

Hays Master Naturalist Board Meeting
Aug 13, 2009 7:00 pm
Camp Jacob Watershed Education Center
Wimberley, Texas

Attending: President Dixie Camp, Treasurer Larry Calvert, Secretary Mary Arizpe, Past President Dale Shively, Training Committee Chair Mimi Boelter, Advanced Training Chair Betty Finley, Membership Chair Beth Ramey, Newsletter Chair Art Arizpe, Volunteer Project Chair Walt Krudop, TPNWD Sponsor Lee Ann Linam.

Not attending: Vice President Ben Adair, Host Committee Chair Jean McMeans, Outreach Committee Chair Susan Nenney.

Dixie called the meeting to order at 7:08. The agenda and the July minutes were approved.

Action items will be noted at the beginning of the minutes.

Beth - send Michelle an email about updating the database..

Mary - send notice about board positions and job descriptions

Mimi - send the application form to Beth.

Walt – Set up project number for FLOW

Walt – bring process of how to implement background checks to board

Officer Reports

President

It was brought up that officer elections are held at the gala in November and we need a nominating committee. The past president usually serves as the head of the committee and Dale agreed to do it. The committee should be made up of people who are familiar with the functioning of the chapter. Susan Neeney and Winifred Simon were suggested as committee members as well as the past year's board members. Mary will send out a notice to the chapter asking for volunteers to fill the positions as well as job descriptions for those positions. Art will put an announcement in the newsletter and it will be announced at chapter meetings.

A question was raised as to whether or not volunteer hours can be counted for Master Naturalist and other organizations e.g. the Wildflower Center or UT. Michelle said that generally you can double count the hours. However you can't use hours for Master Naturalist and Master Gardener if you need the hours for certification.

The FLOW event needs volunteers. Dixie will talk to Peggy and find out how many guided are needed for nature hikes. Walt will set up a project number and Mary will send out an announcement asking for volunteers.

The training committee needs to get started for next year. Mimi will let Dixie know if she wants to continue in the position as training committee chair.

Dixie gave the vice president's report. There is a \$150 fee to use the room at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit as well as a policy on alcohol that would make it difficult to have the Gala there. The room at the Wimberley Community Center is a poor choice because of the size of the room. Jean and her committee will decide on a location.

The August chapter meeting was discussed. Should it be a potluck? The meeting will be at the Nature Center. There are tables and a small kitchen (sink and microwave oven). Concern was expressed about the size of the meeting room and whether there would be enough space to seat people.

Kevin Thuesen, who works for the city of Austin at the Onion Creek Management unit will be the speaker at the September chapter meeting. The meeting will be at the Onion Creek Water Quality Protection land. There is a farm house there and maybe we can have a potluck at this meeting or we could have sack dinners.

Treasurer

Treasurer's report was reviewed. There were no questions

Secretary

No report

Past President/Historian

Dale needs to call Lance, and Andy about the history committee.

Dale provided a paper about how attitudes have changed as a result of the Master Naturalist program.

TPWD Sponsor

No report

Membership

Beth reported that the chapter members have amassed 544 hours of advanced training.

About half of these are trainee hours. The chapter has earned 2700 volunteer hours.

About 12 people have already qualified for recertification.

The demographic information forms were handed out to the training class.

Advanced Training

Betty approved 8 advanced trainings this month.

Training Committee

Mimi reported that the trainees are doing well finding volunteer hours. There is no graduation committee yet and Mimi would like input as to who would like to help. She is thinking of having native plants for centerpieces and door prizes. A speaker is still needed for graduation. It was suggested that graduation be a part of the gala. The graduates could be introduced to the chapter at the gala and they could be welcomed into the chapter. Mimi will talk to the training committee about this.

Betty will attend a training class to talk about advanced training.

Newsletter

Art thanked Walt and LeeAnn for the articles they contributed to the newsletter. Dale will write the "A Naturalist's View" for the next newsletter. Beth, Jean, and Art are the last 3 board members that need to contribute a "Naturalist's View" article.

Outreach

No report

Host Committee

No report

Volunteer Projects

Walt spoke with Michelle about background checks. We must have them for anyone working with children. They need to be done every 3 years. It's up to us to decide what to do about people not working with children. Michelle recommended that he get input from Donna Wolf from the Denton chapter and Sarah Beckelman from the North Texas chapter. Both chapters went through the same type of discussion that we are having. Both chapters started the background checks 3 years ago and neither lost members because the checks were required. Many of their members had been exposed to checks from other groups (teachers, 4-H, etc.). All new trainees are told about the screening. Trainees and chapter members were given a form with 3 options: they had already been screened, they wouldn't work with youth, or they would agree to be screened. There was some opposition to the screening from existing chapter members but not from the trainees. The chapters paid for the screening.

It was suggested that we could increase the cost for the gala and eventually increase the cost of the training class to pay for the screenings. Someone will need to talk to the training class about the importance of getting screened. Information will need to be placed in the class application. The chapter is responsible for keeping track of who needs to be screened. Are we liable for people on our email list who volunteer but aren't paid members of the chapter?

Walt will bring a proposed process for implementation to the board. In the volunteer project's description it will need to be designated if the project involves working with children.

An email or letter will need to be sent to current members informing them of the need for screening. A form with the aforementioned 3 options will be included in the application for trainees and sent to current members during the next dues cycle.

Richard may have ideas of how to keep track of when people need to be rescreened.

Walt made a motion that we establish a policy that offers 3 options for screening.

1. individual has already been screened elsewhere.
2. individual refuses to be screened and won't work with children
3. individual agrees to be screened

Larry seconded the motion and the motion was voted on and carried.

We are looking at a target date of 2010 for implementation.

The next board meeting will be Sept 10, 2009 at 7:00 pm at Jacob's Well. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 pm.