VMS for the Chapter Member

A Reference to Help Members Choose
Opportunity Titles for Recording Volunteer and
AT Hours

Gideon Lincecum Chapter
Update: <u>January 8, 2022</u>

Each of our TMN volunteer hours is worth **over $23** to our sponsoring organizations in the form of grants, mostly from U.S. government entities. We personally gain satisfaction and knowledge from volunteer work and attending programs for Advanced Training, and TMN recognizes us with pins for certifications and hours milestones. The method Texas Parks and Wildlife chose for us to record our hours is the Samaritan Volunteer Management System, an on-line application we refer to as VMS.

The purpose of this document is to help members figure out how best to report their hours. The GLC VMS Administrators are always willing to help out, and we encourage anyone to ask for assistance if there are still questions after reading through this material. Contact: **GLCTMNmbr@gmail.com**

The federal government has Federal Reporting Categories under which each of our hours must "fit" if they are to be used for the grants. The interpretation of those categories is continually refined as new information is received. As a result, sometimes we have to create new Opportunity Titles for our projects as they expand into new areas or we find we have incorrectly used existing Opportunity Titles.

The federal grants are also the reason for the strict enforcement of the rule that any hours must be recorded in VMS within 45 days of the occurrence. Federal auditors won't use volunteer hours entered more than 45 days after they happened.

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Opportunity Titles with Descriptions

Administrative Work – Chapter Administration, including chapter business meetings, Board meetings, hours keeper, typical officer duties, web page, newsletter, training, state organization work, etc. [See explanation of drop-down items within this Opportunity on p. 6 of this document.]

Adopt-A-Highway – Workdays to remove trash from a 2 mile stretch of Hwy 159 from Rutersville to La Grange. May include individual efforts to remove trash from other public roadways and public spaces in our area.

Adopt-A-Loop: Great Texas Wildlife Trails – Collect data on wildlife, particularly Species of Greatest Conservation Need, 4 times per year; record data using iNaturalist to update existing printed maps and online content. Training is required. Chapter project coordinator will be the liaison between volunteers and TPWD.

AT: AgriLife Land Management and Wildlife Conservation Workshops and Programs – New Landowner Workshop series, watershed protection, etc., sponsored by Texas A&M AgriLife

AT: Archaeology – Programs on archaeology and archaeological sites in Texas.

AT: Cibolo Center for Conservation workshops and programs – Wildlife, Land Management and naturalist programs presented at Cibolo Center for Conservation in Boerne, TX and sponsored by approved organizations, such as Texas Master Naturalist chapters

AT: Citizen Science Project Training – Training for specific projects such as weather monitoring, invasive species, seed collection water quality monitoring, deer surveys, quail counts, bird banding, Cornell nest watch, butterfly watch, etc.

AT: NGO Workshops and Programs on Wildlife Conservation and Land Stewardship – (Non-Governmental Organization) - Training presented by Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin Butterfly Forum, Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Habitat Federation, NPSOT (Native Plant Society of Texas), universities or other educational institutions, prescribed burn associations, water conservation groups, etc.

AT: Outdoor Education Training for Volunteers – Training such as provided by TWA L.A.N.D.S, TPWD, a school district, a private organization, etc. to support projects related to outdoor education.

AT: Research in Support of Volunteer Service Projects – Meaningful research in support of volunteer service such as presentations, workshops, or other educational activities. Does not include time spent creating a power point, handout, or other aspects of putting a presentation together. [Putting a presentation together goes under "Educational Group Presentation"]

AT: TFS (Texas A&M Forest Service) Land Management Workshops and Programs – Such as A Plan For Your Land

AT: TMN Chapter Program – Programs sponsored by GLC in conjunction with chapter meetings or at other times. Could also be programs from other TMN chapters

AT: TMN State Meeting Advanced Training – Any Advanced Training session provided at the TMN Annual Meeting in October, unless it is specialty training with its own AT opportunity.

AT: TMN Tuesdays – Webinars presented on-line the second Tuesday of each month on topics related to TMN, its mission, and becoming a better TMN member. Also includes webinars in the TMN Be The Change series.

AT: Top Ten Presentation Research – Research to prepare a Top Ten Presentation to chapter or the general public.

AT: TPWD Wildlife and Land Management Workshops and Programs – Such as Landowner Workshops, Field Days, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Seminars. Individual sessions must be approved, as not all sessions fit the TMN mission.

AT: TPWD Wildlife Management Association programs – These are often county-wide Wildlife Management Associations or Wildlife Societies with multiple WMA's sponsored by TPWD. Programs that are specifically related to naturalist activities are approved, but general education or entertainment programs are not.

