

## **Minutes**

### **Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist Board of Directors Meeting – January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. met at the Aransas County AgriLife Extension Office . The meeting was hybrid and was called to order at 10:00 am.

President, Steve Ferguson, presided at the meeting. Incoming Secretary, Janet Cunningham, and Ele Chew, outgoing Secretary, recorded the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm for 3.5 hours CB:Chapter Business/Chapter Meeting.

Meeting Attendance members & guests attended. Link title “Attendance to Program

Business Meeting Reports •

President • Steve presented a review of 2025, and possible new possibilities for 2026. He also outlined plans for the future, including a long-range planning workshop, engagement of a professional planning facilitator and presidential transition.

Vice President • Ele Chew

#### **Secretary Report by Janet Cunningham & Ele Chew**

The Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist™, Inc. Board of Directors met on Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the Wings Rescue Center Education Center (Yurt), 324 W 3rd St, Rockport, TX 78382. The meeting was hybrid.

A total of twenty-one members were present. Eight board members attended in person, constituting a quorum. In addition, thirteen other members in good standing, of which 5 participated using the OWL/Zoom chat function, were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM. 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 November 25, 2025. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 PM for 3.00 hours CB: Chapter Business/Chapter Meeting.

Project Director Greg Simmon moved to accept the minutes as published on the chapter website, and Past President Bob Cunningham seconded. The motion passed.

**Treasurer**— Budget VS actuals attached •

**Mid-Coast Texas Master Naturalist Inc.  
Board Meeting 01/10/2026  
Aransas County AgriLife Extension Service Office, 892 Airport Road, Rockport, Texas  
Treasurer's Report as of: 12/31/2025**

**Financial Balances - Overview (as of 12/31/2025)**

**Contingency Reserves 12/31**

Certificates of Deposit	\$13,584.12
Money Market Funds	\$7,145.94
Total Contingency Reserves	<u>\$20,730.06</u>

**Bank Checking as of 12/31**

\$53,992.72

Checking account balance as of 12/01	\$54,271.50
Less cleared items	278.78
Less outstanding items	
Operating bank balance as of 12/31	<u>\$53,992.72</u>

YTD Total Revenue as of 12/31 (includes \$13K grants)	\$37,172.21
Less YTD Total Expenses as of 12/31	19,298.08
Net Income as of 12/31	<u>\$17,784.13</u>

**Aransas County AgriLife Extension Service Office, 892 Airport Road, Rockport, Texas**  
**Treasurer's Report as of: 12/31/2025**

- Recap from Page 1: \$53,992.72 in checking, and \$20,730.06 in contingency accounts. Total cash on hand: \$74,722.78. Revenue is \$37,172.21 (including grants), and expenses are \$19,298.08. Net Income as of 12/31 is \$17,784.13.
- The Board will be conducting a strategic planning session soon.
- This is a reminder that grants received count as income with the IRS. The Chapter can submit a form 990 because the gross revenue is less than \$50,000. Filing a form 990 informs the IRS of gross revenue and is very easy to file. Once over the threshold of \$50,000, a 1040 will need to be filed. Gross Revenue in 2025 to date \$36,092.79.
- Three bank reconciliations and Quicken backup completed 01/02. A Quicken backup will not be necessary with the Online QuickBooks version; in fact, there isn't even an option to backup. COH will need revision with next update.
- Budget will be discussed and reviewed during the January Board Meeting today 01/10.
- QuickBooks Desktop to Online was migrated November 13. Parallels were successfully run in November and December. January 2026 is go live. Online will be used going forward.
- New signature cards need to be updated at Prosperity Bank with the new officers: Ele Chew as VP and Janet Cunningham as Secretary. Per Deborah Laird at Prosperity Bank in Rockport, signed copies of the minutes need to be delivered and signed by the *incoming* Secretary. Minutes need to state that outgoing officers are to be removed (Brigid and Ele) and incoming officers are to be added (Ele and Janet). The minutes should reflect legal names since IDs will be required. Once Deborah has completed her updates, the incoming secretary and VP can go to the Rockport bank to sign new resolutions.

State Sales Tax was processed 01/04 for tax year 2025. Form 990 is not due until 05/15.

- A new laptop was purchased in December for the VP. The purchase price was \$429 with a cost savings of \$320. \$429 added to 2026 budget. A discussion on what to do with the old laptop is needed.

