

GULF MASTERS SWIM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 9-23-2026

APPROVED 10-09-2026

USMS Mission: Empower adults to improve their lives through swimming

USMS Vision: Foster a nationwide adult swimming community through lifelong fitness, competition and education.

Sept. 23, 2026 Annual meeting held at Lazy Oaks Beer Garden - 6:30 pm

Gulf Officers present: Nicole Christensen (Chair, Communications-Webmaster), Karlene Denby (Treasurer, Communications Chair/Newsletter, Fitness Chair), Kris Wingenroth (Secretary)

Gulf Committee Chairs present: Linda Visser (Membership Coordinator, Top Ten), Andreas Lorenz (Long Distance Chair), Delia Weber (Social Media), Kevin Lunsford (Sanctions Chair), Patrick Harrington (Coach's Co-Chair), Neil Gregerson (Coach's Co-Chair)

Team Representatives present: Mark Hahn (TFY), Andrew Greule (ETEX), Alana Wilson (WMST), Cheryl Hubbard (MACA), Emily Merkley (SHAC), Seth Huston (RICE), Hanna Huston (RICE), Kerry Suhr (SWYM)

Non-Voting Guests present: Russel Kaskel (TFY), John Keen (TFY), Nick Chambers (Duncan Y & Trotter Y)

Not present: Stacey Eicks (Vice-Chair), Herb Schwab (Officials)

The following teams were not represented at the meeting:

AQSR, BATS, BTAM, CFK, CFSC, ESA, FBMS, FCST, HOUST, KAMS, MAMC, MARC, MEAN, MOB, NOCHM, PEAQ, SPAM, SSC, SSSMS, TASC, TEST

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm. Nicole welcomed the attendees. Attendance was taken via a sign-in sheet. All guests were treated to a free dinner and beverages of their choice.

MINUTES from the 7/15/26 meeting were **approved on 7/21/26** and [posted on the website](#).

AWARDS PRESENTATIONS:

Linda Visser received a USMS Dorothy Donnelly Service Award (announced at the USMS Annual Meeting). She was one of 13 winners nation-wide.

Karlene Denby was presented the 2026 Emmett Hines Award.

GULF LMSC OFFICER ELECTIONS:

The following candidates ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation. They will serve a 2 year term.

Chair: Andreas (Andy) Lorenz (DADS)

Vice Chair: Lindsay Price (SSSMS)

Secretary: Cheryl Hubbard (MACA)

Treasurer: Karlene Denby (UNAT)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The Gulf LMSC hosted Hallowmeet will be held on November 1st at the W.W. Emmons Natatorium. The South Central Zone SCM Champs will be held at the Conroe Natatorium on November 14-15. See the schedule of events at the end of this report for additional swim meets and events.

OFFICER REPORTS:

Nicole pointed out to the meeting attendees that written copies of the annual officer and chair reports were available on the table. She encouraged everyone to read them if they have not done so already. The reports are included at the end of these minutes.

CLUB TEAM REPRESENTATIVES:

All clubs with in-person team representatives were asked to introduce themselves. Blank forms were available to fill out for clubs who have not turned in their Gulf annual registration form yet. Team representatives that attend three Gulf meetings will have their registration reimbursed.

SOUTH CENTRAL ZONE REPORT:

At the USMS Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates voted to approve the addition of the Southern LMSC (Louisiana and Mississippi) to become part of the South Central Zone. The following zone championship meet bids were selected: April 9-11, 2027 Spring Short Course Yards meet in Shreveport, LA hosted by Red River Masters and June 26-27, 2027 and the Summer Long Course Meters meet in Shenandoah, TX hosted by the Woodlands Masters.

ZONE OPEN WATER: The 2026 Zone Grand Prix Open Water Challenge Series started in April and will have its final race on the weekend of October 17 – 18. The series this year has four races, and two of them are brand new. Nicole worked with groups in South Texas so that they were able to add on races in Rockport, TX and Marble Falls, TX, giving us races in three of our five LMSCs.

See the Zone report at the end of this report for more details about Zone activities.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

The Gulf LMSC is striving to increase its social media presence to build community engagement and culture. Help is needed to accomplish this goal, so anyone interested in supporting the LMSC's socials should contact Delia Weber at (832) 674-3989

DOOR PRIZES:

Drawings were held to give away USMS caps and a \$100 gift card for Swim Outlet.

NEXT MEETING:

A virtual meeting will likely be held in November or December.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 pm.

Upcoming Events and Zone, Officer, and Chair Annual reports are included below.

