



TMN-COT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 2, 2012 AgriLIFE®, Angleton, Texas

Attendees: Ed Barrios, Dave Brandes, Barbara Burkhardt, Marty Cornell, Jerry Eppner, Sandy Henderson, Mary Holler, Ed Johnson, Jerry Krampota; Neal McLain, John O'Connell, Pete Romfh.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by President Barbara Burkhardt.

Action Items: Mary Holler reported that Kathy Speights will not be able to serve as Chapter Historian. The board agreed to table the initiative to find an historian, noting that our web archive serves this function in a more complete and accessible manner.

Minutes: Dave Brandes moved, Ed Barrios seconded the motion, and the board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the April board meeting as modified by e-mail editing of board members prior to this meeting.

Treasurer Sandy Henderson reported that our account has a balance of \$5,484.86, and that no checks were written in April. A summary of the COT balance sheet appears on Page 4.

Program Chair Mary Holler reviewed the upcoming general meeting topics and other events:

- May General Meeting: the intern class projects followed by lunch and an afternoon training session on using Google Earth to monitor land areas, plan trail development, etc.
- June: Jaime Gonzalez, Katy Prairie Conservancy, "Frogs" (this speaker has been confirmed since this board meeting), Since President Barbara Burkhardt will be on vacation, Vice President Mary Holler will be in charge of this June meeting.
- July: Wayne and Martha McAlister, discussing Texas coastal ecology and geology,
- Mary noted that the Brazos Belle has been reserved on July 13th for a COT social outing.
- August: an invitation was extended to James Smith to discuss butterflies but he has yet to accept. An alternative would be a presentation by Ducks Unlimited on their protocol for developing duck habitat.
- September: Dianna Foss, "Urban Wildlife"
- October: (still open)
- November: John Jacob, "Coastal Wetlands".
- December: Elections and Christmas party (followed by the annual Hog Wild Holiday Feast)..

Ed Barrios and Marty Cornell discussed their recent chat with Peter and Susan Conaty about their story of how Nash Prairie came to become a protected property of the Nature Conservancy. This topic is suggested as a future program subject.

Dave Brandes reported that Jessica Strickland will provide a refresher course on invasive species on May 17th at the AgriLIFE building. Master Gardeners are also invited to participate.

ConocoPhillips [reverted to Phillips 66 second week of May] Mary Holler reported that Phillips 66 is about to restart their environmental education program with the Sweeny Independent School District. Their program will be self-run using entirely company personnel. The board applauded Mary for her persistence in assisting Phillips 66 to make this happen.

Training Chair Ed Johnson reported that seven of the nine interns of the current class have completed their course work [it was subsequently confirmed that Ann and George Bettinger have also finished their training.] Of this group, four (Neeta Allan, Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh, and Pete Romfh) have earned in excess of 40 hours of VT and 8 hours of advanced training to be certified Master Naturalists.

Interns who completed their course work during the 2009 through the 2011 period, when our chapter experimented with self-paced training, will also be recognized at next week's general meeting. This meeting will have a graduation ceremony and will feature intern class projects. A post-graduation lunch of chicken-black bean casserole and salad is being organized by Marty Cornell.

Discussion ensued on the advisability to hold a fall training class. Barbara Burkhardt noted that she has a list of ten people who have expressed an interest in our program. It was decided that we will not offer a fall class, but rather focus on one annual intern class each spring. **Barbara will invite each interested person to begin attending our general meetings now.**



Background Checks. Adviser John O'Connell spoke of our need to bring our records of membership background checks up to compliance to state standards¹. Passing this check is required for any member to engage in direct activity with children. Those who don't want to be screened can opt out by signing a letter saying that they will not work with children. There is a \$10 charge per person for conducting this screening, which is valid for three years. John, as our AgriLIFE adviser, will be given a list of those who have either passed or failed the screening, but details of the screening are accessible to only a few select AgriLIFE employees at the state headquarters. Those COT members passing background checks through the AgriLIFE process will be issued a certificate by John.

Considerable discussion ensued centered on the lack of coordination by the many agencies who conduct and hold records of screening results. Many COT members have been screened by the Brazosport Independent School District (BISD) and/or the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) through Sea Center Texas. It was noted that TPWD, as part of their new volunteer time accounting process, will include background check status data. Others may have been screened by churches or as part of the process of obtaining a gun permit. No board member present was aware if her/his screening status was up to date. It was acknowledged that maintaining a master list of membership screening status would be necessary but also will be a formidable task. One board member thought that several of our membership would object to "paying (\$10) to volunteer".

