

MINUTES
MID-COAST CHAPTER, TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
NOVEMBER 11, 2023 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. General Membership Meeting met hybrid remote and in-person at 10:00 am on November 11, 2023 at Victoria Education Gardens (VEG Pavilion), 259 Bachelor Dr., Victoria, TX 77904.

Program

At 10:00 am, Helen Boatman (Class of 2004) presented “History of an Educational Garden, The VEG”. Approved AT: with Chapter Meeting is 1 hour.

Business Meeting

The business meeting was called to order at 11:35 am by President Cunningham. Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm for 2.5 hours CB: Chapter Business plus individual travel time.

Meeting Attendance

Thirty-five members in good standing and two guests were in attendance.

Secretary’s Report by Ele Chew

The Mid-Coast Chapter’s August general membership meeting was held on Saturday, August 12, 2023, at Goliad State Park. The [minutes were posted on the chapter website](#) on August 30, 2023 and members notified. Ele asked if there were corrections or revisions to the August 12, 2023 minutes. There being none, Ray Kirkwood moved to approve the minutes as posted; Kim Followwill seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer’s Report by Julie Hejducek

As of: 10/31/2023:

Bank balance as of 10/31/2023:	\$44,292.96
Less outstanding checks:	\$78.99
Bank balance as of 10/31/2023:	\$44,213.97
Bank reconciliation completed November 1, 2023.	
Total Income as of 10/31/2023	\$15,657.71
Less Total Expenses as of 10/23/2023	\$16,674.75
Net Loss as 10/31/2023.....	\$1,017.04

2024 Budget: I’ve begun sending out requests for the budget items that will be approved at the January 2024 BOD meeting. If you have any expenses that have not been sent in for reimbursement, please turn them in by the end of the year.

Address change: The Chapter will have a new PO Box in January and I will let you know the new number as soon as I receive it.

Final Plant Sale Net Revenue:

Includes 1) post sales and 2) charge card fees.....	\$13,407.58
Plant Sale Expenses:	\$6,655.78

Net Profit: \$ 6,751.80

Board of Director Reports:

- [President’s Report](#) — Election of 2024 Officers, VMS Rebuild, Internet Security Alert, Creation of a Separate 501 C3 Entity Called Tentatively “Friends of TMN”, State TMN Meeting
- [Vice-President’s Report](#) — Financial Executive Meeting, 2024 January Board of Director Meeting, February 10, 2024 General Chapter Meeting
- [Treasurer’s Report](#) — Budget vs. Actuals and informational items
- [Membership Report](#) — Current member numbers, new applications
- [Advanced Training Director](#) — Number of ATs approved in 2023
- [Initial Training Report](#) — Proposed training schedule for 2024 initial training class with all dates, venues and ambassadors confirmed
- [Projects Report](#) — Overview & Ongoing Projects
 - Plant Sale Manager Report by Debbie Minns
- [Communications Report](#) — publicity, outreach, newsletter, social media, historian, website
- [Technology Report](#) — Zoom accounts
- [Past President Report](#) — Nomination committee for 2024 election of officers
- [Class Representative Report](#) — Class of 2023 status
- [Chapter Advisor](#) —Amy Nowlin assuming chapter advisor position in 2024

Old Business

Election of 2024 Officers

Election of 2024 Officers resulted in Steve Ferguson as president, Brigid Berger as vice president, Ele Chew as secretary and Julie Hejducek as treasurer through unanimous simple majority votes. Please refer to the President’s Report for details.

New Business

New Chapter Leadership Recognition Pin

Brigid Berger and Dee Mahaffey proposed a Chapter Leadership Pin to the Board in October and the pin was approved in principle. The Chapter Leadership Pin will be revisited and brought up for formal confirmation in January at the board meeting along with providing funds for it in the budget. The minimum order is 100 pins for \$325 at the State designated vendor. A design was created through consultation with State TMN and shown at the meeting. The design comprised of a round pin with the outer white ring stating, “Texas Master Naturalist- Mid-Coast Chapter”, inner green ring saying, “Thank you for your leadership” and the TMN dragonfly in the center. The purpose of the Chapter Leadership Pin (CLP) is to recognize a chapter member for their leadership service to the operations, growth, and improvement of the chapter.

