

2014 Annual Meeting Project Fair
Mo Ranch Conference Center, Hunt, Texas
TMN Statewide Annual Meeting & Advanced Training
October 24-26, 2014

Background: The Texas Master Naturalist Program holds this competition during our Annual Meeting & Advanced Training to share and award the premier projects of the TMN Program. Members continually list this method as a favorite way to learn about projects other chapters are doing and how they may be able to replicate such projects in their areas.

Exemplary Projects should be:

(This is also the criteria by which project fair submissions will be judged)

- Useful and Practical for all chapters—something that is “doable” and sustainable in any given chapter
- Representative of a local need of your chapter’s natural resource issues and community.
- Need driven—a project that addresses a pressing naturalist or natural resource need
- Representative of the goals and mission of the Master Naturalist program
- Led by the chapter (vs. being led or initiated by a chapter partner)
- Visible—for the chapter and the program practices and principles
- A lead into a good newspaper article
- Collaborative of many chapter members’ skills, interests and expertise
- Something that provides several impacts: such as a chapter recruitment tool, provides an educational tool or model for other’s behavior and practices, helps people to appreciate, connect, or reconnect with nature or change their attitude and/or behavior towards natural resources through the presentation of sound natural resource information, management or practices.
- Organized—well planned and well executed.

Exemplary Project Presentation Format:

How: Through a “Project Fair”

When: Set up should be complete by Friday evening or by the close of breakfast on Saturday morning during the conference. (Specific times will be presented on the meeting schedule).

Judging: Judges will begin to review displays throughout the day on Saturday and verbal judging (or ‘show and tell’ with the judges) will take place during the designated times of the Annual Meeting on Saturday evening prior to supper. Chapters need to have at least one representative in place at their display throughout the verbal judging period in the event the panel of judges has additional questions about their project.

Dimensions: Displays need to fit in the space UP TO 3 ft. long by 3 ft. deep and be able to fit two chapter displays per table. Project displays can be put on a table or on the floor. However, all displays need to fit within the dimensions given. Project display can go as tall as the room allows.

NEW REQUIREMENT: Chapters entering a display into the contest will need to provide a short paragraph describing the project **no later than Friday, October 17th, 2014** to Michelle Haggerty at: mhaggerty@ag.tamu.edu

Chapters will need to supply their own extension cords and other equipment they wish to have as part of their display. A table will be provided should you need it.

Chapters should include an accompanying handout for attendees to take home.

Handouts should include the following information:

Note: Please feel free to be creative with your handouts. Handouts can be in any format—printed, pamphlet, CD ROM, etc.

- Short description of project.
 - Needs
 - Goals
- How the project was conducted
- What did it take to complete the project
- Contact information.
- Cost, grants received, etc.
- Sponsors for the project, other organizations, partners and collaborators.
- Hours involved
- Number of people involved.
- Pitfalls to avoid if another chapter were to attempt to recreate such a project in their area.
- Lessons learned and what you would do differently.
- Interesting facts about the project.
- Pictures of the project

Displays of the project should include (as a minimum):

- Project title
- Chapter title
- Project goals
- Pictures of the project
- Short project description
- Methods of project implementation
- Impact of project to the community and/or chapter
- **Note:** Project Fair exhibits must be in place no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, and exhibits will be open for viewing on Friday and Saturday. Judging will take place Saturday between 5 and 6 p.m.
- See notes about sizes above

Some ideas from chapters:

- Have a new class take on a class project and prepare the display and accompanying materials for their project to take to the State Meeting...
- Have a new class work on an existing/ongoing chapter project and then prepare this display and handouts as a class case study and project.

Judges comments from past Fairs:

- Neatness and creativity counts!
- Correct use of Texas Master Naturalist marketing and ID guidelines is a bonus.
- New, creative and unique projects make for an interesting and exciting judges experience.
- Pictures are a plus. They really are worth a thousand words.

Award Notes:

Awards this year are being supported by a generous grant from the Wildlife Diversity Program of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Awards will be in the form of a certificate and monetary project grants to the winning chapters which are intended to further support the winning projects or new project implementations of the chapters' choice. Winners must have submitted a short paragraph (described above about their project) and high resolution pictures of the winning project or project activities (after the Annual Meeting) for use in a report back to the donors as well as for use in the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Report. The donor may also ask for future simple progress reports on the winning projects through the State TMN Program Office.