

**MINUTES**  
**MID-COAST CHAPTER, TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST**  
**APRIL 12, 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. Board of Directors met on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the Aransas County AgriLife Extension Service Office at 892 Airport Road, Rockport, Texas 78382. The meeting was hybrid.

**Business Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM. President Steve Ferguson presided at the meeting, and Mid-Coast TMN Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 PM for 2.30 hours CB: Chapter Business/Chapter Meeting.

**Meeting Attendance**

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

**Secretary's Report by Ele Chew**

The Mid-Coast Chapter's Board of Directors meeting was held on Saturday, January 11, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 1:25 PM, at the Aransas County AgriLife Extension Service Office at 892 Airport Road, Rockport, Texas 78382. The meeting was hybrid. A total of twelve members were present. Board members consisted of nine in-person and three using the OWL/Zoom chat function, constituting a quorum. In addition, three members in standing were in attendance.

President Steve Ferguson presided at the meeting, and Mid-Coast TMN Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes, which were posted on the chapter website on March 12, 2025.

Julie Hejducek moved to accept the minutes as published on the chapter website, and Debbie Kucera seconded. The motion passed.

## Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Inc.  
Agri-Life, 892 Airport Rd, Rockport, TX 78382  
Treasurer's Report as of: 03/31/2025

|                                                                                         |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Beginning bank balances checking as of 03/01                                            | \$39,011.93        |
| Plus CD                                                                                 | 13,173.81          |
| Plus MM                                                                                 | 7,058.78           |
| <u>Total beginning cash as of 03/01</u>                                                 | <u>\$59,244.52</u> |
| Checking account balance as of 03/01                                                    | \$39,011.93        |
| Plus cleared items                                                                      | 17.72              |
| Less outstanding items                                                                  |                    |
| Operating bank balance as of 03/31                                                      | <u>\$39,029.65</u> |
| CD account balance as of 03/01                                                          | \$13,173.81        |
| Plus interest (recorded at maturity)                                                    | -0-                |
| CD bank balance as of 03/31                                                             | <u>\$13,173.81</u> |
| <i>*Note: Interest credited to the account at the end of its 4-month term in April.</i> |                    |
| MM account balance as of 03/01                                                          | \$7,058.78         |
| Plus interest                                                                           | 8.99               |
| MM bank balance as of 03/31                                                             | <u>\$7,067.77</u>  |
| Checking as of 03/31                                                                    | \$39,029.65        |
| Plus CD as of 03/31                                                                     | 13,173.81          |
| Plus MM as of 03/31                                                                     | 7,067.77           |
| <u>Total cash as of 03/31</u>                                                           | <u>\$59,271.23</u> |
| <i>Three bank reconciliations completed 04/01</i>                                       |                    |
| <i>Quicken Backup completed 04/01</i>                                                   |                    |
| YTD Total Revenue as of 03/31                                                           | \$4,900.96         |
| Less YTD Total Expenses as of 03/31                                                     | 2,028.38           |
| Net Income as of 03/31                                                                  | <u>\$2,872.58</u>  |

Budget process for 2025 was finalized and approved at the January 11<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors meeting. After minor adjustments, the budget was approved by the members on February 8th.

### Board of Director Reports:

- President Report
  - TMN Annual Meeting
  - IT Class of 2025

- Board Recruitment
- COH Update Coordinator
- Aransas Pathway
- Project Development Possibility
- Vice-President Report
  - May 10 Chapter Meeting  
Keep Victoria Beautiful. A Trash Free Gulf cleanup event
- Treasurer Report—2025 Budget Overview Budget Actuals
- Membership & VMS Reports
  - Membership Report
  - VMS Update
- Advanced Training Director — Update
- Initial Training Report — IT Progress Report
- Projects Report — 2025 Projects Update
  - Pollinators for Texas Project
  - Requests to MCTMN
- Technology Report —No report
- Communications Report
  - Corpus Christi Hooks Game!
  - HEB TMN Pollinator Collective
  - Newsletter
- Outreach  
Plant Sale Report – Budget
- Past President Report  
Candidates for Vice-President, Secretary, and Technology Officer
- Class Representative Report – Nothing to report
- Chapter Advisor Report — No report
- Awards

## **Old Business**

## **New Business**

### **Plant Sale Budget Pending Grant Approval**

The current budget for the plant sale is under \$6,000 in expenses.

