



**CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER
AGRI LIFE EXTENSION BLDG.**

21017 CR 171, Angleton, TX 77515-8903
<http://tmn-cot.org>

TMN-COT BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, December 2, 2015 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
AgriLife Extension
Angleton, Texas

President Dave Brandes called the meeting to order and presented the agenda at 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Elected Members of Board	Present	Appointed Members of Board	Present
Dave Brandes (President)	x	Jerry Eppner (Membership)	x
Leo Novak (Vice-President)	x	Neal McLain (Publications)	x
Mike Mullins (Past-President)	x	Pete Romfh (Volunteer Service)	x
Ed Barrios (State Representative)	x	Peggy Romfh (Advanced Training)	x
Linda Sluis (Secretary)		Roy Morgan (Training)	x
Don Sabathier (Treasurer)	x	Pam West (Chapter Host)	x
		Ruby Lewis (Outreach)	
Board Advisors		Dick Schaffhausen (Publicity)	
John O'Connell (AgriLife Extension)	x	Patty Brinkmeyer (Intern Rep.)	x
Connie Stolte, TPWD		Jill Carroll (Intern Rep.)	x
Guests			
Carolyn May-Monie	x		
Jean Britt	x	Quorum	Yes
Jim Scott	x		

Minutes Approval:

Meeting Minutes	Motion to Approve	Motion Seconded by	Vote
November Board	Ed Barrios	Don Sabathier	Minutes approved by voice vote.
November General Meeting	Ed Barrios	Don Sabathier	Minutes approved by voice vote.

Action Register Review was led by Dave Brandes [See Table of Action items at end of minutes.]

Nominating Committee: Mike Mullins reported that a sample ballot is done and ready for use for election of officers at the December general meeting. Mike will ask for nominations from the floor before the voting is done.

Treasurer's Report: There was a discussion about the requirement to complete an audit of TMN-COT finances for the fiscal year.

Action: Mike Mullins, Jill Carroll, and Jerry Eppner will meet with Don Sabathier on Jan. 6th at 9:30 a.m. to conduct the audit.

Don Sabathier reported that he worked through some clerical problems with TDECU that created an error in the COT balance. November summary is shown on next page.



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Date: November 1 – November 30, 2015

<u>Beginning Balance</u>		\$ 6,634.81
Revenue Summary		301.41
Interest	1.41	
Membership Dues	50.00	
Sponsor Donations	50.00	
New Intern Class Payments	200.00	
Expense Summary		51.82
<u>Ending Balance</u>		\$ 6,884.40

Wetland Plant Partnership Agreement: [see Attachment A for copy of email responses from John Jacob and Betty Rabe]

Mike Mullins reviewed the responses he received from John Jacob (Texas Coastal Watershed Program (TCWP)) and Betty Rabe (Texas A&M granting accounting) concerning whether TMN-COT is liable for the matching funds if the required grant volunteer hours are not done. Both stated that TCWP will compile the volunteer hours and be responsible for any matching monetary deficiencies. The Board agreed that there is sufficient guarantee that we can go forward with the grant and the volunteer efforts.

Action: Pete and Peggy Romfh will contact Mary Carol Edwards to determine the nursery buildout schedule for the GCBO site and how TMN members may help.

Programs: Leo Novak reported that Christopher Saltese will be the speaker at the January General Meeting. He has updated the ongoing speaker record and provided it to Jill Carroll as a reference for 2016.

VMS Implementation: Jerry Eppner reported that, due to some VMS system updates and the addition of an initial certification field, he has to manually review that all milestone and certification dates have been recorded properly for each member. It was also noted that even un-approved hours show up in the totals in the VMS system.

There was a discussion about the need to have accurate profile information for each member in the VMS system so that background checks can be done by the state. Also, because the annual reports will be done from the VMS system in early January, it is important for all 2015 volunteer and advanced training time to be entered by December 31, or the reports will not be accurate.

Action: Jerry Eppner or Dave Brandes will discuss completion of VMS profiles at the December and January general meetings, including birth dates and signing the background check waiver.

Action: Jerry Eppner will request that members enter all 2015 time in 2015 at the December general meeting.

