

MINUTES
MID-COAST CHAPTER, TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
JANUARY 11, 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. Board of Directors met on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10:00 AM at the main branch of the Calhoun County Public Library at 200 West Mahan St., Port Lavaca, Texas 77979. The meeting was hybrid.

Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM. President Steve Ferguson presided at the meeting, and Mid-Coast TMN Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 PM for 4.5 hours CB: Chapter Business/Chapter Meeting.

[Meeting Attendance](#)

A total of twenty-one members were present. Board members consisted of seven in-person and six using the OWL/zoom chat function, constituting a quorum. In addition, 8 members in good standing were in attendance.

Secretary's Report by Ele Chew

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. Board of Directors met via Zoom at 6:30 PM on October 16, 2023. Meeting minutes were posted on the chapter website and published to the membership on November 3rd. Julie Hejducek moved to accept the minutes as published on the chapter website and Brigid Berger seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Mid-Coast Master Naturalist BOD Meeting – January 11, 2024

Treasurer's Report

As of: 12/31/2023

Bank balance as of 12/31/2023:	\$48,233.51
Add outstanding items:	105.26
Bank balance as of 12/31/2023:	\$48,338.77

Bank reconciliation completed January 2, 2024.

Total Gross Income as of 12/31/2023	\$20,147.60
Less Total Expenses as of 12/31/2023	\$17,039.84
Net Income as 12/31/2023	\$ 3,107.76

- *2024 Budget:* The proposed 2024 budget was presented for approval during the January 11, 2024 BOD meeting. See the Budget discussion below.
- *Address change:* Effective immediately, the Chapter has a new PO Box. Please change records from PO Box 760 to PO **Box 761**, Fulton TX 78358,
- *Taxes:* State Sales Taxes paid January 5th. IRS site down and the 990N will be filed by April 15th due date.
- *Financial Review:* Completed January 4, 2024. Key findings to be presented by Bill.

Board of Director Reports:

- [President's Report](#) — 2024 Major Initiatives
 - Implement new COH and CMOP processes and protocols
 - Build Outreach program
 - Transition Leadership
 - Secure Mid-Coast TMN financial health and sustainability
- [Outgoing Vice-President's Report](#) — 2023 Financial Examination Committee (FEC) Report
- [Incoming Vice-President's Report](#) — Chapter Meetings and Zoom account
- [Treasurer's Report](#) — Balance Sheet and Budget and Multi Year Actuals
- [Membership Report](#) — Current membership numbers, IT class numbers, Membership dues
- [Advanced Training Director](#) — Review of 2023 ATs
- [Initial Training Report](#) — Class Schedule, photo release, scholarship program
- [Outgoing Projects Report](#) — 2023 Projects Summary and 2023 Projects Activities
- [Incoming Projects Report](#) — 2024 Responsibilities and Goals
- [Communications Report](#) — 2023 review and 2024 projections in publicity, outreach, newsletter, social media, historian, website
- Technology Report — No report
- [Outgoing President Bob Cunningham](#) — Highlights of 2023
 - Revised Policy and Procedures Manual to conform with new Chapter Operating Handbook Framework 2023 and new Chapter Management and Operation Protocols 2023 Chapter Documents - Texas Master Naturalist Program (tamu.edu) that were effective January 1, 2024.
 - Procured OWL equipment for video conferencing
 - Created a Technology Director position
 - Implemented Communications Director position
 - Streamlined Initial Training program establishing ambassador framework
 - Transitioned leadership of president, vice president, and treasurer
 - Sensitized members to pay dues in January
- Class Representative Report — Class of 2023 no report
- [Chapter Advisor Report](#) — Assuming Chapter Advisor role

New Business

Introduction of Officers, Directors, and Managers

Mid-Coast TMN: 2024 Board of Directors and Managers

Listed below are MCTMN members who will serve in chapter leadership positions next year. Please join us in thanking these volunteers for serving.

President ¹	Steve Ferguson
Vice President ¹	Brigid Berger
Secretary ¹	Ele Chew
Treasurer ¹	Julie Hejducek
Immediate Past President	Bob Cunningham
Chapter Advisor (TPWD)	Trey Barron
Chapter Advisor (AgriLife Ext)	Amy Loos Nowlin
Advanced Training Director	Debbie Kucera
Communications Director	D'Ann Williams
Initial Training Directors	Jeremy Miller and Kate Geer-Miller
Membership Director	Dee Mahaffy
Technology Director	Steve Simmons
Volunteer Service Projects Director	Greg Simmons
Plant Sale Manager	Debbie Mimms
VMS Administrator(s)	Cindy Hielscher ²
Webmasters	Steve Simmons and D'Ann Williams

¹Executive Committee

²We ask for other members to volunteer and assist Cindy with VMS administration.

Conflict of Interest Attestation Forms

Forms were collected from Brigid Berger-VP, Ele Chew-Secretary, Bob Cunningham-Past President, Steve Ferguson-President, Julie Hejducek-Treasurer, Debbie Kucera-AT, Sandra Lee-Class Representative, Dee Mahaffey-Membership, Jeremy Miller and Kate Geer-Miller-IT, Amy Nowlin-Chapter Advisor, Greg Simmons-Project, and Steve Simmons-Technology.

Approval of 2024 Calendar (individual dates can be changed later if necessary)

Brigid Berger moved to approve the calendar and Amy Nowlin seconded. Motion passed.

- 01/11 – Board Meeting
- 02/03 – IT Orientation / Member Potluck
- 02/10 – Membership Meeting
- 04/06 – Board Meeting
- 05/11 – Membership Meeting
- 06/01 – IT Graduation / Member Potluck
- 07/13 – Board Meeting
- 08/10 – Membership Meeting
- 10/05 – Board Meeting
- 11/09 – Membership Meeting & Election of Officers

Financial Examination Committee (FEC) Report

Steve Simmons moved to accept the report and Steve Marwitz seconded. Motion passed.

IT Schedule Curriculum

Bob Cunningham moved to approve the IT Schedule Curriculum and Amy Nowlin seconded. Motion passed.

A Quorum Vote Accepted the Recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee

A quorum vote accepted the recommendation of the ad hoc committee chaired by Greg Simmons to forward the total \$5000 donation to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with a communicated expectation of how it is to be used.

2024 Budget

The 2024 budget presented by Treasurer Julie Hejducek was voted in principle on the basis of what has been submitted with anticipated change to restate the 2023 budget and revise the proposed 2024 budget to reallocate donations as assets. In that process, expenditures will be revised, reflecting revenue vs expenditure, resulting in a red line of \$3000. Steve Simmons and Treasurer Julie Hejducek, with the participation of President Steve Ferguson will revise the budget which will be brought forth as the final budget to the board for further discussion and vote. Bob Cunningham moved to accept the budget in principle and Brigid Berger seconded. Motion passed.

