

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK



Texas Master Naturalist Program

Blackland Prairie Chapter *“Education, Restoration, Preservation”*

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

	Page
I: CHAPTER ORGANIZATION	1
A. BOARD	1
1. Officers	1
2. Term Limits	1
3. Duties of Officers	1
4. Directors	3
5. Duties of Directors	6
6. Advisors	6
B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD	6
C. COMMITTEES	7
1. Standing Committees	7
2. AD HOC Committees	8
II: MEMBERSHIP	9
Categories	9
Payment of Dues	9
Transfer of Membership	9
Inactive Member Reinstatement	9
III: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK	9
IV: APPENDICES	10
APPENDIX 1: Officers Nomination Committee	
APPENDIX 2: Committee Chair/Director Nominations and Committee Guidelines	
APPENDIX 3: Education Committee Policies and Procedures	
APPENDIX 4: Volunteer Management System (VMS) Administrators	
APPENDIX 5: TXMN Opportunity Category Definitions	
APPENDIX 6: TPWD Volunteers Open-Carry Policy	
APPENDIX 7 Addendum for 501(C)(3) Chapters	
APPENDIX 8: Local Level Organizational Chart	

Abbreviations/Terms

TMN: Texas Master Naturalists

BPTMN: Blackland Prairie (chapter) Texas Master Naturalists

COH: Chapter Operating Handbook

VMS: Volunteer Management System – the state TMN organization's application for recording volunteer and training hours. The following are terms for responsibilities within that system: admin1, data manager, VMS1. These roles must be filled in order for each chapter to report hours to the state organization.

Ex-officio: The Chapter President is a member of all committees.

Advisors: Representatives from the BPTMN sponsoring organizations – Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas Agri-Life.

CBC: Criminal Background Check

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

Bylaws Location

Appendices of this Handbook or at:

<http://txmn.org/chapterdocuments/>

State Management and Operations Protocols

Appendices of this Handbook or at:

<http://txmn.org/chapterdocuments/>

Also to be found at the TXMN website url:

Code of Ethics, Standards of Conduct

Handbook Committee for 2016:

Ron Bamberg – Class of 2010 / past executive board

Louise Frost – Class of 2010 / past secretary

Paul Napper – Class of 2015

LuAnne Ray – Class of 2013/ Education Director

Mike Roome – Class of 2013/ Historian

Patti Tuck – Class of 2014

Update Committee for 2017: Board Members

Additional Advisement:

Clyde Camp – Past President

Donna Cole – Founder, Past President

Ed Ellerbe – Founder

Sally Evans – Founder

Michelle Haggerty – State Director

Rick Maxwell – Past Advisor

David Powell – Past President

LeRoy Thompson, Jr. – Advisor

Elly Tittle – Class of 2016 Representative to Board

Elm Fork, Blue Stem, Cross Timbers and North Texas Chapters

OPERATING HANDBOOK

Blackland Prairie Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

1. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

The documents governing the Chapter will be (1) Chapter's Bylaws (2) the Chapter's Operating Handbook and (3) guiding practices found in the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. In case of conflicting language, first, the Chapter's Bylaws, second the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols shall govern the Chapter's Operating Handbook. The Chapter will be structured for governance as follows and Roberts Rules of Order will be referenced when procedural questions arise.

A. BOARD

The Board shall consist of: elected officers who will serve as members of the Executive Committee and appointed Committee Directors/Chairs. All are voting members in matters not falling exclusively to Executive Committee.

1. Officers

The Executive Committee, which is the duly elected Officers, shall consist of:

- President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- a) All Officer positions are by election.
 - b) All elected officers shall serve for a period of 24 months and are eligible for re-election subject to term limits.
 - c) The signatory Officers shall include Treasurer, President and one other officer to be designated.

2. Term Limits:

- a) No person may serve more than six consecutive years on the board as an elected or appointed member without a majority approval of the Executive Committee. Preferred: no more than two terms as elected member and no more than four terms as appointed member.
- b) Committee directors/chairs serve 12 month appointments. They are eligible for re-appointment subject to term limits of 2a.
- c) After one year off the board a person may again be considered for election to the executive board or appointment as a committee director.
- d) Immediate Past President may serve the entire term of the seated president.

3. Duties of Officers

President

- a) Serve as Chair of the Board of Directors, voting only to break a tie vote.
- b) Prepare and distribute the agenda for Board meetings.
- c) Preside over Board and Chapter meetings.
- d) Sign all Board-approved documents that may be legally binding.
- e) Co-sign checks with the Treasurer for amounts over \$500.
- f) Present summary of accomplishments at the Chapter's first general meeting of a new year.
- g) Prepare correspondence between the Chapter and the State Office, other Chapters or State agencies as appropriate.
- h) Review Chapter's completed annual report before submission to State office.
- i) Communicate with Board and Chapter Members as needed; conduct email votes on issues between meetings.
- j) Appoint all committee Directors/Chairs and be ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate.
- k) Appoint and present a slate of candidates for all new Director positions for review by elected Officers, Past-President, and Advisor(s).
- l) Serve as Immediate Past President upon completion of term as President. If the past president chooses to resign from the board, the position will remain vacant for duration of the current president.
- m) Provide for a training meeting to be held at the beginning of the new year for all Officers and Directors to review policies, procedures and expectations.
- n) President is strongly encouraged to facilitate a fall retreat that is comprised of current Officers and Directors, open to general chapter membership and to those interested in being an officer/director in the upcoming election. This should be a planning and review meeting based on the mission, vision and current projects of the Chapter.
- o) Participate in a state volunteer management system (VMS) training session or take a refresher course.
- p) May present new member certification packets as coordinated with Membership and New Class Directors.
- q) Attend if possible the state Master Naturalist conference with registration fees paid by Chapter unless contrary to budgeting as addressed in B3 – running a deficit.