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Opportunity Titles with Descriptions (continued)

AT: TWA Workshops and Programs – (Texas Wildlife Association). NOT Outdoor Education training. Programs such as Women of the Land series, Land Stewardship Programs, etc.

AT: TX Waters Certification Training – Training to earn the TMN Texas Waters Specialist designation

AT: US Government Agency Wildlife and Land Management Workshops and Programs – Naturalist related programs by NRCS/USDA, USFWS, USFS, etc.

AT: VMS Training – Advanced Training, VMS Training, user training as a volunteer, approver, or administrator.

AT: Webinars – Internet-delivered training by government agencies or NGOs related to naturalist activities, usually in wildlife and land management and stewardship areas. Examples are TWA/AgriLife Wildlife for Lunch series, NRCS or AgriLife webinars. Does NOT include Webinars for Tx Waters Specialist Certification.

Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge – Assist staff with habitat maintenance/restoration and other projects as assigned.

Brenham ISD Outdoor Learning Projects – Support BISD Outdoor Learning Curriculum, Outdoor Classroom, L.A.N.D.S. projects.

Citizen Science (other) – Citizen Science projects that do not have a separate Opportunity Title, including State MN projects. Citizen Science projects are those where members collect data and/or analyze natural resources for the improvement of scientific understanding. Many of these projects utilize iNaturalist or eBird apps. Some require training which should be logged as "AT: Citizen Science Project Training". These are not casual observations on your own property; they must be tied to a specific project approved by the chapter. These include the Texas-Oklahoma Pollinator Project, TX Invasive Species Bioblitz, Great Backyard Bird Count, TX Butterfly Monitoring Network, Texas Nature Tracker projects, etc.

CoCoRaHS – (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network) - Daily monitoring and reporting of precipitation at a specific location.

Colorado River Watch – Trained volunteers submit water quality data that is reviewed and analyzed by CRWN staff, creating an early warning system that alerts LCRA to potential water quality threats.

Education - Informal – This is NOT recruiting - Provide information to the public about aspects of the natural environment and our prairie ecosystem. Examples would be fairs, science nights, and non-TMN programs where the *public roves by seeking information*, but not a formal presentation to a captive audience. [For events where recruiting new trainees was the primary goal, use Administrative Work / Recruiting.]

Educational Group Presentations – Presentation to a "captive audience" for a designated length of time on a Master Naturalist topic. Includes preparation for the presentation (other than research – see AT: Research in Support of Volunteer Service Projects). May be presented to the community or other Master Naturalists.

Fayetteville Native Plants Project – Plant and maintain native pollinator beds on the court house square in Fayetteville.

Indian Creek Nature Area – Pollinator garden and trail maintenance.

Initial MN Training – Initial training classes for new Master Naturalist trainees.

Invaders of Texas – Identify and report invasive species observed in environment using Invaders of Texas training and their app.

Fayette Co AgriLife Bldg. Native Plant Landscape – Maintain & expand (when appropriate) native plant landscaping in designated areas north of main building entrance. Identify plants with signage.

FeederWatch – Watchers periodically count birds they see at their feeders from November through April and send counts to Project FeederWatch (Cornell University).

Monument Hill State Historical Site– Assist with identifying and clearing invasive species. Assist with identifying and labelling species of interest along trails.

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Opportunity Titles with Descriptions (continued)

Native Plant Seed Collection and Sharing – Identify and collect seeds for sharing with chapter members or use with chapter projects. Time can be recorded for identifying, bagging and delivering seeds to members. [Not spreading seeds on your land.]

Native Prairie Restoration with Fayette Prairie Chapter of NPAT – Preserve and restore native prairies and identify native prairie remnants, such as with Fayette Prairie Chapter of Native Prairie Association of Texas. Does not include chapter meetings of FPCNPAT or work you do on your own property.

Native Seed Project for CKWRI – Work with the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute's Native Seed Project. Assist with maintenance of the plot, including weeding, planting, watering, and seed collection/harvesting. Collect wild seed elsewhere for CKWRI when positive ID is established.

NestWatch – Monitor birds on the nest, report when nesting occurs, number of eggs, hatch, how many hatchlings survive. Through Cornell University.

