

TMN – COT
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, June 1, 2011
Sea Center Texas, Lake Jackson, Texas

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

Call to order at 3:00 PM

The Agenda was reviewed and approved with notice of minor additions of items to be discussed regarding requests for information from the TMN state officers.

Action register:

- ✓ Ruby Lewis still plans to meet with Tom West of the Brazoria County Library System (BCLS) in July to develop topics for their Nature Night program, which will begin in the Fall, possibly in September, but perhaps after September. The project has been delayed until the fall because of the heavy summer schedule at the libraries. **Ruby is fixin to solicit the COT members for presenters and topics.**
- ✓ **Neal McLain is developing partner agreement between COT and the BCLS; he will present it to the board before he has his discussion with Tom West.**
- ✓ **Candace Novak, who was not in attendance at this meeting, is to provide a list of AT opportunities that are in addition to the AT offered at our general meetings.**
- ✓ Neal McLain has drafted a revised format for partnership agreements; this topic was discussed at the end of this meeting and is reported below.
- ✓ Barbara Burkhardt, after several attempts, has been unable to connect with Cheryl Rogers on Cheryl's request for COT to help build a raptor flight cage. The board agreed to table this topic until Cheryl responds.
- ✓ Mary Holler continues to develop AT topics for our general meetings; her progress is reported below.

The **Minutes from the April Meeting of the COT Board** (there was no board meeting in May) were unanimously approved after a motion to do so by Laura Brands and a second by Jerry Eppner.

Treasurer's Report:

Sandy Henderson reported that only one check was written since the last COT board meeting, leaving a balance of \$5,445.43. Sandy distributed the following Performance-vs.-Plan data. Ed Barrios moved and Marty Cornell seconded to accepted the treasurer's report; the motion passed unanimously.

CRADLE OF TEXAS 2011 INCOME AND EXPENSE BUDGET

INTERN CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES		2010 Actual	2011 Budget	2010 Actual
Revenue	Class fee	\$450.00	\$750.00	\$500.00
	Intern Manual payment	\$270.00	\$450.00	\$240.00
Expenses	Intern Manual purchases	\$608.82	\$700.00	\$0.00
	Social expenses, name tags, postage, shirts	\$462.56	\$500.00	\$131.44
	Ad for TMN Training	0.00	\$300.00	\$325.50
Net Gain (Loss)		-\$351.38	-\$300.00	\$283.06

NON-CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES		2010 Actual	2011 Budget	2011 Actual
Revenue	2011 dues paid in 2010	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$180.00
	2012 dues paid in 2011	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$0.00
	Interest Income	\$32.50	\$35.00	\$4.77
	Misc. Inc.	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$1,156.00
Total Income		\$82.50	\$535.00	\$1,340.77
Expenses	Administrative Expenses	\$89.93	\$100.00	\$820.75
	Drinks and supplies for social events	\$225.13	\$200.00	\$0.00
	Officer badges	\$42.00	\$42.00	\$23.80
	TMN Meeting Registration	\$0.00	\$90.00	\$0.00
	Misc. Exp.	\$92.00	\$100.00	\$1,090.97
Total Expenses		\$449.06	\$532.00	\$1,935.52
Chapter Profit (Loss)		(\$717.94)	(\$297.00)	(\$311.69)

Carry over from 2010	\$5,757.12
TMN-COT Balance	\$5,445.43

Programs:

Mary Holler reminded the board that the topic for next week's general meeting will be parasites, to be presented by Candace Novak. In July, Mary has scheduled a presentation by the Galveston Bay chapter of TMN on their "10ers" and Junior Naturalist programs. Mary led a discussion about inviting the Lookingbills to review their data on bird banding for our August meeting. The board agreed that this would be a desirable topic if it cover both the technical aspects of banding and results of their efforts. The September meeting will celebrate the tenth anniversary of our COT chapter.

