From Chapter Management and Operations Protocols – Revised December 2016 (Pages 12-20)

Article V. Advanced Training Requirements

The purpose of Advanced Training is to provide Texas Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests on one, or a few, specific topics that interest them. Also, advanced training on an annual basis promotes continued learning and development. Advanced training is a benefit in itself, providing the experienced Texas Master Naturalist with tools to work in more advanced volunteer efforts. Although the State TMN Program may occasionally provide statewide or regional advanced training opportunities, it is generally the responsibility of the local Chapter to ensure that there are sufficient advanced training opportunities offered on the local natural ecosystems, so that members can attain their 8-hour minimum requirement. In addition, the local Chapter should be a clearinghouse for Members of approved advanced training opportunities. Advanced training can be accepted from workshops, seminars and conferences held outside of the state boundaries, if, and only if, the training material meets the AT guidelines within the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. It is mandatory that any training material from outside the state be beneficial to the citizens and the natural resources of Texas and be Chapter and/or State Program approved.

Advanced Training courses may be made available directly through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, or any number of short-courses provided by universities or nature centers. One way for a Chapter's Members to meet their Advanced Training requirements is by actually sponsoring the advanced training sessions. The local Chapter's Advanced Training Coordinator, Committee, or equivalent, should pre-approve all advanced training opportunities before the volunteer attends. In special circumstances, approval may be sought in retrospect. With the exception of college courses, Advanced Training hours are counted one hour for each hour of advanced training. Travel time is **not** included for Advanced Training hours. Pre-approval from the Chapter must be obtained for any Advanced Training session including those that are outside the Chapter boundaries. Advanced Training hours should never be counted as service hours.

In the event a college course is accepted as Advanced Training, each Credit Hour of the course counts as an Advanced Training hour (not each hour spent in class). This is not retroactive to cover courses taken prior to involvement in the TMN Program.

Training by its nature assumes there is an instructor as well as a student. To be effective, Chapters may only approve training that allows for an exchange between the two, except for the narrow exceptions outlined below. If material is complex or confusing, the student should be able to ask questions or request clarification to assure

learning occurs. With the advancement of online communication media, new forms of online-based training can be accepted for Advanced Training hours **provided the instruction is live and participants can ask questions of the instructor**. Online-based training and webinars using a live instructor will only be accepted for a maximum of 4 hours of the required 8 hours of advanced training hours. Once the minimum of 8 hours of advanced training has been obtained for the certification year, with a max 4 via web and min 4 obtained through traditional avenues, additional AT hours can be accumulated from approved online/distance based methods. (Exceptions to this rule may be considered for members meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act)

The use of mission-specific or related videos, DVDs, and archived webinars for Advanced Training should be limited in scope. Modern media that does not have live interaction between participants and an instructor or program facilitator **may not** be approved by a Chapter unless it meets the criteria listed below:

• The educational experience will supplement a Chapter's approved advanced training program because live instructors are not available on a particular subject germane to the ecoregion of the Chapter.
• The quality and caliber of the particular media resource is of significant relevance to the TMN mission so as to be recognized by known experts in the field and/or organizations renowned for their dedication to education.
• If approval is granted, all efforts must be made for a qualified Chapter Member to introduce the resource and lead a Q&A discussion following its conclusion.
• If there is any question as to the worthiness of a resource or validity of the request for Advanced Training approval, the State Coordinator should be consulted.

Chapter sponsored Book Clubs, where discussion is directed and related to the mission of TMN may receive Advanced Training credit for the club discussion and presentation, but time spent reading the book does not receive credit.

The Chapter Advanced Training Coordinator and/or Chapter Advanced Training Committee should use the following criteria or ask the following questions of the opportunity when reviewing and approving Advanced Training Opportunities:

Does the Advanced Training opportunity:
1. Promote continued learning and development of naturalist skills?
2. Provide Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts?
3. Direct trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services?
4. Provide practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts?
5. Take advantage of local partnerships?
6. Provide Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics?
7. Build on the core curriculum initially provided by the local Chapter?