Adjournment

Brigid Berger moved to adjourn the meeting and Bob Cunningham seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ele Chew

Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary

REPORTS AND AUXILIARY MATERIAL TO THE MINUTES

President's Report by Steve Ferguson

Proposed for 2024: For this year, Chapter leadership anticipates the following major initiatives in addition to regular activities and events:

- The year 2024 is both an implementation year and a transition year. Last year (2023), the Chapter accomplished a lot. Those accomplishments included the revision and adoption of the Chapter's governing documents including Bylaws, the Chapter Operating Handbook, and the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Last year we also added a new director position, the Technology Director. This year we will begin fully implementing the new processes and protocols the Chapter adopted.
- We will build on our Outreach initiatives to other counties in our Chapter by identifying regional leaders who can help us grow and serve the residents and resources in those geographical regions. Amy Nowlin leadership is a wonderful example of how we can grow and serve in Matagorda County. Victoria and DeWitt Counties may be other potential areas for significant growth.
- Transition may be one of our greatest challenges.
 - We have a new President (Steve Ferguson), Vice-President (Brigid Berger), and our Treasurer (Julie Hejducek) has not yet served a full year.
 - We also have a new VS Projects Director (Greg Simmons) and Projects Committee who will be creating new processes for member project definition, selection, and evaluation.
- However, our greatest transition may be that of Kris and Ray Kirkwood who have served our Chapter for more than 20 years. For decades the Kirkwoods have served many key roles. While they are still here to assist us, they have made the decision to relinquish those roles to other members of our chapter. We are indebted to them, and their service and we appreciate their offer to coach and guide those who will take on those roles.
- One area that I suggest we, as a board, focus on is our Chapter's financial health and sustainability.
 - This is the second year in a row that we have projected a financial loss at the end of the year. So far, we've been fortunate by having very successful plant sales. Are there other sources of income or funding that we can identify and secure? I suggest we have an initiative to explore that.
 - We have created a contingency reserve in this year's budget. It would cover our expenses for only one year. I personally believe that one year's reserves are insufficient. However, as a Board, we need to determine the appropriate reserve for our chapter and a plan to achieve it.

[Back to Reports](#)

Outgoing Vice President's Report by Bill Burge

TMN Mid-Coast Chapter

Financial Review Report 2023

January 4, 2024, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Calhoun County AgriLife Extension Auditorium

Committee Members

Bill Burge, Julie Hejducek, Michael Hejducek, Brigid Berger, Amy Nowlin, Ele Chew

Documents/Items Reviewed

- Prior Year Recommendations
- December P&L Report (summary and detail)
- Budget Report
- Prosperity Bank Statements
- Chapter WuFoo system (online)

Items Discussed

- Plant Sale final numbers
- COH documentation
- 2023 Budget Performance
- Chapter Financial Status
- Reimbursement Approval process
- Donation process
- Bank Balances

Findings

- The Chapters financial systems and documentation are in good order.
 - We traced two random deposits and two random payments and confirmed that what's in the Quicken reports matches the bank statement.
 - We traced one member reimbursement and one vendor reimbursement from request documentation and approval in Wufoo to matching entry on the bank statement
- The Chapter has been profitable over the last 12 months. This is due almost entirely to the success of the Plant Sale.
- Overall performance against budget was good.
- Our year-end balance at Prosperity is \$48,233.51, an increase of \$9,923.71 over last year

Status of Prior Year Recommendations

- Update P&P manual to reflect current electronic banking procedures (outstanding from last year) - **Complete**
- Establish formal backup procedure for Quick Books - **Complete**
- Recommend Board approval for use of Zelle to collect member dues and IT payments – **Voted Down**
- Do not convert to Accrual Accounting as its too complicated for non-accountant volunteers - **Approved**

- Update Wufoo to document approvals of reimbursement requests by requiring submission of a copy of email approvals – **Alternate procedure implemented**
- Require separate signature on checks reimbursing the Treasurer - **Implemented**
- Add date deposited to Wufoo form for IT fees - **Implemented**
- Update dues spreadsheet to add a reconciliation total for tracking against P&L - **Implemented**
- Refer question regarding acceptance of donations at the Bent Oaks site next year to the Board - **Question raised, no solution implemented at this time**
- Discuss how MCTMN might use some of our substantial bank balance to further our mission - **Working Group created to prepare suggestions**
- Change the Financial Review Schedule to conduct the review in January for the previous calendar year - **Implemented**

Recommendations

- Confirm how transactions work for McAlister book inventory and sales
- Establish electronic means to sign items out of /into storage unit
- Investigate whether we can change “Income” to “Revenue” on Quicken reports
- Establish document retention schedules and implement them
- Move budget responsibility for storage unit from VP to Technology Director
- Include review/validation of Square transactions and reports in future financial reviews

ATTESTATION:

Bill Burge, Vice President

Approved via email

Julie Hejducek, Treasurer

Approved via email

Ele Chew, Secretary

Approved via email

Amy Nowlin, Class Representative

Approved via email

Michael Hejducek, Member

Approved via email

Brigid Berger, Member

MEETING MINUTES Mid-Coast TMN for 2023 Financial Review

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. 2023 Financial Review met on January 4, 2024, at Calhoun County Extension Service, 186 Henry Barber Way, Port Lavaca, Texas 77979. The meeting was in-person. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm and adjourned at 4:00 pm. Bill Burge presided at the meeting and MC-TMN Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes.

Meeting Attendance

Six members attended: Brigid Berger, Bill Burge, Ele Chew, Julie Hejducek, Mike Hejducek, and Amy Nowlin.

Documents/Items Reviewed

- Prior Year Recommendations Status and Results
 - Updated Chapter Operating Handbook (COH) which was Approved by the Mid-Coast Chapter Board of Directors on July 8, 2023, and ratified by the Mid-Coast Chapter General Membership on August 12, 2023, to reflect the current electronic banking procedure (outstanding from the previous year).
 - Established formal backup procedure for QuickBooks in Dropbox.
 - Setup Bill Pay Account for bill payment service in place of Zelle and Venmo to collect Membership dues and IT payments.
 - Refrained from adapting Accrual Accounting.
 - Implemented alternative procedures for reimbursement requests without submission to Wufoo.
 - Required separate signature on checks over \$1000 reimbursing the Treasurer.
 - Added deposit date for IT fees to Wufoo form.
 - Added a separate tab on the spreadsheet for dues to reconcile the total for tracking against COH.
 - Refer cash and credit donation policies and procedures to the ad hoc committee for further investigation.
 - Tabled discussion on the usage of funds to further MCTMN mission.
 - Changed the Financial Review Schedule to conduct the review in January for the previous calendar year.
 - Year-to-Date December P & L Report (Summary and Detail)
- Budget Report
- Prosperity Bank Statements
- Chapter Wufoo system (online)

The Mid-Coast TMN Chapter financial systems and documentation are in good order.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary
Ele Chew

[Back to Reports](#)

Incoming Vice President's Report by Brigid Berger

Next Chapter meeting, Saturday, February 10 will be at Wings Rescue Center, Rockport in their new education yurt. Greg Simmons will provide his presentation about Owls that he gave during the State Meeting in October. We will also be joined by the educational birds at Wings by Linda Shirey.

2024 Chapter Meetings: The rest of the 2024 meetings will be arranged and will be located at various locations throughout the chapter counties.

Board of Director meetings: discussion with the board concluded that the Calhoun County Library in Port Lavaca is a central location for current board members and the rest of the 2024 meeting will be held there on the designated Saturdays as indicated on the chapter calendar.

