

**Hays County Master Naturalists
Board Meeting
April 5, 2012
Camp Jacob, Wimberley**

In attendance:

Larry Calvert
Anne Child
Chris Middleton
Beth Ramey
Jeff Vasgaard
Lin Weber
Herb Smith
Art Arizpe
Helen Bowie
Leah Laszewski
Becky Northcut
Lee Ann Linam
Richard Parrish

Not present:

Eva Gomez
Charles Maxcy
Tom Hausler

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM.

Action items included in the minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and the following new action items were generated.

Larry Calvert agreed to get with Tom Hausler regarding written procedures for getting things on the calendar.

Herb Smith had attempted to touch base with Michele Haggerty but she hadn't responded. Herb agreed to follow up again with Michele.

Anne Child made a motion to approve the minutes and Helen Bowie seconded the motion.

The topic of liability waiver followed with discussion of the various aspects of liability and possible pitfalls. Lin Weber commented that the genesis of the problem was site visits and expressed concern about what would happen if someone did not want to sign the waiver.

Larry Calvert agreed to call other Master Naturalist chapters to see if they are as concerned about potential liability issues and, if so, to determine what they have done about it.

Lee Ann Linam agreed to touch base with Michelle Haggerty to see where TP&W was on the issue and also agreed to get a copy of the volunteer protection policy from the state.

This was followed by a discussion of the appropriateness of movies as Advanced Training. It was noted that there is a difference between movies viewed as part of training followed by an expert lead discussion vs. movies viewed on a standalone basis. However, it was agreed that each situation should be treated on an ad hoc basis.

Beth Ramey distributed the budget report and noted that the Master Naturalist organization had \$16,840.56 in the bank. Beth also noted that she has a rough draft of the asset list and would be getting something out soon.

Lin Weber noted that there had been three training classes and that 43 trainees had participated in the Canyon Gorge trip. Also, the Jacob's Well workday/social had been held the previous Saturday with 20 trainees participating and the first site visit was planned for Tuesday.

Becky Northcut reported that 11 opportunities representing 68 hours of Advanced Training had been sent out in the past month. There was some discussion of the Waterlands project and the lateness of their notices. It was suggested that a blanket permission might be given such that participants can ask for approval after attending sessions.

Becky agreed to send Chris Middleton an e-mail regarding a blanket permission for Waterlands training and to also send an e-mail to the program director, Mandy (???last name) asking her to provide more notice.

Becky Northcut handed out a wish list that had been compiled based on board member comments. Integration with Facebook was added to the list of suggestions. The next step will be to develop a plan that would be sent out for comment. Actual development of the new website is still being held up by the need for training.

Becky Northcut agreed to send out a digital version of the wishlist she handed out and Herb Smith agreed to begin developing a plan for website development.

Beth Ramey talked about the new reporting system and requested that the organization pick up expenses if a trip to Kerrville was needed.

Herb Smith reported that he had set up two Google calendars one for events and one for volunteer projects which are ready to go live on the existing website. An additional calendar for Advanced Training will also be set up.

Becky Northcut agreed to write up instructions for using the Google calendars.

Art Aripze agreed to send the information to about ½ dozen project leaders as part of a pilot project.

Art Aripze thanked everyone for their contributions to the April newsletter. He also said that the information for the Naturescapes photo contest had been finalized for the website and publicity purposes and that the Master Naturalist award would be for the “Best Natural Waterscape Photograph.”

Leah Laszewski reported that:

- Training on the Aquifer and Watershed models had been held the previous Monday with 9 people participating.
- The speakers bureau was up and running and was picking up momentum.
- The committee was looking closely at display materials with the possibility of a workday this summer to construct electronic display boards.
- Something will be put in the newsletter about Outreach activities.

Chapter meetings are being better attended than last year and there was some concern regarding the amount of food being provided. Eva Gomez explained that the need for consistency is why they have been bringing the amount of food they have and that not much has gone to waste. Anne Child requested that the second annual social be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Charles Maxcy reported through Larry Calvert that they had collected lots of information and that he is trying to set up an appointment with Lance Jones to go through it. He is also in the process of setting up interviews with members of the first class.

There was some concern that the Butterfly Festival is growing too fast as it was becoming difficult to fully meet their need for volunteers. In distributing the caterpillars, a shortage of teachers meant some classes had to double up.

Donna Browning has asked if she could get volunteer hours for the hikes she has been leading. It was agreed she can use the outreach project number as the hikes also include individuals who are not Master Naturalists.

Richard Parrish reported that a new person at the AgriLife extension office, Donna Carmean, will be working with youth programs. She will likely be contacting selected Master Naturalists in the near future and may attend the next board meeting to introduce herself.

Getting a group to the upcoming April 17th meeting of the Commissioners Court at which volunteer groups including Hays Master Naturalists was discussed. Also, the Gary Job Core Earth Week Celebration was discussed.

Larry Calvert agreed to compose an e-mail to send out requesting participation.

Leah Laszewski agreed to write something up to send out on the Gary Job Core Earth Week Celebration.

Lee Ann Linam discussed the need to update the curriculum editing for punctuation and producing an electronic version on CD. She also mentioned a workshop at the Bamberger Ranch on April 13th and 14th and an amphibian workshop to be held June 5th in Austin.

Larry Calvert presented a draft proposal for a possible Chapter project addressing the growing Bastard Cabbage problem. Since it is too late this year as the cabbage is beginning to go to seed meaning it is not a good time to pull it up, some suggested first steps in preparation for next year included:

- Get an expert on Bastard Cabbage to speak at a chapter meeting.
- Get feedback after the meeting to gauge interest levels.
- Target just a few areas for a pilot project and begin now identifying areas that might be good places to start.

Larry Calvert agreed to contact Minette Marr to discuss possible approaches.

Lin Weber moved to adjourn the meeting and Herb Smith seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50PM.