There is a possibility of receiving a grant to cover these costs. Tracey Bennett is working on a grant

request with the Ed Rachal Foundation to fund the plant sale expenses. If the grant is received, Debbie Minns has proposed a budget of \$8,000. This revised budget includes additional items that are not part of the currently approved budget. These items consist of an inventory of pots, carry trays, an increased number of plants purchased from vendors, educational materials, banners, posters, and funding for a social media promotion.

Project Director Greg Simmon moved to approve the revised budget for the plant sale, contingent upon receiving the grant. Kim Ballard seconded the motion, and the proposal passed

### **Membership Application Recommendations**

Membership Director Kim Ballard presented the following recommendations.

1. Limit Initial Training application acceptance window from September to January
  - The new training schedule is set by October
  - September coincides with the plant sale at the Hummingbird Festival (18th-21st, 2025); have MCTMN booth to publicize.
  - Limiting the window should help minimize bookkeeping administrative headaches like returning checks for those that drop out due to scheduling issues.
  - Begin a social media blitz after Plant Sale.
  - Capital Area is an example
2. Modify the “Fill out the application” link on the website:
  - Option 1: Deactivate the link but leave the wording “Fill out the application” and add the following or similar:
    - *Applications for the 2025 Initial Training Class are closed. Applications for the 2026 Training Class will open September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, and we expect our next Training Class to begin January, 2026. (reactivate the link once applications are open)*
    - *To get involved prior to training – Click HERE (this link takes them to a page inviting them to Chapter meetings, with the calendar)*
  - Option 2: The link stays active with the following wording added:
    - *The 2025 Initial Training Class has already begun. We are now accepting applications for the 2026 Initial Training Class waiting list. Please carefully review the Initial Training Course Requirements below. Although the 2026 Training schedule has not yet been confirmed, the current schedule should give you an idea of what to expect during your training.*

NOTE: If Option 1 is accepted, the #2 item should be modified to say:

2. *A training fee of \$150 will be due at time of application. This will cover the cost of books and materials and partially offset the costs of speakers and water transportation. The remainder of training costs are paid by the Chapter. A link to pay is provided on the application form.*

Vice President Brigid Berger moved to accept the following recommendation, and AT Director

Debbie Kucera seconded the motion. The proposal was unanimously passed.

Recommendation to limit the Initial Training application acceptance window from September to January, and deactivate the "Fill out the application" link (Line item 1 on the JOIN page). Then edit Line item 2 to: *"A training fee of \$150 will be due at time of application. This will cover the cost of books and materials and partially offset the costs of speakers and water transportation. The remainder of training costs are paid by the Chapter. A link to pay is provided on the application form."*

### **Chapter Leadership Pin Subcommittee**

Report Submitted by: Brigid Berger

Two nominations for the Chapter Leadership Pin were received on March 26, 2025, submitted by Kate and Jeremy Miller. The Chapter Leadership Pin Subcommittee met on April 8, 2025, via Zoom, reviewed the nominations and unanimously approved the nominations of Greg Simmons and Sally Scroggs. The Chapter Leadership Pins will be presented to Greg and Sally at the Chapter Meeting on May 10, 2025.

### **Updates to Chapter Leadership Pins**

Subcommittee Chair Bridget Berger

The Chapter Leadership Pins Subcommittee proposed updates to the [Chapter Leadership Pin guidelines](#) – see attached.

Membership Director Kim Ballard moved to approve the updated Chapter Leadership Guidelines, and Secretary Ele Chew seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

Vice President Brigid Berger moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:25 PM, and Membership Director Kim Ballard seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ele Chew

Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary

## REPORTS AND AUXILIARY MATERIAL TO THE MINUTES

### President Report by Steve Ferguson

April 12, 2025 – Board of Directors Meeting

The TMN Annual Meeting will be held on October 16<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup> in College Station. Key Dates:

- May 16 – Call for presentation proposals deadline
- Jul 1 – Meeting agenda shared
- Aug 1 – Registration opens
- Aug 31 – Early registration ends
- Sep 20 – Registration ends
- Oct 7 – Chapter project fair presentations (#TMNTuesday)

**IT Class of 2025.** In my opinion, our Class of '25 joins our Class of '24 as a class that brings enthusiasm, knowledge, and sense of service to MCTMN. I'm impressed that a large number of '25 Members in Training appear to be on track to earn their TMN certification at the time of their graduation on June 1<sup>st</sup>. I believe that we can look to both classes for leaders in the future.

