

RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalist  
2024 June Board Meeting  
June 4, 2024

**Attendance:**

**Officers**

Robin Gelston – President  
Emma Gonzalez – First VP  
Dan Martin – Second VP  
Evelyn Alpert - Secretary  
Betsy Hosick – Treasurer

**Directors and Committees**

Joni Gillis - Membership  
Barbara Peet - New Training Class  
Mara Lee Moats - Communication  
Teresa Du Bois - AT  
Amy Daley -Education  
Barb Peterson -Education  
Marilyn Lorenz -Outreach

**At large**

Joyce Baer Halpern - Winter Texan  
Thomas Butcher – Brownsville

**Advisors**

Tony Reisinger - Texas AgriLife  
Javier de Leon - Texas Parks and Wildlife

**Others**

Susan Upton  
Michelle Cano  
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 – May minutes were approved, as moved by Joni and seconded by Barb
3. Reports

**Treasurer** – Betsy reported that as of end of May we had approximately \$23 K in our savings account and approximately \$11,687 in our checking. She noted she has been in touch with the COOP grant folks who should be sending the \$2,000 soon. Once the check is received, she will reimburse the trainee that will get the scholarship funds. Betsy also noted that she had filed the 990 form for non-profit tax filing that was due in May for any non-profit that makes less than \$50K.

**Membership** – Joni noted that some entries in VMS needed correction and she might be sending out a blast email. The current membership is 166, 2 advisors, and 1 honorary member. 143 members are active and 20 in training. Joni also reported having to make 18 members inactive. She noted that she and Betsy talked to some of them before setting their inactive status, and some did pay their dues. Joni noted that the 2024 class had another member certify and 5 more were very close to certifying. At the next meeting the following milestones will be celebrated: 250 hours Joseph Kowalski, 5000 hours Barbara Peet, and 40 members will be recertifying.

#### **Communication/Outreach** –

Mara thanked everyone on her team for their hard work. She noted that the expense reimbursement form and Texas Tax Exempt forms are now uploaded on the website under Member pages, document library. Also, the Leadership page has been updated, and she requested pictures from the few that had not yet sent them. The projects page was also updated, and Joseph Kowalski has uploaded a new blog called All Things Biological. Any blogs no longer current have been moved to article archives.

#### **Outreach** – Marilyn Lorenz

In May a Cinco de Mayo outreach was held at STEC, and a pollinator event was held May 18 at STEC, both very successful. Someone from the RGV Pollinator Project will be speaking on June 20 at STEC for Pollinator Week.

#### **New Class Training**

Barbara Peet completed the new member training class survey, which turned out to be more complex than claimed. For 2025, Barb Peterson, Amy Daley, and Joni Gillis have held some meetings with Barbara Peet. Barb Peterson noted that she and Amy will be meeting monthly to be ready for the new class. They already have 14 people on the wait list, and they have invited the wait list folks to the June meeting. Registration for the new class will open October 15 and will be limited to 30 people. She and Amy are doing the VMS state training. She also noted that they have 9 textbooks but will need to order about 25 more.

**Advance Training** – Teresa Du Bois noted that she was trying to add opportunities on the FB page, but she was not clear on some issues as to whether the training qualified. Robin noted that any training that is RGV related or related to something passing through the RGV was eligible, so that Teresa's examples of stargazing or archaeology would both be valid.

**Volunteer Service Project** – David Batot was not present, but Robin advised that the second monitor for the acoustic bat project had been purchased and both were now deployed. They get deployed on Mondays and picked up on Fridays and then the data is examined. She also noted that the COOP grant was going better but there is confusion with how to log hours. Robin noted if you are getting a scholarship for your participation, the hours cannot be logged as volunteer or AT. If you are just volunteering to volunteer the hours can be logged as Volunteer time. If you are participating to learn, the hours can be logged as AT.

#### **Old/Pending Business**

Missing some photos of leadership for the website and missing 13 Conflict of interest forms.

#### **New Business**

Robin opened the discussion on scholarships and sponsoring of the state meeting. Last year we sponsored \$1000 due to the meeting being held locally. Discussion ensued whether we should sponsor this year at \$300 or \$500. Dan moved to do the \$300 and Barbara Peet seconded it. Tony suggested that we have a lot of money in the bank and the additional exposure at the higher level might be worth it. The vote on Dan's motion ended in a tie, but there was a second motion to sponsor at the \$500 level (Teresa du Bois moved, and Betsy seconded it) and that motion passed, therefore we will be sponsoring at \$500. The discussion then turned to stipends for members wishing to attend. Dan thought 5 stipends of \$500 each would be a good level, with the stipulation that those receiving the stipends must write something about the meetings or what they learned for the Chachalaca or the website. Tony thought we could do more than 5 so Dan amended his motion to be for 6 stipends at \$500 each, and Barbara Peet seconded it. This motion passed.

Robin noted that we need a leader for the RGV chapter book club if anyone is interested. Volker recommended "Grasses of South Texas" would be a good book to read.

After last month's discussion of whether the Native Plant Society of Texas was or was not a sponsored partner Robin confirmed that no one was able to locate any "partner form" nor could anyone locate any form that approved other partners. Tony made a motion that we approve the local chapter as a sponsored partner, and Teresa seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Marilyn, David and Barbara will be the co-leads for the Laguna Vista Nature Trails. David and Barb will be meeting with the city.

The RGV Pollinator Project requested \$100 for stickers and bookmarks to be made available at outreach events. Barbara Peet motioned to approve the \$100 and Teresa seconded it. The motion passed.

Robin noted that she felt the chapter needs a Parliamentarian who is familiar with Roberts Rules of Order to ensure we are doing things the way we should. Joni made a motion to get such a parliamentarian, and Marilyn seconded it. The motion passed.

Robin suggested that making a scrapbook of the chapter with pictures of events and members would be a good thing to have at outreach events. She asked anyone with pictures or anything they think would be fun to include to reach out to her.

Barb Peterson noted that she gets many complaints that our t-shirts are too hot. She will be looking into some options and then will come back to the board for approval to spend the dollars.

**Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Evelyn Alpert