

**TMN News & Notes from the State Office
December 2009**

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Whew! The last quarter of the year certainly has been a hectic one—and it's really not over yet! Here's a short synopsis of what has been going on by month...

In September the Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinators attended a national of about 20 different State Master Naturalist programs from across the country. Around 50 professional Master Naturalist Program Coordinators (like Sonny and myself) congregated together to learn from each other about program development, budgets, training techniques, curriculum development and program evaluation over a 5-day time span in West Virginia at the National Conservation and Training Center. Over the past two years I (Michelle) have served as the organization's President and we have helped develop Master Naturalist Programs that serve their own local state agencies in at least 28 other states across the nation. Sonny has helped too by serving on several committees of the organization over the past couple of years.

October- Need I say more than that October is the month of our own Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting and Advanced Training!?! What a great meeting our 10th one was! Read more about this event further on down in this News & Notes issue.

In November and December Sonny and I visited with what chapters we could for your annual meetings, holiday celebrations and/or volunteer recognition banquets. Thanks for having us! It's truly an honor to be included in on your awards and accomplishments received at the local level. We began some 2010 program planning in this month as well... read on for more on that too... Sonny and I also assisted you in getting prepared for your upcoming spring trainings where

many of you have application periods open at this time and some training even starts as early as January!

Ahhh December! The most anticipated month of the year! We begin to REALLY bug you about getting that Chapter annual report and contact lists for new chapter leaders and officers. This is also a time we get to fit in a little R n' R over the holidays. We hope you take time to do the same!

Chapter Annual Reports due by January 15th, 2009.

Completing and submitting your chapter's annual report to the state office is the last activity you conduct in your 2009 tenure as an officer or leader of your local chapter--and yes, that activity may carry over into January of the New Year. Completing your chapter's annual report should not be left to your incoming 2010 officers and leadership team to be hit with their first day 'in office'.

Exiting officers and committee chairs--please work with your incoming officers to compile and submit your annual report--But, do not leave it for them to do entirely--after all, it was your year in office. Be proud of the accomplishments of your chapter under your leadership and report it!

The annual report is a critical summary of what the Texas Master Naturalist program has accomplished during 2009. Added together with other chapters the report reveals amazing accomplishments by our members for our state.

The report is expected by our state sponsors, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas AgriLife Extension Service, and is shared with chapter partners and potential donors to the program.

The 2009 annual report has been updated slightly from last year's form and we now are expected to have printed signed hard copies of your chapter reports on file at our state office as well so this step in the annual reporting procedure has been added as well. You still may email a copy of your report to us as soon as you have it finished, but just make sure to print off and fill out the form in its entirety and mail it to the state office. Please contact the state office if you have questions.—either Michelle or Sonny. A copy of the form has already been distributed to each chapter. Its also available for download from our state website at anytime too.

Chapter Contact Sheets also due to the state office:

As with the Chapter's annual report, the Chapter Contact sheet also needs to be submitted by the January 15th deadline. Again, we ask that the exiting Chapter officers and committee chairs complete this task and not leave it to the incoming leadership to complete on their own. This form has already been distributed to chapters and is available for download on the state website.

Update and/or add contacts on your chapter websites

Over the past couple of weeks we have received several calls from individuals wanting more information about a particular chapter. In most cases the individuals have tried to contact their chapter of choice only to find out that the email or phone number listed on the chapter's website is not correct, if there was any contact information listed at all. Please help your recruiting efforts by keeping your contact information current wherever you can! These people are trying to seek you out... not the other way around. It's easy recruiting! During the Holidays and the New Year many people are searching for areas in which they can volunteer and people looking to turn over a new leaf and volunteer in the New Year are looking for programs to become involved in. Don't miss out of these easy recruits. Likewise, with incoming and outgoing officers changing at the chapter level at this time of year, please make sure those contact changes are made as well.

Spring Training Announcement and News Release went out.

Another reason to update your chapter website contacts is that the spring training news release that went out the first half of December. Look for it at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/news THIRTEEN chapters (about 1/3 of our Texas Chapters) will be training this spring with training classes starting up as early as the second week in January and many are accepting applications as we speak. Be ready to receive some phone calls and emails from interested applicants as a result of this news release—we already have! The news has already hit the Palestine Herald, NPR Radio, The San Benito Monitor, The San Marcos Daily Record and the Marshall News Messenger with some interviews of our local volunteers included.