Zoom Subcommittee: Recommend forming a subcommittee to discuss: 1. the transition of the account from VP to TD, 2. Access of Zoom by board & chapter members, 3. Transition of billing from Bill's Paypal, 4. Bill's sign on to zoom showing as the TMN account.

[Back to Reports](#)

Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Balance Sheet

ASSETS	VALUE			
Current Assets				
Prosperity Bank (as of 11/30/2023)	48,233.51	updated 12/31		
Less Earmarked Donation to Honor Kirkwoods	6,000.00	added 12/4		
Net Prosperity Bank Available	43,233.51	added 12/4		
Petty Cash in cash box	111.49	updated 10/11/2023		
Books - Guidebook to ANWR (347 @ \$19.95 each)	6,922.65	updated 12/30/2023		
Accounts Receivable from Plant Sale	-			
Plants Inventory	-			
Total Current Assets	\$45,267.65			
Fixed Assets				
Matagorda Video	4,200.00			
Storage Shed	2,800.00	Purchase date 2020		
Depreciation - 10% per year	(1,120.00)	4 years		
HP Laptop - Treasurer	449.99	Model HP Laptop 15-bd00; serial number CND7460JHW, resides with Treasurer		
Depreciation - 10% per year	(300.00)	First depr recorded 01/23/19		
Wireless Mouse and Keyboard	14.99	Medion Model 88122 0723, SN 020128/23 Purchased 08/2023 Resides with Treasurer		
Depreciation - 60% per year	(7.50)	2 year depr		
Projector/Screen	1.00	For Outreach. Received via grant from Dow in 2016. Fully depreciated.		
VP Laptop and Case 3/2023	399.14	HP Purchased 2.23.2023, Model 15-dw0063wm, Serial SN CND2473yn Resides in storage unit T-13, Wufoo 153		
Depreciation - 20% per year	(79.83)	5 year depr		
Square equipment	1,275.82	Resides in Storage Unit T-13 Purchased 1/10/2022		
Depreciation - 20% per year	(610.33)	5 year depreciation		
VP Monitor 3/2023	239.99	LG Purchased 2.23.2023, Model 34WL600, Serial SN210NTLE37296, Resides in storage unit T-13, Wufoo 153		
Depreciation - 20% per year	(48.00)	5 year depr		
VP Owl and Case 3/2023	1,288.99	Owl Labs Purchased 2.23.2023, Model Meeting Owl 3 (MTW300), Serial MBFN33223239, Resides in storage unit T-13, Wufoo 153		
Depreciation - 20% per year	(257.80)	5 year depr		
VP Projector and Case	92.97	LED Purchased July 07 10.2023, Model XPE 896, Serial # not available, Resides in Storage unit T-13		
Depreciation - 20% per year	(8.30)	1/2 year 2023, \$9.30 2023 and \$12.60 every year after that until fully depreciated		
T7 Shield Portable SSD	64.94	Resides with Secretary SN S65SNJW606664 Model SAMUPE1T0SAM (MUPE1T0S/AM) purchased 10/9/2023		
Depreciation	(6.41)	2 year depr		
Laptop	209.99	Tablet for Outreach. Received via grant from Dow in 2016 per Kins. Fully Depreciated.		
Depreciation - 10% per year	(209.99)	Fully depreciated		
Total Fixed Assets	\$4,289.67			
Other Assets				
Copyright Aransas	\$6,258.80			
QuickBooks Software 2019				
Nature Walk Animal Skins and table	\$1,750.71	Purchased 4.12.2023, in storage Unit T-13		
Total Other Assets	\$8,009.51			
TOTAL ASSETS	\$57,566.83			
CURRENT ASSETS	\$45,267.65			
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Reserves to Honor Kirkwoods	\$5,000.00	added 12/4		
Long Term Liabilities				
MCTMN Contingency Reserves	\$20,000.00			
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$25,000.00			
Total Expense as of 12/31	17,039.94			
Estimate reserve	20,000.00			

1. Maintain a register of each item of equipment owned by the chapter, including brand name, model number/name, serial number (if applicable), cost, where purchased, and current location.

Budget and Multi Year Actuals

MID-COAST TMN
2023 BUDGET
AND MULTI-YEAR ACTUALS

Printed:1/10/24

Decoratory	\$150 annual donations to TMN \$200 non standard honorarium	\$350.00	\$350.00	\$150.00	\$119.28	\$100.00	\$0.00
Bank Expense		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Administrative		\$9,988.00	\$11,201.00	\$6,946.16	\$2,280.23	\$1,539.11	\$4,871.47
Advanced Training	Instructor/speaker fees	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Training - Initial							
Boat / Touch Tank Fees	RV/Kahly for Bay and Barrier Island Ecology	\$50.00	\$800.00	\$850.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Books - Purchased	19 Statewide Curriculum (TAMU Press, \$665), 19 My Bush Country Bookyard, \$456	1,121.00	\$920.00	\$855.90	\$1,107.90	\$860.86	\$0.00
Instructor Fees	Honoraria or expense reimbursements (2 X \$250 assumed)	500.00	\$500.00	\$250.00	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$50.00
Venue	Fees	75.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$300.00
Contingency Fund	Other expenses (15% contingency)	517.52	\$470.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies & expenses	Note pads, printing, binders, badges, etc.	504.15	\$845.00	\$1,222.41	\$966.56	\$462.51	\$265.28
Scholarship	Barkaik for potential 2025 class applicants	300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$219.54	\$0.00
Misc	Ambassador/training committee pizza meeting	150.00	0.00	\$194.89	0.00	150.00	0.00
Total Initial Training		\$4,417.67	\$3,610.00	\$3,472.90	\$3,399.45	\$3,017.91	\$1,115.28
Plant Sale							
Hummer/Bird Fee	For outside space from Debbie	\$150.00	\$105.00	\$150.00	\$105.00	\$0.00	\$105.00
Plants	Plants purchased from Debbie	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$4,859.35	\$5,195.20	\$5,022.60	\$1,837.54
Sales Tax	Tax for sales other than 2 "free days", Total taxable amount:	\$302.00	\$150.00	\$452.10	\$132.21	\$373.99	\$309.16
POS Supplies	Labels \$100 from Debbie	\$100.00	\$280.00	\$43.99	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
POS Hardware/Software - Capital Expense		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,025.82	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies & Misc expenses	Prints \$200, Misc \$100 from Debbie	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$615.00	\$328.16	\$616.50	\$53.48
Equipment Upgrades - Capital Expense	Carrier trays - 200 from Debbie	\$300.00	\$200.00	\$500.34	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Plant Sale		\$ 6,152.00	\$ 6,355.00	\$ 6,620.78	\$7,036.39	\$6,013.09	\$2,305.18
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$20,807.67	\$21,416.00	\$17,039.84	\$12,716.07	\$10,570.11	\$8,291.93
TOTAL NET INCOME		-\$3,107.67	-\$4,216.00	\$3,107.76	\$11,624.11	\$8,308.97	\$870.77
NET PLANT SALE INCOME		\$6,348.00	\$5,645.00	\$6,786.80	\$6,101.53	\$7,154.77	\$2,781.25
CAPITAL EXPENSE		\$1,621.00	\$4,623.00	\$4,287.13			\$2,858.88
END OF YEAR BANK BALANCE PER PROSPERITY				\$48,233.51	\$45,231.01	\$33,606.90	\$25,297.93
Less anticipated cash movement to honor Kirkwoods				-\$5,000.00			
Less contingency reserve				-\$20,000.00			
ADJUSTED END OF YEAR BANK BALANCE				\$23,233.51			

