

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

May 2021



Guadalupe Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Program

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

I: CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

A. BOARD

1. Officers
2. Duties of Officers
3. Standing Board Members
4. Duties of Standing Board Members
5. Chairs of Nature Education, Citizen Scientist, Monthly Program, and Hospitality Committees

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

C. COMMITTEES

1. Standing Committees
2. AD HOC Committees

II: MEMBERSHIP

III: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

IV: APPENDICES

OPERATING HANDBOOK

Guadalupe Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

I: CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

The documents governing the Chapter will be this Chapter's Bylaws and the guiding practices found in the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and the Chapter's Operating Handbook. In case of conflicting language, first the Chapter's Bylaws, second the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols shall govern the Chapter's Operating Handbook. The Chapter will be structured for governance as follows.

A. BOARD

1. Officers

The duly elected Officers shall consist of:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

The terms and limits of office: All elected Officers shall serve for a period of 24 months and are eligible for a second consecutive term.

2. Duties of Officers

The duties of Officers are defined in the following:

President

- a. Serve as Chair of the Board of Directors
- b. Prepare and distribute the agenda for Board meetings.
- c. Preside over Board and Chapter meetings
- d. Sign all Board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the Chapter.
- e. Co-sign checks with the Treasurer or another designated Chapter Officer for amounts greater than \$1000.
- f. Present a summary of the Chapter's accomplishments at the Chapter's first general meeting of the new year.
- g. Review Chapter's completed annual report before submission to State office.
- h. Communicate with Board and Chapter Members as needed; conduct votes by remote communications technology including email on issues between meetings as required by Section B, Responsibilities of the Board paragraph 4.

- i. Appoint all committee Chairs and be an ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate.
- j. Become Immediate Past President upon completion of term as President.
- k. Encourage all Officers and Directors to read and be familiar with their duties, responsibilities and program guiding documents (i.e. Bylaws, Protocols, etc.) stated in the Chapter Operating Handbook.
- l. Ensure that before the Chapter makes any written commitments to County Governments, City Councils, etc., or executes Contracts or Memorandums of Understanding with other entities, that the TMN State Coordinator's approval is obtained.
- m. Be the Chapter's representative to State Annual Meeting or appoint a Chapter State Representative. (See Chapter State Representative under 3. Directors)
- n. Write donor-appreciation letters.
- o. Present Recognition Awards to out-going Officers and Board Members.

Vice President

- a. Assist the President and act for the President in the President's absence.
- b. Participate as a member of the Audit Committee.

Treasurer

- a. Receive all dues and monies for the Chapter and maintain them in a separate Chapter bank account.
- b. Develop an annual budget for the Chapter for approval by the Board of Directors. The proposed budget should be finalized and submitted for approval prior to the start of the new calendar year.
- c. Pay all bills promptly upon receipt of a written statement or receipt for approved expenses. Treasurer shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes of the Chapter. In the absence of the Treasurer, the President and one other designated Officer may sign any instruments for payment or notes of the Chapter.
- d. For any payments greater than \$1000, the Treasurer must co-sign the payment instrument with the President.
- e. Submit all annual financial records, reports and audits as required by law (and/or sponsoring agencies).
- f. Make a monthly report to the membership.
- g. Present the financial records to the Audit Committee before the last board meeting of the calendar year.
- h. Keep an account of all income, expenses, disbursements and other financial matters including a hard copy file of such documentation for seven years plus the current calendar year.
- i. Keep a list of all donated or purchased inventory, equipment, or other property. Update list monthly, or as needed.
- j. As a 501(c)(3) chapter, the Chapter's financial management system must meet Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) using either accrual, modified accrual accounting, or modified cash basis.

- k. Retain all Chapter financial records for at least seven years according to the Chapter's Data Retention Policy. *(a template for the policy may be found on the txmn.org website)*

Secretary

- a. Conduct all necessary Chapter correspondence.
- b. Record, publish and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors, General Membership meetings or special meetings.
- c. Furnish the minutes to all Board Members and make them available to other Chapter Members when requested.
- d. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting and whether a quorum is present.
- e. Maintain a hard copy file or a secure digital record keeping system of all minutes and correspondence according to the Chapter's Data Retention policy.
- f. Bring to each Board meeting the minute book, a copy of the Bylaws, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, the Chapter Operating Handbook, a list of all committee membership and a copy of Robert's Rules of Order.