## **Director Report •**

- Steve Ferguson, President

January 11, 2026 – Board of Directors Meeting

### “It Was a Very Good Year” — A Review of 2025

2025 was an exceptional year for the Mid-Coast Chapter, marked by strong leadership, remarkable volunteer engagement, and record-setting results across multiple fronts.

Key highlights include:

#### ☑ Leadership and Board Transitions

Smooth leadership changes and an engaged Board strengthened chapter governance and continuity.

#### ☑ The Class of 2025

The Class of '25 has proven to be an outstanding cohort—energetic, committed, and already making meaningful contributions to the chapter.

#### ☑ Plant Sale Success

Our annual Plant Sale exceeded all expectations, setting new benchmarks for both revenue and volunteer participation.

#### ☑ Expanded Outreach Initiatives

The chapter continued to excel in community outreach, expanding both the scope and impact of our educational and conservation efforts.

#### ☑ Fundraising Achievements

The ad hoc Fundraising Committee attracted more donors and generated more contributions than ever anticipated, significantly strengthening our financial position.

### What's Ahead — New Possibilities for 2026

Looking ahead, 2026 presents exciting new opportunities for impactful service and strategic growth.

#### ☑ New High-Impact Conservation Projects

We are exploring significant new service opportunities in partnership with Powderhorn State Park and Aransas First, following its acquisition of the Bailly Ranch in western Aransas County.

- o Aransas Pathways has been designated as the Aransas County entity responsible for land-use management of the new County Park.
- o Steve Ferguson was appointed by the Aransas County Commissioners Court to serve on the Aransas Pathways Steering Committee.

#### ☒ Naturalist–Student Partnership Program

In partnership with Rockport-Fulton High School, the chapter has developed a new naturalist-student initiative aligned with the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Program Junior Naturalist effort.

- o The program is titled SEED — Students Engaged in Ecosystem Discovery.
- o SEED will officially launch in January 2026.

#### Planning for the Future -

- ☒ Members of the Board of Directors and other chapter leaders will convene a long-range planning workshop this spring to focus on the next three to five years.
- ☒ Given the Mid-Coast Chapter’s large geographic footprint and the extraordinary diversity of ecosystems we serve, this effort will help us clarify priorities and identify where the chapter can make the greatest difference for both people and the natural resources of the Coastal Bend.
- ☒ We anticipate engaging a professional planning facilitator to support and guide this strategic conversation.
- ☒ Presidential Transition Notice: Steve Ferguson announced that upon the conclusion of his 2026 term—having served three years as Chapter President—he will not seek nor accept the position of president in 2027.

#### **Current Membership Status:** Kim Ballard

As of December 31st, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 124 members eligible to report hours. One hundred six members have reported hours earned in 2025, 85.5% of the total eligible. The website will be updated soon with the YTD numbers presented December 2025 numbers presented above, and will include December numbers and cumulative in addition to year-to-date.

A new roster is scheduled for January 2026. If you need an updated roster before then, please email [hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org](mailto:hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org).

Of particular interest is the cumulative value from the Midcoast’s volunteer and advanced training services. We are fast approaching \$7 million since inception in 2000.

## **VMS Data Manager report Dale???**

### **Status of Applications for Membership •**

The Initial Training Class of 2026 is full. There is currently one applicant on the wait list should someone drop out at the last minute.

**Advanced Training Director • Bobbi Rankin** NEED

**Initial Training Director • [Tatum Dunn & Margaret Durst](#)** NEED

### **Projects Director • Greg Simmons**

- McAlister property cleanup is temporarily deferred due to summer heat
  - SABP shoreline cleanups are Oct 18 this year.
  - Oyster Gardening is new this year and being led by Amy Nowlin
  - GISP's 1 st paddling programs are proceeding, including this morning. Aransas Pathways paddling event is scheduled for Oct 25 AM (stay tuned).
  - 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 Heritage Park), has made progress at all sites.
  - ☑ Donna Bailey submitted mid-year report.
  - ☑ Signage for pollinator gardens is completed thanks to Brigid Berger and the team.
  - HummerFest and the Native Plant Sale (discussed separately)
- Requests
- Assistance with pollinator gardens at Aransas Pass Community Garden is lacking support

**Communications Director • D'Ann Williams**

## **Past President • Report** of the Past-President to Board of Directors

Mid-Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist

January 10, 2026

The primary duties of the Past-President are twofold. First, to act as a resource for the current President. Second, to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee pursuant to the Chapter Bylaws.

