

# MINUTES

## MID-COAST CHAPTER, TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST

### MAY 10, 2025 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. General Membership Meeting met hybrid remote, and in-person at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, May 10, 2025, at the University of Houston-Victoria Library, 3006 N Ben Wilson St, Victoria, TX 77901.

#### **Program**

A habitat-improvement/resource-management service opportunity took place from 7:30-9:30 AM at Grover's Bend, Riverside Park, Victoria. Separately, AT "Trash Free Gulf" presentation by Jay Kleberg & "Keep Victoria Beautiful" by Christy Youker followed at 10 A.M. at the UVH Library.

#### **Business Meeting**

The business meeting was called to order at 11:30 A.M. by President Steve Ferguson. Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 1:45 P.M. for 2.5 hours CB: Chapter Business plus individual travel time. The AT "Trash Free Gulf" presentation was 1.25 hours, spanning from 10:00 A.M. to 11:15 A.M.

#### **Meeting Attendance**

There was a total of 33 attendees, of which one was a guest. Thirty-two members in good standing, of which eleven participated by Zoom, were in attendance. Nine officers and directors formed a quorum.

#### **Secretary's Report by Ele Chew**

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. General Membership Meeting met hybrid remote and in-person at 10:07 A.M. on Saturday, November 9, 2024, at The Nueces Delta Preserve, which is located at 3410 US-77 N Odem, TX 78370.

The business meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by President Steve Ferguson. Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 P.M. for 2.5 hours CB: Chapter Business plus individual travel time. The AT CBBEP presentation was 0.5 hr., and the AT outing was 1 hr., spanning from 12:45-2:15 P.M.

Twenty-eight members in good standing, of which four participated by Zoom, were in attendance. Nine officers and directors formed a quorum.

#### **Program**

At 12:45 P.M., Lauren Piorkowski, Volunteer Outreach Coordinator, presented The Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP), a nonprofit formed in 1999 to support a thriving bay system in the Texas Coastal Bend. Covering 75 miles of coastline across 12 counties, CBBEP focuses on conservation and offers various volunteer opportunities, including educational initiatives at the Nueces Delta Preserve.

The minutes were posted on the chapter website on April 11, 2025.

Brigid Berger moved to approve the minutes as posted; Bob Cunningham seconded the motion.  
The minutes were approved by acclamation.

## **Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek**

**Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Inc.  
U of H-Victoria, 3006 N Ben Wilson St, Victoria, TX  
Treasurer's Report as of: 04/30/2025**

### **Bank Checking Account**

Checking account balance as of 04/01	\$39,029.65
Less cleared items	-451.98
Less outstanding items	
Operating bank balance as of 04/30	<u>\$38,577.67</u>

### **Contingency Reserve Accounts**

CD account balance as of 04/01	\$13,173.81
*Plus interest (recorded at maturity)	141.93
MM account balance as of 04/01	7,067.77
Plus monthly interest	8.71
Total Contingency Reserve Accounts as of 04/30	<u>\$20,392.22</u>

*\*Note: Interest credited to the contingency CD account at the end of its 4-month term in April.*

Ending bank checking as of 04/30	\$38,577.67
Plus contingency CD	13,315.74
Plus contingency MM	7,076.48
<u>Total cash as of 04/30</u>	<u>\$58,969.89</u>

YTD Total Revenue as of 04/30	\$5,056.39
Less YTD Total Expenses as of 04/30	2,485.15
Net Income as of 04/30	<u>\$2,571.24</u>

The 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 8<sup>th</sup> with additional adjustment on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

The contingency CD matured April 9<sup>th</sup> and renewed for 4 months. The new date is August 9<sup>th</sup> at the new rate of 3.0%.

In February, the Chapter received \$3000 in grant money from HEB for the pollinator gardens. The Chapter usually operates at a net loss until the plant sale. Because of the HEB grant money, the Chapter has a YTD net income of \$2,571.24.

