



El Camino Real Master Naturalist


Board Meeting

April 2, 2020, 6:00 pm

Zoom



Agenda

- Check In: 6pm
 - Information from the Texas Master Naturalist Program
 - Upcoming meetings
 - Remaining new class sessions
 - Other business
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Attendees

- Sue Ann Kendall
- Don Travis
- Mike Conner
- Pamela Neeley
- Donna Lewis
- Linda Jo Conn
- Thank you all for coming and giving Zoom a try.



Information from Texas Master Naturalist Program

Mary Pearl and Michelle's
news items

Current Guidelines for Texas Master Naturalist Chapters

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are statewide sponsors of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. As such we must adhere to the policies set forth by both of our sponsoring agencies.
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has mandated that ALL AgriLife face to face events, programs and meetings be cancelled through **May 4th** at the earliest.
- This includes Texas Master Naturalist face to face events, programs and meetings.
- Because the period may well be extended, all TMN chapters should continue to make contingency plans for no face to-face events through the summer out of an abundance of caution.
- <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/coronavirus/> - a resource page for updates

Certification Requirements

- The mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program is to *develop a corps of **well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service** dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.*
 - *Key Tenets of our Program – are a ‘Masters’-level Basic Training and Volunteer Service*
- The requirement for a full 40 hours of Basic Training and 40 hours of Volunteer Service **will not be changed** for 2020.
- Exceptions will be made for Advanced Training in 2020 as described below, but 8 hours minimum will still be required.

Our bylaws updates from 2015 no longer dictate that a member has to complete initial training within 12 months:

Clarification

B. Member Categories

1. Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training. Volunteer Participant of an official class from the first day of class to the end of the training period continuing until the Trainee has completed the Chapter Training requirements.
2. Texas Master Naturalist Pledge. Volunteer Participant who has completed the Chapter Training requirements and has yet to complete the State or Chapter minimum Certification requirements for advanced training and volunteer service to become 'Certified' within the calendar year following the end of the training period.
3. Certified Texas Master Naturalist. Volunteer or previously Certified Texas Master Naturalist who has completed the State or Chapter minimum Certification requirements (Reference 'Master Naturalist™ Program', *Chapter Management Guidelines*, Certification section) for advanced training and volunteer service hours for the year.
4. Texas Master Naturalist Member. Volunteer who has previously been a Certified Texas Master Naturalist but has not yet to complete the required volunteer service of 40 hours, and an additional 8 hours of Advanced Training toward re-certification requirements for more than one year.

Basic Training Requirements

- For chapters in the midst of a spring basic training class and who choose to continue Spring Basic Training Classes Online
 - Host remaining class subjects through Zoom/Online platforms
 - Field based education delayed until shutdown lifted
 - Field based training waived for 2020 spring basic training classes. But encourage members to audit field courses in future years.
 - Coordinate training opportunities with nearby/regional TMN chapters
 - Take advantage of presentations from state office* (**pending*)
 - Encourage members to audit future in-person basic courses for reinforcement of subject matter
 - **MUST include question/answer and discussion period with presenter**
 - Make-up exceptions for basic training courses need to be submitted to chapter leadership or to the state office for input (for example, if a trainee misses an online training day, how do they make it up?)

Don is sending out links to online AT opportunities as they are announced.

Advanced Training Annual Requirements – 2020 INTERIM POLICY

- Online-based training and webinars will be accepted for **all of the minimum of 8 hours** of advanced training hours required for certification. Additional AT hours can be earned through distance or in person courses once shutdown lifted.
- We encourage members to consider attending in person advanced trainings in the fall if* travel and health restrictions lift.
- We encourage chapters to host multi-chapter or regional advanced training webinars/online programs to limit stress on presenters.
- We encourage the priority of those online training/webinars that are live, allow for speaker/audience interaction and allow for questions/discussion at the end.
- We encourage chapters to host post-training discussion groups if speaker isn't available for questions/discussion.
- We encourage limits to those advanced trainings that are pre-recorded, not live or not interactive in their online format. No “learning by YouTube.”

*We changed “when” to “if” here, at Mike Connor’s suggestion.

Volunteer Service Requirements

- There will be **no change in the minimum requirements for volunteer service** for certification/recertification in 2020
- But there are some options to switch to distance service:
 - Write a newsletter article spotlighting a local SGCN species or make a presentation to give in the fall.
 - Verify or assist with curating observations in iNaturalist or eBird * (*more guidance on CitSci volunteer service coming soon.)
 - Contributing to the chapters blog/newsletter
 - Planning your chapter's 20th anniversary events/celebration/etc.
 - Planning for fall trainings, ATs and projects
 - Grant writing
 - Updating chapter websites
 - Updating chapter brochures and outreach materials
 - Reviewing/making comments to the TMN bylaws, CMOP and COH documents for possible considerations to state program office should consider for 2020 updates.
 - Join a planning committee for the TMN Annual Meeting and events.
 - Assist leadership with managing your chapter, going through and organizing chapter files whether they are electronic or paper files.
- Encourage your members to share their service ideas with us to share across the state!

IMPORTANT NOTE

- ALL volunteer service MUST meet local and federal guidelines for limited travel and social distancing. Local Guidelines currently vary city to city and county to county.
 - Some considerations – We encourage members to limit engaging in service at parks, nature centers, gardens even if following distancing and cleaning guidelines – consider your travel there (i.e., stopping at a gas station) or the potential safety situations when working by yourself at a remote site. It is strongly recommended that these types of service be limited out of an abundance of caution and are not required to complete under social distancing restrictions.



Upcoming Chapter Meetings

Also AT Opportunities

Options for the Next Few Months

- Cancel Chapter Meetings
- Hold Chapter Meetings in Zoom
 - Advantage: Can get AT hours as long as there is interaction
- Hold Chapter Meetings on Free Conference Call platform
 - Disadvantage: Can't do AT, just the Chapter Meeting part
- Other Ideas?
- **DECISION:** We will do a test Chapter Meeting on the regularly scheduled date at 6 pm, to see how Zoom works out. We may do Board meetings by phone, since Sue Ann has a Free Conference Call line we can use.

How to Accommodate Members' Needs

- People with no video access
 - They can call in by phone. This worked for Donna tonight.
- Other needs/issues
 - We will address as they arise.



New Class Options

Kathy Lester

Options for Finishing Class

- Use Zoom Meetings to finish the class.
- Postpone the rest of the class until fall.
- Ask her to find out from them what they can do, and replace the field trips in the fall.
- DECISION: Kathy to decide.
- Suna will reach out to her to see how she is doing.



Other Business

everyone

Bio Blitz News

- Tonia Homayoun will reschedule her introduction to Bio Blitzes for the fall.
- We will start ours up again once the shelter-in-place order is over.

Next Chapter Meeting

- Try a practice meeting April 9, just chapter meeting and no speaker.
- 6 pm, on Zoom.
- Suna to send out concise instructions ahead of time.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

- Don Travis for keeping us up with program news and AT opportunities
- Carolyn Henderson, Eric Neubauer, Larry Kocian, Cathy Johnson, and Ann Collins for recent blog contributions
- Kathy Lester for working with our class speakers
- Donna Lewis for working with our upcoming Chapter meeting speakers

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 7 pm. Mike Connor moved to adjourn and Don Travis seconded.
- This is 1 hour of Administrative Board Meeting time.