Plan ahead for end of the year celebrations and certifications or January Training classes

Many of our 38 Master Naturalist chapters from across the state have already held their year-end certification and award ceremonies along with their holiday parties and annual meetings. Likewise, many chapters are planning for training classes to start in January. During the next few weeks we wanted to remind you of agency, campus and U.S. Post Office closures, and/or reduced work and service schedules over the holidays. Please plan ahead as much as possible in order to receive your chapter's pins, certificates or curricula and shirt orders in a timely manner. We cannot expedite ship. As a reminder, pins and certificates can be ordered through Sonny Arnold and curricula, TMN shirts, hats and other TMN items can be ordered through the Texas AgriLife Bookstore at: <http://agrilifebookstore.org>

New Chapter Coordinators Training being planned:

A New Chapter Coordinators Training is being planned for serious individuals working to start new Texas Master Naturalist Chapters in 2010 or those that missed the training in 2009. The Training is being planned for March. It is a requirement that every chapter have at least TWO individuals attend this training within the first two years of their chapter development. The training is only held once a year, so if you know of someone who is wanting to start a new Master Naturalist chapter or you are a chapter needing to complete your two trainee requirement, please contact the state office for more information. This training will be held in Central Texas are in March. A definite date is still being negotiated.

10th Annual TMN Meeting and Advanced Training held in October

We hope it's no surprise that the biggest news of the quarter was our 10th Annual Texas Master Naturalist Meeting and Advanced Training held in late October at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas. The meeting was, yet another, great one--with over 255 Master Naturalists representing 33 of our 38 different Chapters from across the state. Thanks to all of you who attended and participated so wholeheartedly! You all made the annual meeting one of the best ever! If you missed this one, then mark your calendars now to attend **next year's meeting taking place October 22-24th at T bar M Ranch Resort and Conference Center in New Braunfels, Texas!!**

We also have the next several years' Annual Meetings set as well! Mark your calendars for: October 21-23, 2011, Mo Ranch, Hunt, Texas (tentative location, contract not yet confirmed) October 26-28, 2012 Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas (being hosted by the Cinco Tierra Chapter who will be celebrating their 5th Anniversary this year)

Some highlights from this years meeting included:

- Numerous Milestone Award Winners—See the entire list on our state website at: <http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu/>
- Dozens and Dozens of different Advanced Training Topics
- A silent auction hosted by the Capital Area Chapter which raised over \$2,300.00 for next year's conference, scholarships and awards.
- Our Second TMN Chapter Advisor Award which was awarded to **Julie Massey**, Texas AgriLife Extension Advisor to the Galveston Bay Area Chapter. (Congratulations Julie!) Julie received a TMN denim shirt, a wall plaque and a cash award for her honor. (Chapters—Be thinking about which of your advisors you can nominate for this award in 2010. Nominations are due by September 1st. Find the nomination form and information at the State Website.
- Other nominees for the advisor award were:
Please help us in congratulating your other deserving nominees:
LeRoy Thompson, Jr., Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept., Blackland Prairie Chapter Advisor
Clark Hancock, City of Austin, Nature & Science Center, Capital Area Chapter Advisor
Michael Mitchell, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, El Camino Real Chapter Advisor
Wade Hibler, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Highland Lakes Chapter Advisor
Burr Williams, Sibley Nature Center, Llano Estacado Chapter Advisor
Brett Johnson, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, North Texas Chapter Advisor
Each of the advisors nominated are all very deserving of praise and recognition from the TMN program—that is what makes the selection of just one winning advisor each year so hard. *Thank you Advisors and keep up the great work!*
- A tribute to our newest inductees into the 5,000 hour service Award Club (and the Presidential Lifetime Service Award winners). Those TMN volunteers were: **Mary Jean Hayden of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter and Tom Collins of the Hill Country Chapter (formerly of the Cradle of Texas Chapter).**
- The results of the Annual Photo, Art and Scrapbook and a new Newsletter category popular vote contests winners and the winners of the TMN Exemplary Project Award sponsored by the Magnolia Charitable Trust. (Be thinking about what project your chapter can enter into the contest in 2010 you have lots of time to be developing and implementing that winning project now.

