

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK (COH)

Approved by AAMN Membership - November 9, 2010



Alamo Area Chapter
Texas Master Naturalist Program

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

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CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Alamo Area Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

(a nonprofit public benefit corporation)

Article 1 Name and Headquarters

- 1.01 Name.** The name of this corporation is the ALAMO AREA CHAPTER OF THE TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS, INC. as set forth by the Articles of Incorporation filed with the Office of the Secretary of State of Texas, January 25, 2000.
- 1.02 Address.** The current mailing address of this organization is P.O. Box 690356, San Antonio TX 78269.

Article 2 Purpose and Policies

2.01 Purpose.

- (a) The purpose of this organization shall be as stated in its Articles of Incorporation on file with the Texas Secretary of State, Charter No. – 01568810-01.
- (b) This Chapter Operating Handbook is to supplement and implement the Texas Master Naturalist Bylaws.
- (c) In addition to this handbook and the TMN Bylaws, the chapter’s board and members will be guided by the current versions of the TMN Roadmap for Adoption of New Bylaws; Chapter Operating Handbook for EXISTING Chapters; the TMN Program Chapter Management Guidelines; the TMN Standards of Conduct; and the TMN Code of Ethics.
- (d) References: TMN Website, Members Resource Section

<http://txmn.org/resources/chapter-bylaws/>

2.02 Policies.

- (a) This organization is a tax-exempt, charitable corporation, exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and shall be nonprofit, nonsectarian and nonpolitical in all its policies and activities and not organized for the private gain of any individual or entity. For additional applications, restrictions and limitations see IRS Publication 557, “Tax-Exempt Status for Your Organization.”

- (b) This organization shall support the purpose of the Texas Master Naturalist Program, comply with its Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and Standards of Behavior and follow the other TMN policies and procedures as listed in Article 8 of the Bylaws.

Article 3 Membership

3.01 Membership Requirements.

- (a) Membership requirements will be those set forth by the Chapter Management Guidelines as found on the TMN website.
- (b) Establishment of Membership Dues. The Board of Directors may, with approval of a majority of members present at a duly called and convened general membership meeting, set and change the amount of an initiation fee, if any, and the annual dues, if applicable, payable to the chapter. The Board of Directors must notify all voting members 30 days prior to the general meeting that the subject of dues will be brought before the convened general membership for action. The Board of Directors under special circumstances may waive individual membership fees, on a case-by-case basis, if approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
- (c) Dues Schedule. If dues are required, they shall be payable in advance of the first day of January in each fiscal year. If dues are not paid by March 31 in each fiscal year, then all privileges afforded a member are rescinded until dues are paid.

3.02 Active Membership. Active members are those members who have completed the required training schedule as established by the TMN Chapter Management Guidelines and are current in their dues, if applicable.

Article 4 Board Members and Responsibilities

4.01 Elections and Assumption of Board Duties.

- (a) AAMN elections will be held during the chapter's general meeting in November.
- (b) The new Board of Directors shall assume their duties at the conclusion of the meeting (as found in Article V, E.2.e of the Bylaws).

4.02 The Board of Directors and Voting Privileges.

- (a) The Board of Directors shall include the elected board members, the state advisors (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas AgriLife Extension Service), and other board members as shown in this chapter operating handbook.
- (b) All members of the Board of Directors have full voting privileges except the parliamentarian, the class representatives, and ad hoc committee chairs.
- (c) Other board members are listed in Sections 4.05 and 4.06.

4.03 The Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall include the chapter's elected board members.

4.04 Elected Board Members.

- (a) President
- (b) Vice President
- (c) Treasurer
- (d) Secretary

4.05 Other Board Members – Voting.

- (a) State Representative
- (b) Chair – Plans and Policy Committee
- (c) Chair - Education and Training Committee
- (d) Chair – Membership Committee
- (e) Chair - Volunteer and Activities Information Committee
- (f) Chair – Chapter Programs Committee
- (g) Chair – Marketing and Technology
- (h) Chair – Community Outreach Committee
- (i) Chair – Hospitality Committee
- (j) Historian
- (k) Past President

4.06 Other Board Members – Non-voting.

- (a) Parliamentarian
- (b) Class Representatives
- (c) Ad Hoc Committee Chairs

4.07 Terms and Limits.

- (a) All members of the Executive Committee shall serve a term of one year and are eligible for re-election or re-appointment.
- (b) Committee chairs, state representative, parliamentarian, and members filling any mid-term board vacancies may be nominated by the nominating committee. All appointed positions on the board will be determined by a majority vote of the elected officers, past-president, and advisors (See Article V, F.2a. & b. of the chapter bylaws.).
- (c) Class representatives are selected by vote of their classes.