### Accomplishments in 2025

As Past-President, throughout the year I have been available to and have discussed various issues with President, Steve Ferguson, principally drawing on “corporate” knowledge of Chapter practices and procedures.

As Chair of the Nominating Committee, I communicated with Committee members appointed by the President (D'Ann Williams, Linda Swickheimer, Gary Ward, and Chapter Advisor, Amy Nowlin) for the purpose of nominating candidates to serve as Officers for the one-year term in 2026. The Committee’s recommended slate was presented to the Chapter membership via email notification at least 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting of the year. A majority of Members attending that November 8, 2025, meeting voted to approve the slate, without opposition.

Officers so approved for the 2026 term are: President, Steve Ferguson; Vice-President, Ele Chew; Treasurer, Julie Hejducek; and Secretary, Janet Cunningham.

### Anticipated for 2026

President Steve Ferguson has specified an intent to resign at the end of 2026 after serving three years in that position. Upon his replacement, Steve would assume the position of Immediate Past-President in place of the current incumbent.

Accordingly, the Nominating Committee will be seeking qualified Chapter members willing and able to serve as President in 2027. Candidates for Officer positions must be Chapter members in good standing at the time of election (or appointment by the Board for interim replacements during the term) and must be Certified Texas Master Naturalists. Good standing is defined as current in dues and in compliance with the Texas Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

All Board members are asked to reach out to members who may be qualified and willing to serve as President—or who are interested in any other Officer position--and refer them to me or President Steve.

Budget Request

The activities of the Past-President traditionally do not require financial support. No budget funds are requested for 2026.

Respectfully,

Bob Cunningham Past-President, MCTMN

Hours Keeper – December 2025 Hours keeper Report

**December 2025 Hourskeeper Report**

Chapter Service & Training in December 2025

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
992.25	94.25	52	26	<b>\$24,989.50</b>

Service & Training 2025 Year-to-Date Total

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	# Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
14,616.75	1,595	106	57	<b>\$372,870.25</b>

Cumulative—Chapter Inception in 2000 to Present

Volunteer Service	Advanced Training	All-time # Members Reporting	# Different Opportunities	Value at \$23 per hour
269,453.75	28,186.75	376	76	<b>\$6,845,731.50</b>

As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the Mid-Coast Chapter had 124 members eligible to report hours. One hundred six members have reported hours earned in 2025, 85.5% of the total eligible. A new roster is scheduled for January 2026. If you need an updated roster before then, please email [hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org](mailto:hourskeeper@midcoast-tmn.org). The website will be updated with the December 2025 numbers presented above soon.

**Initial Training Class of 2026**—The Initial Training class for 2026 is scheduled for Orientation on Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, at the Aransas County AgriLife location. There will be a Pot Luck luncheon hosted by our membership to welcome the new class. Kimberly Ballard, Membership Director, has finalized our class list, currently at 20 trainees – 17 new applicants and 3 deferrals. She is completing a final confirmation with trainees to ensure they will be able to commit to Initial Training in 2026.

**Class of 2025**—As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the Class of 2025 has reported 1,830.5 volunteer service hours and 350.5 AT hours. The next step in becoming a Certified TMN Chapter member is to attain 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours as soon as possible, with a target of no later than the June 2026 Class of Graduation. **Thirteen** have achieved Initial Certification, and **ten** of sixteen have also earned 2025 recertification. One 2025 chapter member has moved and transferred to the Coastal Prairie Chapter, which brought the current MCTMN 2025 class size to sixteen. Our Class Representative is Nicole Reagan.

**Recertification 2025**- The Common Roadrunner pin represents 2025 recertifications.

**Seventy-five members** of the chapter have recertified for the year and earned this pin. See the list on page 2. December service hours and training hours are the final opportunity to earn the Roadrunner pin. The hours need to be recorded in VMS by January 31, 2026.