**Board Recruitment.** Past-President Bob Cunningham will fully cover board recruitment in his report. Nevertheless, I have recently received news that Vice President Brigid Berger will join Secretary Ele Chew in her decision to step down from her position at the end of her 2025 term. Brigid has been extraordinary in her service to our chapter and to the natural environment of the Coastal Bend.

I ask all board members to think specifically about who they might invite to serve in our search for vice president, secretary, initial training director(s), and technology director. By early May, I will follow up with board members about those whom they think would be good candidates.

**COH Update Coordinator.** Kris Kirkwood drafted a list of items that we may need to address when updating our Chapter Operating Handbook. I asked that we identify a member who that take on tracking items identified for consideration of a COH update. Cindy Hielscher volunteered to accept that responsibility.

**Aransas Pathway.** Since February, I have been working with the Aransas Pathway Steering Committee and providing them with technical guidance on projects of mutual interest to MCTMN and Aransas Pathways. Such mutual projects include Aransas County's first "Birding Day," creating pollinator gardens, a proposed 38-mile kayak trail from St. Charles Bay (Cavasso Creek) to the kayak launch at Port Bay (TPWD would be active in the project), a boardwalk from the Airport Road to Murph Park, and an Aransas County kayak event that is beginning it's planning stage. Jim Farnsworth is the APSC member who is leader of the kayak projects.

**Project Development Possibility - Mentoring Through Nature Projects and Personal Development for RFHS Students.** Working on a possible project when MCTMN volunteers mentor RFHS senior and junior students in personal development and nature service projects in which MCTMN volunteer. There has been strong interest on the part of the RFHS mentoring faculty member, but the idea has not yet advanced beyond that level within RFISD.

[Back to Reports](#)

**Vice President Report by Brigid Berger**

The next chapter meeting will be held on Saturday, May 10 in Victoria.

The meeting will include a volunteer service project in collaboration with Keep Victoria Beautiful. A Trash Free Gulf cleanup event will be held at Riverside Park beginning at 7:30 am. Participants are asked to register through the TrashFreeGulf.com We will send the event information out to all members on email and post on social media.

Following the cleanup will be a program at the University of Houston Victoria campus. The program will feature Jay Kleberg, Gulf Trust who will speak about the Trash Free Gulf program. Jay and his wife Chrissy walked the entire Texas Gulf Coast and created a six-part documentary called Chasing the Tide which can be seen on PBS.

Also, Christy Youker, Assistant Director of Environmental Services with the City of Victoria will speak about Keep Victoria Beautiful.

The program will be followed by our Chapter Business meeting. Members are encouraged to bring their lunch.

The cleanup and the program will be open to the public. The UH-V and the City of Victoria will be sharing the event with the public so we hope to draw some Victoria residents to our event.

[Back to Reports](#)

