



**TMN-COT BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday, December 5, 2018, 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**  
**AgriLIFE Extension Building, Angleton, Texas**

**President:** Kristine Rivers called the meeting to order, presented the agenda and asked for additions or corrections.

**Attendance—**

Elected Members of Board	Present	Appointed Members of Board	Present
Kristine Rivers (President)	X	Peggy Romfh (Membership)	X
Bill Ahlstrom (Vice-President/Programs)	X	Pete Romfh (Membership)	X
Lisa Myers (Secretary)	X	Neal McLain (Publications)	X
Don Sabathier (Treasurer)	X	Oron Atkins (Volunteer Services)	X
		Larry Ruhr (Advanced Training)	X
		Carolyn May-Monie (Training)	exc.
<b>Board Advisors</b>		Pam West (Chapter Host)	X
John O'Connell (AgriLIFE Extension)	X	Ruby Lewis (Outreach)	X
		Ed Peebles (Speakers Bureau)	X
<b>Guests</b>		Richard Schaffhausen (Publicity)	X
		Bob Whitmarsh (Intern Representative)	X
		Connie Stolte (State Representative)	X
<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Dave Brandes (Past-President)	X

**Secretary—**Lisa Myers stated that the November minutes had been sent to the Board for review, and the corrections suggested by Board members were made. The minutes were approved.

**Minutes Approval—**

Motion	Motion to Approve	Motion Seconded	Vote
Approve the November General Meeting and Board Meeting Minutes	Dick Schaffhausen	Dave Brandes	Minutes approved by unanimous voice vote of Board members present

**Motions—**

Motion	Motion to Approve	Motion Seconded	Vote
Waive the following year's membership dues for those members achieving volunteer milestones of 4,000, 5,000 or 10,000 hours in the preceding year (effective the current calendar year)	Dave Brandes	Connie Stolte	Motion approved by majority voice vote of Board members present with two abstentions
Adopt iNaturalist as COT's repository of wildlife images in our area; the current Photo Gallery will be static	Pete Romfh	Don Sabathier	Motion approved by unanimous voice vote of Board members present

**Action Register Review** was led by Kristine Rivers [see *COT Board Action Register items at end of minutes*]. The following are completed and removed items:



Completed Action Items	Who?	Comments
The State TMN Office requested that each chapter post its intern training schedule on the State website	Connie Stolte, Neal McLain	So that interns from other chapters can find make-up sessions

**Treasurer’s Report**—Don Sabathier presented the November 2018 financial information, below.

**1 November – 30 November 2018, COT Treasurer Report**

<b><u>Beginning Balance</u></b>	\$ 8,704.76
Revenue Summary	\$ 674.50
Expense Summary	(\$ 1,357.06)
<b><u>Ending Balance</u></b>	\$ 8,022.20

Don said that TDECU had retroactively decreased interest rates as of November 1. The ConocoPhillips \$1,000 transfer (matching funds) had been done but was not yet showing in COT’s account. (Later in the day, Don emailed the Board that the funds were now showing.) The month’s balance sheet also reflects an in-kind donation of \$650.39 from Pete and Peggy Romfh’s not accepting expenses for the State Annual Meeting on behalf of Connie Stolte, who could not attend.

**Holiday Party**—Pam West provided an update to plans for the annual Holiday Party. Ed will be recovering from surgery, so the party will definitely be held at AgriLIFE as a COT event. Marty Cornell and his team are smoking pork shoulders and bringing Boraccho beans; Pam has emailed members to bring appetizers, sides, and desserts. Pam will purchase plates, drinks, utensils, and iced tea, and she added that we will need to borrow a roaster and trays from AgriLIFE. The Board determined that a special cake for graduating interns would be overkill. Pam did ask for one more person to volunteer to bring morning snacks, Bill Ahlstrom and Don Sabathier offered to do so. Finally, Pam noted that she will ask Marty Cornell for a list of TPWD personnel to invite to the party, and John O’Connell said that he would invite AgriLIFE office staff.

Later in the meeting, Pam asked whether a vegetarian option should be offered at the Holiday Party. The Board concurred that there should be plenty of sides and deserts that are acceptable. Pam asked Board members to bring holiday decorations to the party.

**Chapter Host**—Pam West indicated that she will be circulating a sign-up sheet for volunteers to bring General Meeting snacks in 2019. Regarding the Bonus AT Day, Pam said that she is working on door prizes; so far she has: one book with promises for more, two dragonfly coffee cups, and beaded dragonfly necklaces. She asked the Board to donate additional items such as books, plants, gift cards, t-shirts, etc.