## Board of Directors Reports:

- [President's Report](#) — TMN Annual Meeting, IT class of 2025, seeking candidates for key leadership positions, working with the Aransas Pathway Steering Committee, mentoring through nature projects, and personal development for RFHS students
- [Vice-President's Report](#) — Updates on the next Board of Directors and General Meetings in 2025 and Chapter Leadership Pin
- [Treasurer's Report](#) — Budget Actuals 04/25
- [Membership & VMS Reports](#)
  - No report
  - VMS Update
- [Advanced Training Director](#) — Nothing to report.
- [Initial Training Report](#) — Update of IT progress.
- [Projects Report](#) — Pollinators for Texas Project update, birding and iNaturalist at Camp Aranzazu, WRC native landscape, Aransas Pathway Birding Festival, GISP Birding Festival, Mid-Coast Birding Festival, project requests
- [Communications Report](#) — Hooks game, HEB grant, publicity, outreach, newsletter, social media, website
  - [Plant Sale Report](#)
- [Technology Report](#) — No report
- [Past President Report](#) — Seeking candidates for vice president, secretary, technology director, and plant sale manager
- [Class Representative Report](#) — No report
- [Chapter Advisor Report](#) — Projects  
Oyster gardening pilot program; Sargent, Rockport, Aransas, Palacios, Riverside-Bay City site updates; bag distribution and tracking; support & supplies; Garden Maintenance; Trail & Area Maintenance; Fish & Flora Initiatives; Invasive Species Removal
- [Awards](#)

**New Business**

Sally Scroggs and Greg Simmons were awarded the Leadership pins.

**Adjournment**

Brigid Berger moved to adjourn, and Carla Belaire seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

VMS: Chapter Business: TMN Adm. Rep Hours=2.5 hrs. plus travel time

Respectfully submitted,

Ele Chew

Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary

## REPORTS AND AUXILIARY MATERIAL TO THE MINUTES

### **President's Report by Steve Ferguson**

**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, including serving on the 2026 board of directors and other key leadership positions.

**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 members could serve as a one-on-one mentor to a RFHS senior and junior student in personal development and nature service projects on which our members 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.

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### **Vice President's Report by Brigid Berger**

The next **BOD meeting** will be on **Saturday, July 10, 2025**, 10 am, Aransas County AgriLife Building, Rockport

The next **Chapter Meeting** will be on **Saturday, August 9, 2025**. Location & AT program TBD.

**Reminder Chapter Leadership Pin:** All members in good standing are eligible to receive the award which recognizes leadership service toward the operations, growth, and improvements of the chapter.

Nomination forms are available on the chapter website in the "For Members" section and I have brought paper copies for anyone interested.



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## Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Budget Actuals 04/25 updated

### 2025 MCTMN BUDGET

628	2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION	2025 BUDGET	ACTUALS as of 04/2025	\$ 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	195	305	
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>5,056</b>	<b>17,609</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	12	238	
VP Expenses for Meetings - Capital Exp	No capitol expected				
Storage Rental	Kool storage, \$93/month	1,200	372	828	
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	25	175	
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	343	3,157	
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 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	325	2,005	
Communications - Online Newsletter, Signups & Facebook Ads	Const Contact 10x\$12=\$120 Boosted FB ads 10x\$12=\$120 \$306 plus 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		
Discretionary	\$150 annual donatioin to TMN, \$200 non standard honorarium	350		350	
Square Expense / Bank Expense	Misc expense from Square transactions and bank fees	50	5	45	
<b>Total Administrative</b>		<b>12,257</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>11,025</b>	
<b>Advanced Training</b>	Instructor/speaker fees	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Training - Initial</b>					
Boat / Touch Tank Fees	RV Katy for Bay and Barrier Island Ecology	850		850	