---

## Treasurer Report by Julie Hejducek as of 03/2025

| CATEGORY                                | 2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION                                                          | 2025 BUDGET   | ACTUALS as of 03/2025 | \$ Difference |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Square Expense / Bank Expense           | Misc expense from Square transactions and bank fees                              | 50            | 5                     | 45            |
| <b>Total Administrative</b>             |                                                                                  | <b>12,257</b> | <b>775</b>            | <b>11,482</b> |
| <b>Advanced Training</b>                | Instructor/speaker fees                                                          | 0             | 0                     | 0             |
| <b>Training - Initial</b>               |                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| Boat / Touch Tank Fees                  | RV Katy for Bay and Barrier Island Ecology                                       | 850           |                       | 850           |
| Books - Purchased                       | 19 Statewide Curriculum (TAMU Press, \$665), 19 My Brush Country Backyard, \$456 | 1,300         | 420                   | 880           |
| Instructor Fees                         | Honoraria or expense reimbursements (1 X \$250 assumed)                          | 250           |                       | 250           |
| Venue                                   | Fees                                                                             | 75            |                       | 75            |
| Contingency Fund                        | Other expenses (15% contingency)                                                 | 0             |                       | 0             |
| Supplies & expenses                     | Note pads, printing, binders, badges, etc.                                       | 700           | 713                   | 13            |
| Scholarship                             | Earmark for potential 2025 class applicants (2@\$90)                             | 180           | 120                   | 60            |
| Misc                                    | Ambassador/training committee pizza meeting                                      | 150           |                       | 150           |
| <b>Total Initial Training</b>           |                                                                                  | <b>3,505</b>  | <b>1,253</b>          | <b>2,252</b>  |
| <b>Plant Sale</b>                       |                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| HummerBird Fee                          | For outside space                                                                | 150           |                       | 150           |
| Plants                                  | Plants purchased                                                                 | 4,250         |                       | 4,250         |
| Sales Tax                               | Tax for sales other than 2 "free days".                                          | 200           |                       | 200           |
| Fees - Square                           | 2.9% transaction fee for credit cards (60.0% of sales)                           | 252           |                       | 252           |
| POS Square Expense                      | One month of hot spot                                                            | 55            |                       | 55            |
| POS Hardware/Software - Capital Expense | Square purchase                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| Plant Sale Educational Materials/Eqpt   |                                                                                  | 500           |                       | 500           |
| Supplies & Misc expenses                | \$50 labels/square, \$250 misc includes Square refill paper \$15                 | 295           |                       | 295           |
| Equipment Upgrades - Capital Expense    | No trays expected                                                                |               |                       |               |
| <b>Total Plant Sale</b>                 |                                                                                  | <b>5,702</b>  |                       | <b>5,702</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                   |                                                                                  | <b>21,464</b> | <b>2,028</b>          | <b>19,436</b> |
| <b>TOTAL NET INCOME (YE)</b>            |                                                                                  | <b>1,201</b>  | <b>2,873</b>          | <b>1,672</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL PLANT SALE NET INCOME (YE)</b> |                                                                                  | <b>8,798</b>  |                       | <b>8,798</b>  |
| <b>CAPITAL EXPENSE</b>                  |                                                                                  |               |                       |               |