Ed Barrios volunteered to contact BISD to determine the status of their volunteer screening records and the district's intent to continue to pay for this screening. Ed's understanding is that former COT adviser Rich Tillman had an agreement with BISD that the district would conduct background checks every year, with COT submitting the names of new interns for inclusion in the district's background check process. Ed will report his findings to the Board at the June meeting.

It is John O'Connell's intent to send out a letter to each COT member with instructions on how to initiate their individual background screening process. The board expressed a desire to first clarify current status at BISD and SCT.

Migration Celebration was reported by Ed Barrios and Marty Cornell to be a success, with record number of guests, fundraising income, corporate donations, and Birds-of-Prey shows. Details are pending as data are still being gathered.

Camp Mohawk summer camp has been scheduled for June 4th through 7th. Ed Barrios will request volunteers at next week's general meeting.

The GCBO Birding Camp on June 11th - 15th has sufficient volunteers per Carol Jones, thus no additional help is requested from COT.

Nature Conservancy Partnership. Neal McLain submitted a draft partnership agreement for The Nature Conservancy that is intended to support COT member volunteer activities at the Nash Prairie Preserve in Brazoria County. The agreement refers to a Volunteer Project and Activity List (VPAL). Marty Cornell moved, Dave Brandes seconded the motion, and the board unanimously approved the draft VPAL as submitted. Neal requested a motion to approve the partnership agreement; Mary Holler so moved, Sandy Henderson seconded the motion, and the motion passed with no objections. Neal will forward this board-approved partnership agreement to Kirk Feuerbacher, Project Director, Texas Coastal Prairies, The Nature Conservancy, for his signature.

Outreach: The Lower Colorado River Authority will host a Coastal Expo at their Matagorda Bay Nature Park on May 10th and 11th, with SCT and the Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges providing volunteers. The COT board decided to decline participation as this event was outside of Brazoria County.



CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER

AGRILIFE EXTENSION BLDG.

21017 CR 171, Angleton, TX 77515-8903

Other Items:

- Barbara Burkhardt thought it would be good to give Corrie Bowen a gift in appreciation of his advisory help in the interim between Rich Tillman's retirement and John O'Connell's joining the staff of Brazoria County AgriLIFE Extension Service. One suggestion was the "dragonfly business card holder" that was presented to speakers at our 2006 training sessions. **Marty Cornell will track down the information on the artist who made these custom-made gifts.**
- Membership Chair Jerry Eppner noted that there are a number of interns from previous years who did not finish their training, nor continue participating at our meetings. He thus proposed to remove them from our roster. Marty Cornell moved and Dave Brandes seconded the motion to remove their names from our roster. This motion was unanimously approved.
- It was noted that the Brazos Bend State Park's Heritage Day will be resumed, but now at the Fort Bend County fairgrounds. The COT board thus considers TMN support to be the prerogative of the Coastal Prairie Chapter in that county.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33.

Marty Cornell

Secretary,

Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter



CRADLE OF TEXAS 2012 INCOME AND EXPENSE BUDGET

INTERN CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES	2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2012 Actual
Revenue			
Class fee	500.00	750.00	600.00
Intern manual payment	240.00	450.00	360.00
Total revenue	740.00	1,200.00	960.00
Expenses			
Intern Manual purchases	0.00	700.00	492.32
Social expenses, name tags, postage, shirts	231.90	400.00	275.85
Ad for TMN Training	325.50	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses	557.40	1,100.00	768.17
Intern Class Net Gain (Loss)	\$182.60	\$100.00	\$191.83
NON-CLASS REVENUE/EXPENSES	2011 Actual	2012 Budget	2012 Actual
Revenue			
This year's dues paid this year	210.00	200.00	260.00
Next year's dues paid this year	445.00	450.00	0.00
Matagorda Trip revenue	1,000.00	0.00	0.00
Interest Income	16.82	20.00	2.35
Misc. Income	32.00	0.00	25.00
Total revenue	1,703.82	670.00	287.35
Expenses			
Administrative Expenses	531.71	100.00	0.00
Drinks and supplies for social events	41.28	200.00	0.00
Officer badges	23.80	42.00	0.00
TMN Meeting Registration	81.20	90.00	0.00
Matagorda trip expenses	980.00	0.00	0.00
Misc. Expenses	282.22	100.00	31.96
Expenditures approved during board meetings	665.69	200.00	0.00
Total Expenses	2,605.90	732.00	31.96
Non-class Net Gain (Loss)	(902.08)	(62.00)	255.39
Chapter Profit / (Loss)	(719.48)	38.00	447.22
Carry over from previous year	5,757.12		5,037.64
TMN-COT Account Balance	5,037.64		5,484.86