MID-COAST TMN
2023 BUDGET
AND MULTI-YEAR ACTUALS

Printed: 1/10/24

CATEGORY	2024 BUDGET EXPLANATION	2024 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET	2023 ACTUALS as of 12/31	2022 ACTUALS	2021 ACTUALS	2020 ACTUALS
INCOME							
Dues	Annual dues (\$15/person average x 100 paying members)	\$1,500.00	\$1,300.00	1,519.90	\$1,631.42	\$1,276.60	\$1,329.18
Donations	Unsolicted donations in excess of \$250	\$0.00	\$600.00	2,117.52	\$5,503.22	\$668.50	\$769.19
Initial Training Fees	Initial training @ \$150 FOR 2024 class	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	2,250.00	\$3,750.00	\$3,000.00	\$1,725.00
Plant sale	Hummerbird	\$12,500.00	\$12,000.00	13,407.58	\$13,137.92	\$13,167.86	\$5,086.43
Book Sales	Book Sales to ANWR	\$600.00	\$250.00	838.60	\$266.62	\$266.12	\$239.40
Badge Replacement	Cost to replace badge	\$50.00	\$50.00	14.00	\$52.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Misc Other	Unsolicted donations less than \$250	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13.50
TOTAL INCOME		\$17,700.00	\$17,200.00	\$20,147.60	\$24,340.18	\$18,878.08	\$9,162.70
EXPENSES							
Administrative							
VP Expenses	Supplies & other expenses incurred by VP	\$200.00	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$57.97	\$0.00	\$0.00
VP Expenses for Meetings - Capital Expense	No capital expended	\$0.00	\$2,150.00	2,021.09	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Storage Rental	Hook storage, \$83/month	\$1,200.00	\$750.00	\$715.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Secretary's Supplies	Paper, ink, postage, other supplies	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$64.94	\$43.29	\$0.00	\$0.00
Treasurer's Supplies	Ink \$54, checks \$30, \$15 pen for Hummingbird Festival	\$200.00	\$300.00	\$293.71	\$221.55	\$51.35	\$61.39
Treasurer - Capital Expense	Laptop Lenovo Idea Pad 3 G Tentative (no charge for Microsoft products) Office Depot/Placemaker	\$550.00	\$50.00	\$14.99	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Historian and scrapbook	Toner, Paper, Scrapbook pages, Storage, etc.	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$276.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Project Director Expenses	Placemaker	\$500.00	\$1,400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grants and Gifts	Grant to FFSD Education Foundation. Monies received in 2022 and resides at the bank in cash.	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00			
Membership	Plaques (2 cases @ \$139.75 ea) - \$280 name badges - \$1320-\$260 mailing awards @ \$4.50 ea - \$200 add \$18-\$20 for new pins	\$800.00	\$750.00	\$454.70	\$470.07	\$604.73	\$264.00
Communications - Website & Technical	Website domain name \$15, SP hosting \$290 & improvements \$270, Wufoo online data support \$350, Zoom license \$150, Quikbooks \$540, Cloud storage \$240, Transcription \$300	\$2,200.00	\$950.00	\$678.70	\$900.63	\$687.03	\$749.82
Communications - Newsletter/ Gen Marketing	Newsletter: MS Pub fee 9x12 @ \$120, Contd Contact 10 @ \$12 @ \$120 Boosted FB ads 10 @ \$12 @ \$120 \$306 plus General Marketing Signup Genius \$211, Boosted FB add for HummerFest \$200 and Misc \$100	\$817.00	\$348.00	\$115.13	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Communications - Outreach	Monthly outreach event supplies 10 @ \$100 + \$50 misc expense	\$1,050.00	\$1,050.00	\$504.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$405.38
Communications - Outreach - Capital Expense	Red Hawk skull \$150, Spoonbill skull \$172, Woodpecker skull \$144, Cardinal skull \$105, Shipping \$100, Bn \$100	\$771.00	\$1,903.00	\$1,750.71	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
PO Box Rental	Post Office box rental - Fullon 12 months @ \$146	\$150.00	\$200.00	\$147.00	\$191.44	\$96.00	\$102.00

[Back to Reports](#)

Membership Director Report by Dee Mahaffey

As of the end of year 2023, our chapter has 110 members eligible to report hours and we have reported 13,608.75 volunteer hours across 54 different opportunities and 1,612.25 hours of Advanced Training, with 94 members reporting hours. The value of the volunteer service is \$350,083.00

71 formerly certified members have recertified, which is 64.5% of the eligible membership.

Initial Training 2024:

Our 2024 Initial training class is full and we continue to receive applications. Fifteen applicants have paid. There are currently 15 people on the waiting list for 2024.

Membership Dues:

54 Members have paid dues for 2024

52 Members have yet to pay dues

8 Members are exempt or honorary.

[Back to Reports](#)

Advanced Training Director Report by Debbie Kucera

In 2023 there were 120 approved AT requests. About 1/3 of these were in person - 25 or so in Rockport with Hummer Fest and birdwatching walks. Another 10 were in Victoria at the Academy for Lifelong Learning and Museum of the Coastal Bend.

Plus, 4 in-person presentations were given at the membership meetings.

The virtual presentations were in a variety of subjects so that everyone had an opportunity to complete their 8 hours to certify.

2024 looks to be the same as 2023 with new AT already posted for January. I don't see any challenges ahead, as 2023 went well.

A goal I have this year is to find AT on the effects of light pollution on plants and animals - let me know if you all come across anything on that subject, or any other subjects you would like covered.

[Back to Reports](#)

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

- Class schedule is as submitted to the board during previous meeting, with the only change from previously approved curriculum being the date of Bay and Barrier Islands to May 11 due to scheduling issues with the R/V Katy. Updated curriculum was approved by board vote.
- Proposed new photo release form to new class as a means of making clear the potential use of their photos on the website, Facebook group and in future publications.
- Submitted proposal for a more defined scholarship program, to be discussed in committee with membership and class representative before presenting framework to the board.