- Presentations from volunteers covering 14 different projects or new ideas implemented within their local area/chapter as a volunteer service project or an innovation solutions to a common chapter 'problem area'. Be thinking of a project or chapter solution you can present for other master naturalists to learn about next year.

Exemplary Award winners included:

Descriptions of their projects will be up on the website soon.

3rd Place-- \$150 Project Grant

North Texas Chapter with their North Texas Regional Fair Project

2nd Place-- \$200 Project Grant

Cradle of Texas Chapter with their Nature at the Library Workshops Project

1st Place-- \$400 Project Grant

Galveston Bay Area Chapter with their Junior Naturalist Club Project

As with any of our events, it takes a lot of help from our Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers in carrying out the state meeting. Thank you to everyone (over 75 of you) who assisted with the meeting this year. The list is extensive. Thanks Again everyone!

Next Year's (2010) Texas Master Naturalist Statewide Conference

Planning for next year's annual meeting has already started and I am pleased to announce the dates of next years meeting at this time too:

The 11th Annual Texas Master Naturalist Meeting and Advanced Training will be held October 22-24th, 2010 in New Braunfels at the T bar M Conference Center. Please mark your calendars to attend and spread the news within your chapters too.

2010 Re-Certification Pin Announced!

The 2010 Re-certification pin is the Wood Duck. The recertification pin will be available for order in the first quarter of the New Year. The pin certifies that a Master Naturalist volunteer has reached their annually required 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training for the current calendar year. All service and advanced training has to be completed IN the year the pin is available. Once the calendar year is done the annual re-certification pin for that year retires. The 2009 re-certification pin was the Salamander.

Advanced Training Suggestions needed for Regional and Statewide Trainings

We're currently looking for suggestions on Advanced Training that you need as a Master Naturalist for this next statewide annual meeting. Please send us those suggestions By February 22nd, 2010 to Michelle at: mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu

Stay Connected and Keep current with Master Naturalist News:

Several of you have asked how you could stay better informed and receive the most up to date information about what is going on in the program. All program information is distributed two ways...

1. Through our Texas Master Naturalist Listserv; and
2. Through direct communication with your chapter leadership (i.e. your chapter officers, committee chairs and advisors) which is requested to be forwarded on to you and your chapter communication outlets.

We invite any and all Texas Master Naturalist volunteers to sign on to our "TMN Listserv"

How do I subscribe to the list? You might ask...

To join the TMN LISTSERV mailing list, send an email to listserv@tamu.edu No "Subject" is required. You do not need to include your email address in your message. LISTSERV automatically uses the address from your email. Future subscribers can enroll by sending a message to listserv@tamu.edu with a simple "subscribe tmn" in the body of the message. The person signing on to the list will receive a response asking them to confirm this request, giving them both a web and email option for confirming that subscription.

Remember the listserv continues to be an excellent means of learning and sharing information for the Texas Master Naturalist program. Over 650 members are enrolled. Please encourage others.

Once you sign on you can select how you receive news and info from the program either as it goes out (message by message) or in what is called 'digest' format which is a collection of recent messages sent in one message to your in-box. The TMN listserve averages about 1 or 2 messages a week, however sometimes, like leading up to the annual meeting and registration notices are a little more frequent, though not extensive. The listserve is moderated so that spam and other messages of that sort do not come through.

Two new volunteers added to the 5,000 hour club this past quarter!

I am happy to report that at time of press in December with this newsletter, two additional volunteers have reached the 5,000 Service Hours Milestone and Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Both **Jim Renfro** of the Cradle of Texas Chapter and **Mary Jean Hayden** of the Galveston Bay Area Chapter have reported enough hours for this award. These two join the 13 others who have also attained this award to date Will there be more? Your annual reports will let us know.... Recipients of the 5,000 Hour Service Award and U.S. Presidential Volunteer Service Award receive a TMN Dragonfly pin that is polished gold in color with a diamond in the center. They also receive a personal letter from the President of the United States, A certificate and a PVSA Pin. The Texas Master Naturalist State Program Office is the only certifying organization for Texas Master Naturalist volunteers to receive these awards.

Here we Grow Again!!!...

- The **Sabine-Neches Chapter** based out of Orange, TX is on their way to completing their first training class to make their chapter official. Their last training will be held in January.
- An informational and organization meeting was held for a new chapter to serve Bell and Williamson Counties in November.
- Another informational and organizational meeting for a chapter serving Polk, Trinity and Tyler Counties was also held in November.
- Interest is beginning to form in the Jasper area too!