A process will be determined for nominating, vetting, and approving through a sub-committee consisting of Membership Director, Vice President and another member approved by the president. Nominations will be accepted on the 1st of the month before the board meetings (January, April, July, and October) to review the applications, followed by awarding the pins at the chapter meetings with a synopsis of the awarded individual’s outstanding work.



Seeking New Directors-Transition of Duties

Ray & Kris Kirkwood

Refer to October 16, 2023 minutes of Board of Directors. Discussion will resume at the first Board of Directors Meeting in January 2024.

Janet Cunningham

Seeking Hospitality and Scrapbook Directors to assume Janet Cunningham’s duties.

Christmas Bird Count

Christmas Bird Count time is approaching. Sign-up information at <https://midcoast-tmn.org/christmas-bird-counts>.

Acoustic Monitoring of Tricolored Bats

There is an upcoming project by US Fish & Wildlife Service on acoustic monitoring of tricolored bats. Please contact MCTMN member Sandra Lee for more information.

Adjournment

Ray Kirkwood moved to adjourn, and Steve Marwitz seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ele Chew

Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary

REPORTS AND AUXILIARY MATERIAL TO THE MINUTES

President's Report by Bob Cunningham

The President's Report included the

- TMN 2023 Annual Meeting
- Appointment of Steve Simmons to the position of New Technology Director
- Slate of candidates for all officer and director positions presented by the nominating committee.

VMS Rebuild

The VMS (Volunteer Management System) which documents volunteer hours will be rebuilt in 2024.

Internet Security Alert

Beware of phishing scams during year-end leadership transitions. Report any suspicious internet activities to Technology Director Steve Simmons and President Bob Cunningham.

Creation of a Separate 501 C3 Entity Called Tentatively "Friends of TMN"

The growing scale of TMN Annual Meetings has prompted the creation of a separate 501 C 3 entity which may be called "Friends of TMN" to manage the incoming revenue and expenditures of the Annual Meeting. Thus, the annual meeting finances would be removed from Agri Life, Parks and Wildlife, and TMN internal agencies.

State Annual Meeting

Brigid Berger attended the Leadership Lunch at the State Annual Meeting on behalf of President Cunningham and reported the following:

TMN Banners: Every chapter received TMN banners that can be used in local events. The banners will be stored in Rockport, TX storage facilities.

Solar Eclipse Program: There will be another solar eclipse on April 8, 2024. State is promoting chapters to do programs with the next eclipse and has provided a supply of special glasses which will be kept in the Rockport storage facilities.

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Vice President's Report by Bill Burge and Brigid Berger

Financial Executive Committee (FEC) will meet on Jan. 4, 2024 from 2pm-4pm at Bauer Exhibit Building (metal building) Calhoun County Extension Office, 186 Henry Barber Way, Port Lavaca TX 77979.

2024 January Board of Directors Meeting announcement will be sent once arrangements have been finalized. 2024 Annual Budget will be planned. Projects or funds requests should be put forth at this time for budget consideration. The budget will be sent to the general membership 10 days prior to the February 10, 2024 General Meeting.

At the February 10, 2024 General Meeting, Greg Simmons will present a program on owls that he gave at the State Annual Meeting along with possibly Linda Shirey who works with owls at Wings Recue Center.

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Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

No Budget Report.

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Membership Director Report by Dee Mahaffey

In the month of October 2023, the chapter has completed 570.50 hours of volunteer services and 114 hours of advanced training, with 41 members reporting on 23 different opportunities for a value of \$15,743.50.

As of October 31, 2023, 11,387.25 hours of volunteer service and 1468.75 hours of advanced training have been completed with 93 members reporting over 52 different opportunities for a value of \$295,688.00.

As of October 31st, the Mid-Coast Chapter has a total of 110 members eligible to report hours and 93 members have reported hours since the beginning of the year, which is 84.5% of the total eligible members.

For 2023, 54 members have recertified so far.

The waiting list for the 2024 initial training class is now up to 34 applicants, of which 2 are holdovers that started the 2023 training class and had to drop out (There were initially 4 holdovers, 2 have stated they wanted to be removed from the list, and one wants to remain on the list for 2025 class, one has not responded), and 9 applicants that have remained on the list since the 2023 class. To date, we have received payment from 15 of the applicants.