Vice President

- a) Should be considered for but does not have to serve as President following term as VP.
- b) Assist the President and act for the President in his/her absence.
- c) Participate as a member of the Annual Financial Examination Committee.
- d) Mail written letters of appreciation to Chapter program speakers.
- e) Participate in a state volunteer management system (VMS) training session or take a refresher course.
- f) Be responsible for scheduling programs for monthly chapter membership meetings and chair the Program Committee, if considered necessary.
- g) Maintain database of meeting presenter contact information and titles of presentations preserved by electronically archived process.
- h) Be knowledgeable of functions of Treasurer, Education Chair/Director and Membership Chair/Director.

- i) Supervise selection of Chapter presenter gifts, introduce the presenters at Chapter meetings and present them with gift.

Secretary

- a) Conduct all necessary Chapter correspondence not assigned specifically to another board member.
- b) Record, publish and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors or special meetings.
- c) Keep a record of attendance at each board meeting and indicate whether a quorum is present.

Treasurer

- a) Receive all dues and monies for the Chapter and maintain them in a Chapter bank account.
- b) Develop and **maintain the Chapter's** annual budget for the Chapter with input and approval by the Board of Directors. **The proposed budget should be presented for approval and finalize prior to the start of the new fiscal year Dec. 1**
- c) Pay all bills upon receipt of a written statement or invoice. Treasurer shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes of the Chapter.
- d) Submit all annual financial records, reports and audits as required by law (and/or sponsoring agencies) including annual IRS report.
- e) Present financial report, including itemized statement of expenses, **at each Board meeting.**
- f) Bring the checkbook and receipt book to all Chapter general meetings and to Board meetings.
- g) Present the financial records to the annual Financial Examination Committee before the last Board meeting of the calendar year.
- h) Keep an account of all income, expenses, disbursements and other financial matters. **Maintain and update the financial workbook in a timely manner and balance the bank statement at the end of each month. At the end of the fiscal year, provide all files to the local Agri-Life office for archiving of such documentation. Upon request, make available all financial reports and documents to any Chapter member and/or Advisor.**
- i) **All payments exceeding \$500 require approval from the Executive Committee.**
- j) Maintain/manage the Chapter PayPal account.

4. Board Directors/Chairs

The duly Appointed Directors may consist of, but are not limited to, the following:

- Membership Chair/Director
- Education/New Class Chair/Director
- Communications Chair/Director
- Advanced Training/Volunteer Service Projects Chair/Director (VH/AT)
- Outreach Director
- New Class Representative
- Immediate Past President
- State Representative
- Advisor(s)

- a) All Director positions are by appointment and approved according to the Chapter Bylaws ARTICLE V, F and G and Appendix 2 of Handbook.
- b) The terms and limits of office: All appointed Directors shall serve for a period of 12 months and are eligible for re-appointment as outlined under Chapter Organization.

5. Duties Of Directors/Chairs

- a) Assist the Officers in their respective responsibilities.
- b) All Directors are voting members of the Board.
- c) Comply with the Chapter Data Retention Policy
- d) Carry out duties as defined for each committee and report any subcommittee appointments and decisions to the board for approval.
- e) Prepare budget yearly to be presented to the entire Board.
- f) Attend full board training at beginning of each year.

Immediate Past President

- a) Lead an annual review and update of the Chapter's Operating Handbook document as requested by the Executive Committee.
- b) Chair the Nominating Committee as referenced in Bylaws and included in Appendix.
- c) Provide continuity from one Board to the next.
- d) Assist the President.
- e) Assist in developing end of year report as required by the State and likewise train incoming president.
- f) Assume responsibility as State Representative for the Chapter if that position is not otherwise filled.
- g) In the absence of an Immediate Past President, the President will reassign above responsibilities as needed.

