

## Article VI. Volunteer Service Requirements

In order to attain 'certification', a Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training or Pledge must complete a minimum of 40 volunteer service hours on pre-approved projects in addition to the required 40 hours of classroom training and 8 hours of Advanced Training. In order to retain the title of Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a Member must complete 40 service hours on pre-approved projects and 8 hours of Advanced Training in every subsequent year.

Volunteer hours credited for the TMN Program shall not be credited from or to another TMN Member or other volunteer programs, sites or locations. Travel and prep time for specific service project opportunities may be counted as service time as determined by the local Chapter. Service activities relating to the development and management of a local Chapter, such as serving as a board member, receives volunteer service credit hours.

Volunteer service project opportunities can be presented by various entities ranging from the State Program sponsors, the Chapter, local Chapter partners, an individual volunteer, nature centers, schools, city, county, state and federal agencies. Often Chapters institute a "class project" where the current training class of the Chapter finds/develops and mutually agrees to volunteer for the project as a group and receive their required volunteer service hours at the same time.

Volunteer projects may be a series of short experiences or they may involve the long-term efforts of a volunteer team. The opportunity to do meaningful and interesting work is the reward of the Texas Master Naturalist volunteer. There are few constraints for Texas Master Naturalist volunteer projects whether Chapter initiated or individually initiated, except that volunteer service must meet the TMN program mission by being dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within local communities for the State of Texas and approved by the Chapter.

Participants in volunteer service projects are encouraged (when safety considerations allow) to identify themselves as part of the TMN program either by wearing a Chapter badge, identifying TMN clothing, or by displaying signage identifying the TMN project and/or participants as members of TMN.

The pre-approval of volunteer service projects and opportunities is important to:

- Ensure that volunteers are covered by the available State Program accident and liability insurance
- Provide a list of service projects for volunteers of the Chapter
- Ensure the mission and goals of the organization and the partners are met
- Provide for and encourage participation in a broad spectrum of opportunities

The following are points for the Chapter's Volunteer Service Coordinator and/or the Volunteer Service Committee to consider in approving and issuing a code or title for a project opportunity:

- A. Is the proposed service project representative of the goals, practices and teachings of the Texas Master Naturalist program?
- B. How does the project address a pressing naturalist, natural resource management, Chapter and/or partner need for meaningful service or resources?
- C. What is the scope of the project in terms of when it would need to be conducted, where, estimated time needed to complete or maintain per month, how many Members would be needed, etc.?
- D. Is the project within the Chapter's service area and ecological training? Consideration by the Chapter may be given to a limited number of projects outside the Chapter's service area and ecological training if the project's service is compatible with the mission, goals, and training of the Chapter and the TMN program.
- E. How does the project allow the Chapter to focus and/or create visibility, identity and/or recruitment for the Chapter? Does the opportunity allow the Member(s) to represent the TMN program at all times?
- F. How can the project's impact on the community and our natural resources be measured?
- G. Does the opportunity include fundraising for an organization other than the Chapter or the TMN Program which is outside of the TMN mission?
- H. Does the opportunity include lobbying which is not acceptable under the TMN Mission?
- I. Is the opportunity a "good opportunity" for the Chapter and Program to be associated with?