2026 UPCOMING GULF MEETINGS

1. TBD (Nov or Dec) (Virtual): TOPICS: preliminary 2027 Gulf Budget

UPCOMING EVENTS (questions? Contact Nicole Christensen at ncr@creativewaters.net):

- **OCT 17-18: Grand Prix Finale:** Marble Falls Banana Slug Splash in Lake Marble Falls in Marble Falls, TX
- **OCT 25:** Shark Attack Open Water at Twin Lakes in Manvel, TX
- **NOV 1:** Gulf hosted Hallowmeet at the WW Emmons Natatorium in Houston
- **NOV 14-15:** South Central Zone Fall Indoor SCM Championships at Conroe ISD Natatorium, hosted by WMST (Shenandoah, TX)
- **NOV 26:** Gulf hosted Thanksgiving morning swim at Dads Club in Houston
- **FEB 14:** Sweetheart Swim at W.W. Emmons Natatorium in Houston
- **MAR 6:** March Madness at Rice University in Houston
- **APR 4:** Lake Longhorn OW Round Up–1st race of the 2027 Grand Prix Series in League City, TX
- **APR 9-11:** South Central Zone Spring SCY Champs in Shreveport, LA
- **MAY 2:** Rockport Beach OW Challenge – 2nd race of the 2027 Grand Prix in Rockport, TX
- **JUNE 26-27:** South Central Zone Summer LCM Champs at the Conroe ISD Natatorium, hosted by WMST in Shenandoah, TX
- **JULY 11:** OWS Challenge – 3rd race of the 2027 Grand Prix at Cedar Park, TX

OFFICERS & CHAIRS ANNUAL REPORTS:

Chair's Report (Nicole Christensen):

USMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

On September 19th, Nicole Christensen – Gulf LMSC – was voted to another two-year term as the South Central Zone At-Large Director. At-Large Directors represent the entire membership, not just the members in their zone. A director is chosen from every zone so that the board has geographic diversity. She is an incumbent and will serve a final two year term.

ZONE WIDE SANCTIONS AND RESULTS ROLES

The beta program to move all sanction and results processing to the Zone wide level in our South Central Zone has been a resounding success. Other LMSCs are moving to this zone wide model. Thank you to our own Kevin Lunsford and Linda Visser for doing such a great job not only processing sanction applications and results for the Gulf, but also for Arkansas, North Texas, Oklahoma and South Texas.

GULF WEBSITE AND EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

www.GulfMastersSwim.org

The Gulf website continues to be hosted by Club Assistant and has been kept up to date on all pages. Anyone who notices an error or who has a request, is asked to contact Nicole at ncr@creativewaters.net.

Since our last annual meeting, 20 emails have been sent out to Gulf members with an average open rate of 85.25%.

Secretary's Report (Kris Wingenroth):

As is required, the 2025 Gulf LMSC Annual Meeting minutes were sent to the USMS national office for posting soon after they were approved.

The Gulf Policies were updated on 12/3/2025 and 7-15-26 to remove restrictions on One Event Registration, to increase the meal allowance and mileage rate for members on Gulf official business and to reorganized them to make it easier to find the reimbursement rates for different activities. An updated copy was posted on the Gulf website.

The Gulf By-laws were updated on 1-28-26. This update removed references to a Gulf House of Delegates and replaced it with the term "voting members of the Gulf LMSC". The voting members are the Board members (officers and committee chairs), club representatives and at-large delegates appointed by the Chair. The updated by-laws were sent to the USMS National Office for posting and were posted on the Gulf website.

All Gulf LMSC meeting minutes for 2026 have been posted on the Gulf LMSC website.

Treasurer's Report (Karlene Denby): Gulf Financials as of 08/29/25 compared to 08/31/26

08/29/25 \$80,786.00 in total assets (\$2,734.23 in checking, \$10,627.16 in savings, and \$67,424.61 in CDs).

08/31/26 \$74,457.16 in total assets (\$371.38 in checking, \$9,637.95 in savings, and \$64,447.83 in CDs)

Membership Coordinator's Report (Linda Visser): Linda submitted a written report which indicated that as of September 20, 2026, the Gulf has 867 members (461 men, 406 women) and 30 registered teams (two more teams than last year). Two of the teams currently have no registered members: FRSTM and LJST. In 2025, the Gulf had 882 members (462 men, 420 women) and 28 registered teams.