**2019 Board Changes**—Kristine Rivers announced that Larry Peterson will be the new Publicity Coordinator as of January. So far, the positions of Membership Director and Training Coordinator are unfilled. John O’Connell offered to fill-in as Training Coordinator in the interim.

**Membership Dues Waiver**—Peggy Romfh suggested that free dues be offered to members who reached a significant volunteer-hour milestone. After some discussion, the Board voted to waive dues for one year to any member reaching 4,000, 5,000, or 10,000 VT hours. *[see Motion]*

**Digital Photo Gallery**—Peggy and Pete Romfh announced that the consortium supporting the software for the Digital Photo Gallery (DPG) was no longer doing so. The gallery currently contains 3,000 images and has had 120,000 views. It is a valuable resource and can sit as is for a couple of years, but Peggy did not recommend adding more images to the DPG or trying to find someone willing to devote the time necessary to maintain it on a new platform. iNaturalist, which stays current on scientific names, gets input from experts, and allows the tagging of images to a specific place/area, is a good alternative. Although iNaturalist does not control image quality, practices a “consensus-is-truth” model and does not allow data dumps (i.e., no easy way to transfer data from DPG), it is currently the best option for members to post wildlife images that can easily be shared. [see Motion].

**BOARD REPORTS and OTHER TOPICS**

**Programs**—Bill Ahlstrom noted the following regarding speakers for upcoming chapter meetings:

- **December**—Intern Project Presentations
- **January**—(unconfirmed) Joy Columbus, VP Horticulture, Houston Botanical Gardens; Nature Notes—Chris Kneupper on rare oak trees and their acorns.
- **February**—not scheduled
- **March**—not scheduled

Bill noted that Stephen Curtis, TPWD American Eel Mop Project Coordinator, would like to present a project update to COT members. Kristine asked Bill to finalize the January through March schedule as soon as possible.

**Membership**—Pete and Peggy Romfh presented the following impact data, VT and AT information, and award recipients for the December General Meeting.

Impact Data	# Adults	# Youth	Total
<b>YTD Totals—October 31</b>	14,226	35,109	49,335 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An estimated 1,000 people are attributed elsewhere, e.g., Sea Center Texas, Angler Education, etc.

Period	VT Hours	AT Hours	# of Volunteers
<b>YTD Totals—November 30</b>	16,122	1,663	107

Recertification 2018 <sup>2</sup> (Ocelot Pin)	2500-Hour Milestone (Polished Silver Dragonfly Pin)
Mary Holler Mike Mullenweg	Dick Schaffhausen

<sup>2</sup> 80 members have recertified to date; two or three more may recertify in December; six of eleven interns will achieve initial certification this year and one may recertify this year.

**State Representative**—Connie Stolte announced that yesterday she distributed for review the latest version of the Chapter Operating Handbook (COH) to the Review Committee (Kristine, Lisa, Peggy and Neal). After their input, she will send it to John O’Connell and then the Board, and after any required revision, the COH should be ready to send to membership for its review at least two weeks prior to a member vote—hopefully at the January General Meeting. No work has yet been done on the appendices.

**Intern Training**—On behalf of Carolyn May-Monie, Kristine Rivers announced that all interns will be graduating at the December General Meeting.

**Volunteer Project, Public Outreach and Activity Request Review**—Oron Atkins noted the following activities:

- **Exploration Green Nursery / Wetland Work Day**—December 13, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; contact TBD
- **TCWP at GCBO Work Day**—December 20, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; contact Chris Kneupper
- **GCBO Native Plant Work Days**—every Saturday until further notice, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; contact Chris Kneupper
- **Pearland Natural Resources Work Day**—First Thursday each month; CANCELLED FOR DECEMBER; contact Cullen Ondracek
- **BCPD Trail Day**—Hanson Park, date TBD, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; contact Mike Mullenweg
- **Christmas Bird Counts (CBC’s) and Contacts:** (on Calendar)
  - San Bernard NWR, 12/14, Ron Weeks, Jennifer Wilson
  - Brazos Bend, 12/15, Justin Bower
  - Freeport, 12/16, Mike Austin
  - Matagorda County, 12/17, Brent Ortego
  - Galveston, 12/18, Richard Mayfield
  - Attwater Prairie Chicken NWR, 12/19, Sumita Prasad
  - Boliver Peninsula, 12/20, Steve Mayes
  - Guadalupe River Delta, 12/20, Brent Ortego
  - Brazoria-Columbia Bottomlands, 1/5, Tom Taroni and Martin Hagne

Oron noted that Pete Romfh had emailed to the Board information concerning a seed-collecting project and Oron will add it to the Calendar.