Membership Director/Chair Refer to Appendix 4

- a) Maintain a roster through state management system (VMS) of all Chapter members (and those in-training) with pertinent contact information. See (VMS), (Ref. State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI, Volunteer Service Requirements) for reporting volunteer service hours and Advanced Training.
- b) Oversee Chapter position of Data manager, serve as Lead on Volunteer Management System team (admin. 1) if not assigned to another member of the VMS team .
- c) Maintain a record of volunteer service and advanced training hours and class training attendance. This latter duty may be assigned to Education Committee member.
- d) Maintain and publish names of members achieving certification and milestone awards, sharing with president prior to presentation at selected chapter meetings.
- e) Order, maintain and present re-certification and milestone awards at Chapter meetings and maintain record of those who have/have not received pins.
- f) Facilitate replacement of name badges with Treasurer.
- g) Coordinate with Education Chair to input trainee VMS profiles.
- h) Appoint Committee members as needed to be trained in VMS procedures and assign specific duties. See Appendix – Volunteer Management System Administrators.
- i) Ensure mentors are properly vetted members in good standing. (Ref. State Chapter Program Management and Operations Protocols, Appendix II, Mentor Program)
- j) Work with Volunteer Services/Advanced Training Chair to provide a process for Chapter Members not having access to the VMS to report Volunteer Project and Advanced Training hours.

- k) Ensure members, new members/trainees receive VMS training by coordinating with Volunteer Services/Advanced Training Director **and the Education Director.**
- l) Compile the State Annual Report with the support of the Immediate Past President, President and Volunteer Services/Advanced Training Director.
- m) Coordinate with VS/AT Director processes of confirming hours.
- n) Ensure members have current Criminal Background Check.
- o) Process transferring member requests.
- p) **Check Inbox of VMS for New Members, and contact to welcome and verify their interest in our chapter. Move from Inbox to the Chapter, set to TMN-Interested, and refer to Education to contact for Training.**

Outreach Director/Chair

First contact for community requests for services as well as assist and report to Board for:

- Outreach Education Manager
 - Outreach Projects Manager
 - Hospitality Host
- a) Coordinate Outreach Public Education Events and Project Events needs and assist Education and Project Managers as needed for events.
 - b) Plan standing Outreach Education events and seek volunteers several months in advance from general membership.
 - c) Ensure standing Outreach Education events vary as to topic: i.e. child centered, plants, mammals.
 - d) Ensure that the event activities are adequately staffed and assist as needed.
 - e) Notify Volunteer Hours Chairman of event for input into reporting system.
 - f) Provide materials for outreach events and involves committee members in preparation for event.
 - g) Oversee that photos are taken at each event and submitted to the Communications Director.
 - h) Submit monthly update of committee work for which responsible.

New Class / Education Director/Chair Refer to Appendix 3.

- a) Appoint members to the Training/Education Committee.
- b) Serve as Manager for the New Class Committee in planning and development of curriculum, calendar, instructors, venue, etc., through class graduation.
- c) Recommend the class tuition to the Board of Directors.
- d) Work with appropriate Directors to develop the New Class recruiting components.
- e) Submit mentor candidates to Membership Director for vetting.
- f) Ensure class time is made available for new members/trainees to receive appropriate training on how to use the Volunteer Management System for reporting hours.
- g) Appoint a finance subcommittee as deemed necessary to develop a New Class budget.

Communications Director/Chair

Oversee following positions as appointed:

- Newsletter Editor: Prepare and distribute newsletter containing chapter and other pertinent news. Assign team as needed.
- Webmaster: Maintain website and work with other committees as needed – recommend team members to Communications Chair for approval.
- Publicity Manager
- Archivist

- Social Media Manager: Coordinate Facebook and other avenues and ensures pertinent duties listed under Social Media/Web Committee description are carried out.
 - Event Photographer.
- a) Coordinate or write publicity/press releases for print and electronic media covering New Class application, Chapter meetings and special events.
 - b) Coordinate with new Class/Education Director, Outreach Director and other committees upon request for printing and distribution of New Class recruiting brochures.
 - c) Keep Chapter information brochure current and maintain copies for historical purposes.
 - d) Identify and recognize members for any awards received from other organizations because of Master Naturalist contributions.

Advanced Training / Volunteer Services Projects (Volunteer Hours) Director/Chair Refer to Appendix 4/5

- a) Maintain a process for members to request that a program be considered for an Advanced Training Code or Volunteer Hours Code.
- b) Appoint Committee members as needed to be trained in VMS procedures and assign specific duties. See Appendix – Volunteer Managements System Administrators.
- c) Review and recommend to the board for action all Advanced Training and Opportunities requests and events.
- d) Assign Advanced Training Codes and Advanced Training Titles to qualifying events and notify Chapter membership of approved Advanced Training opportunities as well as for Volunteer Hours.
- e) Approve Volunteer and Advanced Training entries.
- f) Coordinates with Webmaster to maintain calendar of approved opportunities for AT/Volunteer hours.
- g) Ensure training of membership and in-training members as how to input hours and make changes as necessary.
- h) Run monthly report for AgriLife. Can be assumed by their AgriLife if willing.
- i) Work with Membership Director to provide a process for Chapter Members not having access to the VMS to report Volunteer Project and Advanced Training hours.