Display Case Plaques: Jerry Eppner reported that he will continue to work with G&J to get existing plaques repaired. He stated that a small plaque is needed for members that have achieved 10,000 hours.

Action: Jerry Eppner will purchase a small, 6-person plaque for the 10,000 hours awards.



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Volunteer Partner and Project Agreements: There was discussion about whether and when meals could be counted for Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Events. It was noted that for events such as the CBC, it is difficult to come up with a limit for hours worked. Pete Romfh will note an estimated hours on the calendar when this occurs.

Decision: The Board decided that, for all volunteer events that bridge meal times, all volunteer time from start to finish may be counted plus travel time not to exceed the volunteer hours worked. Meals that are purely social in nature should be excluded from volunteer time.

Action: Pete Romfh will send out an email to TMN members clarifying how to count volunteer hours for the Christmas Bird Count events.

Action: Pete Romfh will add 'estimated' rather than absolute hours for CBC events.

Advanced Training: Peggy Romfh reported there were no updates.

Advisor Report: John O'Connell reported there were no updates.

State Representative: Ed Barrios reported there were no updates.

Training: Roy Morgan reported that he has ordered 21 copies of the new training manual (draft form). He has contacted 25 potential interns for the 2016 and mailed applications to 12. He has received a limited response.

Action: Roy Morgan will send out the list of potential applicants to the Board for review.

Outreach: In Ruby's absence, there was no report n

Publications: Neal McLain reported that the December issue of the newsletter went out on time. He has added additional photos from the Zeta Phi Beta DEEP event and KBR Kids Day to the COT website Scrapbook page.

Neal reported that additions to the Media Library are still in progress. Jennifer Fielding has cataloged the books. With the help of Dave Brandes and Don Sabathier, an additional bookcase was added.

Hosting and Hog Wild Holiday Feast: Ed Barrios will send out an invite to members for the Hog Wild Holiday social gathering that will be held after the December business meeting. Ed and Pam West will send out requests for food to bring to the feast.

Members of the Board were asked to volunteer to bring snacks for the January general meeting. Neal McLain, Pam West, Leo Novak, and Pete and Peggy Romfh volunteered.

Publicity: There was continued discussion about promoting the next master naturalist training class. Members suggested posting on social media sites as well as asking members to recruit new interns on a one-on-one basis.

Intern Report: Jill Carroll and Patty Brinkmeyer reported there were no updates.



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Cradle of Texas Board Action Register November, 2015				
Action Item	Who?	Due Date?	Complete/ Pending	Comments
Reviewed at December meeting:				
501(c)(3) Filing	Ed Barrios, Peggy Romfh, Mike Mullins	TBD	Pending	Low priority
Split the Policies and Procedures from the By-laws	Ed Barrios	January	Pending	Operating Handbook changes are in progress.
Add the term "one time event" to the Operating Handbook	Ed Barrios	January	Pending	
Add VMS code for Stormwater Wetlands Projects	Pete and Peggy Romfh	November 11	Done	
Contact Mary Carol Edwards to clarify Stormwater Wetlands Grant issues	Mike Mullins	December	Done	See notes in meeting minutes for John Jacob's response and clarification.
Ditto: Contact Betty Rabe	Mike Mullins	December	Done	
Invite Commissioners' Court to attend January General Meeting on San Bernard dredging	John O'Connell, Dave Brandes	December 8	Pending	
Send reminder letter to COT members re. 45 day deadline for hours in VMS	Jerry Eppner	November	Done	
Draft new partner agreement document to include language on what partner will provide.	Pete Romfh	January	Pending	
Solicit input from COT members about future program topics	Jill Carroll	January	Pending	
Order 20 copies of the new (draft) training manual	Roy Morgan	January	Done	
Write letter to editor about being a master naturalist and submit to local newspapers	Jill Carroll Dick Schaffhausen	January	Pending	