General Meeting programs after September have not been set. Suggestions included a return of Teri MacArthur of the TMN Heartwood chapter to present her talk on Texas fungi (Secretary's note: Terry did this for our March 14, 2007 general meeting). Another idea was to have a presentation on the effects of urbanization; two subject matter experts are Diana Foss of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TP&WD), and Cheryl Rogers. David Butler of the TP&WD Justin Hurst Wildlife Management Area is a possible speaker who might describe this land and his management objectives. Thomas Adams of our local Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex gives a very good talk on wild food, providing samples. Also suggested was a refresher course on trees, perhaps given by Kirby Rapstein. The suggestion to cover the topic of mosquitoes and mosquito control was not met with much enthusiasm.

During the discussion below on the ConocoPhillips environmental program, which will be based on Project Wild, it was suggested that an overview of the Project Wild/Aquatic Wild curriculum be introduced to the COT general membership, perhaps at our January, 2012 meeting. Mary mentioned a new version, called "Growing Up Wild", that is designed for younger children. Teaching of the full Project-Aquatic-Growing Up curriculum could be separately given to interested COT members.

Mary will work with these suggestions to fill future general meeting AT topics.

Tenth Anniversary of COT

The discussion on future programs briefly diverted to comments about the September celebration of the tenth anniversary of our Cradle of Texas chapter. As it stands, both Michel Haggerty and Sonny Arnold are slated to attend, but it was noted that Michel is pregnant [post-meeting note: Michel delivered a baby boy, named Grant!] and that Sonny might be affected by either retirement or budget cutbacks. At a previous board meeting, it was decided to extend a special invitation to the members of the first COT class (of 2001). The present discussion suggested that the presenters of that first class also be invited; these included Wayne and Martha McAlister, Mike Lange, Baron Richter, Jonny Poland, and Andrew Landry. No decision was made on this topic.

ConocoPhillips

Mary Holler reported that ConocoPhillips volunteers desire to independently run their environmental education program for the Sweeny ISD, asking COT only for training. This training will be given by Mary on June 16th based on the TP&WD's Project Wild and Aquatic Wild curriculum. Free literature is available from TP&WD until the end of August, after which the state will begin charging for materials. It was suggested that Sweeny school teachers be given the opportunity to participate in this training; **Mary will contact the teacher of science at the Sweeny junior high school to offer such invitation.**

Membership:

Jerry Eppner stated that our members have been slow to report their hours this year, with year-to-date submissions being slightly less than 3000 hours. Most of the "surge of hours" from Migration Celebration has yet to be recorded. Jerry suggested that a worthy target would be to document at least 100,000 hours VT by our September 10 anniversary; since inception the COT has logged just a bit over 97,000 hours of VT. [Secretary's note: No discussion ensued on how to accomplish this goal.]

Jerry is processing the paperwork to transfer Dan Smith from the Mid-Coast chapter to COT.

Camp Mohawk:

Ed Barrios reported that he and his staff of Ruby Lewis, Ed Johnson, and Pam Peltier met with James Glover of the Brazoria County Parks Department (BCPD) to cover details of the upcoming June 20th through 23rd summer camp at Camp Mohawk. The start time for each day has been moved forward to 9:00 so that sessions will be done by noon. The BCPD will take responsibility to sign the 30 participating children in and out, insuring a transfer of the child to their parent or responsible adult. This year, a "group guide" will be assigned to each group of kids and will stay with them for the four days as they rotate between sessions. If pre-registration does not reach 30 children, the BCPD will approach the Freeport Boys and Girls club for participants at no charge.

Summer Library Program:

Ruby Luis stated that plans are mostly completed for this program, but a few more volunteers are needed for the last two weeks of the sessions in June. The first session will be next week on Thursday, June 9th in the Angleton library. Ruby will send reminders to volunteers a couple weeks before their event.