3. Standing Board Members

The duly Appointed Standing Board Members shall consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

- Immediate Past President
- VMS Chapter Administrator
- Training Class Committee Chair
- Communications Committee Chair
- Advanced Training Committee Chair
- Training Class Representative
- Chapter State Representative
- Advisor(s) if available to the Chapter
- Chairs of Standing Committees

All Standing Board Member positions, with the exception of the immediate past president, are by appointment of the president.

The terms and limits of office: All appointed Directors shall serve for a period of 12 months and are eligible for re-appointment.

4. Duties of Standing Board Members

- The duties of Standing Board Members shall be to assist the Officers in their respective responsibilities. In addition, their specific duties are listed under their respective committee descriptions in the local Chapter Operating Handbook. All Board Members and Advisors are voting Members of the Board.
- Immediate Past President
 - a. Provide continuity from prior Board of Directors with counsel for undocumented procedures and works to document those procedures.
 - b. Leads an annual review and update if necessary, of the Chapter's Chapter Operating Handbook document

- c. Assist the President.
- d. Chair the Nominating Committee. Ref. Chapter Bylaws, Article V, E, 2
- e. In the absence of an Immediate Past President, the President will reassign above responsibilities as needed.

- VMS Chapter Administrator
 - a. Maintain a roster of all Chapter Members with pertinent contact information.
 - b. Monthly maintain and publish names of Members achieving certification and milestone awards.
 - c. Present awards frequently at Chapter meetings.
 - d. Manage the Chapter's use of the TMN Volunteer Management System (VMS), (Ref. State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI, Volunteer Service Requirements) for reporting volunteer service hours and Advanced Training.
 - e. Approve Advanced Training (AT) and Volunteer Activities (VT) hours that members have entered into the Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Management System (VMS).
 - f. Ensure all Members or a Member-in-Training receives appropriate training in the use of the TMN VMS.
 - g. Compile and submit the State Annual Report with the support of the preceding year's President and Data Manager.

- Training Class Committee Chair
 - a. Form the Training Committee.
 - b. Serve as Manager for the Training Class, planning, curriculum development, calendar, instructors, venue, reception, etc., through graduation.
 - c. Recommend the class tuition to the Board of Directors.
 - d. Organize, publicize and manage Training Class Application process.
 - e. Work with the Communications Committee to develop the Training Class recruiting brochure.
 - f. Work with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Advisor to manage the new class application process.
 - g. Ensure each Member-in-Training receives appropriate training to use the TMN VMS.

- Communications Committee Chair
 - a. Oversee a committee performing the functions of:
 - Publicity Manager
 - Newsletter Editor
 - Webmaster
 - Outreach
 - Historian/Archivist
 - Calendar Maintenance
 - b. Write publicity press releases for print and electronic media covering Training Class Application, Chapter Programs and special events.
 - c. Arrange for printing and distribution of Training Class Recruiting Brochure.

- d. Finalize and maintain a Chapter Data Retention Policy approved by the Board.
- e. Oversee social media content and formats used by the Chapter Members. Social media should follow TMN Marketing & ID Guidelines as well as TPWD and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service policies.
- Advanced Training Committee Chair
 - a. Review and recommend for approval or disapproval all Advanced Training requests and events.
 - b. Provide approved AT opportunities to VMS Administrator and Communications Committee Chair to distribute to members.
 - c. Set up and manage Advanced Training opportunities in the Chapter's TMN VMS.
 - d. Use State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI. Advanced Training Requirements, including VMS, to review and approve Advanced Training Codes.
- Training Class Representative
 - a. Represent the Training Class as a member on the Board attending all Board meetings.
 - b. Participate as a member of the Training Class Committee for the following year.
 - c. Attend selected Training Class sessions the following year to provide the new class with insight into the New Class Representative Board position.
- Chapter State Representative
 - a. Work as a Chapter liaison with the State Program Coordinator.
 - b. Represent the Chapter in State level matters of the Texas Master Naturalist Program.
 - c. Review draft State Documents as requested.
 - d. Help with coordination of activities at the Annual State Conference.
 - e. Help in finding presenters for the Annual Conference.
 - f. Enhance the communication between the State and the Chapters.
 - g. Help guide and educate the Member Chapter's new Officers and Directors through use of the state governing documents.
 - h. Participate in conference calls as requested.
 - i. Attend the Annual State Conference if possible.
 - j. Attend the semi-annual State Volunteer Representatives Council meetings.
- Advisor(s)

