

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

{A Framework}

Hill Country Chapter February 2024



Texas Master Naturalist Program

The Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission is to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas.

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

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CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Hill Country Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

1. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Governing documents - The documents governing this chapter are our *Bylaws*, the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program's *Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP)*, and this *Chapter Operating Handbook (COH)*. A chapter's COH must comply with the *Bylaws* and the *CMOP*. [Reference *CMOP* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>] The chapter is structured for governance as described in this *COH*.

2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2.1 Makeup of the board – The board consists of the officers, the directors, the immediate past president, and the chapter advisor. All are voting members of the board.

2.1.1 Officers are elected by the membership [Reference *Bylaws* Article V, A. and E.] They are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

2.1.2 Directors are appointed and approved according to *Bylaws* Article V, F. and G. They are:

- Advanced Training (AT) Director
- Chapter State Representative
- Communication Director
- Membership Director
- Training Class Director (term begins when training class ends)
- Training Class Representative (term may be shorter than other directors)
- Volunteer Service (VS) Projects Director

2.2 Term of office - For officers and directors, the term of office is 12 months, and they are eligible for re-election or re-appointment.

2.3 Executive committee - The elected officers comprise the executive committee [see 5.1.1]

3. DUTIES OF BOARD

3.1 Duties of all board members

- a. Communicate effectively with the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) state office about any questions or issues that arise and keep it informed of what the chapter is doing.
- b. Maintain confidentiality when dealing with individual member issues.
- c. Whenever possible, maintain the privacy of members' personal information.
- d. Strive to further the TMN mission in everything that one does.
- e. Adhere to the *TMN Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct* [Reference at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>].
- f. Remember that every chapter and every member represents the public face of the TMN Program and its sponsoring agencies.
- g. Serve as a model of leadership and recruit and develop new leaders for the chapter.

3.2 Duties of officers

3.2.1 President

- a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
- b. Serve as chair of the board of directors
- c. Prepare an agenda for board and chapter meetings
- d. Preside at board and chapter meetings
- e. Sign all board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the chapter
- f. Ensure that the president is one of the two authorized signatories on the chapter bank account
- g. Authorize in writing in advance any payments to be made of \$1,000 or greater from the chapter bank account
- h. Facilitate a retreat of all newly elected officers and directors with the outgoing board members to help in the transition of responsibilities and to chart the chapter's new year focus area
- i. Communicate with board and chapter members as needed
- j. Present a summary of the chapter's accomplishments each year
- k. Conduct votes by manual or electronic means as required by responsibilities of the board [see 4.4]
- l. Present a slate of candidates for all director positions for review and approval by a majority vote of the executive committee, immediate past president, and chapter advisor
- m. Appoint all committee chairs and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate
- n. Ensure all officers and directors perform their duties and responsibilities as stated in this *COH* and are familiar with program guiding documents (i.e., *Bylaws*, *CMOP*)
- o. 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, the TMN state program coordinator's approval is obtained
- p. Communicate with the TMN state office, other chapters, and state agencies as appropriate
- q. Write or delegate writing of donor-appreciation letters
- r. Be the chapter's state representative or appoint an alternate to serve [see 3.3.2]
- s. If there is no immediate past president, reassign the duties of that position [see 3.4.1]
- t. Serve as immediate past president upon completion of term as president

3.2.2 Vice president

- a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
- b. Assist the president and act for the president in the president's absence
- c. Meet with the president close to the end of the year to recommend chapter and board meeting dates and locations for approval by the board
- d. Coordinate monthly programs/speakers (Advanced Training, member recognition, etc.) for the chapter meetings. At the end of term in office, have engaged program speakers for the months of January and February of the following year coordinated
- e. Select and secure the venue for chapter meetings. Historically, chapter meetings and/or training classes have been at the Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC) facility at 125 Lehmann Drive in Kerrville. An agreement is signed each year between the GBNRC and our chapter to exchange volunteer hours worked in the GBNRC Edu-Scape for use of the auditorium. The VP coordinates specific dates with GBNRC.
- f. Provide monthly meeting publicity details to Communication Director and Advance Training Director not less than three weeks before each chapter meeting date
- g. Coordinate with Communication Director regarding program presentation at monthly chapter meetings, such as computer and audio-visual equipment set-up