8. Provide natural resource management issues and information applicable to Texas, and the Chapter's local community or ecoregion?

9. Is the program/training provided by a person who is a recognized authority or skilled in the subject matter?

==Advanced Training opportunities must meet all the criteria of 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 above to be approved.== It is suggested that the remaining criteria also be a part of the approval consideration.

Article VI. Volunteer Service Requirements

In order to attain 'certification', a Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training or Pledge must complete a minimum of 40 volunteer service hours on pre-approved projects in addition to the required 40 hours of classroom training and 8 hours of Advanced Training. In order to retain the title of Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a Member must complete 40 service hours on pre-approved projects and 8 hours of Advanced Training in every subsequent year. Volunteer hours credited for the TMN Program shall not be credited from or to another TMN Member or other volunteer programs, sites or locations. Travel and prep time for specific service project opportunities may be counted as service time as determined by the local Chapter. Service activities relating to the development and management of a local Chapter, such as serving as a Board member, receives volunteer service credit hours.

Volunteer service project opportunities can be presented by various entities ranging from the State Program sponsors, the Chapter, local Chapter partners, an individual volunteer, nature centers, schools, city, county, state and federal agencies. Often Chapters institute a "class project" where the current training class of the Chapter finds/develops and mutually agrees to volunteer for the project as a group and receive their required volunteer service hours at the same time.

Volunteer projects may be a series of short experiences or they may involve the long-term efforts of a volunteer team. The opportunity to do meaningful and interesting work is the reward of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteer. There are few constraints for Texas Master Naturalist volunteer projects whether Chapter initiated or individually initiated, except that volunteer service must meet the TMN Program Mission by being dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their local communities for the State of Texas and approved by the Chapter.

Participants in volunteer service projects are encouraged (when safety considerations allow) to identify themselves as part of the TMN Program either by wearing a Chapter badge, identifying TMN clothing, or by displaying signage identifying the TMN project and/or participants as members of the TMN.

The pre-approval of volunteer service projects and opportunities is important to:
• Ensure that volunteers are covered by the available State Program accident and liability insurance (see FAQs)
• Provide a list of service projects for volunteers of the Chapter
• Ensure the mission and goals of the organization and the partners are met
• Provide for and encourage participation in a broad spectrum of opportunities

The following are points for the Chapter's Volunteer Service Coordinator and/or the Volunteer Service Committee to consider in approving and issuing a code or title for a project opportunity:

A. Is the proposed service project representative of the goals, practices and teachings of the Texas Master Naturalist Program?
B. How does the project address a pressing naturalist, natural resource management, Chapter and/or partner need for meaningful service or resources?
C. What is the scope of the project in terms of when it would need to be conducted, where, estimated time needed to complete or maintain per month, how many Members would be needed, etc.?
D. Is the project within the Chapter's service area and ecological training? Consideration by the Chapter may be given to a limited number of projects outside the Chapter's service area and ecological training if the project's service is compatible with the mission, goals and training of the Chapter and the TMN Program.
E. How does the project allow the Chapter to focus and/or create visibility, identity and/or recruitment for the Chapter? Does the opportunity allow the Member(s) to represent the TMN Program at all times?
F. How can the project's impact on the community and our natural resources be measured?
G. Does the opportunity include fundraising for an organization other than the Chapter or the TMN Program which is outside of the TMN mission?
H. Does the opportunity include lobbying which is not acceptable under the TMN Mission?
I. Is the opportunity a "good opportunity" for the Chapter and Program to be associated with?