Reference TMN State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Appendix I, Advisor Guidelines and Article V, B, State Bylaws.

The Chapter-Advisor relationship is not a one-way street, in that the Chapter and its leaders also have responsibilities. These responsibilities include an appropriate level

of communication, providing opportunities for Advisor interaction and a commitment to the success of the organization as a whole.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Board is responsible for the success of the Chapter and has the authority to conduct the business of the Chapter as defined in the Chapter Bylaws (Ref: Article VI, A. 2-3). All business before the Board requires approval of either a majority vote of Board Members in attendance at a Board meeting where a quorum is present, or a majority vote of all Board members using Remote Communications Technology.

All official Board communications, i.e., voting, etc., via electronic media, shall be recorded and contained in the Chapter Secretary's records.

1. Committee Oversight. All committees and their activities are subject to review and approval by the Board.
2. Expenditure Limits. The Board will honor expenditure limits as set forth in the local Chapter Operating Handbook.
3. Chapter Business. The Board shall conduct the business functions of the Chapter as may be stated in the Chapter Bylaws, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and the local Chapter Operating Handbook.
4. Voting by Remote Communications Technology. A meeting of the Board or the Nominating Committee may be held by means of a remote electronic communications system, including videoconferencing technology, email, or the Internet.
5. Establishment of Dues. The Board of Directors may, with approval of a majority of Members present at a duly called and convened general membership meeting, set and change the amount of an initiation fee, if any, and the annual dues, if any, payable to the Chapter. The Board of Directors must notify all voting Members 60 days prior to the general meeting that the subject of dues or their increase will be brought before the convened general membership for action. The Board of Directors, under special circumstances, may waive—in part or in whole-- individual membership fees on a case-by-case basis, if approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
 - Dues Schedule. Dues shall be payable on or before the first day of January for each fiscal year. If dues are not paid by March 31 in each fiscal year, then all privileges afforded a 'Certified Member' are rescinded until dues are paid. A Texas Master Naturalist Member who is not current in the payment of dues, if required, by the end of the calendar year, will be considered "inactive" for purposes of the State Annual Report.

C. COMMITTEES

All committees serve subject to the oversight and approval of the Board. The President appoints the Chair of the Standing Committees. The Chair is responsible for seeing that the Committee fulfills the responsibilities and objectives for which it was formed.

1. Standing Committees

- Executive Committee
- Training Class Committee
- VMS Committee
- Advanced Training Committee
- Citizen Science Committee
- Nature Education Committee
- Communications Committee
- Monthly Program Committee
- Hospitality Committee
- Executive Committee
 - a. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the elected Officers of the Chapter.
 - b. Authority: Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article VI, B. 2. Authority
- Training Class Committee
 - a. Plans, implements and evaluates the Chapter training curriculum and develops training calendar.
 - b. Acquires the TMN State Curriculum for each new Member-in-Training and prepares additional class materials.
 - c. Selects all presenters and makes arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts and audio-visual equipment needed for the class/presentation.
 - d. Arranges for speaker gifts, travel compensation, confirmation, thank you letters.
 - e. Arranges for publicity – newspapers, flyers, brochures, electronic media.
 - f. Arranges for training venue and required facilities equipment for all class periods.
 - g. Facilitates class field outings/trips.
 - h. Hosts initial Training Class social and presentation reception.
 - i. Arranges for refreshment amenities during class periods.
- VMS Committee
 - a. Manages and/or assists in managing the Chapter’s records and reports within the TMN VMS.
 - b. Maintains a roster of the Chapter Member’s names, including all Members-in-Training, plus pertinent contact information within the TMN VMS.
 - c. Maintains a record of volunteer and advanced training hours within the TMN VMS.
 - d. Compiles and returns the State Annual Report.
 - e. Ensures that VMS time reported is accurate and fits the activity description and criteria.
 - f. Frequently reports the names of Members who have achieved Certification, Re-certification, and Milestone awards so that the Members can quickly be recognized.
- Advanced Training Committee
 - a. Supports Advanced Training Chair in reviewing, organizing, assigning codes and notifying Chapter Members of approved Advanced Training opportunities.
 - b. Assists in managing the Chapter’s Advanced Training Opportunities within the TMN VMS.