**Advanced Training**—Larry Ruhr said that no new AT opportunities had been added to the Calendar. He urged those Board members who had not yet done so to register for January’s Bonus AT Day. He will remind members to register at next week’s meeting.

**Outreach**—Ruby Lewis presented the following, upcoming activities:

- **DEEP at Brazoria NWR**—December 11 and 13, January 10, 15, 24, 29, and 31; contact Tom Schneider
- **Sea Center Texas Nature Day**—February 23
- **Brazoria Heritage Day**—March 2
- **BNWR Open House**—end December pending possible government shutdown

**Publications**—Neal McLain provided the following information regarding publications:

Website

- Routine updates to homepage, AT, and Intern Training pages
- Posted revised announcements for December General Meeting; information on the 15<sup>th</sup> annual holiday party
- Posted meeting announcement for January Bonus AT Day (no January Meeting Announcement yet)  
<http://tmn-cot-org/Advanced/BonusAT-2019/index.html>

Newsletter

- November issue went out on schedule
- December issue publication schedule:
 

Wednesday December 5	Board meeting, 9 a.m.
Thursday December 6	Submission deadline, 5 p.m.
Sunday December 9	Board review draft deadline, 12 p.m.
Monday December 10	Publication

Continuous Reminder to Board

- There are “hidden” pages on the website for which no password is needed:
  - <http://tmn-cot.org/Minutes/>
  - <http://tmn-cot.org/Mugshots/>
  - [http://tmn-cot.org/COT\\_Special\\_Forms](http://tmn-cot.org/COT_Special_Forms)
- Larry Peterson is on the Board email list so that he will receive General Meeting agendas.

**Speakers Bureau**—Ed Peebles circulated a rough draft of a Speakers Bureau rack card.

Cradle of Texas Board Action Register				
Open Action Item	Who?	Due Date?	Complete/Ongoing	Comments
COT should hold an annual, Bonus AT Event, if possible; solidify theme/topic(s) and time-frame to develop/organize by August Board Meeting	Larry Ruhr, Edward Peebles, Bill Ahlstrom	Aug	Ongoing	<p>Given the success of the January 20 Bonus AT Day, the Board would like to promote an annual event—perhaps on a smaller scale</p> <p><b>April meeting:</b> Larry will solicit input regarding topics/format from members via a short survey (on-line and/or General Meeting); perhaps have members “vote” on a whiteboard</p> <p><b>May meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send topic/theme/agenda ideas to Larry</li> <li>• Informal survey at April General Meeting: members prefer full-day event (very few responded)</li> <li>• Contact Dennis Jones regarding ornithology presentation</li> <li>• Suggestion to focus on citizen science projects and include training</li> <li>• Suggestion to possibly include a webinar module and a (live) moderator</li> <li>• Suggestion to reach out to nearby TMNs for presenters</li> </ul> <p><b>July meeting:</b> Theme was announced at May General meeting—“A Little R &amp; R” (scientific research and land and species resource management); it is now time to finalize partners and presentations (need a committee and an initial meeting time); Peggy: need to allocate time for displays; suggested possible topics of shoreline</p>



				<p>reclamation, new yucca plant, cactus moth; Sebesta building at Brazoria County Fairgrounds will meet our needs and at no fee, but we could get bumped (secure right of first refusal and maybe pay if we have to); John is to follow-up on rental contract</p> <p><b>August meeting:</b> see "2019 Bonus AT Event" on page 3, above</p> <p><b>September meeting:</b> Larry noted that Saturday, January 26, has been selected for the 2019 Bonus AT Event; agenda is almost finalized; event will be held at AgriLIFE and maximum attendance of 100 will primarily be limited to COT membership (others if there is room); lunch will be provided, and donation boxes be prominently placed; time will be allocated for displays</p> <p><b>October meeting:</b> Larry said that the next committee meeting will follow next week's General Meeting and he gave a brief update of plans to date regarding speakers, lunch, exhibits, presentations; Kristine noted that our event is the same weekend as the TX Ornithology Society meeting and we might have speaker conflicts; Kristine added that there will be displays from members on various citizen science topics in order to broaden the number of subjects covered</p> <p><b>November meeting:</b> Larry noted that the committee is meeting today, and he expects to send out an event invitation to members soon. Kristine asked for the Board to approve a budget of up to \$1500 for the event [see Motions]. Pam indicated that the cost for a stuffed baked potato lunch has increased only \$0.50 since last year; we must order one week in advance</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> Larry indicated that 48 members had registered to date; many have not yet opened the email invitation. Committee is meeting today after Board meeting</p>
Begin development of an annual budget; review, adjust and implement in 2019	Don Sabathier with input from Board	Oct	Ongoing	<p>For planning and accountability;                  Don sent 2017 spreadsheets to the Board;                  State reporting dates are firm, and reports require 1 of 2 software packages; more input from Board is needed</p> <p><b>May meeting:</b> Don does not think COT needs to use a software accounting package as suggested to chapters by State; spreadsheets meet our needs</p> <p><b>July meeting:</b> no further action taken yet</p> <p><b>August meeting:</b> Don asked for budget information from each board member before the October meeting; Don will resend the 2017 financials file</p> <p><b>September meeting:</b> Don is gathering input from Board members; awaiting estimated costs for 2019 intern class; need to determine speaker travel-reimbursement costs</p> <p><b>October meeting:</b> Don displayed the current bank balance and 2019 budget; it is missing some information and currently shows a \$1400-2000 annual deficit for income vs. expenses based on dues from about 96 members (not including interns); line items were reviewed and whether to allocate funds for a project or donation; however, an annual deficit is an issue. Other items discussed included whether to sponsor a member's attendance at the State meeting; whether and how to raise funds to maintain a minimum bank balance of \$3000; Kristine suggested that the Executive Board, along with the Chapter Adviser and Past President, meet to discuss possible projects</p>





