Texas Pecan Board

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Texas Pecan Board (TPB) Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 18, 2026 9:00 A.M. CST
Texas A&M University Horticulture Teaching Research & Extension Center (HORTREC)
3199 County Rd 269 E Somerville, TX 77879

TPB Members Present: Jake Montz, Zachary Swick, Troy Swift, Dennis Hardman, Mark Friesenhahn, Jeffrey Ivey
Guests: TPGA Staff/TPB Contractor: Blair Krebs, Nichole Hejl, Sarah Dieringer, Kelsey Wallis; Texas Department of Agriculture: Patrick Dudley; Texas A&M AgriLife: Kyle Slusher

Texas Pecan Board (TPB) President Jake Montz called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M. and asked that Vice President Zachary Swick run the meeting, due to Montz needing to possibly step out of the meeting. Swick called the board roll call, establishing a quorum, and asked guests to introduce themselves, including new TPGA employee Nichole Hejl, who will be handling some of the TPB contract work.

The next agenda item was looking at nominations and possible action for the board positions vacated by Tami Sorrells and Lalo Medina. Sorrells resigned earlier in the year due to not being able to attend meetings. TPB acknowledged and communicated their appreciation for Sorrell's many years of service to TPB. Medina had missed a number of board meetings and was sent a certified letter in October addressing the issue and requiring attendance at this March's meeting. Since Medina did not attend or provide a response, Mark Friesenhahn made the motion to remove Lalo Medina, under the authority of the TPB bylaws, from the TPB due to repeated absences from the board meetings. Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion passed. A working group was then created to find possible board members for the vacant positions. Troy Swift, Mark Friesenhahn, and Dennis Hardman were assigned to the working group and expected to have nominations for the board to vote on by May 1st.

The board of directors then reviewed the meeting minutes from the Tuesday, September 12, 2025 meeting in Stephenville, Texas. Mark Friesenhahn had a minor edit, his name was missing from the grant review working group. Dennis Hardman made the motion to approve the minutes with the one edit. Zachary Swick seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the minutes were approved. Blair Krebs will make the edit and send the final minutes to the Texas Department of Agriculture, as required, and post to the TPB website.

Patrick Dudley from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) then gave an update from the department about its work, including information on future Southern Plant Board meetings, compliance agreements with New Mexico, pecan weevil quarantine, TDA sponsored grants, and regulations on the movement of pecans between Texas and Mexico.

The board members then moved to reviewing the TPB financials and activities. TPB contractor Blair Krebs presented the prepared financials from September 1, 2025 through March 10th, 2026 with a budget comparison for the board's review of the current fiscal year. Dennis Hardman made the motion to approve the financials as presented. Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the financials were approved. Blair Krebs did note that with the increase in TPB activities, TPGA will be looking at the staff hours spent on TPB projects to evaluate whether the staffing payment is still sufficient. This will be presented at the September TPB board meeting, when the year's budget is established. Krebs also outlined the activities, many of which will be elaborated upon in further agenda items, handled by the contracted staff. Some of the activities included development of the Texas Pecan branding project, completion of previous ACES grant, writing and submitting for the new ACES grant, working with producers and regulators on the El Paso weevil finding, including meeting with TDA in Austin, partnering with producers to handle the entomology research and extension projects, as well as administrative tasks such as collections, board meeting preparation and materials, working group meetings, and more.

The next agenda item was a continuation of a previous discussion to define TPB activities priorities and focus for the organization. At the July meeting there was discussion and Blair Krebs offered three possible focused activities of marketing, research, and regulatory. A working group composed of Mark Friesenhahn, Jeffrey Ivey, and Troy Swift were assigned to take a look at the options and bring more details to this meeting. The working group met and decided the following focuses for the organization: Marketing - domestic and international; Research - water, pests, nutrition; Regulatory/Compliance - assessing production for the state, weevil. Troy Swift made the motion to approve these presented priorities for the organization. Dennis Hardman seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion was approved.