If you know of anyone wishing to establish a new Texas Master Naturalist Chapter, please have them contact the state office for the specific training and procedures to developing a new local chapter in their area. We won't stop until all ends of the Texas earth are 'covered' with Texas Master Naturalists serving the local natural resource future!

TMN Slogan Contest Winners:

Earlier this year we held a slogan contest to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Texas Master Naturalist Statewide program and the amazing accomplishment of having Master Naturalists give over 1 MILLION hours of Service in the 10 year time span!!!! There was such an overwhelming huge response to the contest with 44 entries received! After selections by numerous rounds and numerous judges the top five slogans selected were:

1. **ONE Mission, TEN Years - ONE million hours of volunteer service
The Texas Master Naturalists (dates here optional)**

Submitted by Thea Platz, Alamo Area Chapter

2. **Changing Texas one hour at a time
Ten years of service hours
One million hours of change**

Submitted by Dick Benoit, Galveston Bay Area Chapter

3. **TEN YEARS STRONG, MILLION HOURS LONG TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS
STILL MARCHING ON.**

Submitted by Angie Morrison of the Lost Pines Chapter

4. **Texas Master Naturalist: It's Human Nature.
One Million Volunteer Hours, 1998 – 2008**

Submitted by Megan Miller, Heart of Texas Chapter

5. **To: Texas
From: Texas Master Naturalists
A GIFT OF TIME AND SERVICE
One Decade - One Million Hours**

Submitted by Linda Pullman, Lost Pines Chapter

(Editor's Note—This one is quite fitting this time of year ☺)

You may have seen one or two of these slogan used in our marketing and other materials already. THANK YOU to EVERYONE who submitted their entries!

New TMN Face Book Page--

The Texas Master Naturalist Program now has a Face Book Page... Do you? 'Friend' us, "Fan" us or become a member of our group—Just search in Face Book's search areas for: Texas Master Naturalist.

10th Anniversary Reports Distributed—Additional copies available--

The remarkable 10th Anniversary version of our Texas Master Naturalist Annual Report was distributed to chapters earlier this fall. A certain quantity was shipped to chapters already. However, additional copies are available if your chapter needs more. Please share a copy of the annual report with EACH of your Chapter members, partners, Advisors and supporters of the program. A PDF copy may also be downloaded from the state website too. Its important to note that each of your chapter annual reports is reflected in this document and we hope this demonstrates how important it is to get your annual reports submitted in a timely manner so that this statewide document can be developed, printed and distributed in a timely manner.

Reminder: TMN Curriculum Distribution

The Texas AgriLife Bookstore made a change earlier this year regarding the placing of orders for the Texas Master Naturalist curriculum, item MKT-3568C.

The Texas AgriLife Bookstore distributes the Texas Master Naturalist Curriculum. Chapter **orders must be placed by the local County Extension Office**. Extension Agents and county secretaries can assist with placing the order. Payment is expected when you order. Checks should be made payable to AgriLife Bookstore.

The Bookstore will also accept payment by Visa or Master Card for on-line orders. On-line orders must be approved by the County Extension Agent or the state TMN coordinators. This validates the chapter order to allow the wholesale price offered only to chapters.

The Bookstore can be contacted by visiting <http://agrilifebookstore.org> and selecting the "Environment" link after "Browsing the Shelves". The phone number is 979-845-6573 and fax is 979-458-0172.

When ordering request **MKT-3568-C**, TMN Curriculum. Your order will include the binder insert (MKT-3337) and binder spine. Binders are not included. Indicate your chapter name when ordering. Delivery will be made to the local extension office and shipping charges do apply. Other Master Naturalist items at the Bookstore are available for anyone to order directly.

The curriculum price will remain at \$30.00 per copy when sold to Texas Master Naturalist Chapters. Shipping charges will be added to your order. A minimum order of 5 copies is required to receive the wholesale price. Again, be sure to include your chapter name when making the order.

You will note that the Bookstore web site shows TMN curriculum item **MKT-3568** and its retail price of \$75.00 per copy. MKT-3568 **should not** be requested by chapters.

We continue to get requests to purchase copies from individuals who are not in the Texas Master Naturalist program. Our commitment is to our members first and we believe the retail price increase will reduce the requests from others thus reducing the chances of a shortage for Texas chapters.

