

MINUTES

MID-COAST CHAPTER, TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST

NOVEMBER 8, 2025 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. General Membership Meeting met hybrid remote, and in-person at 10:00 AM. on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at the Austwell Community Center, 403 Bay St, Austwell, Texas in Refugio County.

Program

The "Member Spotlight" Advanced Training program featured various members sharing their volunteer projects to strengthen chapter relationships. Wilfred Korth discussed the McAlister property initiatives. Greg Simmons and Sally Scroggs highlighted Goose Island Kayaking Tours. Cindy Hielscher talked about VMS Hours Keeper. Bobbi Rankin shared her experiences at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge front desk. Bill Burge offered advice on propagating milkweeds. Jarret Kernen discussed research projects at the Welder Wildlife Refuge. Linda Shirey spoke about training educational birds at the Wings Rescue Center. Allan Berger explained the San Antonio Bay Partnership's annual volunteer efforts, including the Shorelines Cleanup and Abandoned Crab Trap Removal. Potluck and business meeting followed.

Business Meeting

The business meeting was called to order at 12:50 PM by President Steve Ferguson. Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 PM for 1.5 hours CB: Chapter Business plus individual travel time. The AT presentation was 2.25 hours, spanning from 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM.

Meeting Attendance

There was a total of 43 attendees, of which thirty-eight members were in good standing and five were guests. Eight participated via Zoom. 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 10:00 AM on Saturday, August 12, 2025, at the Calhoun County AgriLife Extension-Auditorium located at 185 Henry Barber Way, Port Lavaca, Texas.

The business meeting was called to order at 12 PM by President Steve Ferguson. Secretary Ele Chew recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM for 2 hours CB: Chapter Business plus individual travel time.

A total of forty-four members in good standing were present, including one guest, with sixteen participating via Zoom. Nine officers and directors formed a quorum.

Program

Diane Wilson, Executive Director of San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper, and Steve Raabe, Trustee, provided an overview of the history of the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust at the AT presentation. RJ Shelly, Calhoun County Marine Agent; Matt Chastin, Principal and Senior Coastal Ecologist at Compass Environmental Solutions; and Allan Berger, Chairperson of the San Antonio Bay Partnership, discussed the projects funded by the Trust. The AT presentation was 2.25 hours, spanning from 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM.

The minutes were posted on the chapter website on September 5, 2025.

Membership Director Kim Ballard moved to approve the minutes as posted; Bobby Rankin seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Inc.
Chapter Meeting 11/08/2025
Austwell Community Center, 403 Bay St. Austwell, TX
Treasurer's Report as of: 10/31/2025

Beginning bank balance checking as of 10/01	\$54,551.93
Plus CD	13,449.26
Plus MM	7,121.10
<u>Total beginning cash as of 10/01</u>	<u>\$75,122.29</u>

Checking account balance as of 10/01	\$54,551.93
Less cleared items	644.03
Less outstanding items	-69.98
Operating bank balance as of 10/31	<u>\$53,837.92</u>

CD account balance as of 10/01	\$13,449.26
Plus interest	
CD bank balance as of 10/31	<u>\$13,449.26</u>

**Note: New Maturity date is 12/09/2025.*

MM account balance as of 10/01	\$7,121.10
Plus interest	9.07
MM bank balance as of 10/31	<u>\$7,130.17</u>

Checking as of 10/31	\$53,837.92
Plus CD as of 10/31	13,449.26
Plus MM as of 10/31	7,130.17
<u>Total cash as of 10/31</u>	<u>\$74,417.35</u>

YTD Total Revenue as of 10/31 (includes \$13K grants)	\$35,463.07
Less YTD Total Expenses as of 10/31	17,894.37
Net Income as of 10/31	<u>\$ 17,568.70</u>

