



Hosting a Texas Plains Trail Region Meeting, 2013–14

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The Texas Plains Trail Region holds its board meetings six times yearly at various locations within our 52 counties. And we're always eager to travel and learn about new sites.

Our meetings are open to the public, so **we typically attract a number of visitors in addition to our 20–25 board members.** We especially appreciate the opportunity to gather at a site that will make its facilities available to us at no charge, in exchange for your chance to educate us and help us better promote *you*. (In the tourism industry this is known as a FAM, or “familiarization,” tour, and we're eager to familiarize ourselves with our region's locations, whether established or out-of-the-way.)

Scheduling and promotion: Our programming year runs September to August. We like to set our schedule several months in advance for **third-Thursday dates (preferred) in October, December, February, April, and June**, and our **August Round-up**. Please extend our invitation to your local officials and friends as well! We promote each meeting via news releases and social media several weeks in advance, and we solicit RSVPs from our members and guests to provide an advance head count.

2013–14 Dates (Tentative)

Date	Location	Topic
October 17, 2013		Regular Board Meeting
December 19, 2013		Regular Board Meeting
February 20, 2014		Regular Board Meeting
April 17, 2014 *same date as 2014 TTIA Travel Fair, South Padre Island		Yearly Strategic Planning
June 19, 2014		Regular Board Meeting
early August, 2014		Texas Plains Trail Tourism Round-Up
October 16, 2014		Regular Board Meeting
December 18, 2014		Regular Board Meeting

Here's how our meetings are structured:

- _____ **1. General business from 10:00 to 11:45 am**, including time for committee discussions.
- _____ **2. Lunch onsite or nearby from 11:45 am to about 1:00 pm.** Lunch may be prepared, catered, or delivered onsite if serving and cleanup facilities allow; or meal arrangement may be made at an appropriate nearby restaurant. We realize the importance of patronizing local businesses, and we appreciate your restaurant suggestions. We've done everything from sandwich box lunches to restaurant buffet to fully catered meals. Since many of our members are traveling on limited nonprofit funds or their personal resources, we prefer to keep meal cost to \$10 per person.

_____ **3. Tour of your site from 1:00 to 2:00 or 3:00 pm**, depending on what you'd like to show us. The options are very flexible. A museum may provide a guided, interpreted tour, or may wish to allow visitors to tour on their own; a community may wish to provide a walking-tour map of a main street or courthouse square; an organization may wish to present a program. Keep in mind accessibility for a variety of ages and abilities, and for parking and driving information if visitors need to get from one location to another. We love to be able to visit any site, especially yours, at no charge, but if we tour another partner's site in your community that requires an admission fee, we are happy to oblige where necessary.

On occasion our meetings are scheduled for special purposes: for gatherings of smaller task forces, such as the Quanah Parker Trail Steering Committee or a business committee; or for our annual strategic planning meeting. Our needs in such cases may be slightly different, and may not involve time for extended tours. We always greatly appreciate our partners' willingness to host such meetings, so that we can dedicate our resources to programming and promotion.

We're also open to **add-on programs or workshops**, before our after our event, if you'd like for us to make a presentation to your community, or attend one that you want to schedule. This is an excellent way to maximize travel dollars and time, for regional workshops on grants, hospitality training, marketing, social media, or other topics of interest to your followers and ours. Let us know if you'd like to join forces!

One other opportunity to showcase your community is to **host our annual Tourism & Preservation Round-up**, a two-day annual conference in early August that involves meeting space for 150 or more, space for a vendor fair with 20 or more exhibitors, social gathering places and meals, overnight accommodations, and other activities according to location. We try to rotate this event throughout the region as well. If your community is interested in preparing an informal bid for this event, please contact us at least a year in advance.

Here are 5 things we need for a successful board meeting:

- _____ **1. Seated space for 30–35 people** (sometimes more, for special occasions). A setup that also provides **tabletop space for writing and/or dining is even better**. Chairs may be arranged around one large table, or at separate tables, as long as there is a clear view of meeting leaders.
- _____ **2. A lectern or small table up front for meeting leaders**. If your space is large and you have a sound system and mic, we're happy to use it. Otherwise, we can manage without a PA.
- _____ **3. A side table or countertop space** for sign-up, distribution of handouts, and display of a few flyers.
- _____ **4. Restroom facilities.**
- _____ **5. Sufficient parking, and access** for a range of ages and abilities.

Here are some other optional features we appreciate, or need on certain occasions:

- _____ **1. A digital projector and screen** for PowerPoint and slide-show presentations. We are also able to provide our own portable projector, screen, and computer, if projection space, two tables, and electrical power are readily available.
- _____ **2. Additional table and display space.**
- _____ **3. Your own tourism literature, and that of your partners**, for us to take samples.
- _____ **4. An advance list of recommended local lodging**, for those who need to stay overnight before or after the meeting (usually fewer than 10). Any assistance in arranging for a discount rate is always appreciated.

Give us a call at 806.747.1997, or e-mail us at info@TexasPlainsTrail.com, if you'd like to host us in the coming year. We look forward to visiting!

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