Actual Volunteer Service Examples:

Bad/Unacceptable	Better	Best
Being "on call" as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization (Why: no actual service time)	Performing licensed wildlife transport service	Performing licensed wildlife rescue service in cooperation with a partnering rehabilitation and public education non-profit organization

Planting exotic plants or a vegetable garden (Why: this activity is not within our mission)	Planting native plants or a Wildscape at a local school	Leading 5th graders and school staff in implementing a native plant garden or Wildscape at a local school
Monarch monitoring in Colorado (Why: opportunity is not within Texas)	Monarch monitoring in Texas	Monarch monitoring within your local Chapter's area
Cleaning the elephant cage at a zoo (Why: not a native species and does not fall within our mission)	Caring for the Prairie Chicken area at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter	Leading interpretive programs about Prairie Chickens at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter
Maintenance at a private native plant nursery (Why: is a private business)	Maintenance of a demonstration garden at a park/nature center or being part of a native plant propagation team for the city's botanical garden	Holding a workshop on how to install and maintain a Wildscape or other similar type of native habitat.
Identifying flora and fauna on your property and uploading it to citizen science website (Why: Private benefit)	Uploading imperiled species observations into iNaturalist on public land with permissions set to "public."	Organizing a public or private land "bio-blitz" for citizen scientists and experts to learn from each other and upload data to eBird and iNaturalist
Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land (Why: private benefit--conducting activities on personal property is not volunteer service)	Conducting wildlife management practices/activities on public land	Teaching/assisting landowners to develop their own wildlife management plans that the landowner would carry out
A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts in their classroom (Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already/not volunteer service for this individual)	A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts as an unpaid after school Environmental Club leader	A teacher /volunteer who organizes and conducts a natural resource education workshop for other Master Naturalists or the general public.
Stream clean-up by a volunteer who is employed by and works for a local watershed protection program (Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already/not volunteer service for this individual)	Stream clean-up by volunteers who do not work for a local watershed protection program	Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers conducting stream or watershed restoration practices. Or Master Naturalist volunteers coordinating a stream clean-up for the local community to participate in.

Receiving service credit for time spent as a Board member or Committee member for a 'for profit' or 'mission' contrary to that of the TMN Program. Time spent fundraising for non-TMN organizations. (Why: not representing the TMN Program)	Receiving service credit for time spent serving as a Board or Committee member for a non-profit organization devoted to education, conservation and management of natural resources or the environment.	Serving as a Board or Committee member at any level within the TMN program. Training other organizations how to conduct natural resource management activities. Time spent representing your local TMN Chapter's interest on a Board/organization which has developed a designated "Master Naturalist Representative" spot on their leadership team.
Watching nature documentaries, the unplanned altering of species habitat, advocating for bike and hike access trails in sensitive nature areas (Why: not serving TMN Mission)	Conducting endangered species surveys; developing nature trails or habitat brush piles at a local park/nature center which is in a partnership with your local Chapter.	Maintaining a nature classroom/training area for that same partner who also allows the Chapter to keep an office and/or hold Chapter meetings in this same space.
Manning a "store" or native plant sale that raises funds for non-TMN organization. (Why: not part of the TMN mission)	Answering phones/emails and doing basic office work for your local County Natural Resources Agent	Serving as an information docent by giving programs, leading tours, and/or organizing outreach events on native wildlife and habitats
Preparing food items for social actives of the Chapter (Why: Preparation of food for an activity that is purely social does not meet the mission of the TMN)	Planning and organizing logistics for a chapter volunteer recognition event. Serving on the hospitality committee. Coordinating the creation of a new Chapter Volunteer Project	Mentoring a TMN Member in Training Teaching at a New Class training event Serving on a New Class committee

Texas Master Naturalist Service Project Opportunity Categories and Examples

To assist the TMN State Program in its administrative functions, Chapters are required to use the following Service Activity codes when reporting hours to the state.

