

Aransas Pathways Steering Committee

Minutes of January 6, 2026 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 Chair Rich Connell.

2. Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

Members present: Commissioner Pat Rousseau, Pam Stranahan, Shelly Stuart, Councilwoman Mary Ann Pahmiyer, Jatin Bhakta, Steve Ferguson, Dr. Rebekah Rylander

Members absent: Andrea Hattman, Shelly Steckler and Jim Farnsworth

Staff: Rene Butler and Leah Medado

Guests: Earl Matthew, Dayna Justice and Nannette Eiland

A quorum was present.

3. Citizens to Be Heard

The consent agenda, including approval of previous meeting minutes, was presented and approved.

5. Steering Committee Co-Chair's Report – Pam Stranahan

- a) Discussed the need to determine an official name for the Copano (Bailey) Ranch property, which is currently known by multiple names.

6. Subcommittee Reports-Commissioner Pat Rousseau

- a) Welcomed newly renewed appointees and the new APSC member, Mr. Steve Ferguson of the Texas Master Naturalist – Mid-Coast Chapter.
- b) Provided a brief status update on the Copano (Bailey) Ranch, noting that easement details are pending and that future land use management planning—introduced at the previous meeting—will continue.
- c) Rene Butler introduced the Government Affairs Liaison, Dayna Justice of the County Judge's Office.

Birding – Rebekah Rylander

- a) Rockport Christmas Bird Count was successful with over 40 participants 145 recorded species.
- b) Coordination continues for April 18–19, 2026 in partnership with Goose Island State Park, with follow-up coordination planned for January 2026.

Kayaking – Jim Fansworth/Rich Connell

- a) Planned Linda Castro upgrades and coordination with the Aransas Pathways Office on Kayak program scheduling.

History – Pam Stranahan

- a) Provided an update on History Center for Aransas County repair and improvement efforts.
- b) Announced ongoing public lectures at the Texas Maritime Museum, including an upcoming talk on the First Winter Texans (Karankawa) scheduled for January 12, 2026.
- c) Reported installation of America 250 flags at 21 locations countywide.
- d) Noted availability of a tourism app guiding visitors to historic destinations.
- e) Discussed the Kent Crane Site, identified as a Texas Historical archaeological site, and the need to exercise caution in any future work in the area to protect its historical significance.

Trails-Earl Mathews

- a) Provided an update on the development of a Trails Master Plan for the Tule Creek area.
- b) Reported on meetings with city officials related to trail planning.
- c) Reported on a meeting with RPFISD regarding the Live Oak Learning Center.

Marketing – Jatin Bhakta

- a) Provided an update on 2025–2026 marketing, print advertising, and promotional efforts, including progress on the social media campaign.
- b) Paid advertising remained minimal.
- c) Strong organic social media performance was reported, with over 30,000 interactions in the past quarter.
- d) The Marketing Committee will review 2025 results and refine the 2026 marketing strategy and budget.

Facilities- Rene Butler

- a) Staff successfully propagated 54 native plants for Aransas Pathways properties. Special recognition to Tony Sanchez and Jennifer VanAtten for initiating and leading the propagation effort.
- b) Updates were provided on the installation of new trash cans and signage across Pathways sites from the last quarter of 2025 to the present.
- c) Reported on the replacement of lumber at the Tule East boardwalk/bridge due to early signs of warping.
- d) A site visit with EDKO has been scheduled to continue invasive species and grapevine removal.
- e) Significant repair work is underway at the History Center for Aransas County due to weather-related and termite damage, including sanding and refinishing of wood floors.

Events – Leah Medado

- a) The Christmas on the Beach event was reviewed and commended for safe and successful execution.
- b) Reported on the Winter Texan Appreciation Day scheduled for January 15.
- c) Planning continues for birding events and other marketing outreach opportunities.
- d) Continued expansion of Aransas Pathways visibility and partnerships was noted.
- e) Progress reported in governance, documentation, and use of digital tools.

Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2026, at 3:00 P.M.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and passed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:12 P.M.