- Recap from Page 1: \$53,837 in checking, and \$20,579 in contingency accounts. Year-to-date revenue is \$35,463 (includes grants), and year-to-date expenses are \$17,894. Net Income as of 10/31 is \$17,569.
- Year-to-date plant revenue net of the grant is \$18,296. Year-to-date plant expense is \$9,198, leaving \$802 under budget. Year-to-date plant sale net income is \$9,098. Please refer to the Plant Sale tab in the Excel budget sheet for a more detailed view.
- Year-to-date project expense for the pollinator gardens as of 10/31 is \$2,523, leaving \$477 under budget.
- This is a reminder that grants received count as income with the IRS. The Chapter is able to submit a form 990 because the gross income is less than \$50,000. Filing a form 990 informs the IRS of gross income and is very easy to file. Once over the threshold of \$50,000, a 1040 will need to be filed. Gross Income in 2025 to date \$35,463.
- Three bank reconciliations and Quicken backup completed 11/02.
- It's time to begin working on the 2026 Budget! Please send your 2026 budgets to treasurer.mctmn@gmail.com by the end of the year. They will be presented at the January BOD meeting for approval.
- QuickBooks Desktop to Online migration will start in November. Parallels will be run on both Desktop and Online through the end of the year. After confirming year end roll up is correct, January 2026 will be the first 'go live' month.

Board of Directors Reports:

- [President's Report](#) — Highlights of 2025
 - MCTMN 25th Anniversary, Accomplishments of 2025, Plan for the Future
- [Vice-President's Report](#) — Updates on the next Board of Directors and General Meetings in 2026
- [Treasurer's Report](#) — Budget Actuals 10/2025
- [Membership & VMS Reports](#)
 - Updates
 - VMS Update
- [Advanced Training Director](#) — Updates
- [Initial Training Report](#) — Updates
IT 2026 Schedule

- [Projects Report](#)
 - Wrap Ups
 - Upcoming Opportunities
Coastal Flooding Field and Workshop, Christmas in the Park, ANWR Bird Survey, McAlister Property Cleanup, Christmas Bird Count
- [Communications Report](#) — Newsletter, Website
 - [Plant Sale Report](#)
- [Technology Report](#) — No report
- [Past President Report](#) — Updates
Seeking candidates for Technology and Advanced Training directors
- [Class Representative Report](#) — No report
- [Chapter Advisor Report](#) — Projects
Oyster Gardening Project Update
- [Awards](#)

Old Business

Election of 2026 Officers

The Election of 2026 Officers resulted in Steve Ferguson as president, Ele Chew as vice president, Janet Cunningham as secretary, and Julie Hejducek as treasurer.

The 2025 nominating committee comprised Linda Swickheimer, Gary Ward, Communication Director D'Ann Williams, and Chapter Advisor Amy Nowlin. There were no nominations made from the floor for anyone who would like to serve themselves or anyone else. A unanimous majority moved to elect all four members by acclamation.

New Business

Adjournment

Bill Burge moved to adjourn, and Kayla Clark seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 PM.

VMS: Chapter Business: TMN Adm. Report Hours=1.5 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

What a Year We've Had!

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Our Mid-Coast Chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2025—a remarkable milestone for any small nonprofit, especially one with an annual budget under \$25,000. The average lifespan of small, nature-focused nonprofits is only three to seven years, so our 25 years say much about the dedication of our volunteers and the enduring value of our mission.

We marked the occasion with chapter-wide projects like our H-E-B Pollinator Garden Initiative, community events, a night at the Hooks game, and—most meaningfully—the graduation of our **Initial Training Class of 2025**.

Strong, servant-hearted leaders have always sustained our chapter. This year, **Debbie Minns, Greg Simmons, and Sally Scroggs** received our Chapter Leadership Award, one of our highest honors. They exemplify the spirit of service that defines the Mid-Coast Chapter and our work for the people and natural resources of the Coastal Bend.

What We Accomplished

In January, **H-E-B** selected our chapter for a **\$3,000 Pollinator Garden Grant**—thanks to **Donna Bailey's** leadership and the dedication of many volunteers who planted and now maintain six gardens across our region.

Our **Native Plant Sale** in September exceeded all expectations. **Debbie Minn** will share more about our Plant Sale when she makes her report.

Last fall, **Tracy Bennett, Maureen Crocker, and Julie Hejducek** formed a new **Fundraising Committee** that quickly became a game changer. I had hoped they might raise a few hundred dollars. Instead, through persistence and skillful grant writing, they secured **\$13,400** from foundations, companies, and individual donors—funds that now cover about two-thirds of our 2025 expenses.

D'Ann Williams is in the midst of leading the effort to redesign our Chapter's website so that it continues to be stunningly beautiful and becomes much more user friendly.

We also laid the groundwork for a new **Naturalist-Youth Program** at **Rockport-Fulton High School**, developed by a steering committee that includes **Maureen Crocker, Amy Nowlin, Bill Burge, and Rachael Diaz** (RFHS Science Department Chair). This initiative blends conservation education with hands-on fieldwork and could become a model for youth engagement across Texas.