## 2025 MCTMN BUDGET

| CATEGORY                                                   | 2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION                                                                                                                                                          | 2025 BUDGET   | ACTUALS as of 03/2025 | \$ Difference |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| <b>REVENUE</b>                                             | <b>Revenue</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |               |                       |               |
| Member Dues                                                | Annual dues (\$15/person average x 100 paying members)                                                                                                                           | 1,500         | 595                   | 905           |
| Initial Training Fees                                      | Initial training (20 @\$150 FOR 2025 class)                                                                                                                                      | 2,515         | 865                   | 1,650         |
| Gross Plant sale                                           | Hummerbird                                                                                                                                                                       | 14,500        |                       | 14,500        |
| Book Sales                                                 | Book Sales to ANWR                                                                                                                                                               | 600           |                       | 600           |
| Badge Replacement                                          | Cost to replace lost badge                                                                                                                                                       | 50            |                       | 50            |
| Interest Income                                            | Interest income from checking .15% (\$25), money market 1.51% (\$75), and CD 3.25% (\$400)                                                                                       | 500           | 40                    | 460           |
| Misc Other (Donations)                                     | Unsolicited donations less than \$250                                                                                                                                            | 3,000         | 3,401                 | -401          |
|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>                                       | <b>Total Revenue</b>                                                                                                                                                             | <b>22,665</b> | <b>4,901</b>          | <b>17,764</b> |
|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                                            | <b>Expenses</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| <b>Administrative</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |                       |               |
| President Expenses                                         | 25th Celebration, supplies, misc( moved to Outreach)                                                                                                                             |               |                       |               |
| VP Expenses                                                | Supplies & other expenses incurred by VP, MS products \$36, misc                                                                                                                 | 250           | 9                     | 241           |
| VP Expenses for Meetings - Capital Exp                     | No capitol expected                                                                                                                                                              |               |                       |               |
| Storage Rental                                             | Kool storage, \$93/month                                                                                                                                                         | 1,200         | 279                   | 921           |
| Shed Purchase                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                  | 0             |                       |               |
| Shed Rental                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                  | 0             |                       |               |
| Secretary's Supplies                                       | Paper, ink, postage, other supplies                                                                                                                                              | 100           |                       | 100           |
| Treasurer's Supplies                                       | Ink \$65, MS products \$36, storage container \$10, paper \$10, misc                                                                                                             | 200           | 22                    | 178           |
| Treasurer - Capital Expense                                | No capitol expected                                                                                                                                                              |               |                       |               |
| Historian and scrapbook                                    | Toner, Paper, Scrapbook pages, Storage, etc.                                                                                                                                     | 100           |                       | 100           |
| Project Director Expenses                                  | Pollinator garden \$3000, Unforeseen \$500                                                                                                                                       | 3,500         |                       | 3,500         |
| Project Expense - Monarch Tagging Project                  | Monarch tagging kits,nets and habitat                                                                                                                                            |               |                       |               |
| Project Expense - costs associated with 25th Anniversary   | Misc anniversary costs not associated with Hooks Game                                                                                                                            | 1,000         |                       | 1,000         |
| Membership                                                 | Plaques (2 cases @\$171 ea) - \$342<br>name badges - \$13*25=\$325                                                                                                               | 667           |                       | 667           |
| Communications - Website & Technical                       | Website domain name \$15, SR hosting \$290 & improvements \$270; Wufoo online data support \$350; Zoom license \$150, Quickbooks \$540, Cloud storage \$240, Transitioning \$300 | 2,330         | 310                   | 2,020         |
| Communications - Online Newsletter, Signups & Facebook Ads | Const Contact 10x\$12=\$120<br>Boosted FB ads 10x\$12=\$120 \$306 plus<br>General Marketing Signup Genius \$211, Boosted FB add for HummerFest \$200 Misc 100                    | 920           |                       | 920           |
| Communications - General Marketing                         | Plant Sale Yard signs - 100, Misc. Other; Thank you card stationary \$100                                                                                                        | 200           |                       | 200           |
| Communications - Public Outreach - Hooks Game & Misc.      | Hooks Game Stickers - \$530, Chapter Brochure \$260, Winter Texan Day, Misc. Events                                                                                              | 1,240         |                       | 1,240         |
| Communications - Outreach - Capital Expense                | Will concentrate on 25th anniversary / Hooks Game                                                                                                                                |               |                       |               |
| PO Box Rental                                              | Post Office box rental - Fulton 12 months @ \$150                                                                                                                                | 150           | 150                   | 0             |
| Discretionary                                              | \$150 annual donatioin to TMN, \$200 non standard honorarium                                                                                                                     | 350           |                       | 350           |

[Back to Reports](#)

## Membership Director Report by Kim Ballard

As of March 31st, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 137 members eligible to report hours, including the Initial Training class that began on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

For March, 67 members reported 843.25 volunteer service hours and 88.5 advanced training hours across 29 opportunities for a value of \$21,430.25 (\$23/hr).

Year-to-date, 98 members (72% of total eligible) have reported 3373.25 volunteer service hours and 407.75 advanced training hours across 42 opportunities for a value of \$77,584.75 (\$23/hr).

An updated roster will be sent to the membership in April. If you need an updated roster before then, please email [hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org](mailto:hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org). The website will be updated soon with the March 2025 numbers presented above.

One application has been received for 2026 Initial Training.

A Membership Committee has been formed, and includes Cindy Hielscher, Jeremy Miller, Ele Chew and Bobbi Rankin along with Kimberly Ballard. Recommendations for changes in the application process will be presented in New Business.

### March 2025 Hourskeeper Report

#### Chapter Service & Training in March 2025

| Volunteer Service | Advanced Training | # Members Reporting | # Different Opportunities | Value at \$23 per hour |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 843.25            | 88.5              | 67                  | 29                        | <b>\$21,430.25</b>     |

#### Service & Training 2025 Year-to-Date Total

| Volunteer Service | Advanced Training | # Members Reporting | # Different Opportunities | Value at \$23 per hour |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 3,373.25          | 407.75            | 98                  | 42                        | <b>\$77,584.75</b>     |

#### Cumulative—Chapter Inception in 2000 to Present

| Volunteer Service | Advanced Training | All-time # Members Reporting | # Different Opportunities | Value at \$23 per hour |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 258,227.75        | 27,020.50         | 369                          | 76                        | <b>\$6,560,709.75</b>  |

As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 137 members eligible to report hours, including the Initial Training class that began on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Ninety-eight members have reported hours earned in 2025—72% of the total eligible. An updated roster will be sent to the membership in April. If you need an updated roster before then, please email [hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org](mailto:hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org). The website will be updated soon with the March 2025 numbers presented above.

