

Roadmap for Adoption of New Bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook For EXISTING Chapters

The governing documents for a chapter are the Bylaws, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, and Chapter Operating Handbook (COH). All Chapter Bylaws must be uniform across all Chapters and are to be adopted verbatim by each Chapter selecting an option for the 'Term of Officers' and an option for an Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Chapters that desire to meet additional requirements to be recognized as a tax-exempt organization may or may not adopt the Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. On the other hand, the content of the COH is flexible and may be adapted to best fit the needs of each chapter provided the resulting document is consistent with the requirements of the Bylaws and the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Since Bylaws are to be adopted verbatim and the COH is adaptable to the Chapters needs, only the Bylaws requires the approval by the state TMN office before submitting the document for approval by the chapter. Final copies of both documents must be sent to the state TMN office once they have been approved by the local chapter membership.

The general process for Bylaws and the COH for existing Chapters is as follows.

1. Review the Bylaws template, these articles are requirements for all Chapters and must be adopted verbatim selecting an option for the 'Term of Officers' and an option for an Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Please see Article X of the Bylaws.
2. The COH template may be modified as appropriate for each chapter consistent with the requirements of the Bylaws and the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. The COH template found on the State Website is a consolidation of the best practices of existing Chapters. While the organizational structure may be changed to meet the individual needs of each chapter, the responsibilities, roles and tasks have been found to be essential for effective chapter design and operation. Hence the template may be molded and modified as needed to meet each chapter's unique local administrative and organizational needs but the functions and tasks most likely need to be included in some form or manner. If questions arise during development of the COH the following documents may be helpful.

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (formally the Chapter Management Guidelines) and the Guidelines for New Chapter Establishment provide the foundation for the formation and operation of Chapters.

The Texas Master Naturalist Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics, establish the values and principles upon which the Master Naturalist program is built and will provide clarification when questions arise about member behavior and intentions for the program.

Annual Report Information for Chapters, enumerates reporting requirements that may influence the organizational development of the chapter and the details of the COH.

3. The Bylaws and COH should be adopted by the chapter using the process in the Article X of the Bylaws. The drafts of the Bylaws and COH should be sent to all members of a Chapter at least thirty days before a general membership meeting and at that meeting, the voting members present and in good standing must approve both documents by a super majority (>66.7%).