

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

FAQs

1. Where do I find documentation governing the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Program?

Answer: Local Chapter documents are found on the local Chapter's website. State documents and templates for Chapter use are found on the State website at: <http://txmn.org>.

2. Can I hold membership in more than one TMN Chapter at the same time?

Answer: No.

3. Who are the state sponsors of the TMN Program?

Answer: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

4. May I transfer from one Chapter to another?

Answer: Yes. You must meet the requirements of the local Chapter to which you wish to transfer.

5. Can a Chapter lose its Charter?

Answer: Yes.

6. Are dues required to be a Member of a TMN Chapter?

Answer: Yes and no. This depends on the Chapter. Dues are a local option for each Chapter to determine as a requirement for membership.

7. Is TMN strictly a volunteer organization?

Answer: Yes. A Member of a TMN Chapter may not receive compensation for their volunteer service.

8. Can a Member be dismissed from the Program?

Answer: Yes. TMN volunteer Members serve under the auspices of the State Program and/or the sponsoring agencies of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas A&M University System and are subject to the strict level of conduct according to the requirements of the TMN Program.

9. How do I become a Member of a TMN Chapter?

Answer: Submit an application to attend an approved training class of 40 hours (minimum) classroom and field experiences; complete an additional 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training and abide by the Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, and submit to and pass a Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Criminal Background Check (CBC).

10. Is there a fee required to attend the training class toward membership?

Answer: Yes. The fee is set by the local Chapter.

11. How is a local Chapter managed?

Answer: There is a governing Board made up of four elected Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and a number of appointed Directors determined by the local Chapter Operating Handbook. There also is a Chapter Advisor(s).

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

12. How are the Chapter Officers chosen?

Answer: A Chapter Nominating Committee presents candidates from the membership to be voted upon by the membership at the Last General Membership meeting of the year.

13. How are Director positions filled?

Answer: Director Candidates are selected by a committee appointed by the Chapter President and presented to the elected Officers for confirmation.

14. When do Officers and Directors assume office?

Answer: In the month of January as determined by the Local Chapter Operating Handbook. The exception being the New Class Director. The New Class Director assumes office following confirmation by the Chapter Board of Directors usually immediately following the completion of a class.

15. How long may Officers and Directors serve?

Answer: This is a local Chapter option of either 12 or 24 months, stated in their Chapter Bylaws, with eligibility for re-election or re-appointment.

16. Is there an insurance 'umbrella' for TMN in a volunteer capacity?

Answer: There is coverage by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as well as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for **approved** volunteer activity. However, it is vitally important for each Chapter to perform due diligence and to understand the limits of all aspects of insurance coverage. Further, it is recommended to understand personal liability, volunteer event property liability, Chapter Directors & Officers (D&O) Insurance as pertains to the local Chapter.

17. Why is a Code of Ethics important for TMN?

Answer: To establish on a personal level the highest standard of conduct in fulfilling the Mission, goals and objectives of the Texas Master Naturalist Program as a TMN Member. (Ref: Article XI. A. Additional Information)

18. Why is a Code of Conduct important for TMN?

Answer: To establish a uniform policy that insures the ultimate trust, dignity and integrity of the TMN Program and its Members. (Ref: Article XI. A. Additional Information)

19. Why is a Criminal Background Check policy important for TMN?

Answer: The Criminal Background Check (CBC) volunteer screening was developed to provide a safe and secure environment for both adult volunteers and members of the public, and to manage volunteer service risk and integrity of associated organizations. (Ref: Article XI. A. Additional Information). Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension requires volunteer screening for its programs' participants for these same reasons as well.

20. Can I make a Federal tax deductible donation to my local Chapter or the TMN Program?

Answer: Donations to a Chapter are not restricted. However, as a minimum for it to be tax deductible, the Chapter must be incorporated as a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. For individuals and organizations interested in making donations to the TMN Program

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

Endowment should contact Darin Paine darin.paine@ag.tamu.edu (979) 458-5725.

21. May any Chapter Member attend a Chapter Board meeting without invitation?

Answer: Yes. Aside from rare Executive Sessions, every Chapter Board meeting is open to every Member of the Chapter, and public, to attend, and to engage in the proceedings as chaired by the Chapter President.

22. How is the TMN 'calendar year' defined?

Answer: A 'calendar year' is defined as January 1st through December 31st.