Top Ten Recorder report (Linda Visser): Meets uploaded to USMS database:

SCY

9/20/2025 – First Time for Everything Meet – Houston, TX

11/2/2025 – Hallowmeet – Houston, TX

2/15/2026 – Sweetheart Swim – Houston, TX

3/7/2026 – Rice March Madness Meet – Houston, TX

3/27-3/29/2026 - South Central Zone Spring Championships – Shenandoah, TX

Sanction Chair's Report (Kevin Lunsford): South Texas LMSC as a courtesy requested that the meet announcements state whether awards will be given to swimmers. Also, in my communications I am reminding meet directors to submit the results to Linda Visser at linda.visser58@gmail.com

Gulf Sanctions for 2026:

Sweetheart Swim	SCY	February 15, 2026
Rice March Madness	SCY	March 7, 2026
South Central Zones	SCY	March 27-29, 2026
Lake Longhorn Roundup	OW	April 12, 2026

First Time for Everything	SCY	September 19, 2026
Sabin Weisser November Classic	SCM	November 14-15 2026
Hallowmeet	SCY	November 1, 2026

Upcoming		
Sweetheart Swim	SCY	February 14, 2027

Please use the following new email address for Kevin: kevinmlunsfordswim@gmail.com

Newsletter Report (Karlene Denby): Since the 2025 annual meeting, there have been four quarterly newsletters published. Topics in each newsletter have included a health/nutrition article, a swim workout, LMSC news, information about upcoming events, USMS top ten rankings, and open water swim and meet results.

Fitness Report (Karlene Denby):

2025 Lake Tahoe Virtual Swim:

The virtual swim was conducted from September 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. There were 39 Gulf members entered in the event. The event goal was a 72-mile swim around the perimeter of the lake. We had a completion rate of 69%. All swimmers, regardless of miles completed, were awarded an event tee-shirt. The post-event social was held at Saint Arnold's Brewery with about 20 swimmers in attendance.

2026 Gulf Swim University:

The 12th annual Gulf Swim University ran from January 1, 2026 to April 30, 2026. A post-pandemic high number of 56 swimmers were entered in the event. Swimmers earned various degree levels based upon the number of miles completed. Swimmers received an event tee-shirt and a swim cap whose color reflected the degree level attained. All entrants were invited to the post-event social at Star Pizza, with over 30 swimmers and guests in attendance.

2026 Forty Bridges Virtual Swim Around Manhattan:

The virtual event began on September 1 and will last through December 31, 2026. There are currently 47 members signed up to complete the 57-mile, two-loop course of Manhattan Island. Swimmers also have the option of swimming a single loop (28.5 miles), making the event suitable for all ability levels.

Long Distance–Open Water Report (Andreas Lorenz): In 2026 the Gulf LMSC offered several traditional events for the USMS Virtual Championships plus a new event, the Open Water Race Clinic – in the Pool. In January the traditional 1-hour swim had to be cancelled due to poor weather that reduced participation to a level that forced us to cancel the event.

- A. On the last weekend of May, the 5000/10000 Virtual Swim took place at Dad's Club. We ran the 5,000 and the 10000 concurrently. 2 swimmers took on the 10,000 and 8 other individuals swam the 5,000.
- B. The Open-Water-in-the-Pool clinic was also at Dad's club. Lane lines were removed, and with the addition of 4 buoys, we could simulate open water racing without the fear. John Dissinger and Andreas Lorenz coached the clinic, and 4 individuals learned the basics of open-water swimming and racing. This concept worked well and should be kept on the calendar for 2027.

- C. This year was the third time we held a Long Course Swim Practice, open to all Gulf swimmers. In June Dad's Club was host location for the event. We offered coached practices for Long/Mid and Short Distance swimmers as well as IM and New-comers. We had 4 coaches on deck for 23 participants.
- D. Holding the 3000/6000 swim is still a goal, but all efforts to secure the Kingwood Park pool as in the past, have been futile. The ISD person responsible for renting out the facility has been AWOL so far. But we have not given up.

For 2027 we want to again offer the Virtual Championship Swims. But we need assistance from our Clubs and Members to diversify the locations from Dad's Club and SHAC, in order to have higher number of participants.

January: 1-Hour Swim

June: 5000/10000 Virtual Swim

June: Open Water in the Pool Clinic

June: Long Course Practice

October: 3000/6000 Virtual Swim

Diversity and Inclusion Report (Anna Bass): Anna held a spring ALTS class. There were 33 participants, and 2 WSI certified student teachers. Twenty students attended all four lessons. The weekday classes had a better turn-out than the Saturday classes. The students were all thrilled and almost all participants accomplished the ALTS class skills.

Through Anna's efforts, a grant of \$4,300 from the USA Swimming foundation was secured to pay for pool rental and instructor salaries. Tee shirts and swim caps were paid for and provided by the Gulf LMSC.

Coach's Chair Report and Grown Up Swimming (GUS) Report (Patrick Harrington): Patrick has made multiple contacts to advance GUS in the Houston area and Lufkin/Nacogdoches is also interested in starting a GUS program. Villa Sports, a large nationwide sports facility chain, has purchased four locations in the Houston area, including the Memorial Athletic Center. Patrick has had extensive discussions with the Villa Sports aquatic director about starting Masters programs in the four Houston locations. This could be a jump start to expand Masters programs in Villa facilities nationwide. Patrick is also working to dovetail GUS into the Villa Sports locations.