2024 Initial Training Schedule

- **Orientation – February 3**
 - Texas Agrilife Extension, 829 Airport Rd, Rockport, TX 78382
- **Geology and Ecozones Virtual – February 8**
- **Archaeology and Early Texans – February 17**
 - Museum of the Coastal Bend, 2200 E Red River St, Victoria, TX 77901
- **Upland Ecology, Birds, Soils, and Rangeland – Virtual February 29, field March 2**
 - Welder Wildlife Refuge, 10429 Welder Wildlife, Sinton, TX 78387
- **Mid-Coast of Texas Ecology – Virtual March 21, field March 23**
 - Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, 1 Wildlife Circle, Austwell, TX 77950
- **Riverine and Riparian Ecology – Virtual April 4, Field April 6**
 - Fennessey Ranch, FM 2678, Woodsboro, TX 78393
- **Interpreting Nature – Virtual April 18, Field April 20**
 - Lake Texana, 46 Park Rd 1, Edna, TX 77957
- **Coastal Prairie and Wetland Ecology – Virtual April 25, Field April 27**
 - Powderhorn Wildlife Management Area, 10769 FM 1289, Port O'Connor, TX 77982
- **Bay & Barrier Island Ecologies – Virtual May 9, Field May 11**
 - R/V Katy, 732 Channel View Dr, Port Aransas, TX 78373
 - Mustang Island State Park, 9394 TX-361, Corpus Christi, TX78418
- **The Importance of Native Plants & Graduation – Virtual May 30, Field June 1**
 - Barnhart Ranch, FM 883, Berclair, TX 78107

[Back to Reports](#)

Outgoing Projects Director Report by Ray Kirkwood

2023 Projects Summary

Created or updated 3 partnerships

Created a new function in compliance with State TMN guidance for providing Technical Guidance to other organizations

Approved 15 new projects

FR: Bird Populations	Powderhorn Birding
FR: Bird Populations	Project Martin Watch
FR: Insect Life	Texas Mid-Coast Monarch Monitoring
NPA: Other locations	Palacios Prairie Wetland Clean Up
PO Incidental	Green Lake: It's Natural and Human History
PO: Other Events/Partners	Jr. Marine Exploration
PO: Other Events/Partners	Goose Island State Park - El Viaje: The Journey
PO: Other Events/Partners	Turtle Engagement at ARK and Port A
RM: Other Locations	Adopt a Beach Clean Up in Palacios, Tx
RM: Other Locations	Oyster Reef Restoration
TMN Virtual Volunteer Service	Time to Restore: Connecting Plants, People and Pollinators
TR: Other Organizations	Junior Texas Naturalist Program
TR: Other Organizations	Beginner Nature Journaling
TR: Other Organizations	Formosa-Tejano Wetlands Youth Programs
TR: Other Organizations	LCRA Matagorda Nature Park Summer Camp

2023 Project Activities

New Partners

Wings Rescue Center Proposed by Kris Kirkwood

Palacios Prairie Wetland Proposed by Kayla Clark

Updated Partner

Texas Floating Classroom Proposed by Brigid Berger

Technical Guidance

Ray Kirkwood Aransas Pathways

Wilfred Korth Guadalupe Blanco River Trust

Bill Burge CCA Aransas Bay Chapter

Friends of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Aransas First

Janet Price Friends of Aransas NWR

Patrick Hartigan City of Rockport

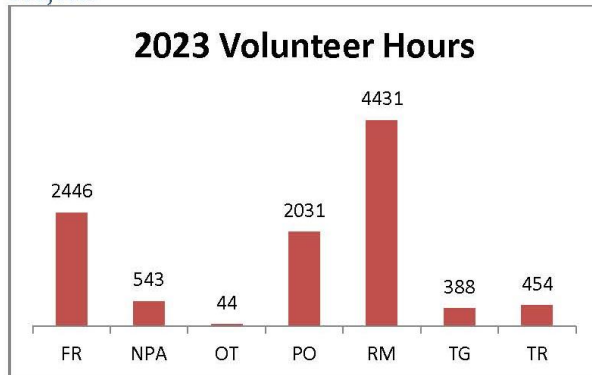
Kris Kirkwood South Texas Chapter, Native Plant Society of Texas

Maureen Crocker Aransas First Land Trust

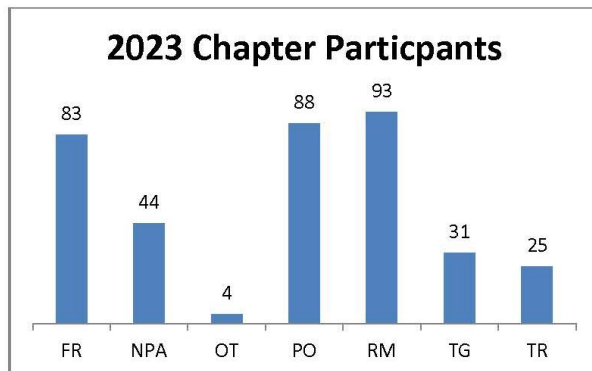
Linda Shirey Wings Rescue Center

Claire Barnhart Friends of Aransas National Wildlife Refuge

Projects



10336.75 hours total



Total participants 368

[Back to Reports](#)

Incoming 2024 Projects Director Report by Greg Simmons

2024 Responsibilities/Goals

- Transition to review and approval of 1) Request for Volunteer Service Approval (VS), 2) MCTMN Partnership Request, and 3) Request for Technical Guidance Status
- Review and update pre-approved VS projects / opportunities. This includes a review of 2023 records with emphasis on identifying and evaluating VS categorized into (or that could be) “projects.”
- Review and update MCTMN COH Appendix G- Chapter Partners
- Review and update Technical Guidance Status of affected MCTMN members

New Business for ad hoc Projects Committee (Greg Simmons, Sally Scroggs, Steve Marwitz, Julie Hejducek, Mike Hejducek)

- Evaluating and approving proposed MCTMN projects
 - Process described in TMN CMOP Sections 6 and 7, and in MCTMN COH sections 3, 5, 6 and appendices.
 - Use of internal funds for VS projects: Outside of Initial Training and Native Plant Sale, MCTMN has not engaged in volunteer activities requiring internal funds. We typically rely on chapter partners to provide funds and supplies. However, there are policies and procedures in place to handle these situations. So, 1) better guidelines on how internal funds can be used (if we want to start spending money, and 2) communicate expectation for funding requests to precede approved budget for the year(s) effective.
- Handling outside donations to the chapter
 - Per Chapter Bylaws, the chapter is authorized to accept and receive contributions, donations and grants from any source as long as it doesn't imply endorsement (conditions are outlined in COH 6.5).
 - As a general rule, the BOD should retain the ultimate authority on the use of “restricted” donations and communicate such to potential donors.
- Grants awarded by the Chapter to third-party entities
 - Per TMN CMOP 7, TMN chapters are volunteer organizations vs. monetary donors
 - Outside donations are discouraged but not prohibited
 - The ad hoc committee recommends that disbursement of funds to third-parties be restricted to MCTMN volunteer projects and activities

One time exception

- In 2022 Liz Branch made a \$5000 donation to MCTMN in honor of Kris and Ray Kirkwood, and to be used according to the Kirkwood's wishes.
- Kris and Ray Kirkwood wish the donation to be used to support the Fulton Learning Center (FLC) program run by Martha McLeod.
- The FLC program is not a MCTMN project but is an afterhours youth nature education program affiliated with Rockport Fulton Independent School District (RFISD).
- The FLC program donation does meet TMN CMOP 7 conditions and was BOD approved on October 16, 2023 with the stipulation that an ad hoc committee (this committee) would be formed to work out the details.
- The original expectation was that MCTMN would periodically reimburse RFISD according to invoiced expenses

Pros – MCTMN maintains control and scrutiny of how the funds are spent

Cons- MCTMN has to manage tracking invoices and reimbursements

- The ad hoc committee recommends forwarding the \$5000 donation to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with a communicated expectation of how it is to be used.
- The amounts and frequency forwarded to the Foundation is undetermined. Martha’s anticipated needs range from \$700 to \$1300 per semester.
- The ad hoc committee recommends forwarding the entire amount to the Foundation. The Foundation has stated they are able to manage supporting the FLC program, and can return any unused funds if the program were to end.

