

**The 2017 Annual Membership Meeting of the Troy Nature Society was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2017 at the Stage Nature Center.** 38 members, family, and guests attended. (22 active members were present, satisfying the requirement, per Article 3.7 of the TNS Bylaws, of 15 members for a quorum). TNS President Tom Lakocy called the meeting to order shortly after 7:00 pm, and thanked all for being present. Board and staff members were introduced.

**Please reference these documents for information presented and discussed at the meeting:**

- TNS Annual Membership Meeting - Presentation - 2017
- TNS Board of Directors - Membership Absentee Ballot - April 2017
- TNS Bylaws - Proposed Revisions - Summary for membership - Changes Only

**Guest Presenter Erin Cassady, Friends of the Rouge Education Manager & Membership Coordinator,** provided an overview of the history and challenges of the Rouge River watershed, which covers 456 square miles, and extends for 126 river miles. Stage Nature Center is at the headwaters of the Main Branch of the Rouge. The industrial and run-off pollution of this 'working river' began to be addressed in the 1970's; Friends of the Rouge was formed in 1986. Troy school students have been involved in FOR-sponsored water quality surveys (based primarily on identifying types of insects present in the water), and several training sessions have been held at SNC. Let's all get to know, and take care of, our 'hometown river'. Please visit [www.therouge.org](http://www.therouge.org) for more information.

**TNS Board Member Nicole Fleming, and Girl Scouts of America Troop 75160,** discussed their work on the Monarch Waystation project, and showed us a ShutterFly picture album they had prepared. Six girls participated in designing the garden, selecting plants, digging out rocks and preparing the site, and putting plants in the ground. The girls also presented an educational outreach activity at the August 2016 Ice Cream Social. Each earned a Silver Award for her 50 + hours of effort. Carla presented each of the scouts with a Thank You certificate. The garden is now an officially recognized Monarch Waystation.

**TNS President Tom Lakocy** presented the slate of candidates for election to three-year terms on the TNS Board of Directors. Candidates who were present introduced themselves to the group. Seema Ibrahim, Meagan Kurnat, and Nathan Wright are already seated on the Board, having been appointed to fill vacancies. Gary Elrod, Liz Hohausser, Bill Ordning, and Anna Romund will be new to the Board. Motion by Nancy Papet, with support from Susie Kowalski, to accept the slate as presented. Called to vote and approved. Welcome to our new Board members! (NOTE: Officers of the Board will be elected at a Board retreat May 6 2017).

**TNS Secretary Mary Creager** discussed proposed changes to the TNS Bylaws. (These were approved by the Board at its April 19 2017 meeting). These changes will update the bylaws to reflect process improvements in Board and staff responsibilities, and meeting practices. Changes are proposed to sections of: Article 3 – Membership, Article 4 – Directors, Article 5 – Officers, and Article 8 - Other Financial Matters. A new Board Expectations Policy is also being implemented. Motion by Roger Kowalski, with support from Nancy Papet, to revise the TNS Bylaws as proposed. Called to vote and approved.

**TNS Executive Director Carla Reeb** reported that TNS has requested a 10-year renewal of its Partnership Agreement with City of Troy. (The term of the current agreement ends June 30 2017). Tom Lakocy remarked that our original agreement was for 2 years, the current one for 4 years; we are pleased that the City will now make a longer-term commitment to the future of the Stage Nature Center. We are also

grateful for an increase in our annual City grant from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Please thank the Mayor and City Council members for their continued confidence and support! Note that the City retains ownership of the SNC building, grounds, and collections, and pays all maintenance, utility, and capital repair expenses. TNS is responsible for management of staff, volunteers, instructional programs, marketing, fund-raising, and IT support. Some City-funded improvements planned for this year include replacement of the decayed pavers in the circle entrance, the trail lights, and the Coolidge Road fence. The City is also providing, for the second year in a row, a seasonal intern to assist with park maintenance and instructional support.

**TNS Treasurer Nathan Wright** presented an overview of TNS financial information for FY 2015-2016, and for first 9 months of FY 2016-2017. (TNS Fiscal Year is the same as City of Troy, from July 1 to June 30). City of Troy support accounts for close to half of our income, followed by fund-raising events, contributions, program fees, and membership dues. Our largest expense is for program services, followed by management/general expenses, and fund-raising expense.

**TNS Membership Chair Ann Neuser** noted that TNS membership has grown from 65 charter members in 2011, to 233 members YTD in 2017. Over that period of time \$48,000 in revenue has been generated from membership dues. SNC has recently joined the Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA), so TNS members now enjoy reciprocal admission privileges, and discounts, at other ANCA nature centers. (A list of Michigan ANCA member organizations will be posted on the SNC website). Ann is looking for a couple volunteers to assist in applying benchmarking data obtained from other nature centers to expanding TNS membership.

**TNS Executive Director Carla Reeb** reported on FY 2016 accomplishments, including school/outreach programs serving 5,478 students, and public/group programs serving 6,546 attendees. We logged a total of 21,219 program participants and visitors. 225 TNS volunteers donated 2,837 hours to various activities. Fund-raising continues to be a challenge, as we solicit contributions, sponsorships, and grants. Stand by for information on a sponsorship/naming opportunity for a new structure to replace our aging tent. Facility rentals are a small, but growing, source of revenue.

**TNS President Tom Lakocy** opened the floor for questions and comments. Karol Carter reminded that pedestrian traffic flow around the Sugar Shed, during Maple Syrup Time, needs to be considered when designing a permanent shelter.

**TNS President Tom Lakocy** offered thanks to **SNC Marketing Specialist Tina Catron** for her work in promoting SNC programs and activities, and building our presence on social media. Tina reminded us that member voices are powerful; let's continue to spread the word about Stage Nature Center.

**TNS Vice President Nancy Papet** expressed thanks to out-going Board members Tom Lakocy and Mary Creager, and presented them with certificates of appreciation for their years in service to TNS.

Minutes Submitted for Review - 14.MAY.2017

*Mary E Creager* – Secretary