

**Member Volunteer Project Approval Form**

Volunteer service projects must meet the TMN mission by being related to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the Chapter catchment area. All projects must be pre-approved.

[Email—projects@woodduck.org](mailto:projects@woodduck.org)

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Project \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Project \_\_\_\_\_

Project Leader \_\_\_\_\_ Project Location \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Duties Involved \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Volunteers Needed \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Physical Activity \_\_\_\_\_

Indoor/Outdoor Work \_\_\_\_\_

Project duration (Circle One): One Time Project / Ongoing / Weekly / Monthly / As Needed

Starting Date \_\_\_\_\_ Ending Date \_\_\_\_\_

Before submitting a request, the project leader, and others if involved, should consider some of the items listed below and develop a plan for execution of the project. Please check the following items if they are related to the project and have been considered: \_\_\_ follow-up or maintenance required; \_\_\_ meetings or work schedule involved; \_\_\_ relation of leader to site manager/organization; \_\_\_ efforts to retain volunteer members; \_\_\_ public relation efforts needed and who is responsible for this. Is the project open to the general membership? \_\_\_ Should it be posted on website? \_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Service Requirements and Guidelines

In order to attain certification, a Texas Master Naturalist trainee must complete a minimum of 40 volunteer service hours on pre-approved projects within one year of the initial training series. In order to retain the title of Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a volunteer must complete another 40 service hours on pre-approved projects in every subsequent year. Volunteer service hours are those direct contact hours spent on Texas Master Naturalist projects approved by the local chapter. (Thus, volunteer hours credited for the TMN program may not be credited from or to another Master Volunteer or other volunteer program). Sometimes travel and prep time for specific projects 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, should receive volunteer service credit hours.

Volunteer service project opportunities can be presented by various different identities ranging from the state program sponsors, the chapter, local chapter partners, an individual volunteer, other agencies such as city, county, state and federal agencies and even nature centers and schools. Several chapters have even successfully instituted 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 such as serving on a speaker’s bureau – or they may involve the long-term efforts of an entire volunteer team from just one or even several chapters. Either way, for a master volunteer, the opportunity to do meaningful and interesting work is the reward. Texas Master Naturalist volunteers will vary in their abilities and interests. Some will want volunteer opportunities to be presented to them by the local chapter and state program sponsors and partners, while others will see a need and want to design their own project. There are few constraints, except that volunteer service must meet the program mission by being dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

All volunteer service projects must be pre-approved, ideally, through a local committee process, as this can often be an arduous job that should not be left to just one person. The pre-approval of volunteer service projects and opportunities is important to:

- Ensure that volunteers are covered by the program insurance available
- Provide a list of service projects for volunteers of the chapter
- Ensure the goals of the organization and the partners are met
- Avoid assumptions

Chapter leaders will be confronted with numerous service projects and opportunities to approve. Below are some points to consider as a chapter Volunteer Service Committee pre-approving individual service projects.

- 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 volunteers would be needed, etc.?
- D. Is the project within the Chapter’s service area and ecological training?
- E. How does the project allow the chapter to focus and/or create visibility, identity and/or recruitment for the chapter?
- F. How can the project’s impact on the community and our natural resources be measured?

### Actual Volunteer Service Examples:

Bad/Unacceptable	Better	Best
Being “on call” as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization	Actually performing a wildlife rescue event for a partnering organization of the local chapter	
Planting exotic plants at a local school	Planting native plants or a Wildscape at a local school	Leading 5 <sup>th</sup> graders and staff in implementing a native plant garden/Wildscape at a local school
Monarch monitoring in Colorado	Monarch monitoring in Texas	Monarch monitoring within your local chapter’s area
Cleaning the elephant cage at a zoo	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	Maintenance of a demonstration garden at a park/nature center or	Holding a workshop on how to install and maintain a wildscape

	being part of a native plant propagation team for the city's botanical garden	or other similar type of native habitat.
Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land	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	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 works for a local watershed protection program	Stream clean-up by volunteers who do not work for a local watershed protection program	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 serving as a Board or Committee member for another natural resource/environmental organization NOT in partnership with your local Texas Master Naturalist Chapter.	Receiving up to a set limit of service credit (e.g. 10 hours per year as set by your local chapter) for serving as a Board or Committee member for another natural resource/environmental organization that is ALSO a partner with your local chapter, providing the chapter with resources such as meeting space at little or no cost.	Receiving service credit for time spent serving as a Board or Committee member for a natural resource/environmental organization in partnership with your local chapter and because the organization invited you to serve and represent your local Master Naturalist Chapter in this capacity.
	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.

A trained volunteer, no matter how little or how much volunteer service they are providing the chapter within a given year is always considered a Master Naturalist volunteer. Master Naturalist volunteers in any given year are either "Certified" or working towards certification for that given year.

Unanticipated situations, i.e. family illness, medical procedures, accidents, etc., that will prevent a member from attaining the required 40 hours of volunteer service can be addressed in an appropriate manner by the Chapter's Executive board.