

Aransas Pathways Steering Committee

Minutes of November 4, 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 Chair Rich Connell.

2. Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

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

Members absent: Andrea Hattman

Staff: Rene Butler and Leah Medado

Guests: Commissioner Bob Dupnik and Keith Barrett

A quorum was present.

3. Citizens to Be Heard

Shelly Schubert-Steckler reported on the upcoming Copano Cove / Bailey Ranch Groundbreaking on November 13, 2025, featuring a ceremony and guided hay ride showcasing the 950-acre prairie, marsh, and wetland property.

4. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda, including approval of the previous meeting minutes, was presented. Chair Connell noted that Pam Wheat Stranahan now serves as Co-Chair, not Vice Chair. Commissioner Rousseau referenced the **January 2024 resolution** and stated the leadership structure should return to Commissioners Court for clarification.

Motion: Dr. Earl Matthew

Second: Jatin Bhakta

Action: Motion carried.

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

- a) Provided brief context on the preparation of the September 2, 2025 minutes during the AP office transition.
- b) Chair Connell noted five APSC positions becoming vacant (Rylander, Schubert-Steckler, Farnsworth, Matthew, Stranahan).

- c) Commissioner Rousseau confirmed the vacancies are posted publicly and letters of interest should be submitted.

6. Subcommittee Reports-Commissioner Pat Rousseau

- a) Aransas County finalized acquisition of Copano Cove Ranch (950 acres).
- b) Discussion initiated to update the APSC Resolution regarding the Co-Chair structure.
- c) County legal support will now be handled in-house.
- d) Five APSC seats must be filled by December.
- e) Copano Cove/Bailey Ranch → Aransas Pathways property transfer remains under legal review.
- f) A community member has offered to donate land; legal review underway.
- g) Announced Texas Sea Grant Workshop (Dec. 6) with field visit and lunch.

Birding – Rebekah Rylander

- a) Two recent bird banding events were well attended.
- b) Christmas Bird Count set for January 4.
- c) Planning underway for Bird Days with Goose Island; coordination meeting to be scheduled.
- d) Acknowledged assistance from Mr. Kelly Bryan during recent banding sessions.
- e) Positive attendance report for the Hummingbird Festival and encouragement for future involvement.
- f) Discussed Bird City Texas certification, preparation for 2026 submission, and issues such as cats in parks and pathway sites.

Kayaking – Jim Farnsworth

- a) Public art update: bird sculpture approved; installation expected February 2026.
- b) Sculpture project to be aligned with art walk; requested bird list support for binocular sculpture at Linda Castro.
- c) Airport Kayak Launch remains in early planning; engineering issues under review.
- d) Potential CBBEP grant opportunity identified; further refinement needed.
- e) Pumpkin Paddle canceled due to weather.
- f) Planning for spring and summer kayak events, with 3-mile and 6-mile routes; emphasized 9-month planning window.

History – Pam Stranahan

- a) Nov. 19: Historical Commission quarterly meeting seeking new members and marker nominations.
- b) Nov. 21: New holiday exhibit opening at the History Center; venue for Dec. 6–7 Homes Tour (“An Eclectic Holiday”).
- c) Nov. 4: Fulton Mansion program — *Poets and Dreamers* by Tamara Saviano.
- d) Nov. 9: “Croquet by the Bay” at Fulton Mansion.
- e) Nov. 11: Music at the Maritime Museum.
- f) RCAD Mural Fest featured new public history displays.
- g) Introduced America 250 initiative with RF Chamber; encouraged partners to align 2026 programming.
- h) Proposed April 2026 History Stroll with docents in period attire; to be forwarded to Marketing Committee.

Trails-Earl Matthew

- a) Recommended re-evaluating Phase 1 walkways (e.g., Tule Creek) using mulch and a 10-ft easement standard.
- b) Introduced basalt as an option for future trail construction.
- c) Noted water needs at the Henderson site, a strong birding location.
- d) Discussed modifications to water management systems, including camera placement and addressing water damage.
- e) Explored extending and linking multiple trail segments for accessibility.
- f) Reaffirmed priority of designing accessible trails for limited-mobility users.

Marketing – Jatin Bhakta

- a) Noted that the promotional video produced by Carla must be officially turned over to AP; reminded committee about AP’s protocol for integrating external video content.
- b) Provided updates on social media, community promotions, and volunteer-aligned initiatives including cost-sharing with CVB.
- c) Outlined digital upgrades including map digitization, website updates, and volunteer training for youth engagement.

Venue Site Maintenance & Improvements – Rene Butler

- a) Installed Pathways sign prototype with larger logo.
- b) Completed installation of ARK turtle rescue signs at six kayak sites.
- c) Completed History Center sidewalk project.
- d) Updated on flooring repairs and 10-year termite treatment for the History Center (work ongoing through Feb. 2026).
- e) Reiterated that Shell Crete Road is *not* an AP site and has been removed from the map.
- f) Shared progress on the Linda S. Castro camera project (test site).

Events – Leah Medado

- a) Introduced herself as the new Aransas Pathways Administrative and Events Coordinator; first APSC meeting.
- b) Recapped recent and upcoming events; event planning now on a two-month cycle for alignment across committees.
- c) Highlighted expanding partnerships and community activities across AP sites.
- d) Reported ongoing volunteer development and proposed projects across all pillars.
- e) Continued development of the Pathways Frontliner Academy (PFA).
- f) Invited members to scan the QR Code linking to the Marketing & Events Report.

Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2025, at 3:00 P.M.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and passed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:22 P.M.