628	2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION	2025 BUDGET	ACTUALS as of 04/2025	\$ Difference	
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			
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	Booth Space For outside space	150		150	
Plants	Plants purchased	5,000		5,000	
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)	300		300	
POS Square Expense	One month of hot spot	55		55	
POS Hardware/Software - Capital Expense	Square purchase				
Plant Sale Educational Materials/Eqpt	Printed plantcare handouts and educational posters	700		700	
Supplies & Misc expenses	\$50 labels/square, \$250 misc includes Square refill paper \$15	300		300	
Inventory Supplies	500 gallon pots	550		550	New 04/12
Marketing	Banners, posters, and social media boosts	800		800	New 04/12
Equipment Upgrades - Capital Expense	200 Carrier trays	200		200	
<b>Total Plant Sale</b>		<b>8,255</b>		<b>8,255</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>24,017</b>	<b>2,485</b>	<b>21,532</b>	
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME (YE)</b>		<b>1,352</b>	<b>2,571</b>	<b>3,923</b>	
<b>TOTAL PLANT SALE NET INCOME (YE)</b>		<b>6,245</b>		<b>6,245</b>	
<b>CAPITAL EXPENSE</b>					
<b>OYSTER SYMPOSIUM</b>					
<b>Oyster Symposium Revenue</b>					
Oyster Symposium Donations/Grants	Sponsorships				
Oyster Symposium Registration	Registration fees				
<b>Total Oyster Symposium Revenue</b>					
<b>Oyster Symposium Expense</b>					
Venue	Rockport Conference Center				
Oysters / Shuckers	Oysters \$300, Shuckers \$100				
Security	Sherriff				
Communications	Advertising \$100, Sponsor table and signage \$100, Website and social media \$200				
Fees - PayPal and Square	Registration fees and discounts				
Gifts	Speaker gifts and give aways				
Miscellaneous - Food, Paper Supplies	Food and refreshments \$900, Paper Supplies \$157				

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## Membership Report by Kim Ballard

No Report

## VMS Data Manager Report by Cindy Hielscher

### April 2025 Hourskeeper Report

#### Chapter Service & Training in April 2025

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
1289	140.75	76	37	<b>\$32,884.25</b>

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

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
4,812.25	575	102	429	<b>\$123,906.75</b>

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

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	All-time # Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
259,759.25	27,204	369	75	<b>\$6,600,154.75</b>

As of April 30th, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 131 members eligible to report hours, including the Initial Training class that began on January 18th. We had one member move to Mississippi, and five members became inactive due to non-payment of dues. Ninety-eight members have reported hours earned in 2025—75% of the total eligible. An updated roster is available and will be sent out in June following Initial Training graduation. 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 April 2025 numbers presented above.

**Class of 2025**—The Initial Training Class of 2025 has 20 trainees. As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, the class has reported 424.75 volunteer service hours, 179.50 AT hours, and 700.50 Initial Training hours. Graduation for the Class of 2025 is approaching and will be celebrated in June.

**Class of 2024**—As of April 30th, the 17 members of the Class of 2024 have reported 1,699 volunteer service hours and 465.50 AT hours since January 2024. The next step in becoming a Certified TMN Chapter member is attaining 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours as soon as possible, and targeting no later than the June Class of 2025 Graduation. Fourteen members have achieved this goal and are listed on page 2. One member has achieved recertification in 2025.

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

## Leadership Awards Earned during 2025

Sally Scroggs<sup>†</sup>      Greg Simmons

## Milestone Awards Earned during 2025

(Bold names new since last month's report)

- *Bronze 250-Hour Milestone Pin*—Kathryn Greer-Miller, Cynthia Baker
- *Silver 500-Hour Milestone Pin*—Jeremy Miller, Marilyn Stewart, **Janet James, Elizabeth Smith, Steve Marwitz, Cindy Hielscher**
- *Gold 1000-Hour Milestone Pin*—D'Ann Williams, **Barbara Mathis**
- *Polished Silver 2500-Hour Milestone Pin*—
- *Gold w/ruby 4,000-Hour Milestone Pin & President's award*—
- *Gold w/diamond 5,000-Hour Milestone Pin & lifetime membership/no dues award*—Allan Berger
- *Gold w/emerald 10,000-Hour award*—
- *15,000 Hour award*—

## 2025 Recertifications (Common Roadrunner pin)

\*1<sup>st</sup> to recertify, †Class of 2025 recertifications, Members in bold certified since last month)

<b>Brigid Berger</b>	<b>Julie Hejducek</b>	Robyn Savage
1 Bill Burge	<b>Wilford Korth</b>	<b>Sally Scroggs<sup>†</sup></b>
<b>Jim Case</b>	<b>Barbara Mathis</b>	
Steve Ferguson	Jeremy Miller	
Patrick Hartigan	Janet McCrea	