What's Next

In January, our Board set three goals for 2025:

1. Strengthen relationships with community partners
2. Build our fundraising capacity
3. Use projects to enhance member engagement and satisfaction

We've made progress on all three. Our projects remain at the heart of who we are—the living expression of our mission to educate, engage, and conserve the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.

This year's successes give us both an opportunity and a responsibility to use our people and financial resources wisely as we expand our reach and deepen our impact. In December, we **Plan for Our Future** when members of the 2026 Board and others will meet to chart that course for the year ahead.

In Closing

This has been a landmark year of **growth, generosity, and gratitude**. We've deepened partnerships, expanded projects, and strengthened our foundation for the future.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary chapter and community. Together, we're ensuring that our mission endures—serving the water, the land, the wildlife, and the people of the Coastal Bend for generations to come.

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Vice President's Report by Brigid Berger

The next Board of Directors meeting will be on Saturday, January, at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held at Coastal Oaks Garden, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension-Aransas County, located at 892 Airport Rd., Rockport, TX 78382.

The next chapter meeting will be held on Saturday, February 14, at 10:00 AM. The advanced training program and location are yet to be determined.

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Treasurer's Report by Julie Hejducek

Budget Actuals 10/25 updated

2025 MCTMN BUDGET

	2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION	2025 BUDGET	ACTUALS as of 10/2025	\$ Difference
REVENUE	Revenue			
Member Dues	Annual dues (\$15/person average x 100 paying members)	1,500	685	815
Initial Training Fees	Initial training (20 @ \$150 FOR 2025 class)	2,515	2,666	151
Gross Plant Sale	Hummerbird	16,600	18,296	1,696
Plant Sale Grants	Ed Rachal	10,000	10,000	-
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	416	84
Misc Other (Donations)	Unsolicited donations less than \$250 includes grants	3,000	3,401	401
TOTAL REVENUE	Total Revenue	34,765	35,463	698
EXPENSES	Expenses			
Administrative				
President Expenses	25th Celebration, supplies, misc(moved to Outreach)			
VP Expenses	Supplies & other expenses incurred by VP, MS products \$36, misc	250	149	101
VP Expenses for Meetings - Capital Exp	No capitol expected			
Storage Rental	Kool storage, \$93/month	1,200	950	250
Secretary's Supplies	Paper, ink, postage, other supplies	100	106	6
Treasurer's Supplies	Ink \$65, MS products \$36, storage container \$10, paper \$10, misc	200	116	84
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	2,523	977
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	62	938
Membership	Plaques (2 cases @\$171 ea) - \$342 name badges - \$13*25=\$325	667	453	214
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	943	1,387
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	270	650
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	856	384
Communications - Outreach - Capital Expense	<i>Will concentrate on 25th anniversary / Hooks Game</i>			
PO Box Rental	Post Office box rental - Fulton 12 months @ \$150	150	150	
Discretionary	\$150 annual donation to TMN, \$200 non standard honorarium	350		350

	2025 BUDGET EXPLANATION	2025 BUDGET	ACTUALS as of 10/2025	\$ Difference
Square Expense / Bank Expense	Misc expense from Square transactions and bank fees	50	27	23
Total Administrative		12,257	6,605	5,652
Advanced Training	Instructor/speaker fees	0	0	0
Training - Initial				
Boat / Touch Tank Fees	RV Katy for Bay and Barrier Island Ecology	850	675	175
Books - Purchased	19 Statewide Cirriculum (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	877	177
Scholarship	Earmark for potential 2025 class applicants (2@\$90)	180	120	60
Misc	Ambassador/training committee pizza meeting	150		150
Total Initial Training		3,505	2,092	1,413
Plant Sale		Budget	Actual	Diff
HummerBird Fee	Booth Space For outside space	380	380	-
Plants	Plants purchased	5,300	5,572	272
Sales Tax	Tax for sales other than 2 "free days".	600	450	150
Fees - Square	2.9% transaction fee for credit cards (60.0% of sales)	520	369	151
POS Square Expense	One month of hot spot	55	50	5
POS Hardware/Software - Capital Expense	Square purchase	-		
Plant Sale Educational Materials/Eqpt	Printed plantcare handouts and educational posters	1,200	93	1,107
Supplies & Misc expenses	\$50 labels/square, \$250 misc includes Square refill paper \$15 less one month hotspot \$55	245	345	100
Inventory Supplies	500 gallon pots	600	278	322
Marketing	Banners, posters, and social media boosts	800	918	118
Equipment Upgrades - Capital Expense	200 Carrier trays	300	742	442
Total Plant Sale		10,000	9,198	802
TOTAL EXPENSES		25,762	17,894	7,868
TOTAL NET INCOME (YE)		9,003	17,569	8,566
TOTAL PLANT SALE NET INCOME (YE)		6,600	9,098	2,498