Out of GLC Area Direct Outreach (Training and Educating) Service – Volunteer time on a project outside of our chapter's normal area, equivalent to our chapter's Educational Group Presentation opportunity. It includes leading, organizing, developing, delivering, instructing, or staffing an educational activity where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event or session (e.g.: planned start and end times with a single agenda. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Out of GLC Area Field Research (including Surveys and Citizen Science) – Volunteer time outside of our chapter's normal area that include planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific understanding. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Out of GLC Area Indirect Outreach (Public Outreach) Service – Volunteer time on a project outside of our chapter's normal area that is leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where participants come and go and are able to inquire on a broad set of topics (equivalent to our chapter's Education-Informal opportunity) -OR- Writing an educational article or brochure. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Out of GLC Area Natural Resource Management Service – Volunteer time on a project outside of our chapter's normal area that improves the health of a public natural area or resource: natural resource management, restoration, rescue, and rehabilitation. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Out of GLC Area Nature/Public Access Service – Volunteer time on a project outside of our chapter's normal area that is field based activity that improves and manages the public's access to natural areas or resources: creating and/or maintaining nature trails, wildscapes, and/or interpretive areas. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Out of GLC Area Technical Guidance Service – Volunteer time outside of our chapter's normal area that provides FREE, detailed natural resource management advice or assistance for any natural resource related program or related business. For example: providing expertise in land management guidance, in consultation and/or written form to Chapters, partners, landowners and/or land managers. Includes work with other TMN chapters and/or organizations compatible with TMN Mission. Travel time is not allowed.

Prescribed Burn Activity - Assist with planning and execution of prescribed burn not on your property.

Schubert House Pollinator Project – Establish and maintain a pollinator garden and other native plants in existing beds around the museum in this historic home.

SF Austin State Park Educational Group Presentation – Leading, organizing, developing, delivering instruction, or staffing an educational activity at Stephen F Austin State Park where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event (e.g., planned start and end times).

Gideon Lincecum Chapter Opportunity Titles with Descriptions (continued)

SFA State Historical Site Native Plant Garden – Work with the SFASHS staff to maintain a native plant and pollinator garden at the Visitor Center for the San Felipe de Austin State Historical Site, including placing signage to identify plants.

Stephen F Austin State Park – Support for TPWD staff as needed, maintain a pollinator garden, projects may be in cooperation with Friends of the Park group.

TMN Virtual Volunteer Service – Work on any of the projects presented at the TMN Virtual Volunteer Fairs. Members must have registered with that project to record hours. Projects that take place within our GLC area may have a separate GLC opportunity title and that one should be used instead.

Washington on the Brazos State Park – Pollinator garden

Winedale Project – Landscape project at Winedale: Pollinator Garden, wildflower trail, signage identifying plants.

Explanation of drop-down menu under "Administrative Work/Chapter Administration" Opportunity Title (From VMS Admin Manual – January 6, 2022)

- **Chapter Meeting** – activities relating to preparing for, presiding over, or setting up for a regular chapter meeting (other than hospitality activities – see Hospitality below)
- **Board/Committee Work** – any activity in support of chapter through your duties as a chapter recognized committee representative or your activities in conducting chapter business as a member of the Chapter Board of Directors
- **President Duties** – any of the chapter activities which, as outlined in the Chapter Operating Handbook, are conducted in your official capacity as Chapter President (planning meeting agendas, interfacing with other chapters or agencies)
- **Vice President Duties** – any of the chapter activities which, as outlined in the Chapter Operating Handbook, are conducted in your official capacity as Chapter Vice President (planning programs, interfacing with other chapters or agencies, conducting Chapter business in the President's temporary absence)
- **Treasurer Duties** – any of the chapter activities which, as outlined in the Chapter Operating Handbook, are conducted in your official capacity as the Chapter Treasurer (preparing a budget and budget reports, presenting budget related information to the chapter)
- **Secretary Duties** – any of the chapter activities which, as outlined in the Chapter Operating Handbook, are conducted in your official capacity as Chapter Secretary
- **Hours Management** – activities related to the review and approval of submitted hours, preparation of reports concerning AT and Service hours both to the chapter and the State Program Office; volunteers who are officially designated by the chapter leadership to enter hours for other volunteers when those volunteers are unable to do so themselves
- **Hospitality** – activities related to organizing others to prepare refreshments or the actual preparation of refreshments for chapter activities to include serving, delivery, setup and take down
- **Communications** – activities relating to promoting the chapter news and events through the production of a newsletter (writing articles, preparing the newsletter, publishing the newsletter, preparing and publishing a chapter brochure, providing information to newspapers, radio, television and other media outlets
- **Website and Social Media** – activities related to developing and maintaining a web site and/or Facebook site or other social media outlets for the chapter
- **Photographer** – activities performed by the person or persons designated by the chapter administration to document chapter functions by means of photography or videography
- **Programs** – activities related to providing programs at chapter meetings that meet the criteria for Advanced Training at a Chapter Meeting (other than actually presenting at a meeting) [GLC - If you are a presenter, use Educational Group Presentations]
- **Project Management** – volunteer time spent in organizing volunteers and preparing for the success of the project; accumulating and reporting the impact data for the activity; preparing needed materials
- **Recruiting** – activities related to generating interest among potential eligible trainees in becoming a Texas Master Naturalist. Includes manning the GLC trifold booth at non-TMN functions such as New Landowner series or Bee Festival. May also include discussions at other occasions encouraging potential new members to join our training class
- **Training Classes** – activities related to supporting the Training Class through mentorship or as a class helper (distribute hand-outs); does not include presentation time
- **Fundraising** – activities related to raising funds or obtaining/creating items for the chapter that can be used to generate funds for the chapter, or other such activities as grant writing for the chapter or State Program
- **Samaritan VMS Rollout** – [**no longer used**] – activities related to the rollout of the VMS – for chapter personnel: preparing chapter data for conversion, training your volunteers; for the VMS team: activities involving assisting chapter personnel with any aspect of the conversion to include chapter training, troubleshooting and responding to Help Desk questions, editing chapter upload files
- **State Meeting** – activities relating to the support of the State Annual Meeting (preparing chapter contest entries), working as a volunteer at the State Meeting; does not include presentations. [GLC Note: for AT use "AT: TMN State Meeting Advanced Training"]
- **State Program Office** – activities relating to the support of state-wide projects like the Endowment Committee