### **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, Tatum Dunn
- *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, **Cynthia Baker**
- *Gold 1000-Hour Milestone Pin*—D'Ann Williams, Barbara Mathis, Julie Hejducek, Steve Ferguson
- *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)

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

† <b>Pamela Anderson</b>	†Kimberly Draper	Kris Kirkwood	Debbi Roskey
Donna Bailey	†Karen Dorgan	Ray Kirkwood	†Jessica Ruble
Cynthia Baker	†Tatum Dunn	<b>Catherine Koenig</b>	Karen Rystad
Kimberly Ballard	†Margaret Durst	Willford Korth	Robyn Savage
Carla Belaire	Steve Ferguson	Debbie Kucera	Ernie Schertz
Karen Benson	†Deb Fisher	Steve Marwitz	Sally Scroggs
<b>Allan Berger</b>	<b>Bobby Garner</b>	Barbara Mathis	Linda Shirey
Brigid Berger	Kathryn Greer-Miller	Clare Martranga	Greg Simmons
Shelby Bessette	Debbie Griffin	<b>Marco Martranga</b>	<b>Steve Simmons</b>
James Black	<b>Melissa Guthrie</b>	Janet McCrea	Jannette Sims
1Bill Burge	Patrick Hartigan	Martha McLeod	†Frank Solis
Jim Case	Patrick Henley	Jeremy Miller	Marilyn Stewart
Ele Chew	Julie Hejducek	<b>Debbie Minns</b>	Scott Swanson
Denise Crane	Mike Hejducek	Amy Nowlin	<b>Linda Swickheimer</b>
Gary Crane	Cindy Hielscher	<b>Janet Price</b>	†Deb Troup
Maureen Crocker	Dale Hughling	Bobbi Rankin	<b>Gary Ward</b>
Bob Cunningham	Gail Hughling	†Nicole Reagan	D'Ann Williams
Janet Cunningham	Bradley Jones	Shirley Richardson	ChelseaWatson
Linda Daley	† <b>Jarrett Kernen</b>		Vickie Wilson

## Class of 2025 Initial Certifications – See Next Page

(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		

Note: If you have not received your above award(s) or past awards, they will be available at the MCTMN Chapter Board meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup> and the Chapter Meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>. If you cannot attend, you may designate someone else to attend the meeting and pick them up for you; otherwise, they will be held for the next Chapter meeting.

## Chapter Advisor

## Old Business

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## New Business

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## Awards

### Updated Awards following the January 10, Chapter Meeting BOD

**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, Tatum Dunn**

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

*Gold 1,000-Hour Milestone dragonfly – Presented: Steve Ferguson*

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

*Gold/Ruby 4,000-Hour dragonfly –*

*Gold/Diamond 5,000-Hour dragonfly –*

### **Leadership Award – Recertification Pins**

*2022 Lightning Whelk— Presented: Karen Benson*

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

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

2025 Roadrunner – Presented: Karen Benson, Karen Dorgan, Clare Martranga, Marco Martranga, Steve Marwitz, Debbie Minns, Bobbi Rankin, Nicole Reagan. Not presented: Pamela Anderson, Donna Bailey, Allan Berger, Denise Crane, Gary Crane, Maureen Crocker, Bobby Garner, Kathryn Geer-Miller, Debbie Griffith, Melissa Gutherie, Jarrett Kernen, Cathy Koenig, Wilfred Korth, Martha McLeod, Janet Price, Robyn Savage, Shirley Richardson, Karen Rystad, Steve Simmons, Frank Solis, Marilyn Stewart, Scott Swanson, Linda Swickheimer, Gary Ward, Chelsea Watson, Vickie Wilson

**TPWD Water Awards 2023 awarded in 2024**

Not present: Marueen Crocker

**VMS Coordinator Update**

- Initial Training and VMS – Trainees to be submitted for TPWD review, Registration email to trainees due January 18, Update trainee information in VMS in preparation for Orientation meeting
  - Governing Documents from TMN State office – addressed in the December TMN Monthly meeting, high-level overview for the BOD. Since then, Amy Nowling has provided direction on the next steps for the process. I will coordinate a committee to work on changes to the COH in 2026 based on the State office changes and other items from the Chapter leadership to address.
  - Recertifications – 75 recertifications in 2025 to date and may see some more by then end of January. For 2026, the new pin design is a Bobcat, *Lynx rufus*, available in mid-February.
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**Adjournment :**

Motion to adjourn by \_\_Concensus\_of attendees

second \_\_\_\_\_

approved \_\_\_\_\_

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted, Mid-Coast Chapter Secretary