Service/Activity	Code	Description	Examples
Training & Educating Others (Direct)	TR	Leading, organizing, developing, delivering instructing or staffing an educational activity where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event (e.g., planned start and end times with a single agenda).	• Classroom instruction • Delivering Workshops • Developing & delivering training Presentations • Conducting/Leading Webinars • Delivering/an instructor for Chapter MN Members in Training/interns class • AT you prepare and present as a TMN member to other TMN members
Advanced Training	AT	Advanced Training you attend as a participant	• AT sessions at TMN Statewide Annual Meeting • Rainwater Harvesting Steward Program Training • Project WILD Instructor/Facilitator Training
Public Outreach (Indirect)	PO	Leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where participants come and go and are able to inquire on a broad set of topics. <or> Writing an educational article or brochure.	• Being a docent for a nature center (excludes selling items) • Writing articles, brochures or newsletters • Answering a Wildlife Hotline (not on call)
Technical Guidance	TG	Providing free, detailed expert advice or assistance for any natural resource related program or related business. For example: providing expertise in land management guidance, in consultation and/or written form, to Chapters, partners, land owners and/or land managers.	• Site visits for and writing ecosystem management plans • Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) • Serving on a City/Community/Regional Habitat Conservation Plan Committee • Time spent serving as a Board or committee member for a natural resource/environmental organization in partnership with the local Chapter

Natural Resource Management (including Natural Resource Stewardship and Conservation)	RM	Activities that improve the health of a public natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration, rescue and rehabilitation.	- Removing foreign debris that improves the health of a public natural area or resource - Invasive species removal - Plant and/or /endangered Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) species rescue (not rehab) - E.g.: Turtle Patrol - Restoring or improving natural habitat - Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys - Tree planting
Nature/Public Access	NPA	Field-based activities that improve and manage the public's access to natural areas or resources. Creating and/or maintaining nature trails, Wildscapes and/or interpretive areas	Developing new or maintaining and/or improving existing: - Hiking trails - Interpretive native species gardens (NOT vegetable gardens) - Wildlife viewing blinds - Wildscapes/native plant gardens - Interpretive hikes - Cleanup activities in habitat
Field Research (Including Surveys and Citizen Science)	FR	Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific understanding.	- Field surveys - Banding and tagging - Species watch - Texas Nature Trackers Programs - CoCoRaHs - Stream Watch/Stream Team/ Water Quality Monitoring - Nestbox monitoring - Citizen Science
Chapter & Program Support, Business and Administration	CB	Activities related to managing and running a Texas Master Naturalist Chapter and its committees.	- TMN Chapter Board of Director or committee duties—including New Class Director - TMN Chapter Newsletter, website or social media management - Management of TMN Chapter records and reporting - Representing TMN Chapter at multi-Chapter events - Other TMN Chapter administration - Assistance to TMN State Program and State Program Office

Other	OT	Any activity approved by a Chapter not defined above. In general a Chapter should only have a small percentage of hours in this activity (< 5%). When this activity code is used, a Chapter should investigate the reason.	• Wildlife rehabilitation (not SGCN animal rescue)

Article VII. Chapter Donations

The State's recommendation is that Chapters donate member's time and expertise to outside natural resource conservation, education and management versus donating money to outside organizations. The Texas Master Naturalist Program and Chapters are to be natural resource service organizations first and foremost versus donors of monetary funds to or for other organizations. For donations to a Chapter, see Bylaws, Article IX, D, Gifts and Donations.

If a Chapter insists on donations to other organizations, then it should be understood that this is on a very limited basis least the requests become overwhelming and further removes the focus of the Chapter from the heart of the Program.

Chapters wishing to donate to an outside organization need to consider the guidelines which follow, to insure the organization is in keeping with the Texas Master Naturalist mission, goals and principals. Exceptions would be donations to the State Texas Master Naturalist Program, or Program sponsoring agencies, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

All other organizations (including Chapter partners) should be vetted with these points in mind:
- It should be a non-profit organization.
- The organization should state clearly what the monies would be used for. (For example: is it paying for native plants, or someone's salary? Chapters should learn the specifics of what their donations would be buying/supporting, and it should be in keeping with the mission and spirit of the Texas Master Naturalist Program)
- How does the organization conduct fundraising otherwise? Is it in keeping with the goals and ideals of the Texas Master Naturalist Program?
- Can the organization guarantee that none of its funds are used in any way for lobbying, political interests or campaigning?
- How will the Chapter's Master Naturalist organizational name (and logo) be advertised as a result of the donation? (Would it be done in such a way you would want the Chapter (and TMN Program) advertised and associated with?)