New Class Representative

- a. Represent the New Class as a member of the Board. Selection shall be by nomination process set by Education Director/Committee.
- b. Attend all board meeting and as many monthly meeting as feasible. Board membership is to begin in the month following the final class.**
- c. Participate as a member of the annual Financial Examination Committee.
- d. d) Become a voting member of the Board once certified. Earn certification no later than six months after start of term.**
- e. e) Term is for one year beginning at the end of his/her class until end of the next year'[s class.
- f. f) May participate as a **non-voting member** of the Education Committee. May assist new class members as needed.
- g. g) Attend at least 1-2 new class sessions to offer assistance and describe class rep role in order to generate interest for next new class rep.**

- h. h) Assist other Board officers and committee directors as needed to provide assistance and ideas from a new member prespective.

Chapter State Representative {This position should be assumed by the President or appointed from the Board membership by the President.

- a. Work as a Chapter liaison with the State Program Coordinator
- b. Represent the Chapter in State level matters of the Texas Master Naturalist Program
- c. Review draft State Documents as requested
- d. Help with coordination of activities at the Annual State Conference
- e. Help in finding presenters for the Annual Conference
- f. Enhance the communication between the State and the Chapters
- g. Help guide and educate the Member Chapter's new Officers and Directors through use of the State governing documents
- h. Participate in conference calls as requested
- i. Attend the Annual State Conference if possible
- j. Attend the semi-annual State Volunteer Representatives Council meetings

6. Advisor(s)

The responsibilities include an appropriate level of communication, providing opportunities for Advisor interaction and a commitment to the success of the organization as a whole. Reference State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Appendix I, Advisor Guidelines.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Board is responsible for the success of the Chapter and has the authority to conduct the business of the Chapter as defined in the Chapter Bylaws, approved by the membership. Board approval requires either a majority vote of Board members in attendance at a Board meeting where a quorum is present, or a majority vote of Board members via electronic media.

Archival Process and Reporting: All Board Members shall ensure that all chapter working documents are appropriately archived electronically in a single location by an archival process chosen by Board that makes those documents available to all Board members on a 24/7 basis without recourse to personal requests to the authors or maintainers of the data. This includes, but is not limited to, backups of the financial records (the excel file or equivalent, not the monthly report); what the education final class schedules and speakers are on a year by year basis; who the monthly meeting speakers are; contact information for speakers; the annual chapter statistics are; what our financial 501(c)3 dealings are; annual IRS report; financial audit results; annual chapter reports; forms and images in common usage, Historical Data on line as of the initial approval of this document.

Committee Oversight: All committees and their activities are subject to review and approval by the Board.

Expenditure Limits: The Board shall not run a deficit or request a credit line.

Chapter Business: The Board shall conduct the business of the Chapter as may be stated in the Chapter Bylaws, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and this document.

In the event that Board action is required before a Board meeting can be called or the matter does not warrant calling a special meeting, the Executive Committee may take action with the same authority and boundaries as the Board. Such action must be reported to the entire Board within one day of taking the action.

Establishment of Dues: The Board of Directors may, with approval of a majority of members present at a duly called and convened general membership meeting, set and change the amount of an initiation fee, if any, and the annual dues, if any, payable to the Chapter. All voting members must be notified 60 days prior to the general meeting that the subject of dues or their increase will be brought for action. The Board of Directors, under special circumstances, may waive—in part or in whole-- individual membership fees on a case-by-case basis, if approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Dues Schedule: Members will be encouraged to pay dues on or before December 1 to allow appropriate time for budget planning. Dues not paid at or before the February chapter meeting will be assessed a \$5 late fee. If dues are not paid at or before the March meeting of each calendar year, all privileges afforded a certified member are rescinded until dues are paid. Current dues are \$25 with timeline and penalties as addressed in this section. Use of PayPal may require user's fee. Fiscal year is December 1 through November 31,

COMMITTEES

All committees serve subject to the oversight and approval of the Board. The President appoints the Chair of the Standing Committees. The Director/Chair is responsible for seeing that the Committee fulfills the responsibilities and objectives for which it was formed.

Executive Committee

Comprised of the Officers of the Chapter: Reference Bylaws, Article VI, B. 2.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

Training (New Class/Education) Committee

Membership Committee

Volunteer Service Projects Committee/ Advanced Training Committee

Training (New Class/Education) Committee

- a) Serves under the leadership of the New Class/Training Director for the Chapter's new member training program. See Appendix 3. Duties assigned can include but are not limited to:
- b) Provide a budget.
- c) Participate in planning, implementing and evaluating the Chapter training curriculum and develops training calendar.
- d) Acquire the TMN State Curriculum for new class trainees and prepare additional class materials.
- e) Select all presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts and audio-visual equipment needed for the class/presentation.
- f) Arrange for speaker gifts, travel, lodging needs, confirmation, and thank you letters.
- g) Coordinate with appropriate directors to arrange for publicity – newspapers, flyers, brochures, electronic media.

- h) Arrange for training venue, and required facilities equipment for all class periods.
- i) Facilitate class field outings/trips.
- j) Coordinate with Hospitality Host for refreshment amenities during classes.
- k) Coordinate initial “social” and completion “reception”.

Membership Committee

- a) Serve under the leadership of the Membership Director.
- b) Manage and/or assist in maintaining the Chapter’s records and reports within Volunteer Management System.
- c) Maintain a roster of the Chapter member names, including in-training members, plus pertinent contact information within the VMS.
- d) Maintain a record of volunteer and advanced training hours within the VMS.
- e) Support with compilation of the State Annual Report.
- f) Reports members achieving Certification and Milestone awards regularly.

