



TMN-COT GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday, February 8, 9:00 a.m. – 11:27 a.m.
AgriLife® Extension Building, Angleton, Texas

Kristine Rivers, President, called the meeting to order and presented the agenda at 9:00 a.m. She reminded attendees to silence their phones, sign-in, and asked guests to introduce themselves.

Attendance: Eighty-one members were in attendance and no guests.

Treasurer’s Report: Don Sabathier presented the financial report for 1 January—31 January 2017:

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$ 5,980.50
Revenue Summary	\$ 2,150.01
Interest	\$.72
Expense Summary	(\$ 627.34)
<u>Ending Balance</u>	\$ 5,980.50

Don also reminded members to give him \$25 in cash or check for 2017 chapter dues, which are due no later than the end of March.

Awards/VMS Profiles/VMS Updates: Peggy and Pete Romfh recognized the following members for achieving service hour milestones:

- Leo Novak for 500 hours, Silver Service Award
- Garry Ellis for 250 hours

Peggy thanked members for volunteering in 2016 and presented a chart of hours allocated to various activities during the past calendar year. The final tally of hours is 15,484 VT and 1,582 AT, as submitted by 127 active members. Hours to date for 2017 are 1,268 VT and 133 AT. If members would like help in entering hours, Peggy and Pete offered to assist them. Ed Barrios noted that the TMN-COT chapter has the highest number of volunteer hours per member of all chapters in Texas.

Peggy then explained the importance of and requirement for also reporting Public Outreach, event impact data in VMS and who should report it (event leader only or the participant if one individual only is involved).



Volunteer Time (Service Projects): Oron Atkins presented the following opportunities and circulated sign-up sheets as applicable:

- DEEP—has started again, with five sessions in February alone; refer to the calendar on-line for dates and Ruby Lewis' sign-up sheets circulated at the meeting
- Bobcat Woods Trail Extension at San Bernard NWR—Oron provided an overview of progress to date, stating that approximately 14 volunteers had participated in the demolition, which was completed ahead of schedule on February 7. A build schedule and call for volunteers will be posted soon
- Brazoria NWR also plans to replace parts of its boardwalk; further information will be announced/posted when available
- GCBO invasive species removal project is underway at the facility. Rainy weather seemed to have kept some volunteers away. Oron reminded members that volunteers who sign up for any event should show up or notify whoever is listed on the calendar if they cannot attend
- Unity Bay Area Youth Nature Program on February 11—Several members are involved in this one day, one-time event
- Brazoria Heritage Day on March 4—sign-up sheets were circulated

Advanced Training: Larry Ruhr discussed the approval requirements to earn AT hours for a webinar, for example, the upcoming Seaside Chats sponsored by Galveston's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, which begin on February 14: a) that participants must be able to interact with the presenter(s) of a webinar; therefore, it cannot be a stored, on-line presentation; b) a maximum of four of the eight hours of AT required each year for recertification may be webinar; c) content must apply to Brazoria County. If a webinar is not already listed on the TMN-COT calendar, contact Larry to request pre-approval or request approval afterwards.

Other upcoming AT events that are on the calendar include Texas Stream Team water quality training on March 3 in Sugarland and an introductory birding workshop.

Outreach: Ruby Lewis announced or reminded members of several volunteer opportunities:

- DEEP at BNWR (sign-up sheets circulated)
- Nature Day at Sea Center Texas on February 25
- Brazoria Heritage Day—TMN is teamed with Friends of BNWRs to provide two shifts of volunteers on March 4 (sign-up sheets circulated)

Ruby indicated that several more activities in April and May will be presented at future general meetings and listed on-line.



David Plunkett gave a brief overview of the 23rd annual Migration Celebration at San Bernard NWR, including this year's dates (April 22 and 23); statistics relating to last year's event (324 volunteer positions; 170 volunteers, of which 44% were COT members; 1075 attendees); kick-off is the fundraising dinner at Freeport River Place on April 7, for which several members are selling tickets and for which volunteers are needed (Ed Barrios will be posting a request for volunteers for the dinner, celebration days, and set up and tear down). The dinner speaker is Cathy Downs, who will speak on monarch butterflies. Information is available at <http://www.migrationcelebration.org/>.

Phil Huxford noted that a school new to the Birds of Prey program had been added this year. He also informed members that Palacios will host the first Matagorda Bay Bird Fest, and although no AT or VT is available, there are activities to attract all ages and interests. <http://www.birdsofpreytxas.org>

Mary Holler requested a presenter to speak about TMN-COT to the Columbia Lakes Ladies Association meeting on March 8 at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided for free to the speaker and the event should finish by 1 p.m.

Nature Notes: As **Jill Carroll** could not attend the meeting, **President Kristine Rivers** introduced COT members Vicky and Larry Kirby, who spoke on the topic, "Common Bird Songs in Brazoria County." <http://tinyurl.com/N-Notes-Birdsongs>

President Kristine Rivers announced a 10-minute break.

Guest Speaker: Amanda Anderson, M.S., Shorebird Technician, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, spoke on the topic of "Winter Shorebirds." Information is available at <http://tinyurl.com/GCBO-ANA-1>. Following the presentation Amanda fielded numerous questions, ideas and suggestions, and a lively discussion ensued that related to plover protection including state and local laws and enforcement. Amanda provided sign-up sheets to volunteer for the plover project and to join a nascent "Beach Steward" beach patrol she is organizing under the sponsorship of GCBO. This citizens patrol will monitor Bryan Beach during plovers' winter and breeding seasons, especially on evenings and during weekends, when most offenses occur, to monitor disturbance by people and report illegal activities to the police.

Upon completion of the program, the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m. Time codes allocated for the general meeting and presentations are:

- Chapter business meeting: Code "CB: Chapter Meetings and Admin," 1.0 hours + travel time
- Presentations: Code "AT: I Received Training," 1.25 hours

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ladd Myers, Secretary, TMN-COT