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Membership Report by Kim Ballard

October 2025 Hourskeeper Report

Chapter Service & Training in October 2025

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
937	119	52	27	\$24,288

Service & Training 2025 Year-to-Date Total

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
12,487.75	1,314.75	106	56	\$317,457.50

Cumulative—Chapter Inception in 2000 to Present

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	All-time # Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
267,281.75	27,853.50	377	76	\$6,788,110.75

As of October 31st, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 128 members eligible to report hours. One hundred six members have reported hours earned in 2025, 83% of the total eligible. A new roster is scheduled for November. If you need an updated roster before then, please email hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org. The website will be updated with the October 2025 numbers presented above soon.

Class of 2025—As of October 31st, the Class of 2025 has reported 1,616.50 volunteer service hours and 327 AT hours. 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 2026 Graduation. Thirteen have achieved Initial Certification, and seven also earned 2025 recertification. Our Class Representative is Nicole Reagan.

Recertification 2025- The Common Roadrunner pin represents 2025 recertifications. **Fifty-three members** of the chapter have recertified for the year and earned this pin. See the list on page 2.

Leadership Awards Earned during 2025

Sally Scroggs Greg Simmons Debbi Minns

Milestone Awards Earned during 2025

(Bold names new since last month's report)

- **Bronze 250-Hour Milestone Pin**—Kathryn Greer-Miller, Cynthia Baker, Amy Nowlin, Jim Case, Sandra Garcia, Jessica Ruble
- **Silver 500-Hour Milestone Pin**—Jeremy Miller, Marilyn Stewart, Janet James, Elizabeth Smith, Steve Marwitz, Cindy Hielscher, Bobby Garner, Janette Sims, Scott Swanson, Eleanor Chew
- **Gold 1000-Hour Milestone Pin**—D'Ann Williams, Barbara Mathis, Julie Hejducek
- **Polished Silver 2500-Hour Milestone Pin**—Bob Friedrichs
- **Gold w/ruby 4,000-Hour Milestone Pin & President's award**—**Dale Hughling**
- **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)

*1st to recertify, †Class of 2025 recertifications, Members in bold certified since last month)

Cynthia Baker	†Tatum Dunn	Ray Kirkwood	Sally Scroggs
Kimberly Ballard	†Margaret Durst	Willford Korth	Ernie Schertz
Carla Belaire	Steve Ferguson	Debbie Kucera	Linda Shirey
Shelby Bessette	†Deb Fisher	Steve Marwitz	Greg Simmons
Brigid Berger	Kathryn Greer-Miller	Barbara Mathis	Jannette Sims
James Black	Patrick Hartigan	Clare Matranga	Marilyn Stewart
Bill Burge	Patrick Henley	Janet McCrea	Scott Swanson
Jim Case	Julie Hejducek	Martha McLeod	†Deb Troup
Ele Chew	Mike Hejducek	Jeremy Miller	Chelsea Watson
Maureen Crocker	Cindy Hielscher	Amy Nowlin	D'Ann Williams
Bob Cunningham	Dale Hughling	†Nicole Reagan	Vickie Wilson
Janet Cunningham	Gail Hughling	Debbi Roskey	
Linda Daley	Bradley Jones	†Jessica Ruble	
†Kimberly Draper	Kris Kirkwood	Robyn Savage	

Class of 2025 Initial Certifications

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

Kim Draper	Deb Troupe	Frank Solis	Brianna Hanselman
Deb Fisher	Karen Dorgan	Pamela Anderson	Jarrett Kernen
Nicole Reagan	Margaret Durst	Mark Croudy	
Jessica Ruble	Tatum Dunn		

VMS Data Manager Report by Cindy Hielscher

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Advanced Training Report by Debbie Kucera

There have been 153 Advanced Training approved in 2025.

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Initial Training Directors Report by Tatum Dunn & Margaret Durst

The Initial Training Orientation for 2026 is scheduled for January 24, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Aransas AgriLife Extension Office, located at 892 Airport Road, Rockport, TX 78382. Members will host a potluck to welcome the trainees. Secretary Janet Cunningham will organize the potluck and provide further details.

