

EAST TEXAS CHAPTER TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST
11942 FM 848 Tyler, Texas 75707 903-566-9394

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 with the Chapter catchment area. All projects must be pre-approved. Send Application to Lance Homeniuk (homeniuk@yahoo.com), Greg Marshall (Marshall7707@gmail.com), and Crystal Mann (cosmic_cat84@yahoo.com)

Member Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date: _____

Project Title: _____

Purpose of Project:

Project Leader: _____

Project Location: _____

County _____ Start Time: _____

Venue Phone#: _____

Volunteer Duties Involved: _____

Number of Volunteers Needed: _____

Type of Work _____

Type of Physical Activity: _____

Project duration (Circle One): One Time Project or Recurring Project
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
- Efforts to retain volunteer members
- Relation of leader to site manager/organization
- Public relations 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 available state program accident and liability insurance when applicable
- 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

Criteria for Project Approval - The following are points for the chapter's VS coordinator and the committee to consider in approving a project opportunity:

- The proposed service project is representative of the goals, practices, and teachings of the TMN Program.
- The project addresses a pressing naturalist or natural resource management issue need.
- The scope of the project is described in terms of when it will be conducted, where, estimated time needed to complete or maintain per month, how many members would be needed, etc.
- The project is within the chapter's defined service area or ecological area. Consideration by the chapter may be given to projects outside the chapter's service area and ecological zone if the project's service is compatible with the mission, goals, and training of the chapter and the TMN Program.
- The project allows the chapter to create visibility, identity, or recruitment opportunities for the chapter.
- The project describes how its impact on the community and our natural resources can be measured.
- The opportunity identifies why/how it is beneficial for the chapter and for the program to be associated with it.
- The opportunity does not include fundraising for an organization other than the chapter or the state TMN Program.
- The opportunity does not include lobbying, which is not acceptable under the TMN mission.

Volunteer Service Examples:

Unacceptable	Better	Best
Being "on call" as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization (Why: no actual service time)	Transporting injured, native wildlife to licensed wildlife rehabilitation service	Providing outreach on the prevention of unnecessary wildlife captures or 'rescues' (e.g., knowledge to answer questions on "abandoned" wildlife)
Planting exotic plants or a vegetable garden (Why: not within our mission)	Planting native plants or a wildscape at a local school	Leading 5 th 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.

Unacceptable	Better	Best
<p>Identifying flora and fauna on your property and uploading it to citizen science website that is not part of a chapter-approved project.</p> <p>(Why: Private benefit and activity does not contribute to an approved project following the program's iNaturalist and eBird community science guidelines)</p>	<p>Uploading imperiled species observations into iNaturalist on public land with permissions set to "public."</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land</p> <p>(Why: Private benefit)</p>	<p>Conducting wildlife management practices/activities on public land</p>	<p>Teaching/assisting landowners to develop their own wildlife management plans that the landowner would carry out</p>
<p>A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts in their classroom</p> <p>(Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already)</p>	<p>A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts as an unpaid after school Environmental Club leader</p>	<p>A teacher /volunteer who organizes and conducts a natural resource workshop for other Master Naturalists or the general public.</p>
<p>Stream clean-up by a volunteer who is employed by and works for a local watershed protection program</p> <p>(Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already)</p>	<p>Stream clean-up by volunteers who do not work for a local watershed protection program</p>	<p>Texas Master Naturalist volunteers conducting stream or watershed restoration practices or coordinating a stream clean-up for the local community to participate in.</p>
<p>The unplanned altering of species habitat, advocating for bike and hike access trails in sensitive nature areas</p> <p>(Why: not serving TMN Mission)</p>	<p>Conducting endangered species surveys; developing nature trails or habitat brush piles at a local park/nature center that is in a partnership with your local chapter.</p>	<p>Maintaining a nature classroom/training area for that same partner who also allows the chapter to keep an office or hold chapter meetings in this same space.</p>

Unacceptable	Better	Best
<p>Receiving service credit for time spent as a Board member or committee member for a ‘for profit’ organization or one whose mission is contrary to that of the TMN Program.</p> <p>Time spent fundraising for other than TMN organizations.</p> <p>(Why: not acting in the interest of the TMN Program)</p>	<p>With annual review and approval from your chapter, 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.</p> <p>Time spent representing your local TMN chapter’s interest to a Board/organization that has developed a designated “Master Naturalist Representative” spot on their leadership team. (Such as liaison positions)</p>	<p>Serving on a TMN Board or as a committee member at any level within the TMN program.</p> <p>Training other organizations how to conduct natural resource management activities. Providing natural resource technical guidance expert advice on/to a municipal advisory committee or land trust council.</p> <p>Serving on a local government advisory committee making natural resource recommendations.</p>
<p>Preparing food items for social activities of the chapter</p> <p>(Why: Preparation of food for an activity that is purely social does not meet the mission of the TMN)</p>	<p>Serving on the hospitality committee for chapter meetings or training classes.</p>	<p>Planning and organizing logistics for a chapter volunteer recognition event.</p>