The deadline for membership dues is approaching. New TMN rules as of last year state that membership becomes delinquent by January 31st, 2024. An updated roster was sent out on November 5, 2023.

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Advanced Training Director Report by Debbie Kucera

As of the October Board of Director Meeting, Debbie Kucera reported that 108 AT requests have been approved so far in 2023. Ten more have been added since the October board meeting. Members are notified by email of upcoming sessions, and they are all posted on the chapter calendar.

TMN Tuesdays presented throughout 2023 are available to access up to the last day of the 2023 year for AT hours attributable in 2023(#TMNTuesdays - Texas Master Naturalist Program (tamu.edu). Check the TMN website for the link.

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Initial Training Directors Report by Jeremy Miller & Kate Geer-Miller

- Proposed training schedule for 2024 initial training class with all dates, venues and ambassadors confirmed
 - ~ Schedule submitted and updated on MCTMN website
 - ~ Overall curriculum and hybrid virtual/field model will remain for this class
- 4Q 2023 training committee gathering for ambassadors in coordination w/Greg & Sally held on October 28
- Currently working with Membership Director to determine 2024 training class

Notes: Chapter Potluck meeting at the Orientation session on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at Rockport AgriLife and on June 1st potluck at the Graduation session at Barnhart Ranch.

Members may attend classes through IT virtual links and acquire AT hours. More information will be forthcoming.

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Projects Director Report by Ray Kirkwood

Overview of Ongoing Projects

There are approximately 180 approved projects on MCTMN website (Approved Volunteer Service Projects - Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist (midcoast-tmn.org). Forty to forty-five approved projects are currently active. Request forms for new projects are submitted to the Projects Director (MCTMN Request for Advanced Training Approval (wufoo.com). The “Resource Management” category is the most used followed by the “Public Outreach” category.

Recently Approved Projects:

Technical Guidance—A new category of volunteer service is Technical Guidance (TG) in which a Mid-Coast member serves on the board of-or attends meetings in an advisory capacity with a partner organization in order to provide TMN-mission-related resource management technical expertise or guidance. Currently, there are 11 such volunteers:

Bill Burge (3 orgs)

Claire Barnhart

Wilfred Korth

Linda Shirey

Maureen Crocker

Patrick Hartigan

Janet Price

Kris Kirkwood

Ray Kirkwood

If you would like to serve in this capacity as an ambassador, please submit a Wufoo request form.

Junior Master Naturalist Program—Junior Master Naturalist program at the Fulton Learning Center public school was created this year and is taught by class 2023 member Martha McLeod. It is anticipated that some MCTMNs will be assisting her. The Board has designated certain funds donated to the chapter in honor of Ray and Kris Kirkwood to support the project, at the Kirkwoods’ request. Please refer to the minutes of the October 16th board meeting for details.

If you would like to initiate new projects that are not on the “Approved Project List,” please consider projects that can improve the environment and MCTMN’s mission and submit a Wufoo request form. On the Wufoo request form, there is a section asking if funding is required. The BOD will review the request through established procedures and guidelines. Funding must be approved. In 2024 a committee will develop a process that complies with CMOP donation guidelines and pertinent accounting requirements. [COH 6.5; 3.2.1.1; 3.2.4; Appendix C].

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Plant Sale Manager Report by Debbie Minns

Forced location change because of construction at the high school; the plant sale team rallied, and the consensus was that we liked the vibe on the grassy area better than on the sidewalk under the porch roof.

Milkweed/Monarch Education was very popular. Milkweed sold out on Saturday. Many of our attendees participated in learning about the importance of milkweed, and how to grow it. Ideas for improvement is to have larger numbers.

Pre-order System Revamp included a standardized form giving us complete customer contact information and pick-up times.

Equipment Additions: The new larger cart wheels worked great! The 6-pack carriers made transportation much easier physically. Delivery went smoothly as carriers were loaded right from the truck and plant types stayed together better throughout the sale.

Formosa Collaboration: Formosa Agricultural Research Center did provide about 280 plants, though most of them were very small trees. The milkweed they produced was a great addition to the sale. We did sell many of the trees and sent the remainder back to Formosa to continue the grow out. Better communication next year could maximize the benefit of this collaboration.