**Class of 2025**—The Initial Training Class of 2025 currently has 20 trainees. As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the class has reported 156.25 volunteer service hours, 98 AT hours, and 367.75 Initial Training hours.

**Class of 2024**—As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the 17 Class of 2024 members have reported 1,576.50 volunteer service hours and 465.50 AT hours since January 2024. The next step in becoming a Certified TMN Chapter member will be attaining 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours as soon as possible and targeting no later than the June Class of 2025 Graduation. Eleven members have achieved this goal and are listed on page 2. Seven members achieved Recertification in 2024 by adding 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 more hours of AT to their total for the year (80 hours of volunteer service plus 16 hours of AT in total).

**Recertification 2025**- A new pin, the Common Roadrunner, has been introduced for 2025 recertifications. Six members of the chapter have recertified for the year and earned the Common Roadrunner pin. See the list on page 2.

### **VMS Update Report by Cindy Hielscher**

The VMS upgrade is continuing, but no specific update is available at this time. The most recent implementation affecting the VMS coordinators was the Multi-Factor (MFA) implementation.

VMS administrative support:

- Kris Kirkwood has notified Steve Ferguson and Cindy Hielscher that she will be stepping back as a VMS administrator.
- Cindy thanked Kris for all of her support and guidance in this process.
- Ele Chew will continue as a VMS administrator, assisting Cindy with VMS activities. Cindy will also begin seeking an additional VMS administrator to replace Kris and as a backup to Cindy and Ele.

[Back to Reports](#)

### **Advanced Training Report by Debbie Kucera**

There have been about 50 approved AT for 2025. Nine members failed to be certified in 2024 because they lacked AT hours. They were evenly represented by graduating class year.

Vice President Brigid Berger suggested submitting a blurb to the newsletter and social media directing members to the chapter calendar as a quick way to find all approved AT. Cindy had graciously agreed to do that.

[Back to Reports](#)

## **Initial Training Report by Jeremy Miller & Kate Geer-Miller**

Training has been going well with 5 sessions remaining

Next training is Riverine and Riparian Ecology on April 17&19

SAVE THE DATE!!! June 7 is the Graduation session at Barnhart Q5 Ranch which includes a potluck with the entire chapter to welcome the newly trained naturalists. More details to follow nearer the date.

The training class iNaturalist challenge has been running strong! The competition runs until graduation when the winners for most observations and most unique species will be crowned.

Totals as of 4/9

Observations: 2634

Species: 1109

Kate & I are looking for new Initial Training Directors for next year; any suggestions are welcome.

[Back to Reports](#)

## **Projects Report by Greg Simmons**

### **Progress Reports**

- The "Pollinators for Texas" team, including Donna Bailey (Port Lavaca), Bill Burge (ANWR), Janet McCrea (Coleta Creek), Brigid Berger (Port O'Connor Elementary), Vickie Wilson (Rockport Post Office, and Margie Wilkins (Matagorda), has made progress at all sites. A mid-year report is pending.
- Charlie Bellaire is working on roadside restoration with Bill Burge's help.

### **Requests**

- Assistance with pollinator gardens at Aransas Pass Community Garden and Riverside Park in Bay City.
- A presentation for a homeschool group in Victoria.
- Ray Kirkwood is leading a flora and fauna tracking project for Rockport-Fulton High School.
- Janet Price, Liz Smith, and Ben Horstmann are providing birding and introduction to using iNaturalist for a women's epilepsy group at Camp Aranzazu on April 23.

[Back to Reports](#)

## Communications Report by D'Ann Williams



# Communication Committee Report – April '25

---

Administration | Historian | Newsletter | Outreach | Publicity | Website

Committee's oversight areas as per our Bylaws



# Hooks!



- Invite your friends, family, and especially your conservation partners!

## Plan –

- Open to just our chapters and partners for 2 to 3 weeks for tickets – then the public
- 2 Weeks prior Press Release
- Meeting 1 month prior with Hooks staff and mascot employee to discuss engagement that night.
- TMN Students will do a conservation relay race during the event
- Will pass out Fun stickers, Up2U bags, and our Chapter Brochure for four innings
- Need 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch backup if Kirkwoods cannot do it.