Volunteer Services (Hours)/Advanced Training Committee - See Appendix for Admin. Guidelines

- a) Support Volunteer Hours/Advanced Training Chairman/Director in reviewing, organizing, assigning codes and notifying members of approved Volunteer Hours/Advanced Training opportunities.
- b) Assist with managing the Chapter’s Advanced Training Opportunities within VMS.
- c) Maintain calendar of events and coordinate publication with webmaster.
- d) Provide training as necessary.

Newsletter Committee

- a) Responsible for collecting Chapter and State TMN news, producing and distribution of the Chapter Newsletter.
- b) Officers, Directors and members may contribute to the contents of the Newsletter.
- c) May assist Chapter Communications Director .

Outreach Committee

- a) Responsible for the Chapter outreach activities under the direction of the Outreach Chair/Director.
- b) Staff outreach education booths.
- c) Acquire and maintain a Chapter display board
- d) Coordinate activities with the Communications Director and Webmaster.
- e) Assist as needed with assignments for Outreach Projects.
- f) May assist Chapter Communications Director, Communications Committee, New Class Director and/or Membership Director

Social Media/Web Site

- a) Maintain Facebook and other social medias used by posting information/photos of members at work, photos of projects, information from TPWD and Agri-life and environmentally pertinent information and links.
- b) Recommend people to help as needed.
- c) Receive training from and communicate with state regarding Wordpress parameters for website.
- d) Maintain and develop services as needed.
- e) Web team to work with webmaster.

Host Committee/Hospitality

- a) Assist Education Chairman/Director with in-training class host activities.
- b) Coordinates General Membership meeting host activities.
- c) Assist with services needed for special meetings.

The following functions are optional functions the Chapter may desire to develop and adopt.

Chapter Program Committee

Assist Vice President in selecting Chapter meeting speakers and other duties as needed.

Historian/Archivist

- a) Maintain historical records include but not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook and Chapter Newsletter archives.
- b) May assist the Chapter Secretary.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Annual Financial Examination Committee

Responsible for conducting the annual examination of the financial records of the Chapter. Members will include the Vice-President, New Class Representative, and Board Secretary and a chapter advisor. The President appoints the Chair person. The Treasurer provides the financial records for review.

In order to meet state reporting requirements, the annual financial Examination will be conducted in December after the November bank statement has been reconciled.

Accordingly, the BPTMN Fiscal Year is presumed to be December 1st through November 31st and reported in January.

Officer Nomination Committee

Proceed in accordance with Chapter Bylaws Article V, E.2 Election Process, and applicable article within the Appendix. Specific procedure required. See Appendix 1.

Director Nomination Committee

Proceed in accordance with Chapter Bylaws Article V, F.3 and applicable article within the Appendix. Specific procedure required. See Appendix 2.

Other Ad Hoc Committees may be formed by the Board as needed to address specific tasks or purposes

II. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a Chapter is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, age (must be 18 years of age or older), sex, religion, disability or national origin. Background Checks are required and shall be processed through Texas Parks & Wildlife via the Volunteer Management System.

Member Categories

- Texas Master Naturalist in Training
- Texas Master Naturalist Pledge
- Certified Texas Master Naturalist
- Texas Master Naturalist Member (member in good standing defined)
- Honorary Texas Master Naturalist

Payment of Dues

Where Chapters have established dues, by a majority vote of Chapter members, a qualifying member must be current in the payment of those dues as defined by this document.

Transfer of Membership

Members may readily transfer between Chapters within the State of Texas, but must meet all requirements of membership for the Chapter into which they are transferring. The transfer process is completed through the VMS program.

Inactive Member Reinstatement

Members who may have been deemed 'inactive' for reasons such as delinquent payment, expired CBC or an incomplete VMS profile, may petition a local Chapter for reinstatement, providing all Chapter membership requirements are met. Inactive status is activated through marking a member inactive in the Profile User Information/Certification, and un-approving all of their opportunities. These steps will be reversed upon compliance.

III. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Adoption.

Initial adoption and ratification of the COH and Appendices will be by a majority vote of those present at the next scheduled general membership meeting following written distribution of the proposed COH to the general membership ten (10) days before the meeting, with notice that the ratification vote will be held at the next general membership meeting.

Written distribution may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.

Amendment.

Changes and amendments may be proposed by the Board of Directors at a regular Board meeting with a two-thirds vote of the Board members in attendance. The general membership must be notified in written form of the proposed changes or amendments ten (10) days before the next Board meeting and be given an opportunity at that Board meeting to voice any concerns about the changes or amendments.

The general membership must then be notified in written form of the final proposed changes or amendments ten (10) days before the next general membership meeting at which time a membership vote will be held.

Written form may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.

State Office Notification

Once a Chapter has adopted a revised and/or amended Chapter Operating Handbook, an electronic copy must be sent to the State Office for its files.