Costal Expo Booth:

Ruby is coordinating, with David Plunkett of the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges (Friends), our displays and animals to be used during the July 4th weekend Coastal Expo event in Freeport's RiverPlace. On Friday, July 1st, the event will be restricted to the handicapped and elderly. The Saturday Coastal Expo on July 2nd is scheduled to run from 10:00 in the morning to 8:00 at night, but will most likely be over by 6:00 PM. A maximum of six COT volunteers will be needed.

Intern Program

Training Chair Laura Brandes submitted a report to the Board via e-mail on May 30, 2011. This report is attached at the end of this document for reference and archiving.

Laura reported that of the ten people who enrolled in the winter 2011 training session, one who paid never showed up and four others who showed up at the first class never returned. It was suggested that these persons be contacted and given priority to attend the next training session.

The 2011 fall class was a major point of discussion during this board meeting. The dates of the fall sessions and the speakers for them are confirmed. Laura recommended that we do not hold this class because recruitment of the ten minimum interns before a September start would be needed. Successful recruiting is overwhelming done by active members and Laura sees little indication that required numbers would be reached. Others thought that it would be worth challenging our membership to recruit interns, or at least surveying the membership to get an indication of the potential for new interns. The decision to cancel the fall training session was tabled pending the outcome of this survey. (Secretary's note: **No assignment for this survey was given, but President Barbara Burkhardt or Laura Brandes can do this at next week's general meeting.**) [post-meeting note from Barbara: President will add slides to the June meeting agenda to challenge folks to recruit members. She will also ask which time frame the membership prefers, spring or fall. The survey will also request that members state their preference for the present schedule of classes or for a more structured format.]

Laura recommended a focus on a winter intern program starting in February, as activities that conflict with training are minimal at this time of year, and hurricanes are nonexistent. She noted that the Migration Celebration posed no problem with this year's winter training program, and in fact many interns volunteered for duty at Migration Celebration.

Barbara Burkhardt suggested that we might use (include) some of the training class topics as general meeting topics. This would help the longer-certified members refresh their skill/knowledge. It would also serve as an opportunity to have outside speakers, i.e. Dr. Barron Rector, John Jacobs, etc. at our meetings.

A second item discussed was our dwindling number of recruitment brochures; Laura has less than 400 in stock. Barbara Burkhardt mentioned that she has a batch of these brochures, as others might as well. Laura noted that our current brochures were out of date and suggested that revisions need to be made and new brochures printed. Ed Barrios commented that the out of date content was confined to the last page (phone numbers, reference to Rich Tillman, etc.)

and this could be fixed with "mailing labels" with current data pasted over the incorrect data. It was agreed to proceed with this label fix.

Laura noted that COT members are now teaching most classes, and that we no longer to rely on experts from Texas A&M, which is fortuitous because budget cutbacks are likely to induce cost reimbursement to TA&M if their experts are used to teach training classes.

Our current portfolio of training subjects contains eight that are required (these reflect aspects of the ecology of Brazoria County) and four that are "elective". Together, these twelve topics are sufficient for interns to meet their ten training session requirement. Urban ecology is the only subject in the state curriculum that we have not taught.

It was noted that the recently certified interns are quite active in chapter activities. Jerry Eppner commented that most of our new graduates have yet to turn in any hours.

Please see the attached report from Laura for many more details.

Requests from state:

Michel Haggerty and Sonny Arnold, in a News and Notes document e-mailed on May 13, 2011, asked for information from chapters on several topics:

Barbara reviewed a request from Sonny Arnold of the State TMN for our chapter's views on how to retain members. Laura Brandes had recently written suggestions on how to retain interns. This board felt that her suggests would be equally applicable to certified COT members, and thus asked Laura to revise her suggestions to encompass both interns and members. Barbara will use this revised document to reply to Sonny. [done on 6June11.]

The State TMN (Sonny Arnold) asked for our most recent update on our Policy and Procedures and for our latest version of our training curriculum. The board agreed that Barbara Burkhardt should refer Sonny to our web site for this information. [done on 6June11.]

