

RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalist
2024 July Board Meeting
July 2, 2024

Attendance:

Officers

Robin Gelston - President
Evelyn Alpert - Secretary
Emma Gonzalez – First VP

Directors and Committees

Joni Gillis - Membership
Barbara Peet - New Training Class
Mara Lee Moats - Communication
Eryn Wingert - Communication
Teresa Du Bois - AT
David Batot - Volunteer Service Projects
Robert Cepeda - New Class representative

At large

Thomas Butcher – Brownsville
Jose Pamos – Cameron County

Others

Ernesto Garcia Ortega
David Gordon
Volker Imschweiler

Agenda

1. Call to order –The meeting was called to order at 5:34pm by Robin Gelston
2. Approval of Prior Board Meetings Minutes – June minutes were approved, as moved by David Batot and seconded by Joni Gillis.
3. Reports

Treasurer – Betsy was not in attendance, so Robin reported a savings balance of 23,856.68 and checking of \$9759. 02. Some of the funds spent during last month were on the new bat monitor, the new tablecloths, and for the pollinator project. A few people donated funds in memory of Jolaine Lanehart, and Robin asked the board where those funds should be placed. A motion was made by Teresa Du Bois and seconded by Joni Gillis to put the funds into the general chapter scholarship fund. The motion passed.

Membership – Joni reported that current membership is 165 members, 143 active, 17 in training, 2 advisors, and 1 honorary member. She also alerted everyone that some statuses in VMS have changed, primarily the “in training” status because we can no longer be lenient in assigning this status. The VMS status categories are active, inactive, interested or associate. Barbara Peet will reach out to the trainees with little or no volunteer hours to see what status they will likely fall into. At the July Chapter meeting the following milestones will be celebrated: 2 trainees will be certified, and one will reach 250 hours.

Communication/Outreach – Mara advised that a lot of the cleanup has been done and that we are now running the most current version of Word Press. The website looks simpler and easier to navigate, and a definition of volunteer service has been added. Joni suggested it would be nice if we could load the Chapter Operation Handbook. Also, it was suggested that if we cannot load Roberts rules of order (too large a file) that we at least load a statement that we follow the rules, and possible a link to the rules.

Outreach – no report

New Class Training – Neither Amy nor Barb were in attendance. The application for the new class will go up on Oct 15. It is not really an application but a link to TMN (which is open all the time). Those on the wait list will get early notification. The website has a new information page about the 2025 training class.

Advance Training – Teresa Du Bois asked whether she could share other chapters' postings that could be AT for us. Robin confirmed that as long as it related to us in the valley, that she could.

Volunteer Service Project – David Batot reported that the Bat monitoring is done monitoring, and they are now deciphering the data. The Coop grant project is ongoing with trail walks continuing the next few weekends. Laguna Vista Nature Trails are still trying to meet with the city, and doing some work in the cooler mornings. Hugh Ramsey – the city is supposed to be coming and helping and supposed to be doing certain things but none of this has transpired.

Old/Pending Business - Robin reported that she had conflict of interest forms available and that she needed only one photo which she would get after the meeting. Only 2 people had expressed interest in the book club so until there are more, it won't be convened. The Pollinator group is doing well and has ordered some supplies. Tony's retirement will be celebrated at the next chapter meeting with a cake, and Joni created an honorary certificate. The South Texas Border chapter is working together with us to create the submittal for the 2024 annual meeting advisory award.

New Business - Robin noted that she created a new partner form that is fairly simple in that it asks for the organization's mission and contacts. It then asks 3 questions:

- Does the organization benefit natural resources in the RGV?
- Does it accept volunteer help from RGVCTMN?
- Is this a non-profit organization?

It would then ask for examples of general type of volunteer opportunities, and then specific needs.

David motioned that we accept the form and Barbara seconded. The motion carried.

Volker made mention of a possible project opportunity from CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow) that has to do with evaporation and precipitation. Robin requested that he formally present it to the board for consideration.

We used to give small gifts to our speakers, and it was suggested that we do that again. Joni offered to make thank you cards, and it was suggested that we could give small gift cards.

Suggestions were solicited for our next field trip, perhaps Estero Llano Grande or a place in Willacy County. Robin will let us know.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Alpert