

RGV Chapter Texas Master Naturalist
2025 January Board Meeting
Jan 7, 2025

Attendance:

Officers

Robin Gelston – President
Rob Gardner- First Vice President
Chad Wilmoth – Second Vice President
Betsy Hosick – Treasurer
Evelyn Alpert - Secretary

Directors and Committees

Joni Gillis - Membership
Teresa Du Bois - AT
David Batot - Volunteer Service Projects
Mara Lee Moats – Communication
Marilyn Lorenz – Outreach Director
Amy Daley - Education
Barb Peterson – Education
Karen Weaver – 2025 Membership Director

At large

Joyce Baer Halpern - Winter Texan
Rolando Garcia – Brownsville region
Mary Grizzard – Coastal Region

Others

Ernesto Garcia-Ortega TPWD Advisor

Agenda

1. Call to order –The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Robin Gelston
2. Approval of Prior Board Meetings Minutes – Rolando moved that the December minutes be approved, and Marilyn seconded. Minutes were approved.
3. Reports
Treasurer – Betsy noted balance at end of December was \$12,853.52 of which \$2708.10 was from the new class and savings was \$23,949.33. Betsy noted that Jody is going to adjust the 2025 budget so that it agrees to the accounting codes. Some other changes made were to remove the class dues from the class revenue and put it into dues where it belongs. She said 31 class participants, 30 have paid; one paid today for a total of 31, Betsy also indicated she would help Rob if he needed any assistance performing the audit. There was a discussion about the cost of the T-shirts for the new class, and it was agreed it should be charged at cost, not retail. Also, the cost of the books was updated. Betsy reported that \$1150 of the Caracara trails grant is not spent but also not in the budget, as it is in suspense/restricted file until the final number is arrived at, after which remaining funds will go back into the scholarship fund.

Membership – Joni advised there are 145 active members, 4 TMN associates, 31 in training (the new class), 9 from the 2024 class not certified, 1 from the class of 2021 class not certified, and 1 advisor/associate member. Four people will be recognized at the next meeting, two for 250 hours and two for 500 hours. She noted that 28 members were newly certified bringing the total for 2024 to 72. She also noted that some members still need to pick up pins and reminded all how this can be accomplished. Joni also reported that 83 members reached 250 hours volunteer time, 64 reached 500 hours, 35 reached 1000 hours, 13 reached 2500 hours, 8 reached 4000 hours and 5 reached 5000 hours. In 2024, 15,138 volunteer hours were logged and 2095 hours of AT were logged. Eighteen of the 28 trainees from the 2024 class members certified.

Communication – Mara Lee thanked Diane Halls, Marilyn, Chet, Rick and Erin for all their work on the website and other communication. She is looking for any feedback on anything else needed for the website or FB newsletter. Robin suggested that more events be added to the website calendar, and there was extensive discussion about having a “one stop shop” for locating volunteer opportunities, and Teresa advised that she can create a list of everything and sent it to Mara and Robin for them to include where desired. Betsy recommended whatever additional PR we can create to get the word out about TMN and what we do.

Outreach – Marilyn advised that there was not much for January, but that February included a new date for the Resaca de la Palma sweet 16 celebration (Feb 1). Also in February is the Winter Wildlife Expo to be held at the Birding Center Feb 6-8, and we will need volunteers. She also advised about the speaker series at STEC on Thursdays at 5:30 (however note that the presentation scheduled for Jan 9 has been postponed).

New Class Training – Amy advised there are 31 trainees with another 11 on the waitlist. All have been assigned mentors (Teresa de Salvo arranged them). Amy advised that they want to hold the 2025 graduation at the April 8 chapter meeting at the thicket at Estero Llano Grande to encourage chapter participation. David moved to approve this, and Teresa seconded it and the motion passed. She also noted that they are practicing with the technology and want to purchase some additional microphones. She was advised that she did not need board approval as the cost was low. Barb noted that the training schedule was out and that she would share it and Robin asked for it to be added to the website. Barb also noted that some of the field trips have been scheduled, and she made particular note of one where Resaca de La Palma offered to host a trip that included volunteer time as well. The board readily endorsed that approach as something to pursue more of. And Barb advised she will have some leftover lanyards that she will sell at the chapter meeting for \$5.

Advance Training – Teresa Du Bois noted that there is Sea Turtle Cold stun training mobile you can take anytime. on Feb 1 Birding tours at Estero Llano Grande. There is always AT available, and she posts it on Facebook.

Volunteer Service Project – Robin that March 11 will be a Volunteer Fair at STEC. She asked for a volunteer to coordinate it, and Rolando agreed. She also noted that she would like a volunteer workday and suggested a beach cleanup possibly April 26, and/or a reforestation event probably in October. There will be numerous outreach events on April 22 for Earth Day.

Old/Pending Business -Robin is still working on the Tri fold and decals. She noted that anyone who had not completed a conflict-of-interest form should get one and return it, and also submit their photos for the website if not already done.

New Business

Betsy brought up the desire to have one or more fundraisers in the year so that we could send additional people to the annual conference. She suggested a spaghetti dinner to which we'd sell tickets as one way, as it would also advertise us. Other suggestions were a silent auction, some kind of raffle or plant sale. It was also recommended that we survey membership to see what inhibits them from attending the annual conference. Robin will address that.

The board meeting ended at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted.

Evelyn Alpert