4.08 Duties of Board Members and Committees.

- (a) President.
 - 1) Serves as chief executive officer of the chapter.
 - 2) Presides at all meetings of the chapter.
 - 3) Chairs the board of directors.
 - 4) Develops and publishes the agenda for board and general membership meetings.
 - 5) Serves as an ex-officio member of all committees.

- 6) Signs all chapter correspondence and board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the chapter.
 - 7) Approves and submits the chapter's annual report to the TMN state office.
- (b) Vice President.
- 1) Assists the president and officiates in his absence.
 - 2) Coordinates and synchronizes board and committee activity between meetings.
 - 3) Performs other duties as assigned by the president.
 - 4) Coordinates with other chapter MN vice presidents.
 - 5) Chairs the Plans and Policy Committee.
- (c) Treasurer.
- 1) Selects and appoints, subject to board approval, an assistant treasurer.
 - 2) Develops and submits an annual operating budget when requested by the board.
 - 3) Monitors execution of and recommends changes to the annual operating budget.
 - 4) Maintains chapter financial records.
 - 5) Receives all dues, fees, donations and other monies belonging to the chapter and expeditiously deposits them in a chapter bank account.
 - 6) Keeps a record of all donated or purchased inventory, equipment or other property belonging to the chapter with an initial purchase price or current market value of \$250.00 or more.
 - 7) Pays all bills upon receipt of a duly authorized and approved written statement or receipt.
 - 8) Signs all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes in accordance with the financial controls stipulated in the bylaws.
 - 9) Issues receipts to individuals or businesses for all cash and non-cash donations.
 - 10) Provides a Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate to chapter members making authorized purchases on behalf of the chapter.
 - 11) Makes a financial status report at all scheduled board and general membership meetings.
 - 12) Presents the financial records to the audit committee no later than thirty days before the last day of the fiscal year.
 - 13) Submits annual financial records and audits as required by federal, state and local law and the TMN State Bylaws, and provides input to the annual chapter report.
 - 14) Insures that all applicable legal documents, including all tax returns, are filed on a timely basis.
- (d) Secretary.
- 1) Prepares all chapter correspondence.
 - 2) Selects and appoints, subject to board approval, an assistant secretary.
 - 3) Records, publishes and preserves the minutes of all meetings of the board of directors, general membership and special meetings.
 - 4) Provides draft minutes to board members for approval and makes them available to all chapter members after approval.
 - 5) Keeps a record of attendance and minutes for each board meeting.
 - 6) Brings to each board and general meeting all current fiscal year minutes, a copy of the AAMN Chapter Bylaws, Chapter Operating Handbook and a copy of the TMN Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

- 7) Posts a copy of approved minutes on the chapter website and forwards a copy to the general membership via e-mail.
- (e) Past-President.
- 1) Serves as an advisor to the current board.
 - 2) Chairs the annual nominating committee. (See Article V, E.2.a & b. of the chapter bylaws)
 - 3) The nominating committee will recommend candidates for the board-appointed positions or for any vacancies that may occur on the board.
- (f) State Representative.
- 1) Represents the chapter in state level matters of the Texas Master Naturalist program.
 - 2) Attends the State Volunteer Representatives Council meetings.
 - 3) Keeps the board and chapter membership informed of changes to the TMN State Bylaws, guidelines and other state documents.
- (g) Chair, Plans and Policy Committee.
- 1) Plans and Policy Committee is chaired by the current vice president.
 - 2) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 3) Develops a grant program to fund chapter activities.
 - 4) Gathers information to formulate future years' strategic and operating plans, activities and policies.
 - 5) Works with the treasurer and other board members to develop the next and future years' operating budgets when requested by the board.
 - 6) Keeps the Chapter Operating Handbook current and in consonance with changing chapter roles and procedures.
 - 7) Informs the board of directors when a membership vote is necessary to amend the Chapter Operating Handbook.
 - 8) Requests that copies of the current TMN Bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook and other pertinent documents be placed on the chapter web site for use by the general membership and the public.
 - 9) Gathers necessary information and submits the chapter annual report to the president for review and editing.
- (h) Chair, Education and Training Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 2) Conducts oversight of the chapter's Master Naturalist Training and Education Committee.
 - 3) Recommends training requirements for volunteers to become and retain the title of Alamo Area Certified Master Naturalist as set forth by the TMN Management Guidelines found on the TMN website.
 - 4) Plans, implements and evaluates the chapter training curriculum and develops a training calendar.
 - 5) Develops the training budget and recommends each class's tuition to the board.
 - 6) Accountable for training committee budget control and records maintenance.
 - 7) Point of contact for training applicant inquiries and application process.