				<p><b>November meeting:</b> Don has made changes requested and will add intern training and AT Bonus Day figures</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> Don said that other than final intern-training costs, the budget is ready</p>
Add an additional COT Chapter Advisor	Kristine Rivers	ASAP	Ongoing	<p>Must be a Texas Parks and Wildlife employee</p> <p><b>August meeting:</b> Kristine will contact David Abrego at Sea Center Texas</p> <p><b>September meeting:</b> No update</p> <p><b>October meeting:</b> No update</p> <p><b>November meeting:</b> No update</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> No update</p>
Correct information on the COT website regarding how to log travel time for VT	Neal McLain	ASAP	Ongoing	<p>Connie will provide accurate information to Neal</p> <p><b>November meeting:</b> Connie and Neal need to check if the information posted is correct.</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> Connie stated that the information posted reflects the revised COH; item will be complete once membership approves COH, likely in January</p>
Review and update Chapter Operation Handbook Appendices	Connie Stolte	Nov.	Ongoing	<p>COT calls this document Policies and Procedures Handbook on the website. Current Appendices need updating and revision</p> <p><b>November meeting:</b> Connie suggested that we organize this website document via a sub-index under "Forms"; Neal will review and make recommendations.</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> Connie finished latest draft and sent to reviewers; then will be sent to Board; then ready for membership vote; no appendices yet</p>
Update TMN milestone plaques	Bob Whitmarsh	ASAP	Ongoing	<p>To add milestone names for 2018</p> <p><b>December meeting:</b> Bob took President's Call to Service plaque to add this year's names</p>

NEW Action Item(s) Added at December Meeting	Who?	Due date?	Comments
None			

**President:** Kristine Rivers adjourned the Board Meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ladd Myers, Secretary

Cc: Board Members  
 Crystal Andablo, AgriLIFE Secretary [Crystal.Andablo@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Crystal.Andablo@ag.tamu.edu)



Attendance Date 2018	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
<b>Elected Board Members</b>													
Rivers, Kristine	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	10
Ahlstrom, Bill	X	X	X	X	X	D	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Sabathier, Don	X	X	X	X	X	I	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Myers, Lisa	X	X	X	X	X	D	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
<b>Advisor(s)</b>													
O'Connell, John	X	X	X	X						X		X	6
<b>Appointed Board Members</b>													
Atkins, Oron	X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	8
Barrios, Ed		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Brandes, Dave		X	X			N		X	X	X		X	6
Lewis, Ruby	X		X	X	X	O	X			X	X	X	8
May-Monie, Carolyn	X	X	X	X	X	T		X	exc	exc	exc	exc	6
McLain, Neal	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Peebles, Ed	-	-	-	-	-		-	X	X	X	X	X	5
Romfh, Peggy		X	X	X	X	M	X		X	X	X	X	9
Romfh, Pete		X	X	X	X	E	X		X	X	X	X	9
Ruhr, Larry	X	X		X	X	E		X	X	X	X	X	9
Salinas, Jimmy	X	X		X	X	T	X	-	-	-	-	-	5
Schaffhausen, Dick	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	10
Stolte, Connie	-	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	7
West, Pam	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	10
<b>Intern Class Representative(s)</b>													
Whitmarsh, Bob (2017)	-	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	10
<b>Guest(s)</b>													
Edward Peebles							X						1