The IT schedule can be found on the MCTMN website: <https://midcoast-tmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/IT-Schedule-2026.pdf>

Tatum Dunn is revamping the curriculum & creating a more environmentally happy, downloadable format for all handouts that will be accessible to trainees.

Margaret Durst is working on the supplies order for the 2026 training. A portion of the necessary supplies is currently in storage and will be utilized for next year.

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Projects Director Report by Greg Simmons

Wrap Ups:

Native Plant Sale Pollinators

Shorelines Cleanup by San Antonio Bay Partnership

Monarch Butterfly Monitoring and Tagging through Monarch Watch by Patrick Hartigan

Oyster Gardening by Amy Nowlin

Upcoming Opportunities:

AT: Coastal Flooding Field Session and Workshop: Past, Current, and Future by Texas Sea Grant

Saturday, December 6

Location: [Carlos Truan Natural Resources Center, 6300 Ocean Dr, Corpus Christi, TX 78412, USA](https://www.texasseagrant.org/events/2025/12/06/at-coastal-flooding-field-session-and-workshop-past-current-and-future)

Description: Explore Coastal Flooding in the Coastal Bend!

Participants are invited to an educational event exploring the science and challenges of coastal flooding in the region, featuring interactive field sessions along the bay and beachfront. Open to all participants, registration is on a first-come basis.

Dress: Closed-toe shoes and cold-weather clothing for outdoor activities

Lunch & water provided.

To register and more information:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScVQe7vfabj2xDMFJ6jyEFTf3qwNdd4mI_Rq5WdM9Vd7GaRqA/viewform

Christmas in the Park

Saturday, December 13, 2025 5:30-8:30 PM

Location: Goose Island State Park

How to camp for free: Registration is now OPEN! Fill out the form for your chance to participate: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/BaB6KNQmR4>. Eligible campsites are 120-132 and

147-157. Only those sites are eligible for waived camping fees. *Please note that submitting a request to decorate a campsite does NOT mean you are registered.* We receive a high volume of requests, and it can take several days to process them.

ANWR Bird Survey

Friday, September 26, 2025, 7:30 AM – 2:00 PM

Monthly except Jun-Aug: Jan 31, Feb 28, Mar 21, Apr 18, May 23, take a break June - Aug, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 21, Dec TBD—the CBC date

Location: Meet at the HQ parking area

Description: Monthly bird census. Walk the Rail Trail & Heron Flats Trail, check out the fishing pier, the tower, and the auto loop. After the fieldwork, meet at HQ to complete the reporting forms.

Birding is usually completed by 1:00 PM. and documentation completed by 1:30 PM. Contact Janet Price for more information. Bring bug spray, water, lunch, and snacks.

Wayne & Martha McAlister's Acres of Solitude (DeWitt County)

Workdays are scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Changes to the monthly schedule could take place due to the weather. Targeting 8 AM but come when you can. The gate will be open until we finish for the day.

Location: The property is on Rabel Rd, Cuero, TX 77954. Take Hwy 87 from Victoria toward Cuero. In Thomaston, turn left (west) on Thomaston River Road, at the intersection with Rabel Rd. Turn left, and it is the 2nd property on the left side. The gate is hidden by brush but will be marked with flagging.

Description: The plan is to do more brush clearing and control. Bring gloves, hats, water, bug spray, and tools (loppers, clippers, hand saws) to help with vegetation mgmt. Also, bring lunch and snacks.

Please RSVP to Wilfred at naturetour12@gmail.com or at 361-542-0374 so we will know to watch for you.

Christmas Bird Counts

The following link provides information on the various locations and dates in our area, and contact information if you want to participate.

https://gis.audubon.org/christmasbirdcount/?_gl=1*1jymaj* _gcl_au*MTMzMTE4MzM2Mi4xNzYzMdkwMjU1*_ga*MTU4MTE1MjI1OS4xNzYzMdkwMjU2*_ga_X2XNL2MWTT*cxE3NjM0OTEzMjlkbzIkZzEkdDE3NjM0OTEzMzckajQ1JGwwJGgw

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Communication Committee Report – November '25

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Committee's oversight areas as per our Bylaws

Newsletter / Website



- **Neli is gathering information for it now!**
 - Our chapter has been doing a lot of wonderful things! Please send her a paragraph on your projects and upcoming events along with photos!
- **Website is getting there slowly but surely**
 - Next slide shows examples

Wix – Website: Getting all in before making it cuter...