Sonny and/or Michel Haggerty asked several questions in preparation for the October State TMN convention at Mo Ranch:

They requested our comments about the "revised" state standards of conduct and code of ethics. Barbara Burkhardt commented that she could see no meaningful revision of this document, and thus will respond that no changes are needed in the as-presented "revised" document. This topic did stimulate the board to agree that it would be prudent to review the state standards of conduct and ethics at an upcoming general meeting, [done on 8Jun11.] and to refer to this document in a future newsletter. Barbara will so do.

Requests were made for chapters to lead round table discussions on various topics; the COT board was not inspired to do so and Barbara will so respond. [Done on 6Jun11.]

Chapters were asked to monetarily sponsor the state meeting to help offset unrecoverable costs. Marty Cornell moved that the COT chapter should **not** contribute to such funding; this motion was seconded by Mary Holler. After brief comments, such as "The registration fees should cover all costs", the motion passed unanimously.

Chapters were asked to sponsor an evening campfire. The discussion consensus was that COT sponsorship would be appropriate in recognition of our tenth anniversary. Sandy Henderson moved that the COT chapter should do so up to a cost of \$75; Ed Barrios seconded the motion. The motion passed with one nay. [On 6Jun11 Barbara Burkhardt informed Sonny Arnold of our desire to sponsor this campfire.]

A solicitation was made by the State TMN to nominate chapter advisors for an award. The COT board decided to not pursue this award.

Chapters were asked to present volunteer service projects at the state meeting. The COT board mulled a couple of ideas and settled on presenting our work on the Dow Woods Trail Project (DWT). All though the project is officially managed by the Friends, the dominant volunteer effort has come from COT members (many of whom are also Friends members). [Secretary's note: Building the five boardwalks and one observation platform was done by seven volunteers; six of them are COT members. The project administrator is Marty Cornell, COT secretary. COT board member Neal McLain drafted specifications for bids on the DWT restrooms, trails, and boardwalks.]

Partnership Agreements:

Neal McLain presented his simplified format for 13 partnership agreements(PA), explaining that his format allows a high degree of freedom on the types of activities that COT volunteers may do. Examples of project activity for each partner are posted on the web site as Volunteer Project and Activity Lists (VPAL), separate from the partnership agreements. The purpose of the activity lists are for the membership to understand what kind of things go on. Thus these activities can change over time without necessitating a new partnership agreement.

Jerry Eppner noted that VPAL are referenced, in Neal's drafts, on the partnership agreements. [Secretary's note, the revised draft, per <http://annsgarden.com/PA/USFWS-1.pdf>, now states "Subject to mutual agreement between TMN-COT and Partner, said VPAL may be revised from time to time. Such revisions will take effect under the terms of this agreement without requiring revision of this agreement."] Since the VPAL are thus an attachment to the PA, which has an initiation date denoted by the signature on the document, VPAL would technically be set by the PA date. It was suggested that the PA wording be changed to allow VPAL revision from time-to-time without requiring a "mutual agreement". **Neal will make the changes in the PA draft, and submit them to the board for approval.**

It was noted that the COT is not active at two of our partners, e.g. the TP&WD Justin Hurst and Stringfellow wildlife management areas. Barbara Burkhardt suggested that we drop them as partners via allowing their PA to lapse. No vote was taken on this suggestion.

A discussion ensued on the current requirement to renew the PA every two years. Sandy Henderson moved, and Jerry Eppner seconded the motion to amend our Policy and Procedures (P&P) to **reset the renewal interval to five years. Barbara will make this change and submit it to the general membership for approval.**

At the January, 2011 COT board meeting, Neal McLain proposed changes to Addendum 9 of our P&P, noting that "Addendum #9 duplicates (and frequently conflicts with) the Volunteer Project and Activity Lists (VPALs)". At that meeting, "Sandy Henderson moved to eliminate the current wording of Addendum #9 and to substitute a simple reference to our chapter web site for a list of partners and projects and for examples of projects. Laura Brandes seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of the Board." The minutes from the January meeting noted that "... it was not made clear who will modify the P&P and if this modification must be taken to the general membership for approval, nor was timing discussed."