IV. APPENDICES

Pertaining to frequently referenced Bylaws, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols or other reference documents helpful to both Board and Chapter members. When including language from the Chapter Bylaws, the language must be verbatim. Documentation from other State sources should also be included as written. Any additions or deletions to be presented to and approved by Board.

APPENDIX 1: Officers Nomination Committee

- a) The Past President will chair the Officer Nomination Committee formed by Chapter Members who are appointed by the Chapter President. The committee will present their slate of candidates to the President, taking into account the following attributes.
- b) The Officer Nomination Committee shall endeavor to select candidates from the Chapter Membership who demonstrate appropriate skills for managing the office of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer; and where possible, with an eye to increasing diversity which is not limited to sex, race, creed, or national origin, but including attributes such as age, formal education, background experience, and county of residence. Preference may be given to candidates whose total time in any Board capacity and total time of service in a single Board position is less than other candidates for the same position. Selection of candidates based on these additional diversity attributes would maintain experience and continuity for the Board while recruiting new members to serve. Officer candidates must be Certified Members of the Chapter, except for Chapters in their first year of operation.
- c) The Officer Nomination Committee must review the required skills, duties and responsibilities of each Officer position with the proposed candidate to assess the candidate's understanding and willingness to perform the functions of the office prior to nominating the candidate for any position.
- d) The President must publish the slate of candidates to the Chapter membership in writing, 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting before the end of the calendar year.
- e) The Officer Nomination Committee will present a slate of candidates and conduct the election process at the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.
- f) This committee will also serve when an Officer or Board vacancy occurs which requires candidates. The committee may serve at the request of the incoming President upon his/her election to present a slate of Director Candidates.
- g) The State Master Naturalist Coordinator may provide oversight to a Chapter's nomination process.

APPENDIX 2: Committee Chair Nominations and Committee Guidelines

- a) The Nominations Committee, if requested by the President, searches for and vets the candidate(s) for the Standing Committee chairs. (Bylaws V.F.2.a) In addition to determining suitability for the position the following guidelines should be followed by the Nominations Committee during this vetting process:
- b) Candidates must be members in good standing in the Blackland Prairie Chapter.
- c) The previous/current committee chair need not be consulted as to the suitability of candidates, although they may provide a suggested candidate for consideration, as can anyone else.
- d) Candidates should be told that they are candidates (possibly one of several) and that if appointed they will be required to attend Board meetings as well as select and manage

their committee as appropriate. They will also be required to provide written committee reports to the secretary prior to the monthly Board meetings and notify the Board of their committee membership, both initially and whenever it changes. They should also be made aware of the Operating Handbook definition of the work of the committee at this time.

- e) The Nominations Committee notifies the President of the candidate or list of candidates that, in its opinion, meet the requirements of the position (Bylaws V.F.2.a & Operating Handbook C.1.c)
- f) Note: These first two steps are based on Bylaws V.F.2.a which states that the "... Nominating Committee may recommend candidates ...". The President may alternatively choose to do these two steps alone.
- g) The President notifies the Executive Committee of his recommendation and calls for a confirmation vote by a specific date. (Bylaws V.F.2.b). Electronic (email or phone) voting is not covered in the Bylaws nor the Operating Handbook but since the Executive Committee rarely meets in person it makes sense to allow for electronic voting.
- h) The President may choose from the list of candidates provided by the Nominations Committee or someone else entirely.
- i) Each Executive Committee member casts a yes/no vote. Each member should consider their vote to be YES unless a specific and justifiable reason for voting NO is provided.
- j) Valid NO vote reasons: "He is no longer a member in good standing" or "She was indicted for fraud last year and is unsuitable for Treasurer", etc.
- k) Insufficient NO vote reasons: "I don't know them", "They've never done this before", "Joe can do it better", etc.
- l) Abstentions or absence of a yes/no vote from an Executive Committee member by the designated date shall be treated as a YES vote for the purposes of confirmation.
- m) Executive Committee members are encouraged to contact the proposed appointee by phone or email to get a feel for them and their abilities or to ask other questions about which the member is concerned.
- n) Upon confirmation by a majority vote of the Executive Committee, the President shall
 - 1) Notify the Nominee of his Appointment and confirm their acceptance (Operations. Handbook C.1.c)
 - 2) Notify the Membership and the Full Board of the nominee's acceptance (Operations Handbook C.1.c)
 - 3) If the nomination is not confirmed, the President shall notify the nominee and start over.

APPENDIX 3: Education Committee Policies and Procedures

This appendix is maintained and reviewed annually by the Education Committee Chair with changes approved by the Board.

General Annual Parameters

- a) Maximum Class Size: Give the best experience for facilities available. 40 is considered maximum.

Education Committee Responsibility

- a) To provide classes and field trips necessary to meet more than the state minimum requirements.