## Class of 2024 Initial Certifications

(Members in bold have been certified since last month's report)

Jim Case	Bradley Jones	Linda Daley
Chelsea Watson	Bobbi Rankin	Cynthia Baker
Kimberly Ballard	Mary Wilkins	James Black
Kendal Keyes	Shirley Richardson	<b>Laura Lee</b>
Clare Matranga	Marco Matranga	

If you have not received your above award(s) or past awards, they will be available at the MCTMN Chapter - BOD meeting in April and the Chapter meeting in May. If you cannot attend, you may designate someone else attending the meeting to pick them up for you, or they will be held for the next Chapter meeting.

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## Advanced Training Report by Debbie Kucera

Nothing to report.

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

There are three more training sessions remaining, with the next one titled "The World is Your Oyster" taking place this Thursday and Saturday. Additionally, the graduation and native plants session on June 7 will also be a potluck to celebrate the completion of training for our new members. An email with potluck details will be sent out soon. Currently, we have seven participants who have accumulated enough training hours to graduate, and two are on track to achieve double certification by the time of graduation. Our iNaturalist challenge has reached an impressive 4,098 observations of 1,603 species! We have one clear winner, but additional prizes will also be awarded.

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## **Projects Director Report by Greg Simmons**

### **Progress Reports**

- The "Pollinators for Texas" team, including Donna Bailey (Port Lavaca), Bill Burge (ANWR), Janet McCrea (Coleto Creek), Brigid Berger (Port O'Connor Elementary), Vickie Wilson (Rockport Post Office), and Margie Wilkins (Matagorda Heritage Park), has made progress at all sites.
  - Donna Bailey is taking lead on mid-year report. Photos and community engagement stories needed.
  - Signage efforts underway
  - HEB offer of 470 free plants initiated by Margie Wilkins. Still exploring the details. Turks cap, Salvia Furman's Red, Eupatorium, Blackfoot Daisy, Rudbeckia Goldsturm are the 5 varieties)
- Janet Price, Liz Smith, and Ben Horstmann providing birding and introduction to using iNaturalist for a women's epilepsy group at Camp Aranzazu on April 23.
- WRC native landscape (Patrick Hartigan) is mostly a watering effort for now.
- Aransas Pathway birding festival, April 12, was poorly attended
- GISP birding festival, April 19, was reasonably well attended
- Mid-coast birding festival, May 1-4, was a first year success

### **Requests**

- Assistance with pollinator gardens at Aransas Pass Community Garden and Riverside Park in Bay City.
  - Amy Nowlin is exploring details of VS opportunities at Riverside Park in Bay City. Looks like there is plenty to do if we are interested.
  - I think we need to be cautious about accepting opportunities without a reliable core group of volunteers.
- Ray Kirkwood is leading a flora and fauna tracking project for Rockport-Fulton High School.

- Other opportunities
  - Oyster gardening (Amy Nowlin)
  - Calhoun Port Authority career day (Steve Marwitz), May 13 and 14
  - Bobbi Rankin appeal for ANWR volunteers

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## Communications Directors Report by D'Ann Williams



# Communication Committee Report – May '25

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Administration | Historian | Newsletter | Outreach | Publicity | Website  
Committee's oversight areas as per our Bylaws



# Hooks!



## Plan –

- April 8<sup>th</sup> opened to chapters and partners
- May 8<sup>th</sup> – Opened to the public
- May 15<sup>th</sup> - Press Release
- Meeting 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
- 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch – Kirkwoods! Ron Smudy as backup

## You can get your items embroidered!

- Sun Kissed Graphics – Rockport
- Creative Things and More Lolita

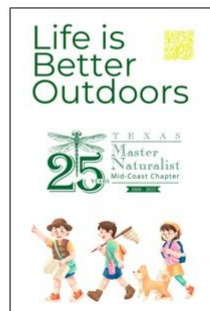
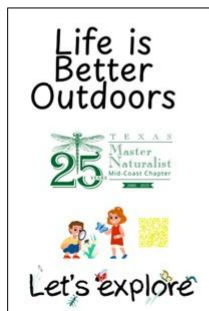


