training have contributed over half of the volunteer time, and that 19 members routinely serve over 200 hours of VT each year.

Qualification for Elected Board Position.

Laura Brandes has found that TMN state policy does not require a chapter board member to be certified. After discussion, it was decided that **Barbara Burkhardt will ask Michelle Haggerty to clarify why certification is not required.**

[Here is Michelle's answer:

From: Michelle Haggerty <mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu>

To: Barbara Burkhardt <bburkhardt@sbcglobal.net>

Sent: Thu, February 3, 2011 9:59:57 AM

Subject: Re: Information Please?

Hi Barbara:

The issue in question is addressed in the Chapter bylaws for the state program. Did you consult those for your chapter?

The bylaws say for Board Member eligibility:

5. Eligibility. All board members must be Texas Master Naturalist Members or Certified Texas Master Naturalists in good standing at the time of election. The only exception is that the advisor(s) does not have to be a TMN Member or Master Naturalist. Good standing is defined as current in dues and in compliance with Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

Appointed positions and committees may be 'members of the board'

The bylaws also address the three membership categories too.

Basically, a member who is not fully certified, but has completed training may be a member of the board. If the bylaws were written in a manner where they could not then new chapters would be at a loss for board members.

Michelle]

AgriLife® Annual Report

Corrie Bowen will revise the Brazoria County AgriLife® annual report to include the contributions of our TMN-COT chapter. He distributed a draft of his revision to us, and **asked for our critique.**

Regional TMN Meeting

The TMN-Heartwood Chapter has offered to host a renewal to our regional meetings, which have included Heartwood, Houston, Galveston Bay, COT, and Coastal Prairie Chapters. It would occur in the summer in Conroe at their Fine Arts Center. Details pending.

TMN-Highland Lakes Chapter.....

....has requested via Jennifer Sanchez that they visit the National Wildlife Refuges in Brazoria County; Jennifer in turn passed this request to TMN-COT. Barbara Burkhardt has responded to Highland Lakes indicating our interest to host them. We await their response.

Review Action Items

The action items, all highlighted in yellow in the above text, were reviewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02

Marty Cornell

Secretary,

Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter

Welcome Felipe Chavez



After a nation-wide search we are pleased to welcome Dr. Felipe Chavez-Ramirez to the GCBO flock. Felipe comes to us from The Crane Trust in Nebraska where he was the Executive Director for nine years. He has an MS and PhD from Texas A&M University in Wildlife Ecology and continues to serve as an adjunct professor there. His research has focused on ecology and conservation issues of migratory birds including the Whooping Crane and Cuban Sandhill Crane. His other interests include ecological studies of migrating raptors and grassland birds in wintering areas, hummingbird resource partitioning on Caribbean Islands, and wading bird habitat use and foraging ecology along the Gulf of Mexico states. As GCBO's Director of Conservation Programs, Felipe will head-up an analysis of current programs to enhance conservation delivery, identifying the potential and need for new program development, and developing a long range plan that identifies research priorities and actions for the Gulf of Mexico region.