- h. Introduce speaker at chapter meetings
- i. Track and report attendance (in-person and online) at chapter meetings, including this information in monthly VP report at the board meetings
- j. Coordinate annual member appreciation event
- k. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee [see 5.2.1]

3.2.3 Secretary

- a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
- b. Conduct necessary chapter correspondence as assigned by the president
- c. Record, publish, and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the board, executive committee, general membership, and any special meetings [see 8.4]
- d. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting and whether a quorum is present
- e. Maintain a paper copy or a secure digital record of all minutes and correspondence on the chapter's One Drive system, according to the chapter records retention policy [Reference at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- f. At board and chapter meetings, have access to electronic or paper copies of past minutes, the *Bylaws*, *CMOP*, *COH*, and the parliamentary authority adopted by the chapter (e.g. Roberts Rules of Order).
- g. Ensure that a method is in place for maintaining the chapter's paper and electronic files [see 4.6]
- h. Facilitate chapter members' compliance with the chapter records retention policy
- i. For 501(c)(3) chapters, ensure that all board members sign the required Conflict of Interest form each year [Reference form at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- j. Maintain a list of all websites, social media platforms, email distribution lists, apps, data storage sites, financial accounts, and any other tools the chapter uses to conduct its business
- k. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee [see 5.2.1]

3.2.4 Treasurer

- a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
- b. Receive all monies for the chapter and maintain them in a chapter bank account
- c. Develop and maintain an annual budget for the chapter with input and approval by the board. The proposed budget should be finalized and submitted for approval as soon as possible after the start of the new calendar year.
- d. Pay all bills promptly upon receipt of a written statement, invoice, or receipt and any other required documentation for approved expenses
- e. Ensure that two required signers (President and Treasurer) are on the chapter bank account
- f. If any other financial tools are used by the chapter, such as PayPal or Square, ensure that at least two other board members have access
- g. Sign all checks, drafts, or other instruments for payment or notes of the chapter. In the absence of the treasurer, the president or another designated officer may sign any instruments under \$1,000 for payment or notes of the chapter.
- h. For any payments of \$1,000 or greater, the president or another designated officer must co-sign the payment instrument with the treasurer. Written authorization must be provided in advance by the president for any payments of \$1,000 or more
- i. Present a financial report at all board meetings that includes the status of all financial transactions and bank statement reconciliations
- j. Make available all financial reports and documents to any chapter members and/or advisors as may be requested
- k. Deposit donation checks received in a timely manner and send an appreciation letter to the donor, if delegated by the president

- l. Prepare and submit all annual financial records, reports and audits as required by law and sponsoring agencies
- m. Present the financial records to the financial examination committee [see 5.2.1] annually as requested
- n. Maintain the financial records of the chapter in such a way that quality financial reports can be produced that are easily understood by any chapter member or advisor. Financial management systems can be a detailed spreadsheet or commercially available programs such as QuickBooks or Quicken
- o. For 501(c)(3) chapters, file the 990N or other tax form with the IRS annually
- p. For 501(c)(3) chapters, use a financial management system that meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- q. Retain a detailed account of all income, expenses, disbursements, and other financial matters (including a paper copy of such documentation) for seven years plus the current calendar year, on the Chapter's One Drive and according to the chapter records retention policy [Reference the *TMN Chapters Records Retention Policy* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- r. Serve as a member of the chapter's committee for grants, contracts, and donations if this committee exists.

