



**TMN-COT BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday June 5, 2013**  
**Sea Center Texas Conference Room, Lake Jackson, Texas**

**Attendees:**

- Board Members Ed Barrios, Barbara Burkhardt, Marty Cornell, Jerry Eppner, Mary Helen Israel, Ed Johnson, Jerry Krampota, John Marshall, Neal McLain, Tom Morris, Mike Mullins, Peggy Romfh, Pete Romfh, Dick Schaffhausen
- Advisers (also board members): John O'Connell and Connie Stolte.
- Guest: Chinatu Gladrich, recently appointed as Family and Consumer Science agent of Matagorda County, attending as an observer.

President Mike Mullins called the meeting to order at 9:58 am.

Peggy Romfh moved and Ed Johnson seconded the **motion to approve the minutes of the May, 2013 board meeting**, as amended with email input. This motion **passed** with no dissent.

Secretary Marty Cornell reviewed the action items pending from the May board meeting:

- Ed Barrios completed his task of getting, from Michelle Haggerty, a statement of the insurance benefits of signing the state Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) hold-harmless waivers. Ed noted that these benefits are the same as the previous state hold-harmless waiver circa 2008, except that coverage amounts have increased. The description of this coverage, **TPWD Volunteer Coverage**, is attached as an addendum to these minutes. Ed noted that signing the hold-harmless agreement is not currently obligatory, but it will be a condition of being a Master Naturalist in the near future. Ed will insert this document as an addendum to the Cradle of Texas Chapter (COT) Policies and Procedures Guidelines (P&P); such addendums do not require approval of the general membership. Per the instructions of President Mike Mullins, Ed is to note in this addendum that coverage is contingent upon a volunteer signing the waiver.
- Board-sanctioned proposed changes to the COT P&P are being accumulated until a sufficient number of changes are accrued to warrant submission by Mike Mullins to the general membership for approval. Pending changes are;
  - ✓ An insertion, on page 3 of the Policies & Procedures Guidelines, under President shall: of item "F. During the first calendar quarter, appoint a Financial Audit Committee to audit the previous year financial records."
  - ✓ A change to allow all board members, including activity chairpersons, to vote at board meetings (discussed below).
- John O'Connell has received a quote from the AgriLIFE staff artisan on the cost to print "card rack" brochures to recruit new members. John will forward this information to Neal McLain who is looking at the cost to do this job at FedEx Office and the UPS store.



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Treasure John Marshall articulated the following financial activity over the past month:

**CRADLE OF TEXAS 2013 TREASURES REPORT**

	<b>May, 2013</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>
<b>Beginning Balance</b>	4,727.10		5,098.07
<b>Revenue</b>			
Training Fees Paid in 2013			400.00
2013 Dues	30.00		737.00
Miscellaneous Income	0.97	Interest	16.95
<b>Total Revenue</b>	30.97		1,153.95
<b>Expenses</b>			
Training Expenses 2013	52.00	Name tags	348.57
Social & Administrative	128.05	Luncheon	128.05
Miscellaneous	42.00	Shirt refund	1,038.94
Board Approved Expenses			200.44
<b>Total Expenses</b>	222.05		1,716.00
<b>Net Income Gain, (Loss)</b>	<b>(191.08)</b>		<b>(562.05)</b>
<b>Ending Balance</b>	4,536.02		4,536.02

**Membership** Chair Jerry Eppner reported that year-to-date 33 members have submitted 3,758 hours of volunteer time. New member Randy Holcomb has certified, and both Peggy and Pete Romfh have reached the 500 hour VT level. Jerry noted that Susan Conaty, who had been inactive, has resumed submitting VT hours.

**Program** Chair Peggy Romfh reminded the board that the AT topics for the next three general meeting will be:

- ✓ June 12<sup>th</sup>; Kelly Drinnen will discuss the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary.
- ✓ July 10<sup>th</sup>; Brittney Zepeda of Sea Center Texas will cover mollusks and lead the members in squid dissection.
- ✓ August 14<sup>th</sup>; Tasha Metz of TAMU-Galveston will discuss sea turtles.



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**Voting Privileges of Members of the Board**

Mike Mullins noted that the COT P&P, which decrees that only elected officers of the chapter's board of directors are entitled to vote, is in conflict with the state TMN Bylaws, which states that all members of the board, including appointed committee members, have voting privileges (Article VI, item 6), to wit: "Voting. All members of the board have full voting privileges. Resolutions or actions of the Board of Directors shall be effective if passed by the majority vote (or 2/3rd if applicable) of those Board members present at a duly called and convened meeting of the Board of Directors, subject, however, to the quorum requirements listed in Article

VII - "Meetings ".