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Plant Sale Manager Report by Debbie Minns; presented by Jessie Zaykov, incoming Plant Sale Manager

Jessie has generously agreed to step into the role of Plant Sale Manager. In 2026 we will be working together so that we can make a smooth transition.

Thanks to a grant to underwrite the expenses of the plant sale, our net income was the best ever. Thanks, too, to every chapter member who contributed to this very successful sale. The planning team members accomplished their respective duties with expertise and enthusiasm: Brigid Berger, Consultant; Bill Burge, Set-Up; Cindy Hielscher, Pre-Orders; D'Ann Williams, Volunteers and Communication; Julie Hejducek, Financial; Liz Smith, Propagation; Margaret Durst, Staging Area; Patrick Hardigan, Education/Milkweed; Tracey Bennett, Grant Writing and High School Volunteer Liaison. I could go into great detail about how important each one of these volunteers is to the success of the sale. Each of these people really step up and get it done. It hasn't been easy over the last few years with constant changes in venue.

This year, after thoroughly investigating several options, we worked with the Hummerbird Celebration Coordinators to have the entire patio area on the Bay Side of the Fulton Convention Center which provided the space and utilities that we required. There was some concern about overnight security but nothing was lost or damaged. The Chamber Staff and Fulton Convention Center Staff were very accommodating, though understandably strict about their rules. This venue

is set for the Hummer Mall/Plant Sale at least through 2029 so this gives us a chance to perfect the set-up.

There was a bit of a scramble at times leading up to the sale with the staging, pre-order and set-up. We are discussing the possibility of receiving plants directly at the Convention Center. This would be ideal if we can work it out.

There were lessons learned about volunteer sign-up. Please take care, when you sign up to carefully check your timeslot and write it on your calendars, to only sign up for only one job during a time-slot and to make sure that you are physically able to perform the task. We try to be very thoughtful about the number of slots available so we can't afford to have shortages. Volunteers are what make this event possible and we are extremely grateful to each and every one of you. We had an abundance of plants this year because we had grant money to spend, Formosa and the Propagation Team were very productive and we had lots of space for them. We had plants left at the end but those will still help to fulfill our mission to get more native plants into our landscape. The bottom line is that we made money, placed over 2000 natives in the landscape, educated hundreds of people about the importance of natives, and we had a lot of fun doing it.

	<u>YTD 25</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>
Income Plant Sale			
Grants Plant Sale	10,000	10,000	-
Plant Sale - Income			
Plant Sale Revenue - Non-Taxed	12841	8,600	4,241
Plant Sale Revenue - Taxable	5455	8,000	-2,545
Total Plant Sale - Income	<u>18296</u>	<u>16,600</u>	<u>1,696</u>
Plant Sale - Expense			
Equipment Upgrades	743	300	443
Inventory supplies	278	600	-322
Marketing	918	800	118
Plant Sale Educational Material	93	1,200	-1,107
Fees-Square	369	520	-151
Point of Sale System	50	55	-5
Sales Tax	450	600	-150
Plant Purchase	5572	5,300	272
Plant Sale Supplies	345	245	100
Booth Fee	380	380	0
Total Plant Sale - Expense	<u>9198</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-802</u>
Net Income Plant Sale	<u><u>9,098</u></u>	<u><u>6,600</u></u>	<u><u>2,498</u></u>

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Past President Report by Bob Cunningham

Past President Bob Cunningham, chair of the nomination committee, congratulated Steve Ferguson on being elected President, Ele Chew as Vice President, Janet Cunningham as Secretary, and Julie Hejducek as Treasurer for 2026. The nominating committee also identified candidates for the director's positions. These directors will be appointed by the President and must be approved by a subset of the board of directors. Currently, the positions for Advanced Training and Technology directors are vacant

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Class Representative Report by Nicole Reagan

No report

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Chapter Advisor by Amy Nowlin

Oyster Gardening Project Update

Chapter Advisor Amy Nowlin reported on the progress of the oyster gardening project in the Palacios and Rockport area. She outlined the plans for data assessment and collection, as well as the relocation of oysters to a conservation area. In her report, she expressed gratitude to the Matagorda Bay Foundation, various individuals, and other organizations for their support and assistance.