Seed Packet price increased to \$2. 281 packets sold for \$562 profit.

Plant Sale Structure:

A new structure was put into place this year. The Plant Sale Manager created a team of leaders/coordinators in the following areas and the system worked very well.

Plant Propagation, Pre-order, Volunteers, Communication, Education/Milkweed and Monarch Education, Sale Set-up and Tear-Down, High School Volunteer Coordinator, Financial/Sales.

Plant Sale Manager Successor: There is a call out to members for a potential successor to shadow the current manager to learn before taking the role.

Left-over plants were donated to Wings Rescue Center for development of a pollinator garden on their property.

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Communications Director Report by D'Ann Williams

President Bob Cunningham reviewed the highlight points in the Communication Report given at the October 16, Board of Directors Meeting. See following October 2023 Report. Communications is a relatively new office for MCTMN, and the experience of 2023 will provide background for review with the Board of Directors in January for efficacy and budget guidance in 2024.

Social Media

Brigid Berger & Wilfred Korth are monitoring content administrators for social media. Please refrain from presenting political topics.

Administration:

- Signup Genius Platform for the Plant Sale seemed to go well. Let me know of any feedback.
- Looking for passwords for Instagram, etc. to give to Secretary and Technical Advisor Pub

Publicity/Social Media:

- Rockport Pilot did an article from our Press Release about the Plant Sale
- Facebook Ads – Target Audience: 25-mile radius around: Austin, San Antonio, Corpus, Sugarland, Brenham, Austin, Port Lavaca, Port Aransas, Goliad, Bay City with hobbies in Garden design, Gardening, Ecotourism, Nature/Wildlife photography, Garden, Plant nursery, Natural environment, Nature (science), Tourism, Beaches, Birdwatching, Travel, Beekeeping, Birds, Butterfly, Honeybees
 - ~ Aug 23rd Created Plant Sale “Event” Ad \$44.66 – Reached 6000, 132 interested/going, 46 shares, 144 clicks
 - ~ –Sept 1st - General Festival/Plant Sale Post - Ad \$100–Reached 18,416 people 4,789 active engagement, 175 shares and had post from people all the way from Mexico!
 - ~ Re-boost of Plant Sale Event 1 week prior–Ad \$75.32–Upped reach to 8967 people, 302 interested/going, 234 clicks

- Also posted in Nextdoor which received comments and questions.

Newsletter: New Editor Neli Spurrell

- Thank you BobbieLee for the great work you did on the Newsletter
- Neli Spurrell has offered to take responsibility for our Chapter newsletter and will start using Constant Contact Enews format.
- Please send your ideas, stories about your great works, article ideas, etc. to Neli.

Outreach:

- HB Festival –
 - ~ Outreach Table – Thank you to the Stapletons and all for engaging with the public with our new skulls/pelts and more!
 - ~ Monarch Education – Patrick Hardigan was well received!
 - ~ Bent Oaks Rookery Park / Connie Hagar
 - ~ Thank you to Laura Anderson for your engagement at BORP on Friday and Mary Ann Carr for meeting with the public at CH on Friday/Saturday. The team was unable to do all days at Bent Oaks this year, busy with plant sale, etc.
- Next is Monarch Madness at Compass Rose Park and Calhoun County Fair Oct. 21
- We need more members on the outreach committee. Let me know if interested!

Historian’s Report by Kris Kirkwood:

Kris Kirkwood reports that historical material is being prepared to turn over to the next chapter historian and for storage. More will be discussed under new business.

Webmaster’s Report by Ray Kirkwood:

- Our website is still healthy and useful.
- In the last 30 days we recorded 1034 sessions by various users.
- Top 3 users this month are from USA, Canada, China

A new calendar system was implemented this year that improved the speed of transactions. Activities that involve several dates will be posted on the website and not designated on the calendar. Click “For Members” page for links to details. One-of-a-kind activities will be published on the calendar.

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Technology Director Report by Steve Simmons

Steve Simmons is in the process of creating a “Technology Catalog” that will contain the items, descriptions, and locations. Any technological-related questions should be directed to him at technology@midcoast-tmn.org or ssimmon_tx@yahoo.com.