Federal Opportunity Category Definitions from VMS Admin Manual
With Gideon Lincecum Chapter Opportunity list for each Category (1-2021)

Federal Category Service/Activity	Description	Examples	Gideon Lincecum Opportunities in this Category
Direct Outreach (Training and Educating)	Leading, organizing, developing, delivering, 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).	• Classroom instruction • Delivering workshops • Developing & delivering training presentations • Conducting/Leading webinars • Delivering/An instructor for Chapter MN Members in Training/interns class • AT you prepare & present as a TMN Member to other TMN Members • Leading interpretive hikes	• Brenham ISD Outdoor Learning Projects • Educational Group Presentations • SF Austin State Park Educational Group Presentation • Out of GLC Area Direct Outreach (Training and Educating) Service
Advanced Training	Advanced Training you attend as a participant	• AT sessions at TMN Statewide Annual Meeting • Rainwater Harvesting Steward Program Training • Project WILD Instructor/Facilitator Training • GLC programs designated as AT	• AT: AgriLife Land Management & Wildlife Conservation Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: Cibolo Nature Center Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: Citizen Science Project Training • AT: NGO Wrkshps & Prgrms on Wildlife Conservation & Land Stewardship • AT: Outdoor Ed Training for Vols • AT: Research in Support of Vol Service Projects • AT: TFS (Texas A&M Forest Service) Land Management Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: TMN Chapter Program • AT: TMN State Meeting Advanced Training • AT: TMN Tuesdays • AT: Top Ten Presentation Research • AT: TPWD Wildlife & Land Mgmt Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: TWA Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: TX Waters Certif Training • AT: US Govt Agency Wildlife & Land Mgmt Wrkshps & Prgrms • AT: Webinars

Federal Category Service/Activity	Description	Examples	Gideon Lincecum Opportunities in this Category
Indirect Outreach (Public Outreach)	Leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where <u>participants come and go</u> and are able to inquire on a broad set of topics -OR- Writing an educational article or brochure	- Being a docent for a nature center (excludes selling items) - Writing articles, brochures or newsletters for the public - Posting to GLC Facebook pg. - Staffing GLC booth with info on various nature topics - Offering educational activities to students or adults at a festival, science night, or similar open activity	- Education - Informal - Out of GLC Area Indirect Outreach (Public Outreach) Service
Technical Guidance	Providing FREE, detailed natural resource management advice or assistance for any natural resource related program or related business. For example: providing expertise in land management guidance, in consultation and/or written form, to Chapters, partners, land owners and/or land managers.	- Site visits for and writing ecosystem management plans - Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) - Serving on a City/Community/Regional Habitat Conservation Plan Committee - Advising other organizations on natural resource management (outside of serving as a board or committee member of an organization)	Out of GLC Area Technical Guidance
Natural Resource Management (including Natural Resource Stewardship and Conservation)	Activities that improve the health of a public natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration, rescue, and rehabilitation	- Remove foreign debris that improves the health of a public natural area or resource - Invasive species removal - Plant and/or endangered SGCN (Species of Greatest Conservation Need) species rescue (not rehab) E.g.: Turtle Patrol - Restoring or improving natural habitat - Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys - Tree planting	- Adopt-A-Highway - Attwater Prairie Chicken Refuge - Monument Hill State Hist. Site - Native Plant Seed Collection & Sharing - Native Prairie Restoration w/ Fayette Prairie Chapter NPAT - Native Seed Project for CKWRI - Prescribed Burn Activity - Out of GLC Area Natural Resource Management
Nature/Public Access	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	Developing new or maintaining and/or improving existing: - Hiking trails - Interpretive native species gardens (NOT vegetable gardens) - Wildlife viewing blinds - Wildscapes/native plant gardens - Cleanup activities in habitat	- Indian Creek Nature Area - Fayetteville Ct House Square - La Grange AgriLife Landscape - Schubert House - Stephen F Austin State Park - Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site - Winedale - Out of GLC Area Nature/Public Access Service