- 8) Selects presenters and makes arrangements for class locations, presentations and field trips including prepared/furnished materials, handouts, and audio-visual equipment as needed.
 - 9) Prepares class manuals and other training materials.
 - 10) Arranges for speakers' and presenters' gifts, travel and lodging needs, and thank you letters.
 - 11) Coordinates with the Public Relations Chair for training publicity and announcements.
 - 12) Appoints the Class Representative Mentor.
 - 13) Arranges class graduation ceremonies location with appropriate speakers, awards and presentations.
 - 14) Assigns training committee duties at all graduations.
 - 15) Collects and evaluates presenters' performances to maintain/improve training quality and trainee experience.
 - 16) Adjusts speaker/presenter roster as needed.
 - 17) Maintains training information and data for annual report input and chapter records.
- (i) Chair, Membership Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 2) Maintains current alphabetic and class rosters of the chapter's active and inactive members, including in-training members, containing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
 - 3) Maintains and updates a record of the interests and expertise of all members.
 - 4) Maintains a detailed and cumulative record of each member's volunteer and advanced training hours.
 - 5) Notifies the board of members meeting annual certification and cumulative-hour achievements.
 - 6) Coordinates routinely with the Hours Assistance coordinator, the Public Relations and Community Outreach Committee and other committees as appropriate.
 - 7) Validates that all candidates at time of election or appointment as board members are current TMN members or certified TMN members in good standing.
 - 8) Orders and maintains a stock of member certification and recognition awards.
 - 9) Recommends additional and special awards for recognition of sustained or one-time outstanding performance.
 - 10) Provides input to the quarterly and annual reports required by the state office.
 - 11) Documents procedures used for reporting service hours.
- (j) Chair, Volunteer and Activities Information Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 2) Chairs an activity review sub-committee that reviews submissions of volunteer service and/or advanced training activity or events and recommends approval or disapproval to the board.
 - 3) Searches for and develops one-time and on-going service opportunities. Identifies and develops those opportunities that can be led by chapter volunteers and are identified as AAMN Chapter-sponsored programs and events.
 - 4) Establishes points of contact with other organizations' volunteer coordinators, e.g., San Antonio Parks and Recreation; and engages them in reference to AAMN volunteer recognition events and volunteer awards.

- 5) Establishes electronic or personal links with other organizations and helps share volunteer opportunities with each.
 - 6) Coordinates routinely with the Public Relations Committee and Community Outreach Committee and other committees as appropriate.
 - 7) Uses the recommended criteria found in the Texas Master Naturalist Program Chapter Management Guidelines.
 - 8) Maintains a list or data base of currently available and/or scheduled volunteer service and advanced training projects and opportunities and makes the list available to the membership through e-mail, the chapter newsletter and the chapter website.
 - 9) Provides input to the annual report.
- (k) Chair, Chapter Programs Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 2) Develops and schedules, as appropriate, chapter programs, field trips and outings and special advanced training classes and presentations directly associated with chapter meetings.
 - 3) Searches for and develops advanced training opportunities for members.
 - 4) Notifies membership of field trip requirements (e.g., water, safety, maps, logistics, etc.)
 - 5) Publishes chapter programs on the chapter web site and in the monthly newsletter.
 - 6) Ensures speakers or trip leaders are appropriately recognized.
 - 7) Provides input to the annual report.
 - 8) Routinely coordinates with the Public Relations Committee, the Hospitality Committee and other committees as appropriate.
- (l) Chair, Marketing and Technology.
- 1) Selects the Public Relations Committee responsible for the following:
 - a. Develops an annual public relations plan.
 - b. Develops contacts with the public relations personnel of various local and state organizations, as well as various radio and TV media to publicize Master Naturalist events and activities.
 - c. Develops and collects information and photos of chapter activities and events and provides them to local newspapers and other media outlets.
 - d. Collects chapter and state TMN news and information.
 - 2) Selects the Marketing Information & Materials Committee responsible for maintaining and updating the chapter marketing brochures.
 - 3) Selects the Marketing Technology Committee, responsible for the following:
 - a. Manages layout and content of the chapter web page.
 - b. Responsible for the development, design, editing and publication of the monthly newsletter.
 - c. As part of the website, develops an online community websource.
 - d. Insures that all board members update their portions of the chapter website.
 - e. Assists the board and committee chairs with new information technology.
 - 4) Provides input to the annual report.
- (m) Chair, Community Outreach Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.

