

**Letter of Introduction**

Dear Applicant for the Texas Master Naturalist Program,

Thank you for your interest in the *Blackland Prairie Texas Master Naturalist Program (BPTMN).*  This program is supported by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks & Wildlife and is designed to increase the availability of information and provide volunteer hours to improve the quality of life throughout the Collin County Blackland Prairie. The Texas Master Naturalist program is made up of certified volunteers who have been trained and meet the required volunteer service hours and advanced training each year. While participants will benefit personally in this training, it should be understood that the principle criteria for acceptance into the program is the availability and willingness of the applicant to volunteer.

The training covers topics such as: Geology of the Blackland Prairie, Prairie Plants, Ecology, Avian Ecology, Entomology, Mammals, Our Weather, and the Study of Water with regional experts teaching individual classes. This training consists of 13 classes, each Wednesday evening, 6 pm – 9 pm, from February through May each year and 3 Field Trips.

The class location is: The Heard Museum Field trip locations and days vary.

1 Science Place

McKinney, TX 75069

The Texas Master Naturalist Training Program fee is $150. **All class material is provided including the textbook – Texas Master Naturalist.** You will receive in-depth training from recognized experts in each field and you will have an enjoyable learning experience. No refunds for withdrawing from the BPTMN training program will be available after January 31, 2019.

At the completion of your course work and 3 field trips you will receive a Class Completion Certificate. This is just the beginning of your journey.

In order to meet the requirements to become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist you are required to:

1. Complete the training classes and 3 required field trips.
2. Meet 40 Volunteer Service Hours with an approved project between now and May 15, 2020
3. Attend 8 Advanced Training hours with an approved event between now and May 15, 2020

Your class work or field trips do not count towards your advanced training requirements but you may work on getting your volunteer hours and your advanced training to become a Certified Master Naturalist while you are taking the class. This can give you a jump start on your requirements to become certified.

You have until May 15, 2020 to accomplish the 40 volunteer service hours, 8 advanced training hours, and 3 field trips, at which point, you will be awarded your Certified Texas Master Naturalist certificate, your official Texas Master Naturalist name badge, and your Initial First Year Certification Dragonfly Pin.

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After the May 15, 2020 deadline, you can still become certified if you complete at least 40 volunteer hours and 8 advanced training hours *in a single year* as long as your class coursework and 3 field trips are complete.

You may even find yourself so involved and immersed in your Texas Master Naturalist experience that you complete an ***additional*** 40 volunteer service hours and an ***additional*** 8 advanced training hours (for a total of 80 VH and 16 AT respectively) by December 31, 2019. In this case, you will also receive an Annual Recertification Pin in addition to your initial certification Dragonfly Pin.

It is very important that you keep your hours entered and up-to-date during this first year so we will know how far you have progressed. Much training will be provided on how to log these hours.

Lastly, on behalf of the Blackland Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists, the Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment. We believe you are going to have a long-term, enjoyable time with our group.

**To apply for this program please send the following “Application Packet”.**

**Candidates must be 18 years or older by February 13, 2019.**

1. **$150 – Course Fee – *check made payable to Blackland Prairie Texas Master Naturalist***
2. **Application**
3. **Volunteer Service Agreement**
4. **Volunteer Waiver**

**Mail to: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**

 **825 North McDonald Street**

 **Suite 150**

 **McKinney, TX 75069**

 **Attn: Maureen Metcalf**

**For questions, please call Maureen Metcalf at 972-548-4232. Congratulations on the first step!**

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity program provider. Individuals with a disability needing an accommodation should contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension one week prior to the event.