Having no action on this motion, Neal McLain asked that we do so. **Laura Brandes volunteered David Brandes to draft these changes for membership approval**, since he has the latest version of our P&P on his computer.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm

Marty Cornell

Secretary, Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter

Attachment: Report by the Training Chair, Laura Brandes:

BOARD REPORT

June, 2011

January, 2011: Recruitment

- *1,000 brochures distributed around Brazoria County;
- *Chapter Members encouraged strongly to recruit within their personal organizations and contacts;
- *Ads placed in all local printed media; only one(1) responded;
- *Ads placed in *The Facts*; cost = \$300 for 1 large and 12

small;

*Article on TMN-CoT with picture submitted and printed

in *The Facts*

February, 2011: Enrollment

*Four(4) 2011 Interns continuing;

*Two(2) completed Internship and became TMNs;

*One(1) granted extension to December, 2012 due to financial complications and one(1) had health relapse (Training Director recommended extension request)

*2011 New Class: Ten(10) enrolled

One(1) never attended but paid;

Nine(9) attended 1st 2011 "Intro/Orientation" Class:

Four(4) never returned but paid;

Four(4) completed Internship and became TMNs

by May 31, 2011

NOTE: This is the "pattern" for years 2009, 2010 and 2011. To the best of my knowledge, ALL Interns who participated, except one, became TMNs AND all earned their 1st Year Certification. They continue to be Active Chapter members including leadership on the Board, planning initiative in Chapter programs and the Intern Training.

2011 EVALUATIONS:

1. Required by AgriLife a specific evaluation was designed to accommodate all topics in the Intern program. These were distributed completed by Attendees, Guests and Instructors. The completed Evaluations were submitted to the AgriLife office as a class packet.
2. Each Intern class had a required Attendance Sheet including an Instructor's session evaluation.

Summation: *All Instructors appreciated their class environment, had adequate equipment and enthusiastic Attendees. All but one(1) Instructor had no problem duplicating their handouts and/or using the ones supplied by the Training Director. All but one(1) Instructor accommodated*

a change in the Field Experience. They all appreciated the coffee and snacks provided by the Training Director.

All Instructors expressed disappointment in zero to very low attendance of Chapter Members. Only two(2) Instructors expressed disappointment in low number of Interns in attendance.

No Instructors had any suggestions to change or improve the topic or class size.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS: I contacted each enrollee with a personal phone call and maintained email contact with all enrolled Interns regarding monthly Training reminders. Only one(1) email was sent specifically to those who were not participating. The only response was from Lee Jacobs who was NOT sent an email because she and her husband had never submitted the required forms even though she paid their tuition, received the Curriculum and attended the 1st class. (Their only interest seemed to be the Matagorda trip.)

The 2011 Class has taken a reasonable amount of the Training Director's time. All narratives, enrollment forms, evaluations, etc. required only minor changes, mostly to simplify. The AgriLife evaluation was designed specifically for the Training. The Instructors were encouraged to be responsible for their class especially when the Training Director was unable to attend. The Instructor's evaluation was completed as part of the Attendance Sheet.

The Training Director encouraged the development of 2 new sessions—Ichthyology and Entomology—and encouraged less active Members to take on the role of Instructor or Assistant Instructor. Also, there is now a complete file of background material for all Intern topics. Some of the Instructors' CDs have been logged onto the TMN computer. Additionally, the basic topic information (i.e. what is a Mammal?) are part of each topic's file.