Pros – Transfers responsibility away from MCTMN

Cons- MCTMN loses some control on how the “grant” is to be used

Draft letter to RFISD Foundation

Greetings,

The Texas Master Naturalist, Mid-coast Chapter (MCTMN) plans to forward a \$5,000.00 donation to the Rockport Fulton ISD Foundation. This donation was made to our chapter by Liz Branch in honor of and to be used according to the wishes of long-standing, dedicated members Ray and Kris Kirkwood. The Kirkwood’s wish is for this donation to support the Fulton Learning Center Junior Naturalist Program overseen by Martha McLeod.

Texas Master Naturalist chapters are volunteer organizations. Typically, monetary donations are not made to other organizations. Our chapter accounting procedures are not set up to disburse and track donations to outside programs. As such, we will forward the entire donation to the Rockport Fulton ISD Foundation to support the Fulton Learning Center Junior Naturalist Program (FLC) at whatever rate is deemed appropriate. It is our understanding that our donation will be used to provide transportation for program participants to outside education venues.

The Texas Master Naturalist mission includes education, outreach and volunteer service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within or communities for the State of Texas. MCTMN is pleased that FLC program meets the TMN mission. Should the FLC program be discontinued MCTMN should be contacted regarding utilization of any remaining funds to ensure that its use is consistent with the TMN mission.

A quorum vote accepted the recommendation of the ad hoc committee chaired by Greg Simmons to forward the total \$5000 donation to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with a communicated expectation of how it is to be used.

The ad hoc committee chaired by Greg Simmons recommended forwarding the total \$5000 donation to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with a communicated expectation of how it is to be used. After much discussion, it was proposed to return the recommendation to the committee and ask them to reconsider a distribution plan of the funds over time.

Proposal 1: Forward the total \$5000 donation to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with communicated expectations of how it is to be used.

Proposal 2: Dole a smaller amount on a semester-by-semester basis to the RFISD Foundation as a “grant” with communicated expectations of how it is to be used and a report required at the end of each semester. A quorum of officers and directors was present and a vote was taken. The simple majority ruled to accept

Proposal 1 as the ad hoc committee recommended. It was stated that the grant request adheres to stipulations given during submission.

“Yes” Votes

Greg Simmons, D’Williams, Jeremy Miller, Sandra Lee, Brigid Berger, Steve Simmons, Julie Hejducek

“No” Votes

Debbie Kucera, Dee Mahaffy, Steve Ferguson, Ele Chew, Amy Nowlin, Bob Cunningham

[Back to Reports](#)

Communications Director Report by D'Ann Williams

General Administration

Brand Management

Signup Genius

Member Surveying

Chapter Operating Manual Update

Administration

- Reviewed Brand as per Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Guidelines
 - Researched proper fonts, CMYK colors, etc.
 - Created Chapter Logos, Thumbnails, etc. in Green and Brown
 - Revamped Social Media Page/Group to meet guidelines
 - Created Press Release Template
- Signup Genius implemented for large scale volunteer efforts like Plant Sale and Potlucks
- Communicated on behalf of Chapter to Texas Master Naturalist
- Will set up a Dropbox Folder for all to access Branding Guideline quick facts, photos and Chapter Logos to use
- Will need to come up with another Surveying Platform for out of meeting voting – last year used my personal Survey Monkey acct.

In 2023

In 2024

Chapter Publicity

Social Media

- Created Facebook Page
 - Can now connect formally with the public as a chapter
 - Can now Purchase Ads for large events
 - 184 followers, so far
 - Chapter is following our 8 County Partnership Groups as a Chapter (ex. ANWR, Welder Wildlife Foundation)
- Facebook Group
 - Grew by 83 followers to 436 Members
 - Created formal guidelines on what is allowed in posts
 - Fixed “spam” issue(s)
- Will add Instagram and Twitter presence

- Purchase Ads, as requested for the Chapter

In 2023

In 2024

Social Media Plant Sale Advertising

- Targeted Audience
 - 25-mile radius around major cities from Austin South
 - With Hobbies that reflect what we do (Butterflies, Gardening)
- Plant Sale Ads and Outcomes - \$220
 - Aug 23rd Save the Date Plant Sale Event/Ad –\$75 Reached just under 9000
 - Sept 1st HB Festival Ad - \$100 – Reached 18,416 total in 15 days – with 2600 engaging further
 - A couple of people from Mexico posted they were ready to see the Hbirds there!
 - Week of Plant Sale Ad – \$45 - Re-boost reached 6000 of Plant Sale and 700 marked as “interested”
- Will continue

In 2023

In 2024

Press Releases

- Distribution List Created
 - News affiliates and chambers in all 8 counties, State Texas Master Naturalist organization
- Rockport Pilot covered
 - Feb. – “Love is in the Air” Event
 - Bent Oak Rookery Park Interpretation Signage Install with multi-agency participation,
 - Chapter Plant Sale
 - Monarch Madness Event
- Will send out Press Releases as requested/needed

In 2023

In 2024

Chapter Outreach

Outreach - Events

- 2023
 - See chart have 14 on our team
- 2024

Website - Ray Kirkwood	Amount	Categorized
Domain name, hosting & improvements	450.00	E
Wufoo	350.00	E
Zoom License	150.00	E
Misc. Website Fees	300.00	E
Total	1,250.00	

Outreach - Bird Feeding Interpretive Box	Amount	Categorized
Redtail Hawk Skull	150.00	C
Roseate Spoonbill Skull	172.00	C
Woodpecker Skull	144.00	C
Cardinal Skull	105.00	C
Shipping	100.00	E
Beak - Engagement Supplies & Small Bin	100.00	C
Total	771.00	

Outreach - Interpretation Team	Amount	Categorized
General - Site Incidental Needs (1st aid kit, bug spray, etc.)	50.00	
January 24th - Winter Texan Day - \$50 fee	100.00	E
March ?th - Bent Oak Rookery Engagement	100.00	E
April 20nd - Earth Day - Planet Vs Plastics	100.00	E
May 18th - Skimmers Welcome at Rockport Beach	100.00	E
June 15th - Father's Day Weekend at Rockport Beach	0.00	E
July 20th - Rockport Beach Up2U Bags	0.00	E
August - Skip	0.00	E
September 16th - HB Festival	100.00	E
Oct. 14th - Indigenous Peoples Day at Little Bay Sculptures	100.00	E
Nov. 19th - Monarch Madness at Compass Rose Park	100.00	E
Total	750.00	

Newsletter - Neli Spurrell	Amount	Categorized
Constant Contact up to 500 - 12 month prepay 15% off	306.00	E
General Mktng - D'Ann		
Brochures/Rack Cards	250.00	
Signup Genius Online Platform for Plant Sale, Potlucks, etc	211.00	
Boosted Facebook Ads for Hummingbird Festival	200.00	E
Boosted Facebook Ads - Other Events	100.00	
Total	1,067.00	

Grand Total - Communications 3,838.00

○ March – Bent Oaks with Aransas First

○ Looking for new team members and opportunities to partner

○ Rockport Beach

Outreach - Tools

● 2023

○ Bent Oaks Interpretative Signage

○ Misc. Reusable Posters – Monarch, etc.

