

Rio Brazos Master Naturalists
Monthly Meeting
December 3, 2015
Cleburne State Park

Dinner began at approximately 6:00 PM . A fine meal was provided. Thanks to Cathy and Jim Crocker for their decoration of the hall and for the acquisition and distribution of the door prizes Thanks also to those members who gave of their talents and skills to donate their own special works of art as door prizes

Program

The program consisted of two components: (1) awarding members for their achievements; (2) a follow up training session of the new Volunteer management System which goes into effect for us on December 15.

Business

Announcements: Jim Crocker spoke of and encouraged participation in the Texas Parks and Wildlife **First Day Hikes**. Cleburne State park will host a 1st Day nature scavenger hunt. Lists may be picked up at park headquarters any time from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Get a list, pick a trail, and try to complete the list of finds along the way. Dinosaur Valley will offer 2 hikes. 10:00 Intermediate hike of approximately 1.5 miles along the Limestone Ledge Trail. 11:00 Advanced Historical Hike is more involved with park background & behind the scenes, in addition to enjoying the natural beauty of the trails.

Minutes from the November meeting were approved as posted to the website.

Bylaws Revision Dayna proposed acceptance of the new bylaws that chapter was notified of following proper requirements. Cathy Crocker asked if the revisions came from Michelle Haggerty at the state level. Dayna responded that they had and noted the changes made for our chapter, approved by Michelle via email. A vote was taken and the revised bylaws were approved.

Training: Robert said that the training schedule had been prepared for new members. It will be weekly from January 23 through September with 2 meetings in July. Three new sections will be taught: Texas Water Rights, Citizen Science, and Texas Law. A new book will be made available at some point in the future, The 3 new chapters will be made available to those members with existing manuals.

Outreach:

- > 1st Saturday Bird Walk will be January 2, dawn (7:00)
- Star Party is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 4 (Saturday, Dec.5 as a back-up date) Guest speaker Steve Tuttle begins the program at 7:00 PM at the Pavilion, followed by star gazing. Fort Worth Astronomy Club will be present, and we will be joined by the Cypress Basin chapter of the MN's, who will stay for the bird walk on Saturday morning before heading home. Several scopes will be

available. Previously volunteer sign up took place & t-shirts ordered. Volunteers were needed for operating scopes, parking, shuttles, and general traffic direction. The event is fully “staffed.” All are thanked for their efforts.

- ANC Development and Maintenance
 - Bird Blind work is targeted to be complete before Feb 6 in time for the Great Backyard Bird Count and RBMN’s newest “event” **Feather Fest**.
 - The scheduled workday was a partial success as reported by Dave and Wendy. The interior of the bird blind is painted and primed. It will stay blue and bird silhouettes will be applied. Updates to follow.
- Friends of Cleburne State Park
 - Jim Crocker reported that a “Night Sounds” program would be presented along with a pot luck dinner on December 17.
 - Texas parks and Wildlife Angler Education Instructor course would be offered on December 29.
 - A new trail is in the development stages at the park for when the money can be raised for its construction.

Education Committee asks that members keep out newest “EVENT” in mind. Done in conjunction with the Great Backyard Bird Count in February, it will be called “Feather Fest.” It will start with the First Saturday bird walk, followed by various presentations and the dedication of the bird blind. In conjunction with the Feather Fest, volunteers will be needed, and the need to work on the Ornithology (Bird) Trunk has become more pronounced. To that end, we are asking members to assist with finding binoculars and possibly bird guide materials to add to the trunk to build our inventory for a birding event.

Newsletter The new newsletter will have a March 15 deadline for submission. The winter newsletter is now under construction according to Billy Teels who expressed his appreciation for the stories and many photos being submitted.

Membership Committee/Volunteer Management System (VMS) After the awards and recognitions took place, at the end of the meeting, Wanda Riley gave a detailed power point presentation on the operation of the VMS. She concluded by saying that if any help was needed, questions could be answered by tutorials and by the help desk provided on the website, or that she would take phone calls for any questions you may not be able to find answers to. Chris Inbody reminded members that there will be an “Hours” tab on chapter website with instructions and guides for VMS and to let us know if anyone needs more help with VMS.

The system will be in place on December 15, at which time we will enter our hours directly. Sign-in will be required. To that end, Wanda distributed instructions to each member with their individual password. You may go into the system and change the password to your preference. “Cheat sheets” were distributed, and they will also be posted to the website. We are encouraged to access the state system to familiarize ourselves with the process by using the tutorials provided. Time spent on the tutorials may be considered for AT hours (within reason).

Home Schoolers Malea said that they were gearing up for the birding event coming up next year.

Big Bend Trip was reported to be a great success with 27 in attendance. Advanced Training was arranged by Robert. Please pay Linda if you have not done so.

Awards and Recognitions Dayna, on behalf of the RBMN's, presented MN shirts in recognition of some members who had given "above and beyond" as volunteers:

Billy Teels for his work on many projects and his guidance on others. As Dayna explained, for lots of questions, the answer was, "Ask Billy."

Ken Coy and Wanda Riley for their exhaustive work on conversion to the VMS.

Cathy & Jim Crocker for their work with Friends of Cleburne State Park and Cathy for her work on signage at the ANC

Joe & Karen Langdon for their donation of meeting space and support of the parties at their ranch, Karen's work on signage at ANC for educational purposes, Joe's heading up projects and donating resources and manpower for projects at ANC

Dave and Wendy Moore for their work on the Bird blind and on Education and Home School committee and activities.

Bill and Linda Diehnelt for their long term support of the ANC, programming and administration within the RBMN's

Friends of RBMN dragonfly pins were awarded to Education consultants Mel Schader Malea Balmuth, Teresa Taylor and to Steve Tuttle for star party support, to Mark Pyle for his contribution through Reptile Fest; and to Park Rangers Jeff Titus at CSP and Robert Enckhausen at DVSP.

Volunteer Hour Achievements: 250 Hours – Jake Balmuth, Gail Bradshaw, Tom Colgin

500 Hours - Bonnie Colgin, Nancy Theimer

1000 Hours – Henry Bogusch, Wendy Moore, Karen Langdon

2500 Hours – Maryann Matthews, Sara Paulsen

5000 Hours – Robert Theimer

New Member Certification was achieved by Bruce Bradshaw and Carol Wald.

Recertification was achieved by Jake Balmuth, Henry Bogusch, Gail Bradshaw, Bob Bullard, Gail Bullard, Tessa Chenoa-Owenby, Tom Colgin, Bonnie Colgin, Ken Coy, Cathy Crocker, Jim Crocker, Bill Diehnelt, Linda Diehnelt, Seth Hamby, Dagmar Higgins, Cathy Hinds, Gary Hinds, Chris Inbody, Dayna Inbody, Joe Langdon, Karen Langdon, Carol Lee, Greg Lee, MaryAnn Matthews, Dave Moore, Wendy Moore, Kenneth Nalley, Chris Paulsen, Sara Paulsen, Wanda Riley, Valerie Taber, Scott Taylor, Billy Teels, Nancy Theimer, Robert Theimer

CHECK OUT THAT WEBSITE! Members are encouraged to check the website frequently for additional announcements and updates.

Upcoming Events:

1st Saturday Bird Walk at ANC

December 3 at 7:00 A M

VMS Roll Out

December 15

State Parks 1st Day Hikes

January 1, 2016

January monthly meeting

January 7, 2016 at STC

Feather Fest, Bird Blind Dedication

February 13, 2016 at ANC

& Great Backyard Bird Count