3.3 Duties of directors

3.3.1 Advanced training director

- a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
- b. Chair an advanced training (AT) committee [see 5.1.2]
- c. Maintain and utilize a form or process for members to request that a program be considered for AT credit
- d. Working with an AT committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all AT requests and events [Reference *CMOP* 5.10]
- e. Coordinate with the membership director (via VMS Administrator/Data Manager) to set up and manage AT opportunities in the chapter's Volunteer Management System (VMS)
- f. Utilize multiple avenues (e.g. Email, Newsletter, Newspapers) to notify chapter membership of approved AT opportunities and ensure that upcoming opportunities are on chapter calendars

3.3.2 Chapter state representative

This position may be assumed by the president, or the president may appoint a board member to assume these responsibilities.

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Work as a chapter liaison with the TMN state program coordinator
- c. Represent the chapter in state level matters of the TMN Program
- d. Enhance the communication between the state and the chapter
- e. With the immediate past president, help guide and educate the chapter's new officers and directors using the state governing documents
- f. Participate in meetings as requested by TMN state program coordinators
- g. Review draft state documents as requested
- h. Help with planning and coordination of activities for the TMN statewide annual meeting
- i. Attend the TMN annual meeting or delegate an alternate

3.3.3 Communication director

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Oversee volunteers or committees to handle these various aspects of chapter communications:
 - Chapter specific information and technology

- a. Computers and audio-visual equipment, including software
- b. Microsoft 365 account (One Drive: document files, history/archives, distribution lists and branded email accounts)
- c. Social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- d. Website
 - Newsletter
 - Outreach
 - Publicity via other avenues (e.g. newspapers, print media, etc.)
 - Speaker's bureau
- c. Ensure completion of written publicity press releases for print and electronic media covering training class application, chapter meetings and special events
- d. Work with training class director and membership director to review/develop recruiting materials
- e. Work with training class director and membership director to arrange for printing and distribution of recruiting or promotional materials
- f. Oversee social media platforms and content developed for chapter members. Social media should be compliant with the *TMN Brand Guide* [Reference at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-brand-marketing/>] and with policies of the TMN sponsoring agencies: Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (AgriLife Extension)

3.3.4 Membership director

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Chair the membership committee and/or direct assistants [see 5.1.3]
- c. Assist with maintaining a roster of all chapter members with pertinent contact information (located in the chapter's One Drive account with access limited to board members)
- d. Oversee the management of the chapter's use of the TMN Volunteer Management System for reporting VS and AT hours [Reference *CMOP*, 5. and 6.]
- e. Supervise the chapter VMS administrator's process for reviewing and approving hours logged by members
- f. Ensure all members are trained in the use of the VMS
- g. Ensure all member VMS profiles are up to date to allow for an annual criminal background check
- h. Publish names of members achieving certification and milestone awards using multiple print and electronic media
- i. Present awards at chapter meetings or other appropriate gatherings
- j. Coordinate with training class director to manage training class application process, including:
 - Review and revision (if needed) of application
 - Communications with prospective applicants, board of directors, applicants
 - Monitor status of applicant pre-requisites, applicant skills and interests
 - Prepare an application review process in preparation for board review and selection
 - Notify prospective students of acceptance in class
 - Ensure application retention on One Drive
- k. Coordinate with communication director and training class director to review/develop recruiting materials
- l. Coordinate with communication director and officers to manage electronic communications to all chapter members using established distribution lists
- m. Manage the chapter's mentor program in coordination with the training class director [Reference *CMOP*, Appendix 3.]
- n. Ensure that rosters with member contact information are not shared on public sites such as the chapter website or social media platforms

3.3.5 Training class director

Note about term of office: The term of the new training class director begins as soon as the current training class concludes.