[http://txmn.org/files/2012/07/Chapter\\_Bylaws\\_Template\\_4-2011.pdf](http://txmn.org/files/2012/07/Chapter_Bylaws_Template_4-2011.pdf)

Per the state website, "The Bylaws is to be adopted verbatim..."

[http://txmn.org/files/2013/04/Read\\_Me\\_First\\_4-2013.pdf](http://txmn.org/files/2013/04/Read_Me_First_4-2013.pdf).

**Barbara Burkhardt moved, and Ed Barrios seconded the motion, to revise the COT P&P to be consistent with the wording in the TMN Bylaws Article VI, item 6. This motion passed** with the unanimous consent of the elected officers. Ed Barrios will make the proposed changes to the COT P&P, which are subject to approval by the general membership.

Before the next board meeting on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ed will provide a summary to the board of pending changes to the COT P&P, including appendix changes; President Mike Mullins will then notify the membership of the upcoming voting on those intended changes that require approval by the general membership, per the advanced notification requirements specified in our P&P.

**Training** Chair Ed Johnson noted that the expenses for the 2013 intern training, at \$348.57, were significantly under budget. One area of savings was the use of in-stock three-ring binders for the interns' training literature. Ed will provide a proposed budget for the 2014 intern class at the August board meeting. It was noted that the charge to future interns will be increased by \$10 to cover the cost of background screening.

Ed reported that twelve people have inquired about our next intern class, and of these, five came from the COT outreach display at Migration Celebration, and four were referrals from the state TMN website. Five of this group have positively responded to follow up communications, and one (Donna Jablecki) has already begun the process of completing the application and other forms.

Ed announced that he will not be the training chair next year, and recommended that his replacement be named as soon as possible, preferably by July. In accordance with the role of the Past President, Barbara Burkhardt will begin the process of recruiting a new training chairperson. Peggy Romfh initiated a round of thanks and applause for the service of Ed Johnson as training chair for the past two years.

Ed noted that there are 19 TMN shirts in our chapter inventory, with various styles and logos. Those that are not suitable as inventory for the package given to graduating interns will be displayed for sale at next week's general meeting (June 12<sup>th</sup>) in "silent auction" format.



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**VT before Membership Status**

It was observed that many recruits to COT membership had previously been active volunteers at one or more of our chapter's partners like DEEP and Sea Center Texas. The chapter custom has been to account for volunteer and advanced training hours only after the recruit has officially become a member of the chapter. Suggestions were made that VT accrual should be allowed as soon as an interested party starts attending meetings, with the proviso that the training fee is paid (which includes a fee for background checks) and that the individual has been given an orientation to things like the chapter protocol (e.g. timekeeping), working with partners, and ethical performance standards.

Some felt that premature VT could count in building lifetime hours, but not be applicable toward certification. There was also uncertainty in how to handle early advanced training. One note was that anyone who has "skin in the game" is more likely to give a priority toward becoming a TMN, and should thus be encouraged. Another observation was that anything that encourages volunteering should be promoted.

President Mullins formed a committee of Jerry Eppner, Ed Johnson, Tom Morris, Pete Romfh, and Dick Schaffhausen to propose a policy for AT and VT accrual prior to becoming a member of the chapter. They are to present their proposal at the August board meeting.

**Volunteer Coordinator** Pete Romfh submitted a Partnership Agreement signed by Aaron Tjelmeland, Upper Coast Project Director of The Nature Conservancy. Per the accompanying Volunteer Activity and Project List (VPAL), "*...it is anticipated that most TMN-COT volunteer activities performed pursuant this VPAL will be located at the County Road 25 Unit of Nash Prairie Preserve in Brazoria County. However, this applies to any TNC property located in Brazoria County and contiguous counties.*" The timesheet code for The Nature Conservancy will be "Other" until next year.

**Volunteer Time Limits:**

Discussion ensued around the concept of limiting the amount of volunteer time that may be reported for any period of activity such as caring for or nursing an injured animal. The consensus emerged that all active time can be counted.

**Policy on Publishing Photographs of People**

Pete Romfh's investigation into case law regarding the publication of face photography of children indicates there is no law restricting such publication if the photograph was taken on a public place. Pete proposed a list of nine guidelines for taking photographs and/or videos that include people. Suggestions included simplification of the policy, better integration of the definitions with the content, use of bulleted guidelines, and review of the USFWS guidelines and photo publishing policy of newspapers (such as The Facts). Pete commented that he has already reviewed national journalistic photography standards. Ed Barrios will provide the USFWS protocol on publishing photographs of people to Pete. Based on the board input, Pete will revise the policy and resubmit it for approval at the July meeting.