Obtaining permits from Texas Parks and Wildlife for relocating the oyster collection was challenging. Two bay systems required individual permits, and GPS mapping was essential for documenting both the original and relocation sites. Graduate students and other team members conducted data analysis by counting spat recruitment and taking measurements.

Nowlin detailed the collection, which began with 40 to 50 bags, each containing 20 oyster shells. Each bag of oyster shells yielded between 800 and 1,000 oysters. Although it was initially believed there would be no spat recruitment in the fall, photographs and data have provided evidence of the contrary in Palacios, Texas.

The first relocation is scheduled for November 15-16 to Dog Island, which is owned by Matagorda County. The Matagorda Bay Foundation holds a conservation lease on the island, and the relocated oysters will never be harvested. This effort aims to help build and conserve our natural resources. The next relocation is planned for December 12-13 at Goose Island. During this event, they will collect the bags of oysters from the Rockport area and collaborate with Sink Your Shucks for the relocation efforts at Goose Island. Bill Burge is assisting with this effort.

Regardless of whether there was no spat recruitment, she asked the members to return the oyster bags. No stat recruitment is still considered data.

She also discussed plans for the future oyster gardening season, which will begin in April and May, with a definite cut-off in May. The South Texas chapter aims to expand this project, while the Hill Country chapter plans to construct bags and collect oyster shells from local restaurants.

She invites members to participate in the upcoming collection and relocation efforts.

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Meeting Attendance

Kim Ballard (Membership), Brigid Berger (Vice President), Shelby Bessette, James Black, Bill Burge, Jim Case, Ele Chew (Secretary), Laura Clark, Kayla Clark, Denise Crane, Gary Crane, Bob Cunningham(Past President), Janet Cunningham, Karen Dorgan, Daniel Dorgan, Kim Draper, Margaret Durst (IT), Steve Ferguson (President), Bobby Garner (Zoom), Debbie Griffin (Zoom), Patrick Henley, Cindy Hielscher (VMS Admin), Dale Hughling, Bradley Jones, Jarrett Kernen, Cathy Koenig (Zoom), Wilfred Korth, Debbie Kucera (Zoom), Janet McCrea, Amy Nowlin (Chapter Advisor), Bobbi Rankin, Jessica Ruble, Karen Lee Rystad, Ernie Schertz, Sally Scroggs, Linda Shirey, Greg Simmons (Projects Director), Gary Ward (Zoom), and D'Ann Williams (Communications Director-Zoom), Petra Hockey (Guest), Mindy Miles(Guest) and Cassie Hartman (Guest), Antonio Sanchez (Guest Zoom), Denny Fahey (Guest Zoom).

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Awards

Updated Awards following the November 8, 2025, Chapter Meeting

Initial Certification enamel dragonfly & plaque— Presented: Karen Dorgan and Jarrett Kernen Not presented: Frank Solis, Mark Croudy, Brianna Hanselman, Mary Wilkins, Sally Crofutt, Larry Green, Martha McLeod

Milestone Awards

250-hour bronze dragonfly—Presented: Not presented: Sandra Garcia

Silver 500-Hour Milestone dragonfly—Presented: Not presented: Janet James, Scott Swanson

Gold 1,000-Hour Milestone dragonfly – Presented:

Polished Silver 2,500-Hour dragonfly – Not presented: Bob Friedrichs

Gold/Ruby 4,000-Hour dragonfly – Presented: Dale Hughling

Gold/Diamond 5,000-Hour dragonfly –

Leadership Award –

Recertification Pins

2022 Lightning Whelk— Presented: Not presented: Karen Benson.

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

2024 Rattlesnake—Presented: Not presented: Chris Andersen, Laura Andersen, Karen Benson, Kayla Clark, Debra Dhams-Nelson, Judy Goodner, Wilfred Korth, Martha McLeod, Robyn Savage, Scott Swanson, Gary Ward

2025 Roadrunner – Presented: Kimberly Ballard, Shelby Bessette, James Black, Bob Cunningham, Janet Cunningham, Kimberly Draper, Patrick Henley, Bradley Jones, Ernie Schertz. Not presented: Maureen Crocker, Kathryn Geer-Miller, Wilfred Korth, Clare Martranga, Steve Marwitz, Martha McLeod, Nicole Reagan, Robyn Savage, Marilyn Stewart, Scott Swanson, Chelsea Watson, Vickie Wilson

TPWD Water Awards 2023 awarded in 2024

Not present: Marueen Crocker

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