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Provide COT training schedule to TMN listserv	Roy Morgan	January	Done	
New Action Items Added at December meeting:				
Conduct Financial Audit, COT for 2015	Jerry Eppner, Jill Carroll, Mike Mullins, Don Sabathier	January	Pending	
Contact Mary Carol Edwards to determine the nursery buildout schedule for the GCBO site	Pete and Peggy Romfh	December	Pending	
Discuss completion of VMS profiles and completing time entries	Jerry Eppner, Dave Brandes	December and January	Pending	
Purchase a small, 6-person plaque for the 10,000 hours awards	Jerry Eppner	January	Pending	
Send out an email to TMN members clarifying how to count volunteer hours for the Christmas Bird Count events	Pete Romfh	December	Pending	
Update calendar for CBC with estimated rather than absolute possible hours	Pete Romfh	December	Pending	
Send out the list of potential applicants to the Board for review	Roy Morgan	January	Pending	

President Dave Brandes adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peggy Romfh, TMN-COT



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Attachment A: Stormwater Wetlands Grant Documentation of In-Kind Match

Note – Letters from Mike Mullins to John Jacob and Betty Rabe are not included below as the answers to his questions are clearly documented in their responses.

From: John Jacob [<mailto:jjacob@tamu.edu>]

Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 12:07 PM

To: Mike Mullins <mcmprm@embarqmail.com>; Mary Carol Edwards <mcedwards@tamu.edu>

Cc: Dave Brandes <djbrandes@comcast.net>

Subject: Re: Cost sharing letter for 07-586111

Glad to help, Mike!

That \$13k commitment letter should have stated it was in-kind match, not cash.

1. We will take the responsibility of coming up with missing match if necessary.
2. The only violation would be if you were counting the same hours toward another project that required match. Logging them as TMN hours is not in any way a problem.
3. Mary will be responsible for documenting the hours and what goes where. She will just need the sign in sheets. Working with match commitments can be a screwy thing--we do have to get creative in figuring what counts as match and what doesn't. The efforts of TMN are solid match in every way--could not do this without your involvement!

From: Rabe, Betty

Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 1:14 PM

To: Mike Mullins; 'Dave Brandes'; Mary Carol Edwards; Joyce, James R; Carranza, Becky

Cc: John Jacob; Michele Lacey; Rabe, Betty

Subject: RE: Cost sharing letter for 07-586111

Good Afternoon Mr. Mullins,

Thank you for your response. The letter that was sent to you is just a confirmation that your organization wants to participate in the Dr. Jacob's project. The \$13,542 is just the value of volunteer hours that you indicated in your letter to Ms. Porter with the Texas General Land Office, the sponsor. By no means is your organization held to any monetary commitment. I apologize if that is the impression that you received. We always include a copy of your commitment letter to just verify the amount of either voluntary hours, equipment or cash that the organizations are offering.

I believe Ms. Edwards will take care of organizing your volunteer hours, sign-in sheets, or however you choose to record your volunteers. We appreciate your support of the Wetlands Plant Partnership and look forward to working with you toward this worthy project.

Thank you,

Betty Rabe

Betty Rabe | Accounting Associate I – Cost Sharing Management Group

Sponsored Research Services – Texas A&M University

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Date	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr.	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Board Members													
Barrios, Ed	1	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brandes, Dave	1	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Forrest, Gerald	1	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	dec	dec	dec	dec	dec	dec
Mullins, Mike	-	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Novak, Leo	-	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Sluis, Linda	1	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Don Sabathier									1	-	1	1	
Advisors													
O'Connell, John	1	1	n/a	n/a	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	
Stolte, Connie	1	-	n/a	n/a	1	1	-	1	1	1			
Committee Coordinators													
Eppner, Jerry	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Lewis, Ruby	1	1	n/a	n/a	1	1	-	-	-		1		
McLain, Neal	1	1	n/a	n/a	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Morgan, Roy	-	-			-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Romfh, Peggy	-	1	n/a	n/a	-	-	1	-	1		1	1	
Romfh, Pete	-	1	n/a	n/a	-	-	1	1	1		1	1	
Schaffhausen, Dick	-	1	n/a	n/a	-	-	-	-	-		1		
West, Pam					1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	
Quorum	Y	Y	n/a	n/a	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Training Class Representatives													
Grigson, Joycelynn	1	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Kitchen, Brianna	1	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Sabathier, Don			n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Brinkmeyer, Patty			n/a	n/a	n/a	-	-	1		1		1	
Carroll, Jill			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	1	1	