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Chair the training class committee [see 5.1.4]
- c. Develop a budget for the class and submit to the board for approval
- d. Recommend class tuition fees to the board for approval
- e. Work with membership and communication directors to review/develop recruiting materials
- f. Work with the membership director to manage the training class application process
- g. Coordinate with membership director to review applicants and share with the board as appropriate
- h. Present to the board for approval a proposed class syllabus that covers the state-approved curriculum for Initial Training [Reference *CMOP* 2.3]
- i. Serve as manager for the training class, including planning, curriculum development, calendar, instructors, venues, attendance tracking, etc.
- j. Coordinate all communications with trainees
- k. Work with the membership director to ensure that a mentoring program is in place for trainees [Reference *CMOP Appendix 3*]
- l. Ensure each trainee receives appropriate instruction to use VMS

3.3.6 Training class representative

Note about term of office: Class representative serves on the board from the end of the training course they attended for 12 months.

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Represent the current training class as a member of the board, attending board and chapter meetings
- c. Participate as a member of the training committee [see 5.1.4] planning for the subsequent class
- d. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee [see 5.2.1]
- e. Report back to the current training class to provide trainees information about chapter business
- f. Talk to the subsequent training class about selecting a training class representative

3.3.7 Volunteer service projects director

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Chair the volunteer service (VS) projects committee [see 5.1.5]
- c. Maintain and utilize a form and process for members to request approval of a new VS project, using as a guideline the information required for setting up a new opportunity in VMS [Reference <https://texasmasternaturalist.freshdesk.com/support/home/>]
- d. With the VS projects committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all chapter VS project requests [Reference *CMOP*, 6.8 Appendix 2]
- e. Coordinate with the membership director/VMS administrator to add or modify volunteer opportunities in VMS
- f. Coordinate with project leaders to ensure their responsibilities are met [see 6.2]
- g. Ensure that a complete description of every volunteer service project is accessible to all chapter members through the chapter website, event calendar, email announcements and any other communication methods used by the chapter

3.4 Duties of other board members

3.4.1 Immediate past president

In the absence of an immediate past president, the president assigns these responsibilities to a previous past president or another board member

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Provide continuity from prior board to ensure local policies and procedures are being followed
- c. Provide counsel to officers and directors on fulfilling duties and responsibilities
- d. Assist the president as requested
- e. Lead an annual review of the chapter’s *COH* and update, if necessary, to reflect actual chapter policies and procedures as well as to ensure compliance with all TMN state governing documents [Reference <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- f. Chair the nomination committee [see 5.2.2] [Reference *Bylaws*, Article V, E, 2]

3.4.2 Advisor

The duties and responsibilities of the chapter advisor are described in detail in Appendix 1 of the *CMOP* and in Article V, B of the *Bylaws*. Also see 3.1 – Duties of all board members

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD

4.1 Authority – 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 *Bylaws*. [Reference Article VI, A. 2-3]

4.2 Committee oversight – All committees and their activities are subject to review and approval by the board.

4.3 Expenditure limits – The board will honor any expenditure limits set by the chapter.

4.4 Voting – All business before the board requires approval by majority vote of board members in attendance (either in person or via electronic method) at a board meeting where a quorum is present. See also *Bylaws*, Article VII, D. 2. All official board votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

4.5 Records retention - The board must conduct chapter business in compliance with the chapter records retention policy, that in turn must meet requirements as outlined in the state policy. [Reference *TMN Chapters Records Retention Policy* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]

- a. Ensure the chapter has a records retention policy in place.
- b. Establish and maintain a remote data storage system (e.g., Microsoft 365 One Drive account) that gives appropriate access to chapter members responsible for retaining records of their positions
- c. Train all chapter members who are in leadership positions (officers, board members, committee chairs, project leaders) in the requirements of the records retention policy and the proper use of the chapter’s designated data storage system.
- d. Board members, some project leads, and key committee members will be assigned a Hill Country chapter TMN branded email account. The expectation is that the account will be used to conduct chapter business and communication. This branded account gives access to the chapter’s One Drive system where documentation of activities resides.

5. COMMITTEES

All committees serve subject to the oversight and approval of the board. The president appoints committee chairs. The chair is responsible for seeing that the committee fulfills its responsibilities and meets its objectives. Committees may meet remotely.