○ Chapter – Nature and History Rack Card

● 2024

○ Signage - Birding Palapa at Rockport Beach

▪ Paid for by ACND

○ Beasley – History Signage and Conservation

▪ Paid for by Bent Oaks Conservancy

● Outreach - Speakers:

○ Will look for ways to connect members to groups like Rotary meetings, etc.

[Back to Reports](#)

Technology Director Report by Steve Simmons

No Report

[Back to Reports](#)

Outgoing President Report by Bob Cunningham

Overview of Goals proposed in January 2023: The Chapter substantially accomplished virtually all its proposed goals for 2023. Highlights included:

- Revised former Policies & Procedures Manual to comply with new Chapter Operating Handbook (COH) framework and Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP) issued by TMN effective January 1, 2023. The new chapter-specific revised COH was approved by the Board at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 8, 2023, ratified at the next subsequent meeting of the General Membership on August 12, 2023, and then notified to TMN via email from the President on August 31, 2023.
- Purchased OWL equipment to provide hybrid online access for live meetings held in various venues throughout Chapter region, and implemented for those Board and Chapter meetings held in venues with a feasible internet connection. That said, 3 of the 4 general membership meetings did not utilize this option. It is recommended that attention be directed at identifying additional venues suitable for hybrid meetings, consistent with the overall objective of holding meetings throughout the Chapter region and particularly in under-served areas.
- Created and filled a new Board position for Information Technology Director with responsibility for managing laptops, hybrid meeting equipment, backups, updates, and other hardware and software, owned by the Chapter and/or used by members.
- Implemented broad scale Outreach activities, with additional effort to include sub-regions of Chapter geographic scope. Further efforts are needed to identify events and leadership in areas outside Aransas County for grass roots outreach.
- Streamlined Initial Training program to combine overlapping sessions and reduce hours.
- Transitioned leadership to replace Treasurer at mid-year (confirmed at annual meeting), and to replace President and Vice-President through election at the annual meeting.
- Encouraged prompt dues payment by end of January per TMN's new COH (change from end of March per Chapter's prior practice).

Additional developments not anticipated at the outset of 2023 included:

- Transitioned Initial Training directorship in July 2023 upon conclusion and final report on 2023 class.
- Approved support for junior naturalist extended public school program at Fulton Learning Center developed and conducted by 2023 graduate Martha McLeod, utilizing funds donated to the Chapter in 2022 in honor of members Kris and Ray Kirkwood.
- Approved new Leadership Recognition award and pin with applicable nomination and approval procedures, subject to budget funding and implementation in 2024.

Ongoing Programs in 2023:

- Conducted another very successful Native Plant Sale with large scale membership participation, implementing reorganized responsibilities and new inventory control capability, and utilizing new equipment for transporting potted plants.
- Continued an active social media presence, published quarterly newsletter, and followed through on plan for expanded interpretive outreach programs.

- Sustained chapter roster above 100 active members with consistently high levels of volunteer service (85% of eligible members reporting volunteer service equivalent to \$350,000.00 in value) and advanced training participation, with almost 65% of members re-certifying for 2023.
- Managed a full-capacity initial training class of 21 members-in-training initially, with 17 graduates of whom 12 (70.5%) have initially certified, and of that number 8 (47%) re-certified within the calendar year.

An expanded summary of 2023 activities follows, with even greater detail provided in the annual reports of individual directors for their respective areas of responsibility:

Administrative:

As President and the Chapter's representative to TMN, I attended monthly TMN online meetings including an extended luncheon at the Annual Meeting in McAllen (via Webex link, with Brigid Berger in attendance in my absence), and acted as liaison to Chapter reporting and implementing developments in the state program.

Those developments included many, many hours of work by officers and directors to revise the Chapter's longstanding "Policies & Procedures Manual" to conform with the Chapter Operating Handbook framework issued by TMN effective January 1, 2023. Kris Kirkwood took the lead and laboring oar in tracking and implementing revisions, with the Treasurer (Charla Ingalls) and incoming Treasurer (Julie Hejducek) devoting much attention to financial provisions. The revised Chapter Operating Handbook was presented to and approved unanimously by a quorum of the Board and over 2/3+ vote by a quorum of Chapter membership pursuant to appropriate notifications and procedures, and the revised COH was provided to TMN.

At its annual meeting in November the Chapter membership also voted (unanimously) to approve a slate of Officers consisting of renewing Secretary, Eleanor Chew; interim-appointed Treasurer, Julie Hejducek; incoming Vice-President, Brigid Berger, replacing Bill Burge; and incoming President, Steve Ferguson, replacing Bob Cunningham. Pursuant to the Chapter bylaws, Bob Cunningham takes the role of Past-President replacing Claire Barnhart.

At its October meeting, the Board approved the addition of Amy Nowlin as a Chapter Advisor to assume that position at the January meeting so she can finish out her tenure as New Class Representative. Amy is employed as the Coastal and Marine Resources Agent for AgriLife Extension in Matagorda County, and will join the Chapter's other, longstanding Advisor Trey Barron of TPWD.

The incoming Officers along with the Past-President and Advisor unanimously approved the incoming President's proposed slate of directors for standing committees: Membership (Dee Mahaffey); Communications (D'Ann Williams); Projects (Greg Simmons); Advanced Training (Debbie Kucera); and Technology (Steve Simmons). The Board previously approved Initial Training director(s) (Jeremy Miller and Kate Geer-Miller) for the 2023 Class.

Meetings & other Chapter-sponsored activities: The Mid-Coast Chapter held 4 scheduled quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors and 4 scheduled quarterly meetings of the general membership, as follows:

Board of Directors meetings:

- January 14: Calhoun County Public Library, Seadrift (in-person only)
- April 8: Fulton Mansion Education and History Center, Rockport (hybrid)
- July 8: Calhoun County AgriLife Building, Port Lavaca (hybrid)
- October 16: Online (Zoom) only

Chapter membership meetings:

- February 11: Coletto Creek Park, Victoria (in-person only)
 - May 13: Goose Island State Park, Rockport (in-person only)
 - August 12: Goliad State Park, Goliad (in-person only)
 - November 11: Victoria Education Gardens (VEG Pavilion), Victoria (hybrid)
- A minimum of 1 hour Advanced Training was presented at each Chapter meeting.

Potluck and annual Native Plant Sale events:

The Chapter held its usual potluck luncheon for the opening Orientation session of the Initial Training Class on January 28th (Aransas-San Patricio County AgriLife Building, Rockport), and for the final Graduation session on June 3rd (Barnhart Ranch, Goliad County). The Chapter's principal self-sponsored event--the Native Plant Sale and associated outreach activity held in conjunction with the HummerBird Celebration in Rockport--was conducted very successfully September 14-17 with involvement in various aspects by a large number of members.