# Stickers for Hooks Game, etc.

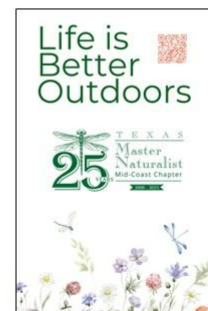
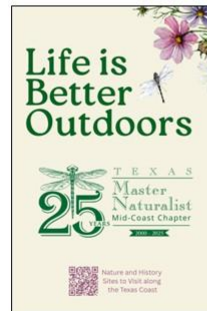


2"x1"

- Budgeted for 3000 for \$530.00
- We could do two types – 1 for Kids and 1 for Adults
  - And, a small 2"x1" as seen above for outreach events



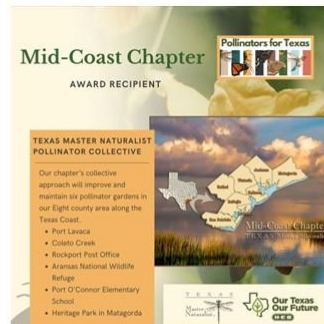
2"x3"



# HEB Grant



- What do I need to do?
- 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 format



# General



- **Outreach - Chapter Initiated**
  - Aransas Pathways – Not super well attended, but
    - 3 are participated in a Children's Booth at Linda Castro today from 10 to 1pm
    - 2 did an "Eat like a bird" presentation
    - 1 is lead 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 doing little things like fixing outdated links, etc.
- **Publicity**
  - 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Focused - Let me know if you need the Logo for your great works!

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## Plant Sale Manager Report by Debbie Minns

The Plant Sale will be September 19-21, 2025.

The Hummer Mall and Plant Sale will be located at the Fulton Convention Center. We will work out the details at a later date.

Our focus is on propagation right now. Liz Smith reports that her team is planting 16 native species from our most wanted list in 385 1-gallon pots. We have ordered pots to supply our propagators.

Tracey Bennett has submitted a grant request to Rachel Foundation to cover the expenses of the plant sale so that all the proceeds can go into our programming. If that grant is awarded, we plan to increase our educational component with additional signage and materials. Margie Wilkins is working on a large donation of native plants from HEB and some of those may be available at the plant sale.

We are still looking for a member to work with the Plant Sale Manager, and step into that position.

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### **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, Technology, and plant sale manager positions and refer them to me or President Steve.

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## Class Representative Report by Chelsea Watson

No report

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## Chapter Advisor by Amy Nowlin



### Oyster Gardening Pilot Program – Update as of May 1st

#### Program Launch:

- The pilot program officially kicked off on **May 1!** (Present the **oyster habitat.**)
  - **Oyster Bros. -donated the older oyster bags for repurposing.**
  - **Consulting with Bill Rodney (TPWD), Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) lead consultant.**
- 



### Community Partners & Site Updates

#### Sargent Area:

- **Clare and Marco Matranga** helped build and place habitats.
- **4 bags currently deployed in Sargent.**
- Actively recruiting additional participants! Will be distributing bags
- **Proposed training at the Sargent Library—stay tuned.**

#### Rockport Area:

- **Charla Ingalls** constructed bags and distributed **to local neighbors.** 13 total

#### Aransas County:

- **Shelby Bassett** helped build habitats.
  - Bags will be available for pickup at the **Aransas County AgriLife Extension Office.**
  - **Coordinate with Pat Cruz,** who will serve as a local point of contact alongside me.
- 




### Bag Distribution & Tracking

- **Several bags are ready to pick up now!**
  - Please inform me of:
    - How many bags you take.
    - **GPS coordinates** of where they're placed.
  - This data will support a mapping system being developed by a **Texas A&M student!**

- **James Black** has picked up **3 bags**.
  - **Palacios Update:**
    - Requests are coming in!
    - **2 bags are currently at PMAR** and being monitored.
- 

### **Support, Supplies & Next Steps**

- **Bill Balboa (MBF)** has generously offered a roll of oyster bags—this will speed up deployment.
    - **Goal: Get as many bags out as possible in May!**
  - **SAVE YOUR SHELLS!** 
    - We need oyster shells for habitat!
    - **Debbie Griffith** is assisting with shell collection for Aransas.
    - **Clare and Marco** already provided **300** shells for Matagorda County!
- 

### **Looking Ahead**

- We're planning an **official training and habitat construction workshop**.
- More details to come—stay involved and spread the word!