5.1 Standing committees

5.1.1 Executive committee

- a. The executive committee is composed of the elected officers of the chapter [Reference *Bylaws*, Article VI, B. 2.]
- b. With the immediate past president and the advisor, approve proposed directors to fill vacancies in a position
- c. In matters of discipline or removal of a member from TMN, review allegations and supporting documentation to make a recommendation to the TMN state program coordinator [Reference *Process for Disciplining or Removing Members* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- d. In matters of serious incidences of malfeasance or behavior inconsistent with the principles of the chapter (of a board member other than an elected officer), review the issues and vote to remove that board member from position if necessary [Reference *Bylaws* Article V, I, 2]

5.1.2 Advanced training committee

- a. Support AT director in reviewing and approving AT opportunities for chapter members
- b. Assist in publicizing approved AT opportunities to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications or website event calendars
- c. Assist in managing the chapter's AT opportunities in VMS

5.1.3 Membership committee

- a. Assist the membership director in managing the chapter's records and reports within VMS (The membership director may designate an assistant VMS administrator to assume some of these responsibilities.)
- b. Support the membership director in ensuring the accuracy of hours and activities logged into VMS (The membership director may designate an assistant VMS administrator to assume some of these responsibilities.)
- c. Assist in maintaining the current roster of members
- d. Assist the membership director in tracking and reporting the names of members who have completed the Initial Training course, achieved initial certification, achieved re-certification, and earned milestone awards
- e. Help publicize and celebrate member achievements (e.g., at chapter meetings, on the chapter website, in newsletters, at volunteer recognition events)
- f. Assist membership director in outreach/recruitment activities

5.1.4 Training class committee

- a. Serve under the leadership of the training class director
- b. Help plan, implement, and evaluate the chapter training curriculum and develop the calendar for Initial Training course.
- c. Acquire the *TMN State Curriculum* for each class member and prepare additional class materials
- d. Help select presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts, and audio-visual equipment needed (including use of Zoom or other virtual format)
- e. Help arrange for speaker gifts, travel, lodging needs, confirmation, and thank you letters
- f. Help arrange for publicity, e.g., photographs, newspaper articles, flyers, brochures, electronic media
- g. Help arrange for training venue and required facilities equipment for all class periods
- h. Assist with class field trips
- i. Ensure there is a method in place for tracking attendance of trainees and monitoring their progress toward completion of Initial Training course
- j. Host training class orientation and course completion events

- k. Arrange for refreshments/amenities during class periods

5.1.5 Volunteer service projects committee

- a. Support VS projects director in reviewing and approving volunteer opportunities for chapter members.
- b. Assist in publicizing approved volunteer project opportunities to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications and website event calendar
- c. Assist in drafting a complete description of those project activities for which volunteer service hours may be accumulated and assure the descriptions are kept up to date where all chapter members can easily access them (e.g., on the chapter website).
- d. Assist in organizing and hosting volunteer project fairs or similar events for chapter members (in particular for members-in-training enrolled in the chapter's Initial Training course)
- e. Assist in managing project opportunities in the chapter's VMS
- f. Assist project leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities [see 6.2]

5.2 Ad hoc committees

Ad hoc committees are formed for a particular and specific short-term purpose. Every chapter must form the first 2 committees described below. Additional committees or a task force may be formed by the board as needed to address specific tasks or purposes.

5.2.1 Financial examination committee

- a. Conduct the annual examination of chapter financial records [Reference *Bylaws* Article IX]
- b. Members include vice-president, training class representative, and secretary and/or advisor
- c. President appoints the chair
- d. Treasurer provides financial records for review
- e. Results of financial examination will be reported and recorded in the minutes at the board meeting following the completion of the audit with signed attestations from each committee member

5.2.2 Nomination committee

This committee must be used for the selection of officer candidates. It may also be used for recommending director candidates.

