

Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society Board Meeting

15 May 2026

Virtual meeting, host T. Sprague, Google platform

Attendees:

Tiffany Sprague	President	tasprague@gmail.com
Heather Mathewson	President-elect	mathewson@tarleton.edu
Abby Lawson	Treasurer	Abbylawson@gmail.com
Ryan Luna	Past President	rluna@sulross.edu
Kathy Granillo	SW Section Representative to Council	kgbirder55@gmail.com
Kay Nicholson	SW Web Manager	Kay.E.Nicholson@jacobs.com
Nicholas Forman	Conservation Affairs Com. Chair	Nicholas.Forman@dgf.nm.gov

Absent:

Levi Heffelfinger	Secretary	Levi.Heffelfinger@tamuk.edu
Madeleine Kaleta	SW Newsletter editor	madeleine.kaleta@dgf.nm.gov
Robert Corkren		rcorkren@tamu.edu

Meeting minutes written by H. Mathewson and Tiffany Sprague

* Designates action items.

Introductions

T. Sprague

- AZ Fish & Game, Heritage Data Program Manager
- AZ Chapter, approximately 6 years serving on the board, additional years as Newsletter Editor and member
- Favorite species: bats, snakes, tortoises

K. Granillo

- Retired, based in NM
- TWS participation approx. 30 years
- SW Rep to council for last 6 years, 2 term service ends in 2027
 - *Requested board add Rep to TWS Council to board communications and to board as non-voting member per our by-laws
 - * Need candidates for SW section Rep to Council position
 - TWS election in May 2027 so need to help identify candidates fall 2026
- Favorite species: red-breasted nuthatch

K. Nicholson

- Jacobs (consulting) >24 yrs, in AZ
- TWS member for 24 years
- AZ Chapter board 7 years, plus additional time as committee chair (historian, newsletter editor)
- SW section board last 4 years, President in 2023

- Favorite species: Mexican long-tongued bat

H. Mathewson

- Associate Professor in Wildlife and Natural Resources and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Tarleton State Univ., Stephenville, TX
- website: mathewsonlab.com
- TWS participation approx. 30 years as member, committees, and working groups
- TX Chap for approx. 30 years; 10 years on Student Affairs committee and as Chair
- Favorite species is birds; would be a turkey vulture if could be a bird.

R. Luna

- Professor and Department Head, Sul Ross University and Borderlands Research Unit
- TWS member for approx. 20 yrs
- Favorite species: Montezuma quail

A. Lawson

- NMSU USGS since 2021, data scientist
- TWS member since 2011
- Former Chair of Biometrics Working Group
- Favorite species: ocean sunfish

N. Forman

- NM Fish & Game, Carnivore biologist, approx. 8 yrs
- TWS member since 2012
- Favorite species: salamanders

Executive Board Transition

Annual transition occurs in early February

This year's official transition is 15 April 2026

- Board will ensure that transition occurs early February 2027

Newly elected board members:

Election results announced via email on 17 April 2026 by Ryan Luna, Past President		
Heather Mathewson	President-elect	mathewson@tarleton.edu
Abby Lawson	Treasurer	Abbylawson@gmail.com

Transition of bank account

- Chase bank
- Abby has met with past treasurer and obtained all information.
- Need to obtain a bank card from Chase connected to our account but not connected to any individual person.
 - Card is needed for payments to our website provider, GoDaddy.
- These board meeting minutes serve as the official statement that Abby Lawson, Treasurer, has permission for full access to Southwestern Section of The Wildlife Society bank account and all associated information.

Membership list

- Need to update and keep updated to reduce time needed prior to voting on actions, elections, and other updates
- TWS has list of members paid through their system.
- KG: noted that there are other means by which members can join and pay.
- AL: in communication with TX chapter to obtain payments through their system.
- RL: information in our emails with contact information for MX Chapter for membership.
- *TS and AL will coordinate to determine how to effectively update the membership list.
- *Chapter representatives should be included on the Section email list.
- *TS will confirm that all board members are on the email list and that executive board has access.

By-laws Review and Updates

Chapters: AZ, NM, TX, Mexico, Costa Rica

- Costa Rica is not very active and has no current members, as far as we know
- Mexico is holding a conference 8-11 September
 - <https://twsmexicochapter.com/conferences>
 - KG attending; HM will see if able to attend

Officer and Board Positions

- Four voting members: President, President-elect, Treasurer, Secretary
 - TS: suggests that the board consider amending this to include a 5th voting member because of the balance created with an odd number of members.
- Chapter Representative on board as non-voting members.
 - By-laws state that each of the 5 Chapters would have a representative on the board.
 - KG: other sections have representatives from each state.
 - *Board needs to discuss and activate or discuss changing by-laws.
- Student Representative on board as non-voting members.
 - By-laws state that we have 1 student representative from each of the active Chapters.
 - AL: suggested 1 student representative on a rotating basis to reduce number of participants on the board.
 - Consensus at current meeting was that we explore reinstating these positions on the board.
 - *TS and HM will investigate and provide suggestions to the board for further action.