10th Anniversary T-shirts Still on Sale:

The Texas Master Naturalist program is now offering the 10th anniversary t-shirt at the reduced price of \$10.00 for all sizes. This t-shirt features a design created by a Master Naturalist volunteer, celebrating the 10th anniversary with an explorer theme.

These are available from the AgriLife Bookstore and proceeds support Master Naturalist activities and events. Order on-line at <http://agrilifebookstore.org> or call 979-845-6573.

Chapters making News

Lindheimer Chapter Recognized by City of New Braunfels

The Lindheimer Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program was awarded the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Award by the city of New Braunfels Parks and Recreation Department. In a recent volunteer appreciation night at Landa Park, the City Manager, Mr. Mike Morrison, presented the Lindheimer Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist program, with this prestigious award noting the past President's most lasting contributions to the world was the permanent preservation of some of the most unique natural resources in the United States. The award recognizes a citizen or group who advocates for studying, teaching, documenting and preserving the natural resources in New Braunfels.

The Lindheimer Chapter of Master Naturalists has worked with the City of New Braunfels for many years. Their most recent efforts include improvements in Panther Canyon, where they have repaired footbridges, maintained nature paths, and identified plants. They have also been instrumental in assisting with the planning of Fisher Park."

Tip of the Month: "Deck the Halls and Check the Pulses"

The end of one year and the start of the next is a great time to "check the pulse" of people in your organization. Keep things easy with a very short feedback request consisting of only two main questions -- one looking back over the year ending and the other looking ahead. But ask for a specific number of short responses to each.

For example:

1. In 2009, what two things did you do or see someone else do that you felt were really important to the organization and natural resource community we serve?
 - a.

- b.
- 2. For 2010, what two things would help you to be even more successful in your work here?
 - a.
 - b.

Note that the questions do not necessarily have to be about volunteers, nor do you have to limit the participants to volunteers only. In fact, asking everyone, regardless of position to respond will allow you to use the responses to demonstrate the role of the organization. Here are two ideas for how to do that, based on the sample questions above.

Sharing the many answers you will get to question #1 will make everyone feel good (it's that time of year, after all). You might even post the "really important" actions on big sheets of newsprint in some area seen everyone in the organization. Make sure the comments are legible and presented seriously, but you can also use colored markers, glitter, whatever, to make these posters festive. (Be sure to say something at the top such as "The _____ Master Naturalist Chapter Wants You to Know..." so that you get the credit for the idea!)

For question #2, you might collate the answers and group them under topic headings. Distribute the list to everyone individually. There are many ways you can go from there. You might ask everyone to circle the five ideas they like the best and promise that, in 2010, you will attempt to put energy into those areas. Or you might offer to facilitate a meeting to discuss what's needed and what you, collectively, can do to accomplish this.

One important caveat: *Do not ask for any feedback that you can do nothing about!* In other words, if you do not feel able to tackle the issue of "what do you need to be successful," ask a different question. The whole point is not to conduct a survey per se, but rather to use the holidays to make people reflect positively on what they did throughout the year, and then to be upbeat for next year.

--Adapted from *Energinze, Inc.*--

Dates to Remember:

March 27-28, 2009 New Chapter Coordinators training

October 22-24, 2010 T bar M Ranch Resort in New Braunfels

October 21-23, 2011 Mo Ranch, Hunt, Texas (tentative location, contract not yet confirmed)

October 26-28, 2012 Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas (being hosted by the Cinco Tierra Chapter who will be celebrating their 5th Anniversary this year)

Thanks for a great year!

I've said it before and I'll say it again because one can just never say it enough! THANK YOU for all that you are and all that you do for the Texas Master Naturalist Program each and every day! Our Texas Master Naturalists are truly some of the most passionate people I know out there taking care of our natural resources (and natural resource future!) Thank you for that and your dedication. We hope that each of you take a much needed break over the Holiday Season to

spend time with your family; to reflect on your accomplishments through the past year; and to become re-charged and set new goals for 2009! If you are an exiting chapter officer or committee chair, we would like to congratulate you on a job well-done and thank you for your commitment to the program. If you are an incoming officer or committee chair, Welcome Aboard! And we're looking forward to another great 2009 program year!

Happy Holidays and Safe Travels!
Michelle & Sonny