Federal Category Service/Activity	Description	Examples	Gideon Lincecum Opportunities in this Category
Field Research (Including Surveys and Citizen Science)	Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific understanding.	• Field Surveys • Banding and tagging • Species watch • Texas Nature Trackers Program • CoCoRaHs • Stream Watch/Stream Team/Water Quality Monitoring • Nestbox monitoring • Citizen Science	• Citizen Science (Other) • CoCoRaHS • Colorado River Watch • Invaders of Texas • Nest Watch • Project Feeder Watch • Out of GLC Area Field Research

Chapter & Program Support, Business, and Administration	Activities related to managing and running a TMN Chapter and its committees.	• TMN Chapter Board of Director or committee duties
		• TMN Chapter newsletter, website or social media management
		• Management of TMN Chapter records and reporting
		• Representing TMN Chapter at multi-chapter events
		• Other TMN Chapter Administration
		• Assistance to TMN State Program & State Program Office
			• Administrative Work/Chapter Administration
			  ○ Chapter Meeting
			  ○ Board/Committee Work
			  ○ President Duties
			  ○ Vice President Duties
			  ○ Treasurer Duties
			  ○ Secretary Duties
			  ○ Hours Management
			  ○ Hospitality
			  ○ Communications
			  ○ Website and Social Media
			  ○ Photographer
			  ○ Programs
			  ○ Project Management
			  ○ Recruiting
			  ○ Training Classes
			  ○ Fundraising
			  ○ State Meeting
			  ○ State Program Office

Other	Any activity approved by a Chapter not defined above. 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.	Wildlife rehabilitation (not SGCN animal rescue)	

Bits and Pieces

45 Day Rule…

Please remember that you have **45 days from the day of the event** to record your hours and make any necessary corrections. Don't wait until the last minute!!

To EDIT a Log Book Entry

1. Log in to your VMS account
2. On your Dashboard, click on "View My Log Book"
3. Find the entry you need to change and click in the box to the left of it
4. Scroll down to the "Edit Selected Record" button and click it
5. The next screen looks just like the original entry screen. Change what you need to change on the page
6. Scroll down and click the OK button when you are through.
7. Your entry has been edited.

To DELETE a Log Book Entry

1. Log in to your VMS account
2. On your Dashboard, click on "View My Log Book"
3. Find the entry you need to delete and click in the box to the left of it
4. Scroll down to the "Delete Selected Record(s)" button and click it
5. The entry has been deleted. You may delete more than one at a time if you need to.

Educational Group Presentation vs **Education - Informal** vs **Administrative Work/Recruiting**

- It's **Educational Group Presentation** if it is presented to a captive audience that will stay for a designated amount of time to hear the presentation. Ex: BISD presentation to 3rd graders, Ag Safety Day, speaking to the Lion's Club on native grasses, presentation to youngsters at Bee Festival, creating and presenting an AT program. People don't rove in and out of the presentation.
- It's **Education - Informal** if you have a roving audience that drops by, and you have displayed some information about birds, or grasses, or bees, etc. that will teach the public and they may ask you questions. Examples are school science night, Cotton Gin Festival.
- It's **Recruiting** (the drop-down under **Administrative Work**) if your purpose is to recruit new members of the GLC Training Class. Staff the GLC trifold booth with materials about our next training class. People rove by and ask questions about the class and TMN. The display have as its main focus materials to teach about master naturalist topics.

Questions??

GLCTMNmbr@gmail.com to contact the Membership Director/VMS Administrator