The next discussion was to organize and establish communications and protocols of that work from the Texas Pecan Board to the industry, providing structure to the organization's industry communications. Troy Swift made the motion to issue a letter from TPB and TDA in September each year to note assessment rules for the upcoming year and a summary of what TPB has accomplished. Mark Friesenhahn seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion passed. However, Blair Krebs brought up the need for overall protocols and expectations of communication, for example speaking at events such as the TPGA Conference and the WTPA meeting. A working group of Troy Swift and Zachary Swick was assigned to come up with an outline for these tasks to address TPB industry communications, including for presentations, mailings, and more.

There was then an update on the Texas Pecan Board Marketing activities by Blair Krebs. She shared the materials created for the Texas Pecan branding project and developed by the working group and contractor, Signal Theory, on the screen. With the project close to being completed, the discussion focused on how to decide who can use the materials for branding or how to certify people using the materials. A working group of Troy Swift, Jake Montz, Mark Friesenhahn will work to create a policy and draft for an application for usage of the Texas Pecan brand.

The efforts focused on international marketing efforts were also discussed. Blair Krebs went through the handout on the efforts provided in the board packet. It largely focused on work established through the Agricultural Commodity Export Support (ACES) grant. Krebs highlighted all the work that had been done to promote Texas pecans in India with around $68,000 received from the 2024-2026 ACES grant, and gave a summary of the request made to gain grant funding for promotions in India and Asia for the 2026-2028 application. Zachary Swick also brought up a discussion about how to get the younger growers engaged in these activities and recruiting them to attend events.

The next agenda item was an update from Texas A&M AgriLife entomology program with Dr. Kyle Slusher. Slusher was held up in a meeting and wasn't able to present at that time, so we moved to the next agenda item.

The board then moved on to the next item, a report and possible action about the confirmed weevil finding in El Paso County from Jonathan Consford, IPM specialist in El Paso with Texas A&M AgriLife. Consford provided a handout, included in the board packet, of the work being done. He was requesting funds to continue the pecan weevil scouting program in El Paso, totaling $30,000 over a 6 year period of scouting. The costs associated with the first year have already been paid by the West Texas Pecan

Association (WTPA), so TPB, if they choose to fund the project, would reimburse WTPA the first year then pay Consford outright over the next 5 years. Zachary Swick made the motion to have TPB pay a total of $30,000 over 6 years for the pecan weevil scouting project in El Paso, first reimbursing WTPA and then paying to Jonathan Consford. Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, motion passed.

The discussion moved to the activities and studies surrounding the scouting of pecan weevil being handled in Pecos and Reeves Counties. Kyle Slusher from Texas A&M AgriLife was still not available for an update, so he will do so at a later time. Zachary Swick gave an update on the activities going on in the counties. Swick elaborated on the difficulties of getting the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to approve protocols to follow in the scouting that would allow a Texas county to be removed from the quarantine, if weevil is not found. Blair Krebs noted other groups are having similar trouble with their requests in regard to weevil.

The board then reviewed a handout given to the group and updated them on the USDA-ARS research focused on pecan weevil with funds from NMDA and TPB. The handout gave details about the research work related to pecan weevil and the funding provided, but also possible additional work on stink bugs through grants. The researchers, Dr. Charles Suh and Dr. Lindsey Perkin presented later that day to both boards about the details of their entomology research work.

The next agenda item addressed the new research and extension grant program jointly funding $25,000 per year between TPB and TPGA to address projects that benefit Texas producers. Blair Krebs presented a Request For Proposal (RFP) she created for the grant, for review and possible approval from the boards. Troy Swift made the motion to approve the RFP as presented to release the grant. Mark Friesenhahn seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion was approved. After getting approval from TPGA, Blair Krebs will publicly release the grant in April to research and extension representatives.

The last agenda item was the confirmation of the TPB board meetings dates for 2026, which were given to the board in October 2025. For future meetings, both in-person and virtual options will be listed on the meeting agenda.

With no further agenda items or business, Dennis Hardman made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Zachary Swick seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting was adjourned about 11:56 A.M. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Krebs

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Texas Pecan Board (TPB) Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 13, 2026 11:00 A.M. CST
Virtual – Google Meet

<u>TPB Members Present:</u> Jake Montz, Zachary Swick, Troy Swift, Dennis Hardman, Mark Friesenhahn, Winston Millican, Jeffrey Ivey
<u>Guests:</u> TPGA Staff/TPB Contractors: Blair Krebs, Nichole Hejl; Texas Department of Agriculture: Patrick Dudley; Texas A&M AgriLife: Kyle Slusher

Texas Pecan Board (TPB) President Jake Montz called the meeting to order at 11:02 A.M. CST. Montz called the board roll call and established a quorum. There are 7 seated board members, so 4 board members present are required for a quorum.