Depending on the acceptance or rejection of the recommendations, the Training Director can format an Intern Training CD with the forms and information needed by

the Chapter to implement the State's curriculum including their reporting requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Fall Recruitment is scheduled for August, 2011. There are 400 brochures remaining and the brochure needs to be up-dated. This must happen in June and July for a Fall semester, or no later than November to accommodate a Spring semester.**
- 2. It is recommended to CANCEL the Fall, 2011 class schedule. Rationale:** There is insufficient time to revise the brochure, get Board approval and to get it printed. Also, it is felt that the Chapter Members will not be very involved with August recruitment activities. Finally, there currently are no active Interns in the February, 2011 class. (see Recommendations #4 and #9)

(If the Board decides to continue with a Fall Semester then the current Training Director will implement the program as scheduled previously. The Board and Instructors must accept that enrollment is a direct effect of the Membership's recruitment efforts. If the enrollment is unsatisfactory then the Board needs to develop a more effective public relations effort.)

- 3. Those who enrolled February 2011, paid their tuition and received the State Curriculum (Total = 5) should be given a one-time-only opportunity to return the Curriculum and receive a refund not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20).**
- 4. The Intern Training Program is recommended to be offered once per year from February thru May with January as the recruitment period. Rationale:** There is insufficient enrollment to maintain a program longer than six(6) months. The year-end holidays are over and there are no holidays except Spring Break and possibly Easter. It is not hurricane season. Anyone not finishing the program in allotted six(6) months will have time for completion within the required fifteen months OR a special project can be approved by the Training Director.
- 5. It is recommended that this program and schedule be the Cradle of Texas' official Intern Training Program. Rationale:** All planning, development and testing is complete. Other than scheduling Instructors and locale, it is a simple matter for anybody to "jump in" at anytime to implement the program. Then the primary role of the Training Director is to communicate with each Intern, each session's Instructor and the responsible person for locale.
- 6. The basic schedule of classes set on Wednesdays, except for the day of the General Meeting, should be continued. The General Meeting presentation will count as Advanced Training under 1st Year Certification unless that class duplicates a training topic at which time it replaces an Intern session. Rationale:** It is too burdensome for the Training Director and the Vice President to coordinate their responsibilities. Encouraging the Interns attendance at the General Meetings encourages camaraderie and participation as well as simultaneously working on their 1st Year Certification. This meets the Chapter's goal to increase our active membership. Training leads directly to retaining a growing active CoT membership.
- 7. The majority of Instructors should be Certified TMNs who are CoT Members. Rationale:** This is consistent with State recommendations. The majority of Texas A&M instructors are dead or retired, have no time in their schedule to make the trip to Brazoria County and are most likely involved with a leave having to do with Research, and they want reimbursement for associated meals, travel and lodging costs. Also, the Members are most flexible to develop those topics which have not been offered in the past (ex. Ichthyology) or that no longer have a professional Instructor (ex. Entomology).
- 8. Those Members who consistently take pictures of Chapter events and activities should submit them on a CD to be used by the Training Director for publicity purposes. Rationale:** In four (4)

years no one has stepped forth to assist with the much needed Intern publicity activities. Also, no one has responded to the numerous requests made by the Training Director for pictures. Apparently, this needs to be a Board-directed activity.

- 9. The Training Director is an elected position and serves until December of the calendar year. The 2012 Training Director should be selected by the Nominating Committee early Fall, 2011. This permits that person to begin working on the SPRING, 2012 Intern Training Program including January thru May scheduling, locations, Instructors, material preparation and recruitment (Recommendation#4).** (The current Training Director can complete their term by working on the revised brochure and, if agreeable, mentor the 2012 Nominee.)

NOTE: I have discussed the Training Director's position with Donna Graham. She is very knowledgeable in program implementation, mentoring Enrollees and the need to attend the many details that have or have not been anticipated. Donna has been an outstanding and consistent Intern and is within 10 hours or less of completing her 1st Year Certification. She is a person with initiative and a sense of responsibility when undertaking a task. Donna is easy to work with and is genuinely personable. Finally, Donna is willing to take on the role of the Training Director.

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