- Citizen Science Committee: Plans activities that qualify for Natural Resource Management (RM), Nature/Public Access (NPA), Field Research (FR), or Technical Guidance (TG).
 - a. Reviews, accepts, or denies any Volunteer Service Project applications submitted by members for RM, NPA, FR, TG projects.
 - b. Resource Development Management—plans or participates at hands-on projects, invasive plant removals, plant rescues, etc., e.g. Alligator-Geronimo Creek Clean-up, exotic plant removals in public parks.
 - c. Nature/Public Access—plans or participates in trail-building or creating wildscapes and interpretive areas, e.g. trail work at Park West, working on Birding Station at ILSOLC, maintaining pollinator gardens, etc.
 - d. Citizen scientist activities—plans or participates in field research such as Nature Tracker, Yearly Bird Counts, Texas Invaders, Stream Team, Monarch Larval Monitoring, iNaturalist, etc.
 - e. Technical Guidance—provides free assistance to a natural resource program.
 - f. Trains and recruits members to carry out activities.
 - g. Identifies and provides RM, NPA, FR, and TG activities to Communications Committee for sending to members.
- Nature Education Committee: Plans activities that qualify for Training and Educating Others directly (TR) where participants have learning objectives, and for Public Outreach (PO) with indirect educational activities where participants come and go.
 - a. Reviews, accepts, or denies any Volunteer Service Project applications submitted by members for TR and PO projects.
 - b. Plans and carries out educational and outreach activities and exhibits, e.g. Discovery Series programs at parks, schools, libraries, youth organizations, etc.
 - c. Creates and maintains original curriculum, kits, and exhibits, e.g. Discovery kits, Earth Day exhibit, Guadalupe Fair display, etc.
 - d. Educates others by using curriculum or kits provided by others, e.g. TPWD, ILSOLC, AgriLife, Red Barn, etc.
 - e. Trains and recruits members to carry out activities.
 - f. Identifies and provides TR and PO activities to Communications Committee for sending to members.
- Communications Committee
- Monthly Program Committee
 - a. Focused on programs of interest to the public as well as Master Naturalists.
 - b. Find speakers and venues.
 - c. Arrange occasional field trips open to the public (could be Advanced Training).
 - d. The President will run the business meeting portion.
- Hospitality Committee
 - a. Responsible for social events and gatherings.
 - b. Provides hospitality tied to major chapter-hosted events.

2. AD HOC Committees

Ad Hoc committees are formed for a particular and specific short-term purpose.

- Auditing Committee. Responsible for conducting the annual examination of the financial records of the Chapter. Members will include the Vice-President, Secretary and one member appointed by the President. The President appoints the Chair. The Treasurer provides the financial records for review. The results of the audit will be reported to the Board and recorded in the minutes of the following Board meeting with signed attestations from each member of the committee.
- Officer Nomination Committee. Proceed in accordance with Chapter Bylaws, Article V, E. 2. Election Process.

The Past President will chair the Officer Nomination Committee along with two ad hoc members who are appointed by the Chapter President and approved by the board. The committee will present their slate of Officer candidates to the President.

Responsible for selecting the annual ballot of officers.