- 2) Plans, schedules and conducts chapter outreach activities, to include establishing relationships with the community, private businesses, service clubs, city and county public organizations and other local volunteer organizations.
 - 3) Stores and maintains chapter outreach equipment and supplies.
 - 4) Coordinates routinely with the Public Relations Committee, Volunteer Programs Committee and other committees as appropriate.
 - 5) Acquires and maintains a chapter display board, banner and assigns duties related to the preparation for the Annual State MN Meeting.
 - 6) Distributes AAMN literature, brochures and student recruitment material at public events throughout the city and surrounding areas.
 - 7) Documents procedures of the Community Outreach Committee
- (n) Chair, Hospitality Committee.
- 1) Selects committee members and forms necessary subcommittees.
 - 2) Plans, schedules and organizes chapter social functions and events.
 - 3) Publishes annual social calendar on the chapter web site.
 - 4) Provides and/or coordinates refreshments at general membership meetings and other chapter functions.
 - 5) Coordinates routinely with the Public Relations Committee and Chapter Programs Committee and other committees as appropriate.
 - 6) Documents procedures of the Hospitality Committee
- (o) Historian.
- 1) Selects assistants as necessary.
 - 2) Maintains the historical records of the chapter.
 - 3) Historical records serve as the official archives of the chapter and should include, at a minimum, all board and other meeting minutes, nominations, election results, correspondence, budgets, financial records, training records, photos and member volunteer service and advanced training records and documents and photos associated with social events.
 - 4) Provides historical records to the following year's historian for safekeeping and reference.
 - 5) Coordinates routinely with all committees.
- (p) Class Representatives. A class representative and an alternate will be selected from and by the members of each training class to serve as liaison with the Board of Directors. Class representatives are expected to attend board meetings and, at a minimum, keep members of their class informed of chapter events and programs. Class Representatives will start their duties when the class begins and continue for a minimum of two years.

4.09 Ad Hoc Committees. Ad Hoc committees are formed for a particular and specific purpose.

- (a) Audit Committee. Responsible for conducting the annual audit of the financial records of the chapter. Three members will be appointed by the president and approved by the board. The audit will be performed and submitted to the board prior to the annual meeting.
- (b) Nomination Committee. Responsible for selecting the annual slate of officers. The past president will chair the committee with two or more members appointed by the president

with board approval. The committee will present the slate of candidates for election at the annual meeting.

- (c) Application Review Committee. Meets semi-annually to review and evaluate student applications.
- (d) Other Ad Hoc Committees will be formed for specific tasks or purposes.

4.10 Board of Directors Volunteer Hours. To better serve as role models to the membership, all members of the Board of Directors, whether officers or chairpersons or committee members, are expected to fulfill their volunteer service and advanced training certification requirements for the current calendar year.

Article 5 Adoption and Amendment of the Chapter Operating Handbook

5.01 Initial Adoption. Initial adoption and ratification of the COH is by a majority vote of those present at a general meeting following written distribution of the proposed COH to the general membership. This distribution will be forwarded thirty days before the general meeting at which the ratification vote will be held. Written distribution may be by conventional mail, e-mail or other means.

5.02 Changes and Amendments. Changes and amendments may be made by the board of directors at a regular board meeting with a two-thirds vote of the board members in attendance, subject to the quorum requirements found in the bylaws under Article VII-Meetings. The general membership must be notified in written form of the proposed changes or amendments ten days before the meeting and be given an opportunity at the board meeting to voice any concerns about the changes or amendments. Written form may be via conventional mail, e-mail or other equivalent means.

Article 6 Fund Raising and Donations

6.01 Donations. Chapter members, non-members, businesses and government entities may make cash and/or non-cash donations to the chapter as established by Article IX-D of the bylaws. Such donations are tax deductible to the donor to the extent that their value exceeds the cost or value of anything received in kind from the chapter. The treasurer will provide a receipt for donations upon request. The value of the goods or services will be determined by the donor.

6.03 Fund Raising. The chapter may organize and implement fundraising as needs dictate within the limits of the bylaws and the Texas Master Naturalist program.

Article 7 Parliamentarian and Chapter Rules of Order

- 7.01 Primary Duty.** The primary duty of the parliamentarian is to advise the presiding officer on questions of parliamentary law and matters of procedure.
- 7.02 Voting.** The parliamentarian does not vote or participate in board discussions except as necessary in the fulfillment of his or her responsibilities.
- 7.03 Procedures.** The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, as amended, shall govern the meetings of the chapter insofar as those rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the TMN Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation, and the laws of the State of Texas or other adopted rules governing agenda, motions and related matters.