Unfortunately, GUS did not take off in Houston this year. Just as he was getting some interest and some folks willing to set up teams, Patrick was sidelined with a health issue. Along with Brian, the USMS GUS director, it was decided that GUS in Houston would need to wait until next year.

Social Media Report (Delia Weber): The Gulf LMSC is striving to increase its social media presence to build community engagement and culture. Help is needed to accomplish this goal, so anyone interested in supporting the LMSC's socials should contact Delia Weber, (832) 674-3989. Content contribution from different clubs across the LMSC is a great step in the right direction. There was discussion about a central/shared photo album for ease of sharing/collecting content. Delia will look into which option presented will be the most feasible for the LMSC.

Club Outreach Report (Ad Hoc Committee) (Stacey Eicks): Clubs in the Gulf LMSC were sorted newest to oldest, and the 11 newest clubs were selected to start the outreach program. Welcome letters, along with

complimentary USMS caps, have been sent out to all 11 clubs. Stacey met with the Blue Tide Aquatics coach, Mandy, at a mid-day workout. There were approximately eight swimmers in the workout, ranging from college age to 40s.

South Central Zone Report (Nicole Christensen):

At the USMS Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates voted to approve the addition of the Southern LMSC (Louisiana and Mississippi) to become part of the South Central Zone. The following zone championship meet bids were selected: April 9-11, 2027 Spring Short Course Yards meet in Shreveport, LA hosted by Red River Masters and June 26-27, 2027 the Summer Long Course Meters meet in Shenandoah, TX hosted by the Woodlands Masters.

Zone Open Water

The 2026 Zone Grand Prix Open Water Challenge Series started in April and will have its final race on the weekend of October 17 – 18. Our series this year has four races, and two of them are brand new. I worked with groups in South Texas so that we were able to add on races in Rockport, TX and Marble Falls, TX giving us races in three of our five LMSCs.

- Apr 12 Lake Longhorn Open Water Round Up in Gulf LMSC
- May 3 Rockport Beach Open Water Challenge in South Texas LMSC – **NEW RACE**
- Jul 12 Open Water Swim Challenge in North Texas LMSC
- Oct 17 – 18 Marble Falls Banana Slug Splash in South Texas LMSC – **NEW RACE**

Marble Falls registration is open until October 15th. Currently it has 48 swimmers.

The races are set up with three distance categories at each race and swimmers are given points in 1st through 10th place in each distance category at each race. The points are then added together as swimmers swim in additional races. A leaderboard is kept showing the cumulative points achieved by each swimmer in the category they swum in. If a swimmer swims in different distance categories, then their points will be split to show them in both.

At the end of the series, the 1st – 3rd place male and female swimmer in each distance category are given the Grand Prix champion awards based on cumulative point totals. Swimmers who swim in all races in the series also receive a prize no matter how they score. For 2026, we currently have nine swimmers who have attended all three races that have been swum so far.

Swimmers must swim in at least two races to be eligible for the Grand Prix champion awards. Swimmers must also be USMS registered in order to receive points. OEVT swimmers do not get Grand Prix points, although they may get points and awards from the individual race hosts for their specific race. All races in the series are USMS sanctioned open water events.

Zone Website Communications: www.USMSSouthCentralZone.org

An update to the Zone website was done to refresh the images and backgrounds on the home page, refresh the South Central Zone Calendars section on the Calendars page, and then to also change the South Central Zone Events calendar page to have buttons that directly link to the USMS events that are for each specific LMSC. In this way, human error is taken out and whenever a calendar listing (save the date), pool meet, open

water race, clinic or anything else any of our LMSCs are posted on the USMS Calendar of Events, they will automatically show.

Our Open Water page has been constantly updated with new information coming in about our Grand Prix Open Water Challenge series. The challenge being for swimmers to do the whole series and travel around the zone.

The Records page has been updated with items sent to me by the All Time Zone Record keeper, Kirsten Hoffman, and the Zone Champs Meet Records keeper, Susan Ingraham.

The Zone Champs Meet Results page is updated to include all results that I have found for our Zone meets from 2013 to the present. If anyone knows of a links to results for missing years, please email me.

The Awards Winner's page has been updated to include the information about our 2025 Jesse Coon award winner, Cindy Myer. We also have other awards on this page [Award Winners](#) and if anyone sees something that is missing, once again, please email me.

For groups/clubs wanting to host a Zone Championship swim meet, please go to our [Documents](#) page to download templates, samples and other information.

Zone Email Communications

Since the last Zone Annual Meeting, thirteen emails have been sent out to the members of the zone. Emails are sent from the swim@usmssouthcentralzone.org email. If zone members have not been seeing the emails, they should check their spam or bulk folder and designate it as not junk/safe sender. Questions should be sent to Nicole at ncr@creativewaters.net.