The President must publish the slate of candidates to the Chapter membership in writing, 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting before the end of the calendar year.

The Officer Nomination Committee will present a slate of candidates and conduct the election process at the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.

This committee will also serve when an Officer or Board vacancy occurs which requires candidates.

- Other Ad Hoc Committees. May be formed by the Board as needed to address specific tasks or purposes.

II: MEMBERSHIP

Member Categories--See Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article IV, Membership

1. Active members are those members who submit the required service reports and pay the chapter dues for the current year. These actions indicate they wish to remain active members of the chapter. The chapter may require additional reports as a condition of membership as well.
2. Members may readily transfer between Chapters within the State of Texas but must meet all requirements of membership for the Chapter into which they are transferring.
3. Those who have had no contact with the chapter at chapter meetings or activities during the preceding year and who have not submitted written notice that they wish to remain an active member will be moved to a list of inactive members.

4. Members who may have been 'inactive' for some reason, may petition a local Chapter for reinstatement, providing all Chapter membership requirements are met.

III: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

1. Adoption.

- a. Initial adoption and ratification of the COH and Appendices will be by a majority vote of those present at the next scheduled general membership meeting following written distribution of the proposed COH to the general membership ten (10) days before the meeting, with notice that the ratification vote will be held at the next general membership meeting.
- b. Written distribution may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.

2. Amendment.

- a. Changes and amendments may be proposed by the Board of Directors at a regular Board meeting with a two-thirds vote of the Board Members in attendance. The general membership must be notified in written form of the proposed changes or amendments ten (10) days before the next Board meeting and be given an opportunity at that Board meeting to voice any concerns about the changes or amendments.
- b. The general membership must then be notified in written form of the final proposed changes or amendments ten (10) days before the next general membership meeting at which time a membership vote will be held.
- c. Written form may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.

3. State Office Notification

Once a Chapter has adopted a revised and/or amended Chapter Operating Handbook, an electronic copy must be sent to the TMN State Coordinator within 30 days.

IV: APPENDICES

1 Elections Schedule

- a. The elected officers will serve two-year terms with the president and secretary elected in even-numbered years and the vice-president and treasurer elected in odd-numbered years.
- b. Elections shall be by written ballot. If the nominating committee has made only one nomination for each office and there are no further nominations from the floor for each office called in sequence, the membership may dispense with the written ballot and vote for the slate by voice vote.

2 VMS Codes and meanings

Opportunity Category Definitions (Revised 3-15-2016)

Code	Opportunity	Description	Examples
AT	Advanced Training	Advanced Training that you attend as a participant	*Chapter/NPSOT/Lunch & Learn meetings *Project WILD (Instructor/facilitator trng) *Cibolo NC/LBJWC/TMN/etc.
CB	Chapter & Program Business	Activities related to managing and running a Master Naturalist Chapter and its committees	*Board of Directors/Officers/Committee Chairs *Newsletter/website management *Management of chapter records *Hours or chapter reporting *Other chapter business
FR	Field Research (Including Surveys)	Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific knowledge	*CoCoRahs •Banding and tagging *Project Feeder Watch, MLMP, water testing, etc.
NPA	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 improving existing: *Hiking trails *Gardens (interpretive, butterfly, habiscapes, etc.) *Wildlife viewing blinds *Wildscapes
OT	Other	Animal Rescue Only	*Wild animal rescue
PO	Public Outreach (Indirect)	Leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where participants come and go and are able to inquire on a variety of topics	•Discovery Center *Trout Unlimited *Festivals *Traveling Trunks

RM	Natural Resource Management	Activities that improve the health of a natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration, rescue, and rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Invasive species or trash removal *Plant rescue *Restoring or improving natural habitat *Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys
TG	Technical Guidance	Any work that provides written management recommendations to landowners and/or land managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Writing ecosystem management plans *Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) *City/Community/Regional governments
TR	Training and Educating Others (Direct)	Leading, organizing, instructing, or staffing an educational activity where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event (i.e. a planned start and end time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Workshops *Presentations *Webinars *Chapter MN trainees/interns