

# Rio Brazos Master Naturalist Chapter Meeting

## Minutes

### February 10, 2011

President Bill Diehnelt welcomed everyone for dinner and presented the "Pop Quiz" on Flowers.

**Program:** "Sharing the Vision" by Mr. Collis Park, park superintendant of Cleburne State Park.

The Texas State Parks in general are falling under the state budget cuts. Revenue has declined in the last three years for CSP and they are running self sufficient. Cleburne State Park is undergoing construction. They now have a new computer system better able to document demographics and the facilities are being revamped. The slide show presentation went through the history of the park, the impact on the county, the new construction, possible recreational opportunities, and volunteer opportunities for tours, interpretation /public education, camp hosts. The park relies on volunteers like our group to help in the progress. Mr. Collis asks us to contact our state officials to let them know that we think our state parks are important, and wants us to know that he is willing to speak at any function.

**Meeting called to order.**

**Minutes from January were presented and approved.**

***Old Business:***

**Training Report:** Robert Theimer reports that out of 18 interested folks, only 1 has confirmed for the spring 2011 training. Robert suggests that if we do not have a minimum of 4 the class should not hold and any interested parties would be allowed to attend meetings, glean volunteer hours and attend the next class.

**Website Update:** Jim Crocker reports the new face of the website is up and running with new colors and a busy home page with lots of new information. He asks that any corrections to your member's list be forwarded to him and any corrections to email address on the distribution list be forwarded to Mike Balderas.

**Auditors Report:** Audit was completed by team of Billy Teels, Cathy Miller, Kenneth Coy, Bill Deihnelt, and Carrie McLaughlin. The records reflect the audit was completed and everything was fine.

**Newsletter:** March newsletter deadline is middle of March. There will be a feature article on the home school program being held at ANC. Billy asks all to submit articles of interest as soon as possible.

**First Saturday Bird Walk:** Billy Teels reported that this month's bird walk did hold, despite weather. Lots of sparrows were spotted with three folks in attendance.

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**Nature Walk:** Bily Teels reports there will be no nature walk in preparation for the Great American Backyard Bird Count on February 18, 19 and 20<sup>th</sup>. On the 19<sup>th</sup> we will begin the count at the ANC at 7am and then hold a sparrow identification class at 930am at the library. The count actually starts the 18<sup>th</sup> and can be done at home by googling the GABC to get the information. Jim Crocker will add information/link to the website.

**ANC Workday:** Kenneth Coy reports there is lots of work that can be done keeping in consideration the weather and in preparation for the "Fun Run" in June. Many of the trails need hand trimming, we have some bird houses to put in, and there are things that can be done in the house. Some planting in the butterfly garden will be done in April depending on the results of Wanda Riley's crop.

**Buffalo Creek Project:** The Buffalo Creek Project Committee meeting was held in January. Because of the loss of several trees that were planted last year, Cleburne parks manager and the city manager had committed to an irrigation system to be placed before new trees will be planted. Robert reports that the trenches have been dug and the pipes are being laid for the irrigation system. Once that is complete the committee will cover the replacement of the lost trees.

**Fossil Rim:** Carol Lee reported they are keeping track of the eating habits of the Atwater Prairie Chicken because the diet of the bird changes as it ages. No studies have been done on this fact and they hope the statistics will be lead to a better understanding of this endangered species.

**El Tesoro:** no report

**Comanche Peak Trail:** Maryann Mathews reported that work was done the end of January. Some trail was cleared, a few bird boxes were cleaned out, and some laminated signs were replaced. The small cactus garden about half way in needs work. Dave Moore offered to look in to production of permanent informational signs by the Peak. Robert Theimer reports that he is coordinating a work day when the staff of the Peak can bring out big equipment and will get back with us on a date.

**Spring Home School Program:** Program begins Feb 11<sup>th</sup>. Billy Teels went over the dates available for volunteers and asks for support. Please let Billy know so he can coordinate dates and who will be working those dates.

## ***New Business:***

**Dues:** \$25.00 Yearly membership dues are due now. Bill proposed an addition to the chapter operating handbook concerning dues. Robert asks the piece reflect new member dues are covered for the first year in their course fee. Motion made and adopted. Bill will secure electronic copy of handbook and update.

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**Booth Committee:** Cathy Crocker reports that the PR and Booth Committee will be rolled into one "Outreach" Committee. Increasing membership interest is top priority, but we also want to recognize our partners. Cathy presented the finalized recommendation for the portable "booth" for funding approval. This unit is light, the proper size for most spaces offered, easily stored at the library, and information is easily removed or added with the use of Velcro. Estimated cost for the booth, carrying case, tables and chairs, touch items and decorations is \$1000.00. An additional \$200 will cover the color backgrounds that Wendy Moore is working on. Goal is two weeks to have it ready for spring functions.

**Motion was made to approve funding. Funding is approved when guidelines for the amount are met.** Once the booth is procured the Outreach Committee will manage the volunteer opportunities. Our Master Naturalist brochure has been developed and at the printer. In addition Nancy Pricer is writing a column in the Cleburne newspaper which should bring attention to our group.

**Background checks:** Bill Diehnelt reports that throughout his communication with the state about the Jr Master Naturalist Programs, the issue of background checks for volunteers has continually come up. He has been told that the county extension agents would handle this for our chapter. Bill will research further with the state and in the meantime, we will continue to honor our commitments.

**Junior Master Naturalist Program:** Bill Diehnelt reports that nobody in Texas has a certified JMN program. Most non certified programs are geared to quarterly meetings. Concerns have been raised; we will continue to look in to this programming to see if it is a feasible responsibility for the chapter.

**Committees:** Bill Diehnelt suggests we revisit the committee lists to see what we can combine, define the responsibilities and then request volunteers to work the committees once we have streamlined the opportunities.

### **Open Discussion:**

Dagmar Higgins presented a book "Attracting Native Pollinators". Suggestion of writing a book review for the newsletter was made.

Robert Theimer requested a new battery for the dell laptop, \$116. **Motion to approve made and approved once proper forms are submitted.**

Robert Theimer informed us that Ronald Hood from Hill County has achieved his 5000 hour of volunteer service.

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