Hybrid access:

The Chapter purchased OWL equipment after previous experience borrowing from TMN. The new equipment was utilized for hybrid access to the Board meetings in April and July and the General Membership annual meeting in November, where venues had sufficient internet capability. Additional effort is needed to identify venues suitable for hybrid access, subject to the overall objective of holding meetings throughout the Chapter region.

Budget: The proposed 2023 Budget was approved by the Board on January 14, and was presented to the general membership at the February 11th meeting. Discussions were held regarding one-time deficit budgeting for capital expenditures for outreach interpretation supplies, new equipment for hybrid meetings, and plant sale supplies, along with increased funding for outreach events and chapter-funded projects. The proposed 2023 Budget as approved by Membership included:

- Expected Income: \$17,200
- Expected Expense: \$20,666
- Expected Net Income: -\$3466
- Bank balance as of 1/1/2023: \$45,231

The annual examination of the 2022 financial records of the Chapter was presented and approved by the Board at its October 8, 2022 meeting. That report recommended, among other things, that the examination be held after the end of the calendar year, for reporting at the first Board meeting in January. That recommendation was incorporated in the COH (Appx C), so that the Financial Evaluation Committee will provide its report of 2023 finances at the Board meeting on January 11, 2024. Members of the FEC include the vice-president, secretary, training class representative, and chapter advisor, and ordinarily also include up to two additional chapter members appointed by the chair who are not members of the board. The President appointed VP Bill Burge as chair, with the Treasurer providing financial records for review. [COH 5.2.1]

Membership: As of December 31, 2023 the Chapter roster included 110 members in good standing. 94 members reported 13,608.75 VS hours, and 1,612.25 AT hours. These statistics are consistent with 2022 membership reports.

Initial Training: Seventeen members-in-training completed the program out of 21 original trainees, with all four dropouts expressing initial interest in returning for 2024. Ten out of ten field sessions were completed without re-scheduling. Program re-organization of Coastal Prairies, Wetlands, and Bay and Barrier Island ecologies from three sessions into two sessions was successful. New venues of Lake Texana Park, Powderhorn WMA, and R/V Katy were well received. The hybrid Virtual / In-the-field model is well accepted and effective.

At its July meeting the Board approved keeping the training fee at \$150 and authorized 20 slots for the 2024 class. At its October meeting the Board approved the syllabus for 2024 in principle, pending final approval of the training class schedule, curricula, and class composition at its January 2024 meeting. On October 28th the initial training committee and session ambassadors met to debrief on the prior class experience and coordinate the upcoming training.

New Class Rep: Amy Nowlin worked diligently with 2023 graduates to obtain initial certifications, achieving 12 initial certifications and 8 re-certifications from the 17 graduates. She also conducted a significant evaluation of the 2023 training resulting in positive feedback and critiques to be considered in the 2024 program.

While initial certification is expected within 12 months of commencing the class, a graduate of initial training may continue as an “active” member by payment of annual dues and reporting of VS / AT hours until initial certification is obtained.

Advanced Training: As of the November chapter meeting, some 118 AT requests had been approved in 2023; this is consistent with and somewhat greater than 2022. Members are notified by email of upcoming sessions and all are posted on the chapter website calendar. TMN Tuesday online presentations provided by TMN in 2023 are available for Members to view through the end of the calendar year for reporting as 2023 hours. Members are encouraged to submit AT opportunities for pre-approval through the Wufoo application on the Chapter website.

Projects – Volunteer Services: The main Chapter-sponsored project is the Native Plant Sale, which was conducted with great success in mid-September after months of effective planning and

organization. Significant developments in 2023 included the purchase and utilization of large-wheel carts and carriers for more efficient inventory transportation. Plant Sale coordinator, Debbie Minns, is seeking a deputy for the 2024 who can take over in 2025.

A new category of volunteer service was created for Technical Guidance (TG) to approve VS reporting of Mid-Coast members for service on the board of a partner organization or for advisory consultation to partners, providing MC-TMN mission-related resource management technical expertise or guidance. A Wufoo application was created to implement this process.

This was the first year to include a budget line item for chapter-funded projects initiated by Members. No funds were spent, but the Board did approve funds donated in 2022 in honor of Kris and Ray Kirkwood to be used, at Kirkwood's request, to support a junior master naturalist program initiated and conducted by a new member, Martha McLeod, as a public school extension at Fulton Learning Center.

The incoming President formed a committee to propose a comprehensive procedure for handling applications, review, approval, and ongoing reporting for projects and programs funded by the Chapter from donations or other sources of budgeted revenue. These procedures will be presented to the Board for decision and implementation in 2024.

Communications: The Communications position had been vacant for some years until mid-2022 August, and budgeting for 2023 was based on rough estimates in lieu of prior expense experience. The experience of 2023 will provide background for review with the Board in January for efficacy and budget guidance in 2024.

The activity level across all Communications' responsibilities—including but not limited to a quarterly newsletter, social media, advertising, interpretive outreach events, and website—is too extensive to summarize effectively in this President's report, and reference is made to the separate Communications Director report.

Inroads were made to extend outreach efforts outside the Aransas County area, notably with events and presence in Calhoun County. Further energy and focus is expected in 2024 to identify leadership and events for outreach in the full extent of the Chapter region.

[Back to Reports](#)

Chapter Advisor Report by Amy Nowlin

Amy Nowlin expressed her appreciation to the class of 2023 for electing her as class representative. As she recently transitioned into the role of Chapter Advisor, she offered her thanks to Sandra Lee for assuming the role of class representative for the remainder of the term. Amy looks forward to learning more about how her new role may benefit the Mid-Coast Chapter. She has recently communicated with Mary Pearl Meuth and Cheryl Foster of AgriLife Extension and was informed that advisors are required to take the VMS training course, which is scheduled for February. Amy also advised that the Marine Education Center, currently operated by Palacios Marine Ag Research, has been newly renovated and would make an excellent location for Chapter Meetings. Jay Tarkington, Educational Director can be reached at: jtarkington@pmartexas.org. Amy further commented that she and Jay are planning educational initiatives that would allow volunteer opportunities to the members of the chapter.

[Back to Reports](#)

Meeting Attendance

Board members in attendance: Brigid Berger-VP, Ele Chew-Secretary, Bob Cunningham-Past President, Steve Ferguson-President, Julie Hejducek-Treasurer, Debbie Kucera-AT, Sandra Lee-Class Rep, Dee Mahaffey-Membership, Jeremy Miller-IT, Amy Nowlin-Chapter Advisor, Greg Simmons-Projects, Steve Simmons-Technology, D'Ann Williams-Communications

Other chapter members in attendance: Bill Burge, Patrick Hartigan, Patrick Henley, Cindy Hielscher-VMS Administrator, Kris Kirkwood, Ray Kirkwood, Steve Marwitz, Sally Scrogg,

Awards

Initial Certification Dragonfly Pin & Plaque
2024 Patrick Henley

[Back to Reports](#)