- a. For elected officers, proceed in accordance with *Bylaws*, Article V, D. 2. Election Process.
- b. For director positions, proceed in accordance with *Bylaws*, Article V, E. 2&3
- c. President appoints members to the committee, chaired by the immediate past president.
- d. Committee must review the required skills, duties, and responsibilities of each position with the proposed candidate to assess the candidate's understanding and willingness to perform the functions of the position prior to nominating the candidate.
- e. Committee presents a slate of candidates to the president, considering the following attributes. Selection of candidates based on these attributes would maintain experience and continuity for the board while recruiting new members to serve.
 - 1) Officer candidates must be certified Texas Master Naturalists and members in good standing. An exception is made for chapters in their first year of operation.
 - 2) The committee shall endeavor to select candidates from the chapter membership who demonstrate appropriate skills for managing the position for which they are being nominated. Candidates should not be selected only on length of time in a certain position, length of time in the chapter, or on amount of service hours attained.
 - 3) Where possible, candidates should be selected with an eye to increasing diversity. Diversity considerations should not be limited to sex, ethnicity, creed, or national origin, but include attributes such as age, sexual orientation, gender identity, formal education, background experience, and county of residence.

- f. Election procedure:
 - 1) President must publish the slate of officer candidates to the chapter membership in writing at least 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.
 - 2) Nomination committee will conduct the election at the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.
- g. TMN state program coordinator may provide oversight to a chapter's nomination process.

6. CHAPTER PROJECTS

6.1 New projects – A new or expanded volunteer service project may be proposed by any active chapter member, following the instructions provided by the VS projects director. Instructions and a form to submit a request for the VS projects director to review a potential new project are on the Hill Country Chapter website (URL at the end of this document).

6.2 Travel time – Members may include a reasonable, typical amount of travel time when recording volunteer service hours. Travel time should not include side trips for personal activities. The Board has approved the following language to address service hours for approved projects outside of our 10-county area:

6.2.1 Approve service hours for approved projects in counties that are generally considered to be in the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. Hill Country chapter counties are in bold. The list of counties is as follows: **Bandera**, Bell, Blanco, Bosque, Burnet, Coke, Comal, Comanche, Concho, Coryell, Crockett, **Edwards**, Erath, **Gillespie**, Hamilton, Hays, Hood, Iron, **Kendall**, **Kerr**, **Kimble**, Lampasas, Llano, McLennan, **Mason**, McCulloch, **Menard**, Mills, Palo Pinto, Reagan, **Real**, **San Saba**, Schleicher, Somervell, Sterling, Sutton, Tom Green, and Upton, Travis, Val Verde and Williamson. Portions of Bexar, Kinney, Medina, and Uvalde counties are also included.

6.2.2 Upon request from a Chapter Member, projects outside of the Chapter's 10-county area will be evaluated by the Volunteer Service Projects Committee (per Section 5.1.5 of the Chapter Operating Handbook). If the proposed project is in another chapter's area, the Hill Country Chapter member must contact the other chapter to discuss dual project details and then forward the project approval request to the Committee for evaluation.

6.2.3 Projects are more likely to be approved if an organization has requested help from a Chapter Member who has skills or knowledge uniquely beneficial to the project.

6.2.4 Submitted travel hours shall not exceed the service hours for the project.

6.2.5 All projects, within or outside of our service area, must be approved prior to service hours being submitted.

6.2.6 There will be no retro-active approval of past service hours.

6.3 Responsibilities of project leaders

6.3.1 Have fun! Be positive and passionate about the service being provided. Volunteering should leave you feeling better mentally and physically!