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**Outreach Definition**

The chapter's annual report to the state includes a statement of the number of people reached through our outreach activities. Mike Mullins led a discussion on the definition of outreach, and how these numbers are derived. Concluding that outreach is the number of people served at any event involving a chapter member and a chapter partner or a chapter approved activity, it appears our numbers have been historically undercounted. For example, the +14,000 people annually reached by member Phil Huxford in the Friends-sponsored EarthQuest® *Birds of Prey* shows have not been counted. Double counting an event for two state entities must be avoided, e.g. TMN-COT and Sea Center Texas.

With this more-inclusive definition of Outreach, the year-to-date numbers are shown on the table below. Note that neither DEEP nor INEOS numbers have been included.

**Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter Outreach Report**

Outreach Chairman: Ruby Lewis			Reporting Period: 2013					
			Volunteers		Attendance			
Date	Event	Organization Location	# COT Volunteer	Volunteer hours	Youth	Adult	Total	
20-Feb-13	Freeport Headstart	Freeport	1	5.00	75	10	85	
23-Feb-13	Nature Day	Sea Center Texas	9	38.25	364	449	813	
2-Mar-13	Heritage Day	Brazoria	7	30.50	236	118	354	
12-Mar-13	Heritage Day	Vарner-Hog Plantation	3	7.50	15	10	25	
25-Mar-13	Nature Night at the Library	Angleton Library	2	4.00	20	22	42	
20-21 Apr-13	Migration Celebration	San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge	56	Per Eppner	613	920	1533	
Feb-Apr 2013	Birds-of-Prey presentations & falconry demonstrations	24 schools in southern Brazoria County, 4 civic shows including 2 at Anahuac NWR	1	per Huxford	12895	679	13574	
3-May-13	Agriculture awareness for Angleton ISD 4th graders, teaching water importance	AgriLIFE Extension booth at Brazoria County Fairgrounds	2	23.00	460	25	485	
<b>Totals</b>			<b>81</b>	<b>108.25</b>	<b>14678</b>	<b>2233</b>	<b>16911</b>	

**Miscellaneous:**

Barbara Burkhardt volunteered to take minutes at the June general meeting

The meeting was adjourned 12:10 PM.

Submitted by Marty Cornell Secretary, Texas Master Naturalists, Cradle of Texas Chapter



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**Addendum**  
**TPWD Volunteer Coverage**

Three types of insurance policies cover Texas Parks & Wildlife Department volunteers:

- Medical accident policy. Excess insurance; Maximum benefit per accident is \$25,000
- Volunteer excess liability policy. Excess coverage only of \$1 million per occurrence
- Excess auto liability policy. Limit \$500,000 per accident

Operation of a TPWD vehicle – Volunteers are covered **ONLY** by the medical accident policy when operating a TPWD vehicle; limited to medical expenses and to \$25,000; this policy “kicks in” if the medical expenses exceed that which is covered by the volunteer’s personal insurance

Operation of a volunteer’s personal vehicle – The insurance company is interpreting the **volunteer** excess liability policy to **NOT** cover any accidents where the volunteer is driving an automobile, including personal automobiles;

The excess **auto** liability policy **DOES** cover volunteers driving automobiles, **ONLY** if it is their personal auto; this policy covers volunteer damage to a third party caused by operation of the volunteer’s own motor vehicle or temporary rental vehicle; this coverage **requires** a volunteer to have his/her own automobile coverage (state statutory minimum) and will pay the third party’s damages only if they exceed the limits of the volunteer’s coverage

Operation of TPWD equipment – Volunteers are covered by the medical accident policy **AND** the volunteer excess liability policy when operating equipment; this includes mobile equipment, such as riding lawnmowers, and in general any mobile vehicle that does not require state registration (i.e., “gators” and the like); note that the insurance company takes the position that if such a vehicle is operated on any public road, then it **DOES** require registration and is **NOT** mobile equipment but a vehicle and wouldn’t be covered

**Medical Accident Policy** covers “registered volunteers” for most medical expenses and most types of accidents that occur while the volunteer is performing an assignment, or traveling to and from the volunteer site; does not cover illness, disease, hernias; coverage is in excess of any personal accident/health insurance the volunteer has

**Volunteer Excess Liability** covers situations where a volunteer is liable to a third party for damages (bodily injury, property damage, personal injury) from a covered accident or injury; covers damages and legal defense of volunteer – but coverage is for expenses in excess of volunteer’s personal insurance. This is the policy that does not cover auto accidents, even if a volunteer’s personal auto

**Volunteer Excess Auto Liability** covers damage to a third party if volunteer is driving a personal or rental vehicle (**NOT** TPWD vehicle); the policy requires that a volunteer have personal auto coverage, and will cover only costs in excess of the volunteer’s coverage; does not cover damages from assault or battery or errors and omissions of a volunteer rendering professional services