

**TMN Training Class Graduation
and
TMN Certification/Re-Certification Ceremonies**
Ideas from Chapters

Sabine-Neches Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

We had our trainings in the fall, so our graduation ceremony was combined with a Christmas party. Just our luck, dragonfly ornaments were in vogue this last year, so we used them to decorate a small tree and everyone got to take one home at the end of the party. Between bites of yummy dips and cookies, we gave out the pins and took a picture of every recipient, then took a group picture.



Submitted by: Amanda Adair

Big Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

We received a copy of the book "A Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold upon our Certification. (Available through the TMN/TexasAgriLife Bookstore)

Submitted by: Sarah Kieschnick

Panhandle Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

"Last year we had an ice cream social and invited family and friends to be a part of it."

Submitted by: Susan Thompson

Heart of Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

We provide the TMN Certification certificates and give t-shirts from the TMN/AgriLife Bookstore and the TMN program pins to those who have completed the training, service and advanced training in order to certify or re-certify. Other items given include bags, name tag lanyards and caps (also available from the TMN/AgriLife Bookstore) for training class graduates. We usually have a covered dish dinner and just have a good time socializing with the new members.

Submitted by: Janet Wallace

Hill Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

The Hill Country Chapter has a fun keynote speaker at the training Commencement like Barron Rector or Steve Nelle doing his "Bubba" stewardship talk. We invite the spouses or partners to come. We try to have it at a venue which includes a great outdoor area. We tell students it's a Commencement because they are just at the beginning. Graduation implies the training is over!

We make a day of it having the speaker first. After the speaker we present the new name (permanent) badges individually and collect the temporaries. We give the Sand County Almanac book to students as a Commencement gift. Then we have lunch - we've done both catering and pot luck depending on the budget. After lunch we have a tour, if it's a Nature Center, or a hike if it's a park or such. Enthusiasm is high, always lots of fun and laughter...and relief.

Submitted by: Cathy Downs

Big Country Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

On the final night of our training class, we have a pot luck dinner where the whole chapter is invited to welcome the new graduates. The first event of the evening is our training 'lab final'. This is followed by dinner and then the issuance of a training completion certificate. We always have LOTS of good food and good conversations.

Submitted by: Judy Hetherington

Blackland Prairie Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

In January we hold an open house meeting, where we invite spouses and prospective members to join the rest of the Chapter. We make an abbreviated presentation of the Master Naturalist program then we present the certification pins and Certificates to the class members whom have completed all of the requirements. Then we present the Re-Certification and Milestone pins to our continuing members after which we share refreshments and social time. If we have scheduled correctly, we have members from Blackland Prairie Raptor Center do a short raptor presentation. This is our normal January Meeting.

Submitted by: David Powell

Cradle of Texas Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

As soon as each member reaches their requirements to become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist in their first year, we award them their certification pin, and certificate as soon as possible.

Submitted by: Laura Brandes

Cross Timbers Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

Our Chapter's celebration has been held in February for the past several years. We have lots of good food, a decoration theme and while we have social time we have a powerpoint running that is photos of members at work, conference attendees etc., -- a year in review in pictures! We send a "formal" email invitation/RSVP invitation to the members and guests are also invited. There is

a program printed on card stock with names and award categories, it usually has pictures of the recertification pins and some Master Naturalist info. Our narrator/MC is usually someone from the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge and the pins, certificates etc. are presented as the narrator tells something about the recipient. We present award certificates to class members that complete all classes & field trips (i.e. Perfect Attendance). It is a fun and tasty evening at the Ft. Worth Botanic Gardens.

Submitted by: Ginger Bason

Elm Fork Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program

Procedure listed in separate attached document

Submitted by: Van Elliott

Highland Lakes Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program (Class Graduation)

We at the Highland Lakes Chapter have a class graduation party with awards for those that have completed their 11 classes successfully. We also give special honor to those that have achieved their 40 hours and 8 hrs by the time the graduation party happens. Our training class coordinators have socials after several of the 11 classes to get the new students to know each other better. At the graduation party we also invite their spouses so that they can meet their new friends. It has worked out great in the past years There's plenty to eat and drink!

Submitted by: Billy Hutson

Highland Lakes Chapter, TMN (Certification & Re-Certification Celebration)

Our Highland Lakes Chapter really enjoy all of our recertification and milestone awards and try to make it special for everyone. We obtain the award pins form the state office and then take them out of the little plastic bags, create a cardstock card with the hours they represent, the name of the people receiving them and some art work really make the pin and card special. This technique works perfect when an individual cannot be there too, that way we know which ones are left and will give them out at later monthly meetings. We do our awards ceremonies twice a year, in June and at our big end of the year December party and meeting. We also try to have our officers up front handing out all of the pins and awards, shaking hands and lots of hugging. We always take lots of pictures. I have been very successful in putting the pictures with a short article in all of the local newspaper and everyone loves that a lot. This lets the community know who is new in our organization and has managed to keep our waiting list for the next years classes almost full! This is something we all love and our chapter is such a huge family of volunteers for our area. We have lots of fun and do a huge amount of good for our communities.

Submitted by: Sue Kersey

New Ideas and Suggestions

One thing I haven't seen -- but I'd suggest -- is an ongoing photo/AV show of trainees on their field trips that could be shown while they and their guests have an opportunity to socialize. Trainees that learn to enjoy working and sharing projects with other class members from the start are the one's I'll bet go on to certify and remain active.

Having the graduation at a location where you could take your guests outside on the trails and share some of the things you'd learned is also an asset. I wouldn't doubt that some enterprising chapter has a pre-graduation scavenger hunt with an extra surprise being awarded at graduation.

Submitted by A TMN Member

My idea is to have a 5 or 10 year training class reunion, with the current year's class being in service. Invite all graduated class membership. It would be a fun, social way to get everyone together and for the new class to learn from existing members. It may even be a way for our chapter to bring back into the fold lapsed members who have dropped away for various reasons—we might draw them back and get them re-engaged again!

Submitted by Laura Wilson, East Texas Chapter of the TMN Program

Common Themes across all chapters are to:

- Make it special!
- Invite members' family/significant others to share in the event
- Celebrate class training completion AND other members' Certifications, Re-certifications and Milestone awards
- Include elements of food, fun and fellowship for all to enjoy.
- Make it personal—tell a little something about the awardees.