Committees

- Conservation Affairs is the only active committee of 13 listed in by-laws
- Geospatial committee is not listed in by-laws but is on SW website and on TWS website.
 - Committee inactive for several years
 - *TS will contact committee members identified on the website to determine status

- Nominations committee
 - KN: board has been handling this in the past.
 - TS: this committee would provide immense assistance in the process. Should ideally have a slate of candidates identified by November 30.
 - *HM: will take lead on formation, providing the board with some summary ideas for process of formation and selection of the 3 people to run the committee.
- Membership
 - *KN: suggests selecting a Chair and forming this committee. An announcement can be sent to the membership to determine if someone is interested in serving as chair.

Annual Meetings, Workshops

- Annual meetings for TX and NM/AZ occurred in February.
- KG: No annual meeting for the section in probably >30 yrs. The Section typically participates in Chapter meetings rather than hosting a separate meeting. Section hosted a workshop in the 90s that brought in a lot of the funds in our account.
- KG: Suggested that we should increase our participation at our Chapter meetings.
- AL: Asked about other sections holding annual meetings and KG confirmed that some of them do, Western section, Southeastern section, possibly Mountains and Plains, or at least they add their meeting to other meetings.
- *Board decided to hold a meeting later to discuss possibilities for annual meeting, workshops, or other events.

Individual Updates

President T. Sprague

- Expectation is for the board to follow Robert's Rules of Order and provided a short summary.

K. Nicholson, website

<https://twsw-section.org/>

- The website has been moved to GoDaddy. Currently working on updating the website, goal is to finish around end of May.
- *KN will let the board know when the website is ready for review. Requested feedback from the board especially for us to check that links are working.

Treasurer A. Lawson

- *Needs signed letter from President TS.
- *Needs copy of these minutes stating her election to the position (see statement above).
- We have approximately \$22,000 in our budget.

N. Forman, Conservation Affairs

- Joint statement signed regarding the border wall at Big Bend.
 - *Letters such as this should be sent to the full section, including the Section Rep to Council.
- Has met with TX Chapter Conservation Affairs leaders, Mary Pearl Meuth and others.

- Discussed SW section support to Chapters with Matt L. at AZ Chapter meeting; Matt L. has requested attendance at board meetings to better understand SW section.
- NM Chapter does not have an active Conservation Affairs committee.

K. Granillo, update from TWS Council

- TWS Council and TWS staff to hold retreat in June – meeting between the two groups has not really been held in the past; they want to discuss communication and roles of council and staff.
- TWS Annual Conference, Des Moines, IA
 - No logo has been decided for the annual meeting yet.
 - Abstracts are due on Friday 22 May.
 - TWS usually receives a ~\$1-2K from federal government but received zero funds this past year.
 - Expectation of very few federal employees present at the conference.
 - AL: clarified that federal employees funded off “reimbursable” funds or through university are still often able to attend conferences.
 - KG: Approximately 1,600 attendees last year at Edmonton, Alberta meeting and federal employees were under restrictions so TWS still expects high attendance this year.
 - Described the theme this year of Art and Ecology connections.
 - Next year conference is in Sacramento, CA
 - Possibly AFS & TWS joint conference around 2030.
 - Possible joint conference with Society of American Foresters after 2030.
- *Requested for Conservation Affairs committee to keep her updated on actions, such as the recent joint statement on the boarder wall.
- Provided information and website for Mexico conference in September.
- Discussed that the board needs to make sure to include Mexico chapter on events such as the JAM.

Newsletter

- Spring edition will be out soon. A draft should be sent in the next few weeks.
- MK provided this update via email:
 - Getting content from groups can be challenging. Most content comes from news articles, recent publications, word of mouth.
 - Working on building relationships and contacts to feature work of student chapters, indigenous tribes/pueblos, Costa Rica and Mexico.
 - Interested in linking social media and website content to the newsletter. Will talk with KN about helping/collaborating on this.
 - Editing formatting for sending newsletter out for easier viewing.
 - Open to any feedback.

SW section logo, TS update

- RE email from K. Confortin 10 March “TWS Chapter & Section Logos..” forwarded to board on 15 May.
- *TS will initiate an email discussion. We should at least follow the template provided until we decide if we will create our own logo.

Regular Meetings, TS update

- Wants to hold regular board meetings.
- Board decided to hold meetings every 2 months.
- TS will send an email to board to determine availability.

Brainstorming and Planning, TS update

- Graduate student scholarships
 - Due in November
- Social media, Facebook
 - The Wildlife Society Southwest Section Chapters Hub
 - Who is the admin for our Facebook page?
 - Last post was 28 October 2025.
- AL: Encouraged us to use decision planning approach and identify our section goals to guide us in determining how to spend our budget
 - Determine travel grant support to SW section Chapter meetings or to TWS.
 - Determine the size of our emergency fund.
- KG: Received suggestion recently that travel grants should fund >1 student from a university to go to conferences so they know each other.
 - HM: Agrees this is a good idea in that it will encourage students in their participation, reduce stress of traveling alone, and reduce costs through shared travel or lodging arrangements.
- Board decided to move discussion to a Google doc for ideas.
 - RL: Confirmed we have a Google account and that information is contained in a recent email.