

Aransas Pathways Steering Committee

Minutes of September 2, 2025 Regular Monthly Meeting at 3:00 P.M. at the Aquarium Education Center located at 706 Navigation Circle, Rockport, Texas, 78382

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 P.M. by Vice Chair Pam Stranahan.

2. Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

Members present: Commissioner Pat Rousseau, Pam Stranahan, Shelly Steckler, Jim Farnsworth, Councilwoman Mary Ann Pahmiyer.

Members absent: Councilwoman Andrea Hattman, Shelly Stuart, Rich Connell, Jatin Bhakta, Earl Matthew.

Staff: Rene Butler and Melissa Zieschang

Guests: Commissioner Bob Dupnik, Debbie Griffith, Brittany Aguirre and Rebekah Rylander.

A quorum was present.

3. Citizens to Be Heard

No citizens requested to speak.

4. Consent Agenda

The minutes for August 5, 2025, were approved with one correction under Section B of the Subcommittee Reports – Commissioner Rousseau.

5. Steering Committee Vice Chair's Report – Pam Stranahan

- a) Vice Chair Stranahan welcomed attendees and noted the ongoing activities across Pathways.
- b) She encouraged members to volunteer for the upcoming HummerBird Festival.

6. Subcommittee Reports-Commissioner Pat Rousseau

- a) Requested volunteers for Pathways sites during the HummerBird Festival.
- b) Announced job posting updates and interview schedules for the Pathways Event Coordinator position.
- c) Vice Chair Stranahan confirmed the position is posted on the Aransas County website.

Birding – Rebekah Rylander

- a. Reported that Healthy Hummingbirds held on August 23, 2025, was successful.

- b. Shared that Rebekah performed a song to be posted on social media.
- c. Discussed potential sponsorship with the American Bird Conservancy.
- d. Announced a Hummingbird Banding Demonstration (registration required) on September 27, 2025, at Linda Castro Sanctuary.
- e. Announced Chirp & Chat – Fall Bird Walk scheduled for October 18, 2025, starting at Tule West and ending at Tule East.
- f. Planning continues for the Christmas Bird Count to be held the first weekend in January 2026.

Kayaking – Jim Farnsworth

- a. Reported the Pumpkin Paddle event will be held late October at the Highway 188 Kayak Launch.
- b. The committee is finalizing artist selection for the Linda Castro site installation.
- c. Planning Spring 2026 event with both 3-mile and 6-mile route options.
- d. Confirmed \$80,000 grant from Coastal Bays and Estuaries includes boardwalk improvement components.

History – Pam Stranahan and Debbie Griffith

- a. The History Center’s pop-up presentation on hurricanes was successful.
- b. Texas Maritime Museum will host Texas Navy Day on September 13, 2025, from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.
- c. America 250 – Discussion held on how Aransas Pathways can participate in the 2026 celebrations, including initiatives like countywide cleanups using 250 trash bags.
- d. Coordination with Rockport downtown for potential kayak route tie-ins was noted.
- e. Reported partnership with Keep Aransas County Beautiful (KACB) for maintenance of the Aransas First Trail between the churches off Enterprise Boulevard.

Trails – Debbie Griffith/Earl Matthew

- a. Completion of trail broadening and final bench installation is pending.

Marketing – Jatin Bhakta

- a. Carla Tank is finalizing a promotional video and preparing a mobile-friendly version for the Pathways website.
- b. Coordination with the Rockport-Fulton Chamber is ongoing for cross-promotion opportunities.
- c. Advertising arrangements for upcoming events have been initiated.

Venue Site Maintenance & Improvements – Rene Butler

- a. Sidewalk work at the History Center will begin soon.
- b. New signage for the History Center is in production.
- c. Several floor planks have been replaced; comprehensive repairs, replacements, and painting are scheduled for 2026.
- d. Installation of metal panels at the Linda Castro Pavilion will begin shortly.
- e. Facilities Department is documenting progress with photos and reports for county records.

Events – Melissa Zieschang

- a. Volunteers are needed for the Hummingbird Bus Tour at Linda Castro.
- b. Pathways Poker Tour will be held September 20, 2025, at 10:30 A.M. at the Pathways Pavilion.
- c. Hummingbird Banding Demonstration set for September 27, 2025, from 8:00–10:00 A.M. at Linda Castro Sanctuary.
- d. Feeder sites all have volunteers except Tule East.
- e. Pumpkin Paddle poster is being developed, and Pathways Frontliner volunteers will assist with logistics.
- f. Aransas Pathways will participate in the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas, November 5–9, 2025.

Partners and Collaborations

- a. Texas Master Naturalists – Steve Ferguson presented the ongoing Monarch Butterfly Monitoring (banding) program.
- b. Motion to support butterfly banding project was approved.
- c. Maintenance of Monarch Butterfly Station beds continues.
- d. City of Rockport – No Arbor Day tree planting this year due to water restrictions. Follow-up on Arbor Day proclamation is pending.

New Business

- a. Melissa Zieschang announced her resignation effective September 5, 2025.

Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2025, at 3:00 P.M.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and passed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:45 P.M.