The meeting then moved to the first agenda item and the primary reason for calling a virtual board meeting, which was to vote on the nominations for filling the vacancies on the board of directors. At the March meeting, a working group was established and tasked at getting recommendations for new board members before May 1st, so they could be seated during the July board meeting. Members of the working group spoke to each of those nominated to see if they were willing to serve. Troy Swift made the motion to place Benito Fernandez in the vacant board member position. Winston Millican seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and he can be sworn in at the July board meeting. Mark Friesenhahn made the motion to place Holt Oliver in the second vacant board member position. Jeffrey Ivey seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and he can be sworn in at the July board meeting. Blair Krebs will reach out to both to start the formal process of getting them sworn onto the board and attending meetings.

The second agenda item was an update from the Texas A&M AgriLife entomology program by Kyle Slusher, since he was not able to fully participate in the March meeting due to scheduling conflicts. Slusher gave updates on a couple of entomology focused items, but the bulk of the discussion focused on the pecan weevil scouting program in Pecos and Reeves Counties. In 2025-2026 Texas A&M AgriLife specialists did cleaning plant inspections in those western counties in an effort to formally remove from the pecan weevil quarantine, if not found to have weevil. Slusher had approached the board about the travel costs associated with the Texas A&M AgriLife team's scouting and possible reimbursement of those costs. However, there were a few line items on the report the board wanted clarification on, and they asked Slusher to report back with the information. In an effort to not delay any possible payments, Winston Millican made the motion to authorize Jake Montz and Troy Swift to review additional details from Slusher's report, and make a decision on the reimbursement for scouting in the 2025-2026 season for funding up to $5,854. Mark Friesenhahn seconded the motion, and Zachary Swick recused himself from the vote due to a possible conflict of interest. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

There was also a discussion about the future of the pecan weevil scouting program and the efforts to remove counties from the weevil quarantine under both the State of Texas and State of New Mexico quarantines. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has already approved the proper protocol and scouting methods needed to remove a county from the weevil quarantine. However, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) has not provided any official protocols for scouting to establish presence, or lack thereof, of weevil in each county. These official protocols are needed to establish if a county in Texas can be removed from the quarantine under New Mexico rules. Slusher and several industry members have met with the NMDA team, but none have received formal protocols or any progression of the project. Without NMDA providing or approving policies for the scouting program, the industry does not feel it can validate the costs and efforts of the scouting program without assurance that NMDA will approve the finding. Inspections would need to be started again in November or December, so it was agreed they would have further discussions with NMDA, in an effort to get set protocols and policies. Nevertheless, if the confirmation of any procedure is not reached before the fall, the TPB should likely not put funds towards travel to the scouting locations if there is no possibility of removing the counties from the quarantine under New Mexico rules.

Slusher also presented a possible budget for development of a research orchard in Stephenville for entomology work and trials. The budget proposed the rehabbing of the 5-acre orchard by using funding to remove old trees, plant new trees, and establish irrigation. The board of directors asked Slusher to provide more details, including timelines, varying quotes for each piece of the work, and justifications for the projects. They also asked him to provide what kind of work could be done at the research orchard and how it would benefit the industry. Slusher will report back to the board with enough time to do the possible necessary work before plantings in February.

The next discussion, which was not on the agenda so no vote was allowed, but the discussion began with Troy Swift proposing to have a presentation on the fundamentals of the Texas Pecan Board and what the organization does during the July board meeting, since there will be new board members. TDA Representative Patrick Dudley recommended reviewing Chapter 41 of the Texas Agriculture Code, which gives details about Commodity Producers Boards and TPB Bylaws, which regulate the organization. Contractor, Blair Krebs, also reminded the group that a working group was established during the March board meeting to develop a communications strategy focused on speaking to the industry, and this sort of presentation would be a part of it. The board decided the discussion and preparation would continue further within the working group.

With no further agenda items or business, Winston Millican made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Troy Swift seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the meeting was adjourned about 11:54 A.M. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Krebs