**T-Shirts –** Need a person to lead this:

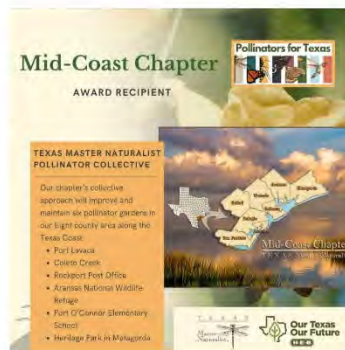
- 25<sup>th</sup>-anniversary chapter design, orders via signup genius, pricing, t-shirt ordering from company, distribution.



# HEB Grant

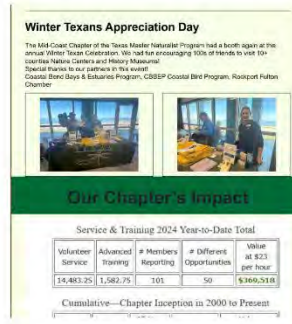


- Did Facebook and Press Releases as requested by HEB – FB Ad reached 3893 people!
- Take lots of photos of people working and having fun! Send them in a large pdf format



# Newsletter

- Neli did a terrific job!
  - Get your articles to her for the next!



## General



- **Outreach - Chapter Initiated**
  - Bird Fest:
    - 3 are participating in a Children's Booth at Linda Castro today from 10 to 1pm
    - 2 are doing "Eat like a bird" Children's Booth
    - 1 is leading a Forest Bathing Hike at Ivy Lane at 1:00
- **Dropbox Initiated**
  - Uploaded all the Kirkwood's years of documents
    - Let me know if you need help accessing our new Dropbox!
- **Website Review**
  - Met with Kirkwoods, Cindy is updating our calendar as events come up, I'm learning...
- **Publicity**
  - 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Focused - Let me know if you need the Logo for your great works!

## Plant Sale Report by Debbie Minns

The Plant Sale in conjunction with the Hummerbird Celebration, is scheduled for September 19-21, 2025. A venue has been selected for the Hummer Mall. It will be at the Fulton Convention Center. They have not given me any specific details about the location of the sale. There has been another staff change but Shannon Biggerstaff has stepped back in to help with the event and she has been involved with it previously. Vendor applications are still not available at this time. I have been informed that when they are released, we will apply and that will secure our spot. As soon as possible, we will access the venue and begin to plan our strategy for another venue change.

We will be calling for lots of volunteers to support this fundraising and educational program. Right now, we are asking volunteers to propagate and grow plants for the sale. There are some concerns out there for growing and selling plants during severe water restrictions. Sally Scroggs has received and offer for well water access for growing plants.

Tracey Bennett is working on a grant request to fund the expenses of the Plant Sale. I have made an unofficial budget that includes some things that are not in our current approved budget. I'm requesting advise on how to handle this unofficial amended budget.

[Back to Reports](#)

### **Past President Report by Bob Cunningham**

The Past-President serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee pursuant to the Chapter Bylaws. As appointed by President Steve Ferguson, the Nominating Committee comprises Chapter members D'Ann Williams, Linda Swickheimer, Gary Ward, and Amy Nowlin.

The primary purpose of the Nominating Committee is to identify and recommend candidates to serve as Officers for the one-year term commencing in January 2026. The Committee may also assist in identifying candidates to chair committees, for recommendation to the President for his discretionary appointments.

Current Secretary Ele Chew and Vice-President Brigid Berger have indicated a desire to step down from their respective positions during or at the end of 2025. In addition, the recently created position of Technology Officer remains open.

The Nominating Committee will continue to identify Chapter members willing to serve as Secretary and Vice-President, with the intention that a candidate would "shadow" the respective officer this year and take over the position via mid-year appointment by the Board, and/or would be recommended to the membership for formal election at the annual meeting in November. A new Technology officer is also being sought.

Realistically, however, general requests at membership events and general communications with membership have not traditionally elicited good response, in comparison with identifying individual qualified members to personally approach.

All Board members are asked to reach out to members who may be qualified and willing to serve in the Secretary, Vice-President, or Technology positions and refer them to me or President Steve.