### **Riverside Park -Bay City (Matagorda County) Update:**

#### **About the Park:**

- **110 acres**, owned by the **City of Palacios**.
  - Offers **camping, fishing, boat ramp access, and kayaking**.
  - A very **natural setting**, ideal for **wildlife watching** and **birding**.
- 

### **Volunteer Opportunities – Seeking Lead Volunteers!**

We're looking for a few committed lead volunteers to help with key improvement projects in the park: (need to create a volunteer sign in/out sheet)

#### **Garden Maintenance**

- Help maintain the **flower beds in front of the park station**.
- We will have access to **tools and leftover materials donated by LCRA**.

- Need help **relocating some plants** behind the station.
- Planning to establish a **Monarch Waystation** for pollinators.

#### **Trail & Area Maintenance**

- Assist with **clearing and maintaining walking trails** and select common areas.
- **Duckweed control consultation** needed for the slough area—seeking advice or assistance.

#### **Fish & Flora Initiatives**

- Coordinating a **fish count study** with TPWD.
- Interested in a **wildflower planting project**—especially **bluebonnets** and other natives.
  - Area already has **native Turk's cap** and **Texas Thistle**.

#### **Riverfront Restoration**

- Need help with **weeding along the riverfront**.
- Looking to **plant native grasses** to help control erosion.

#### **Invasive Species Removal**

- Ongoing effort to **clear invasive cane/bamboo**.
  - **Boys and Girls Club** helped previously, but more work is needed!

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## **Meeting Attendance**

Cynthia Baker, Kim Ballard (Membership), Carla Belaire, Charlie Belaire, Allan Berger, Brigid Berger (Vice President), James Black (Zoom), Mary Carr (Zoom), Ele Chew (Secretary), Bob Cunningham (Past President), Kim Draper, Steve Ferguson (President), Bob Friedrichs, Julie Hejducek (Treasurer-Zoom), Mike Hejducek (Zoom), Patrick Henley, Dale Hughling (Zoom), Gail Hughling (Zoom), Bradley Jones, Dee Mahaffey, Barbara Carr (Zoom), Steve Marwitz, Janet McCrea, Amy Nowlin (Chapter Advisor), Bobbi Rankin, Karen Lee Rystad (Zoom), Sally Scroggs (Zoom), Greg Simmons (Projects Director-Zoom), Marlyn Stewart, Linda Swickheimer, Deborah Troup, Gary Ward, Chelsea Watson (Class Representative), and D'Ann Williams (Communications Director-Zoom).

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## **Awards**

Updated Awards from May 10, 2025 Chapter Meeting

**Initial Certification enamel dragonfly & plaque**— Not presented: Mary Wilkins, Laura Lee, Sally Crofutt, Larry Green, Martha McLeod

### **Milestone Awards**

*250-hour bronze dragonfly*—Presented: Cynthia Baker

*Silver 500-Hour Milestone dragonfly*—Presented: Steve Marwitz Not presented: Karen Barton, Jeremy Miller, Marilyn Stewart, Janet James, Liz Smith, Cindy Hielscher

*Gold 1,000-Hour Milestone dragonfly* – Presented: Barbara Mathis

*Polished Silver 2,500-Hour dragonfly* –

Gold/Diamond 5,000-Hour dragonfly – Presented: Allan Berger

**Leadership Award** – Sally Scroggs and Greg Simmons

### **Recertification Pins**

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

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

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

*2025 Roadrunner* – Presented: Brigid Berger, Barbara Mathis (by Carla B.), Janet McCrea Not presented: Jim Case, Patrick Hartigan, Julie Hejducek, Wilfred Korth, Jeremy Miller, Robyn Savage, Sally Scroggs

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

Not present: Marueen Crocker

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