- b) Students are under the authority of the Education Committee from Registration through Graduation (completion of state minimum training requirements). After Graduation, they are TMN Pledges and included in the roster of TMN-Active members. Students have until the end of the Calendar year to complete their training requirements.
- c) Graduation shall be complete with presentation of Chapter Class Completion Certificate and President's Letter to Graduates.
- d) Students who graduate have until May 15 of the year following their class year to complete their initial certification requirements (40 hours of VH and 8 of AT).
- e) Students who do not complete their initial certification by May 15 of the year following their class year will certify the first year they achieve 40VH and 8AT hours within a single calendar year.
- f) Upon certification the class member will receive the State Certification Certificate, a name badge with Class and Certification Year, the Initial Certification Enameled Dragonfly Pin and the President's Letter to the new Texas Master Naturalist. (Letter samples on file)

Funding

- g) Budgeted at \$150 available for Education Committee to purchase manuals, rent facilities, reimburse travel expenses and any other training related expenses with the Fiscal Year end remainder turned back to Chapter Treasurer.

Facilities

- h) Classes will be held in the main auditorium of the Heard's Science Resources Building and the Education Committee will pay the Heard up to \$500 in rental for the property for this purpose out of the Budgeted Funding in Section 1.3 of this Appendix.

General Preparation and Training Timeline

- i) The general class cycle is approximately June through May plus support for lagging students through end of year. Note that the term of office of the Training Director is from the start of the planning period to the end of the Execution the following year.
 - Planning - Approximately June through September
 - Registration - Approximately September through January
 - Execution - Approximately mid-February to mid-May
 - Follow-up - Supporting students who need makeup classes to graduate

Training Timeline Milestones

Suggested Class Training Structure

One class may be missed but others must be made up. The following is a suggestion for content.

- Greenfire: Video may be alternate for Lecture 1 or used as pre-class AT - final policy TBD by Education Committee.
- Lecture 1 - Ecology Overview recommended.
- Lectures 2-12.
- Defined on year-by-year basis according to Lecturer Availability.
- Lecture 13 – Wrap-up and Class Party.
- Any student who attends the minimum required classes and field trips and who achieves **an additional 40 Volunteer Hours and 8 hours of Advanced Training (for a total of 80 and 16 respectively) by December 31 of their class year** will be double certified and will receive the initial certification Dragonfly pin and the re-certification Pin appropriate for **their class** year.

APPENDIX 4: Volunteer Management System (VMS) Administrators

- a) Appointed positions that may overlay or be the same as that of a Director.
- b) Only Director/Chair of VS(VH)/AT are voting members of the Board.
- c) Administrators must be certified members in good standing and undergo state training.
- d) Some Administrators may have editing and input rights while others will have read-only rights.

The following positions are suggested:

- Admin1: Principle Hours Keeper or Membership Director-Full Rights.
- Admin 1a: Associate Full Rights hours keeper – additional full rights associates may be added.
- Admin2: CBC – Within Membership Committee-Minimal use with TPWD as CBC agent.
- Admin3: Known by state as Opportunities or Volunteer Services and Advanced Training and associated with the AT/VS (VH) Projects chairman.

- Admin 3a: Associate Full Rights VS (VH)/AT Opportunities - additional full rights associates may be added.
- Adminx: General help not directly associated with 1-3 and assigned alpha designators such as Adminy, etc.
- RO1: President Read Only
- RO2: New Class Director or designee Read
- RO3: Membership Read Only

APPENDIX 5: TXMN Opportunity Category Definitions Note: The most recent version of this document is on the txmn.org/help site under the Administrators section

j) Service Activity	k) Code	l) Description	m) Examples
n) Training & Educating Others (Direct)	o) TR	p) Leading, organizing, 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).	q) Classroom instruction r) Workshops s) Presentations t) Webinars u) Chapter MN trainees/interns class v) AT you prepare and present as a TMN member
w) Advanced Training	x) AT	y) Advanced Training you attend as a participant	z) AT sessions at TMN Statewide Annual Meeting aa) Rainwater Harvesting Steward Program Training bb) Project WILD Instructor/Facilitator Training

cc) Public Outreach (Indirect)	dd) PO	ee) 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.	ff) Manning booth or visitor center gg) Writing articles or brochures/ newsletters hh) Wildlife Hotline
ii) Technical Guidance	jj) TG	kk) Any work that provides natural resource or program related business, land management, and other expertise consultation and/or written management recommendations to cooperators, chapters, partners, land owners and/or land managers.	ll) Site visits for and writing ecosystem management plans mm) Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) nn) City/Community/Regional Habitat Conservation Plan Committee
oo) Natural Resource Management pp) (including Natural Resource Stewardship and Conservation)	qq) RM	rr) Activities that improve the health of a public natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration rescue and rehabilitation.	ss) Invasive species or trash removal tt) Plant and/or /endangered species rescue (not rehab) • Eg: Turtle Patrol uu) Restore or improving natural habitat vv) Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys ww) Developing an eco-system plan xx) Tree planting
yy) Nature/Public Access	zz) NPA	aaa) 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	bbb) Developing new or maintaining and/or improving existing: ccc) Hiking trails ddd) Interpretive gardens eee) Wildlife viewing blinds fff) Wildscapes/native plant gardens ggg) Interpretive hikes
hhh) Field Research iii) (Including Surveys and Citizen Science)	jjj) FR	kkk) Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific understanding.	lll) Field surveys mmm) Banding and tagging nnn) Species watch ooo) Texas Nature Trackers Programs ppp) CoCoRaHs qqq) Stream Watch/ Team/Water Quality Monitoring
rrr) Chapter & Program Support, Business and Administration	sss) CB	ttt) Activities related to managing and running a master naturalist chapter and its committees.	uuu) Board or committee duties vvv) Ch. Newsletter or website mgt www) Management of chapter records xxx) Hours reporting yyy) Chapter reporting zzz) Representing chapter at multi-chapter events aaaa) Other chapter administration bbbb) Assistance to State Program and State Program Office
cccc) Other	dddd) OT	eeee) Any activity approved by a chapter that is not	gggg) Wildlife rehabilitation (not animal rescue)