[Back to Reports](#)

### **Class Representative by Chelsea Watson**

[Back to Reports](#)

### **Meeting Attendance**

Board members in attendance: Kim Ballard-Membership, Brigid Berger (Vice President),



Ele Chew-Secretary, Bob Cunningham-Past President (Zoom), Steve Ferguson-President, Julie Hejducek-Treasurer, Debbie Kucera-AT, Greg Simmons-Projects, D'Ann Williams-Communications

Other chapter members in attendance: James Black (Zoom), Bill Burge, Kim Draper, Cindy Hielscher-VMS Administrator, Steve Marwitz, Debbie Minns (Plant Sale), Nicole Mullen (Zoom), Sally Scroggs

[Back to Reports](#)

## **Awards**

**Initial Certification enamel dragonfly & plaque**—Presented: James Black picked up. Not present to receive the award: Mary Wilkins, Sally Crofutt, Larry Green, Martha McLeod

### **Milestone Awards**

*250-hour bronze dragonfly*—Presented: Not presented: Cynthia Baker

*Silver 500-Hour Milestone dragonfly*—Presented: Not presented: Karen Barton, Jeremy Miller, Marilyn Stewart

*Gold 1,000-Hour Milestone dragonfly* –

*Polished Silver 2,500-Hour dragonfly* –

*Gold/Diamond 5,000-Hour dragonfly* –

### **Recertification Pins**

*2022 Lightning Whelk*—Presented: Karen Benson Not present: Karen Barton, Rebecca Bootzin

*2023 TX Ecoregions*—Presented: Not presented: Karen Benson, Kayla Clark, Bob Friedrichs

*2024 Rattlesnake*—Presented: Not presented: Chris Andersen, Laura Andersen, Karen Benson, David Clark, Kayla Clark, Debra Dhams-Nelson, Bob Friedrichs, Bobby Garner, Judy Goodner, Wilfred Korth, Martha McLeod, Dee Mahaffey, Robyn Savage, Scott Swanson, Gary Ward

*2025 Roadrunner* – Presented: Bill Burge, Steve Ferguson Not presented: Patrick Hartigan, Janet McCrea, Jeremy Miller, Robyn Savage

### **TPWD Water Awards 2023 awarded in 2024**

Not present: Marueen Crocker

[Back to Reports](#)

Chapter Leadership Pin Guidelines  
proposed updates 4/12/2025 by Brigid Berger

**The Goal** of the Chapter Leadership Pin (CLP) is to recognize a chapter member for their leadership service to the operations, growth, and improvements of the chapter.

### **Eligibility**

- Any chapter member in good standing can be nominated by any other chapter member in good standing.
- Nominees must have provided recognizable service toward the operations, growth, or improvement of the chapter.

- Any chapter member in good standing can be a nominator.
- Non-chapter members may not submit nominations.
- Non-chapter members may not be nominated.
- Chapter members may not self-nominate.
- A chapter member may receive the award only once.

## **Nomination**

- The nominating form shall be made available to chapter members on the chapter members only website.
- Nominations shall be submitted by the first of the month of each Board of Directors meeting (January, April, July, and October).
- Nominations shall be reviewed by the Chapter Leadership Pin subcommittee prior to the Board of Directors meeting and the outcome of the nomination shall be reported to the board.

## **Operations**

- The CLP subcommittee shall consist of the Membership Chair, the Vice President, VMS Coordinator, and one other chapter members approved by the president.
- The CLP subcommittee shall review nominations for the following award criteria:
  - Is the nominator a member in good standing (paid dues and are recording volunteer hours)?
  - Is the nominee a member in good standing?
  - Has the nominee reported service hours (in VMS) for Chapter Business?
  - Has the nominee demonstrated recognizable service toward the operations, growth or improvement of the chapter?
  - Are there any other considerations, such as adherence to the State Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct?
- If the nomination does not meet the award criteria, the nominator shall be notified by the subcommittee with an explanation of why the nomination did not meet the criteria. The nominator may submit a new nomination.
- If a CLP subcommittee member is nominated for the award, that subcommittee member shall recuse themselves from the nomination review and the President (or the President's appointee) shall participate in the review of that nomination.
- Pins will be awarded at the Chapter Meeting following the nomination approval (February, May, August, and November).
- Awarding the pin shall include the reading of, or summarization of the information provided on the nomination form and shall be shared in the Chapter Newsletter.
- There shall be no limit to the number of chapter members who can receive the award.

[Back to Reports](#)