Zoom Account

Management of the zoom account has been transferred from Vice President Bill Burge to Steve Simmons. Steve recommended that the Board of Directors, Chapter, and Initial Training Meetings should take priority in scheduling. An annual Zoom calendar will be created containing bookings for aforementioned meetings and a Zoom scheduling procedure will be applied to other meetings.

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Past President Report by Claire Barnhart

Past President Claire Barnhart chaired the Nomination Committee for 2024 officers presenting a slate of candidates. The officers 'elections have been carried out and President Bob Cunningham will assume the Past President position in 2024.

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Class Representative Report by Amy Nowlin

The 2023 TMN training class continues to increase certification efforts. As of Nov. 4, 2023, ten of the seventeen members have become state certified. Three additional members are within a few hours of completing the certification process. Of the 10 certified, 7 have obtained recertification and the remaining three are very close to achieving recertification. Numbers are expected to increase by the January meeting.

In total, the class has achieved 1610.25 volunteer service hours and an additional 350.25 advanced training hours.

Volunteer opportunities have been posted on the Class's Facebook page and the new link for TMN Tuesday was emailed to the non-certified members as a means to obtain additional hours to meet certification requirements.

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Chapter Advisor

Amy Nowlin is the Matagorda County AgriLife Extension Agent for Coastal & Marine Resources and has been approved by the Board to serve as an Advisor to the chapter along with Trey Barron of TPWD. She will step down from the 2023 Class Representative office and assume the position of AgriLife advisor in January 2024. She will confer with Class 2023 on the class representative vacancy.

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Meeting Attendance

Claire Barnhart (Past President), Allan Berger, Brigid Berger, Helen Boatman, Bill Burge (Vice President), Ele Chew (Secretary), Denise Crane, Gary Crane, Bob Cunningham (President), Janet Cunningham, Debra Dahms-Nelson, Kim Followwill, Kate Geer-Miller, Judy Goodner, Ken Goodner, Julie Hejducek (Treasurer), Mike Hejducek, Cindy Hielscher, Charla Ingalls, Kris Kirkwood (Historian), Ray Kirkwood (Project Director), Catherine Koenig, Debbie Kucera (AT Director), Sandra Lee, Steve Marwitz, Jeremy Miller, Debbie Minns (Plant Sale Manager), Gregory Nelson, Amy Nowlin, Janet Price, Debbi Roskey, Linda Shirey, Steve Simmons (IT Director), Marilyn Stewart, Linda Swickheimer, Cynthia Baker (Guest), Margie Wilkins (Guest)

Awards

Initial Certification enamel dragonfly & plaque—Kate Geer-Miller. Not present to receive awards: David Clark, Cindy Hielscher, Gary Ward, Sally Crofutt, Larry Green, Frank Hayes

Milestone Awards

250-hour bronze dragonfly: Ele Chew. Not present: Chris Andersen, Carla Haskett, Bobby Garner, Liz Smith

Silver 500-Hour Milestone Pin: Julie Hejducek. Not present, Karen Barton

Gold/Ruby 4,000-Hour Milestone Pin & President's VS Award— Not present, Linda Shirey

Recertification Pins

2021 Side-Oats—not present: Donna Fiarkoski, Carla Haskett

2022 Lightning Whelk—Not present to receive awards: Karen Barton, Rebecca Bootzin, Maureen Crocker, Donna Fiarkoski, Sandra Garcia, Carla Haskett

2023 TX Ecoregions— Allan Berger, Denise Crane, Rusty Crane, Janet Cunningham, Steve Ferguson, Jeremy Miller, Amy Nowlin, Janet Price, Debbi Roskey, Robyn Savage (via Price), Marilyn Stewart, and Linda Swickheimer. Not present: Laura Clark Maureen Crocker, Bob Friedrichs, Melissa Guthrie, Cindy Hielscher, Bobbie Lee, Ernie Schertz, Susie Starnes, Rebecca Stapleton, D’Ann Williams

Service against All Odds through Grit and Distance pin —Not present: James Coquat, Claudia Dorn, Donna Fiarkoski, Carla Haskett, Larry Henneke, Melanie Konarik, Robyn Savage, Neli Spurrell

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