		defined above. ffff) 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.	
--	--	---	--

APPENDIX 6: TPWD Volunteers Open-Carry Policy

The Blackland Prairie Chapter complies with the Open Carry policy as adopted by Texas Parks and Wildlife. A person in violation of the policy will be informed of the policy and asked to come into compliance. Upon a second violation that person will be reported to the State Offices to be dealt with accordingly which can include state punishment for violation, and permanent removal from the Chapter and exclusion from all activities and volunteer opportunities related to the Texas Master Naturalists. No volunteer can carry a firearm while working on a TMN sanctioned project or while wearing anything that identifies them as a Master Naturalist. State policy may be accessed at http://tmn-cot.org/Forms/Carrying_of_Firearms_Policy_for_Volunteers.pdf

APPENDIX 7 Addendum for 501(C)(3) Chapters

Article I – Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Organization or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Article II – Definitions

1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family: a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, b. A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing Board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III – Procedures

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing Board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest
- b. The chairperson of the governing Board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- c. After exercising due diligence, the governing Board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy

- a. If the governing Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing Board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV – Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing Board and all committees with Board-delegated power shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for the discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V – Compensation

- a. Voting member of the governing Board who receives compensation, directly/ indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the governing Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes

either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI – Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with policy, and
- d. Understands the Organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII – Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted.

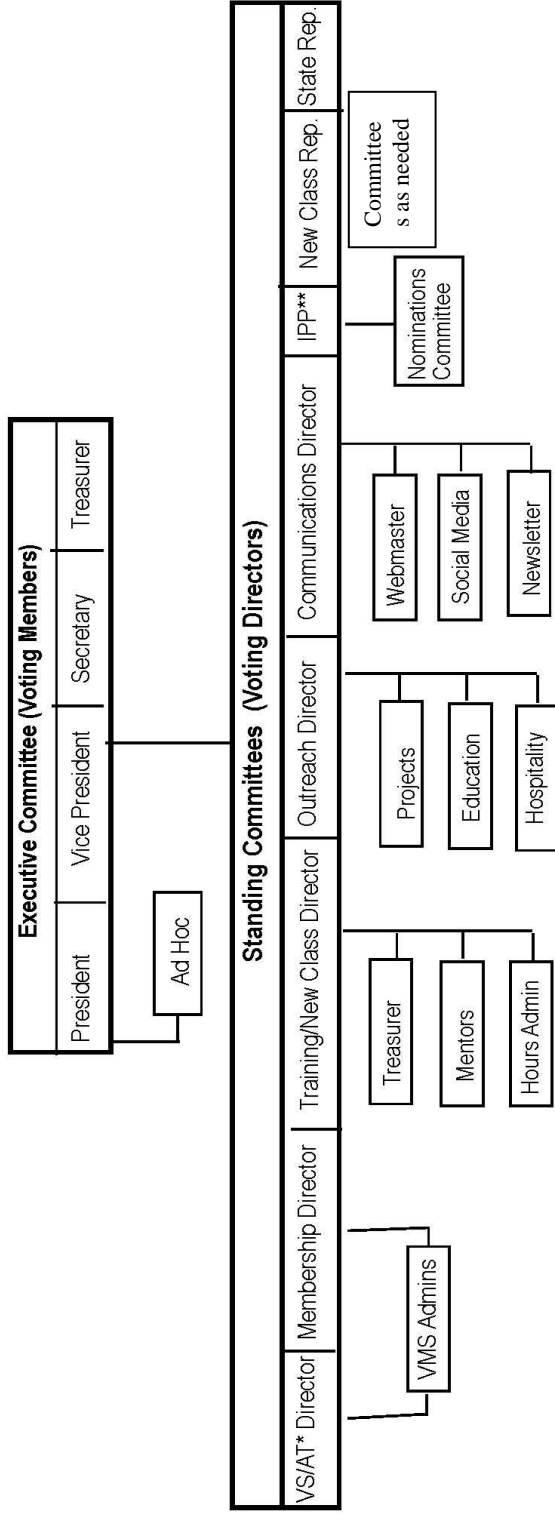
The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII – Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Blackland Prairie Chapter Governing Board



* Volunteer Services(Hours) Advanced Training

** Immediate Past President

NOTE: All actions by a Committee must be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval and submission into official minutes of the Chapter.