### Actual Volunteer Service Examples:

Bad/Unacceptable	Better	Best
<p>Being “on call” as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization</p> <p>(Why: no actual service time)</p>	<p>Performing licensed wildlife transport service</p>	<p>Performing licensed wildlife rescue service in cooperation with a partnering rehabilitation and public education non-profit organization</p>
<p>Planting exotic plants or a vegetable garden</p> <p>(Why: this activity is not within our mission)</p>	<p>Planting native plants or a Wildscape at a local school</p>	<p>Leading 5<sup>th</sup> graders and school staff in implementing a native plant garden or Wildscape at a local school</p>
<p>Monarch monitoring in Colorado</p> <p>(Why: opportunity is not within Texas)</p>	<p>Monarch monitoring in Texas</p>	<p>Monarch monitoring within your local Chapter’s area</p>
<p>Cleaning the elephant cage at a zoo</p> <p>(Why: not a native species and does not fall within our mission)</p>	<p>Caring for the Prairie Chicken area at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter</p>	<p>Leading interpretive programs about Prairie Chickens at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter</p>
<p>Maintenance at a private native plant nursery</p> <p>(Why: is a private business)</p>	<p>Maintenance of a demonstration garden at a park/nature center or being part of a native plant propagation team for the city’s botanical garden</p>	<p>Holding a workshop on how to install and maintain a Wildscape or other similar type of native habitat.</p>
<p>Identifying flora and fauna on your property and uploading it to citizen science website</p> <p>(Why: Private benefit)</p>	<p>Uploading imperiled species observations into iNaturalist on public land with permissions set to “public.”</p>	<p>Organizing a public or private land “bio-blitz” for citizen scientists and experts to learn from each other and upload data to eBird and iNaturalist</p>
<p>Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land</p> <p>(Why: private benefit--conducting activities on personal property is not volunteer service)</p>	<p>Conducting wildlife management practices/activities on public land</p>	<p>Teaching/assisting landowners to develop their own wildlife management plans that the landowner would carry out</p>
<p>A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts in their classroom</p> <p>(Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already/not volunteer service for this individual)</p>	<p>A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts as an unpaid after school Environmental Club leader</p>	<p>A teacher /volunteer who organizes and conducts a natural resource education workshop for other Master Naturalists or the general public.</p>
<p>Stream clean-up by a volunteer who is employed by and works for a local watershed protection program</p> <p>(Why: the individual is employed and receiving pay to conduct this work already/not volunteer service for this individual)</p>	<p>Stream clean-up by volunteers who do not work for a local watershed protection program</p>	<p>Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers conducting stream or watershed restoration practices. Or Master Naturalist volunteers coordinating a stream clean-up for the local community to participate in.</p>

<p>Receiving service credit for time spent as a Board member or Committee member for a 'for profit' or 'mission' contrary to that of the TMN Program.</p> <p>Time spent fundraising for non-TMN organizations.</p> <p>(Why: not representing the TMN Program)</p>	<p>Receiving service credit for time spent serving as a Board or Committee member for a non-profit organization devoted to education, conservation and management of natural resources or the environment.</p>	<p>Serving as a Board or Committee member at any level within the TMN program.</p> <p>Training other organizations how to conduct natural resource management activities.</p> <p>Time spent representing your local TMN Chapter's interest on a Board/organization which has developed a designated "Master Naturalist Representative" spot on their leadership team.</p>
<p>Watching nature documentaries, the unplanned altering of species habitat, advocating for bike and hike access trails in sensitive nature areas</p> <p>(Why: not serving TMN Mission)</p>	<p>Conducting endangered species surveys; developing nature trails or habitat brush piles at a local park/nature center which is in a partnership with your local Chapter.</p>	<p>Maintaining a nature classroom/training area for that same partner who also allows the Chapter to keep an office and/or hold Chapter meetings in this same space.</p>
<p>Manning a "store" or native plant sale that raises funds for non-TMN organization.</p> <p>(Why: not part of the TMN mission)</p>	<p>Answering phones/emails and doing basic office work for your local County Natural Resources Agent</p>	<p>Serving as an information docent by giving programs, leading tours, and/or organizing outreach events on native wildlife and habitats</p>
<p>Preparing food items for social actives of the Chapter</p> <p>(Why: Preparation of food for an activity that is purely social does not meet the mission of the TMN)</p>	<p>Planning and organizing logistics for a chapter volunteer recognition event.</p> <p>Serving on the hospitality committee.</p> <p>Coordinating the creation of a new Chapter Volunteer Project</p>	<p>Mentoring a TMN Member in Training</p> <p>Teaching at a New Class training event</p> <p>Serving on a New Class committee</p>