6.3.2 Maintain a positive relationship with all site personnel. The TMN leader for the day shall provide contact information to the site each workday. Ensure there is an open line of communication with site contacts

- 6.3.3 Let the site know when you arrive, what work you are performing, and when you leave the site. Also ask if anything unusual is happening at the site that you need to be aware of (special events, unusual hazards, etc.)
- Prior to beginning work for the day, ensure volunteers understand and mitigate any safety hazards.
 - All TMN volunteers should understand emergency procedures for the location they are working.
 - Ensure all TMN personnel volunteering at the location are current on any training that may be required by the site.
- 6.3.4 Using the Volunteer Opportunities Calendar on the Chapter website, keep chapter membership informed of events concerning your project, including information about location, date, time, and equipment needed for workdays
- 6.3.5 Record volunteer hours in VMS in a timely manner and record impact data in VMS, as appropriate, each workday or appoint one of the volunteers to do it
- 6.3.6 Report on your project periodically via the newsletter, email blasts, newspaper articles, or at a chapter meeting
- 6.3.7 Work with the chapter board to solicit grants or donations if appropriate. Board approval is required prior to soliciting any grants or donations. The TMN state office must be notified of any grants of \$5,000 or more received by the chapter
- 6.3.8 Financial support for projects in the chapter typically is through donations made to a dedicated project, grants, or member donations of goods or services. A project lead may request financial assistance by presenting such request to the board of directors
- 6.3.9 During the workday, maintain contact with partners at the event venue or worksite for your project. (Partners may include cities, counties, schools, parks, non-profit organizations, or site supervisors)
- 6.3.10 Maintain an updated project work log file. Include pictures, reports on workdays, and partner and volunteer contact information. Project leads can request a chapter branded email account which includes access to Microsoft One Drive and the ability to retain project documents (e.g. pictures, reports on workdays, and partner and volunteer contact information).

7. MEMBERSHIP [Reference *Bylaws*, Article IV]

- 7.1 Non-discrimination and inclusion** - Membership in the chapter is open to individuals aged 18 or over, based on the equal opportunity policies of the state sponsoring agencies, TPWD and AgriLife Extension.
- 7.2 Member categories**
- Texas Master Naturalist-in-Training (Member-in-Training) – a member enrolled in a chapter’s Initial Training course
 - Texas Master Naturalist – an active member who has completed Initial Training course requirements
 - Certified Texas Master Naturalist – an active member who has met all the requirements of initial certification and thereafter, attains annual recertification

7.3 Membership status

- 7.3.1 Criminal background check - All persons who are chapter members in any category must submit to and pass the required annual criminal background check
- 7.3.2 Dues - Members must be current in the payment of any dues set by the chapter
- 7.3.3 Transfers - Members may transfer between chapters within the state of Texas [Reference *CMOP*, 3.2]
- 7.3.4 Reinstatement - Members who have been moved to inactive status may petition a local chapter for reinstatement, providing all chapter membership requirements are met

8. MEETINGS

- 8.1. Chapter meetings** - Our chapter has regularly scheduled membership meetings monthly, the fourth Monday each month, excluding December. Chapter Meetings are held at the Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC) building, (previously known as Upper Guadalupe River Authority), located at 125 Lehmann Drive, Suite 100 in Kerrville. Doors open at 6 pm for socializing. A short business meeting begins at 6:30 pm and an Advanced Training session is held from approximately 7:10 to 8:10 pm. There is no cost to attend and the public is invited. These chapter sessions are HYBRID, meaning there is an option to attend in-person or virtually, via Zoom or Live Stream on Facebook. Pre-registration is required to attend virtually. Instructions, links and more detailed information is provided on the chapter home page and sent via email the week prior to the meeting. Any number of members present at a meeting, in person or remotely/virtually, constitutes a quorum.
- 8.2 Board meetings** - The board has regularly scheduled meetings on the fourth Monday each month from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM at the Riverside Nature Center in Kerrville. A majority of the members of the board must be present in person or remotely/virtually to constitute a quorum.
- 8.3 Meeting remotely** - All meetings may be conducted by remote communication technology if the following requirements are met:
 - a. Reasonable notice is given to persons entitled to participate in the meeting and includes relevant information to be discussed.
 - b. The system provides access to the meeting in a manner or using a method by which all meeting participants can communicate with each other.
 - c. Minutes include documentation that the requirements in a. and b. above were met.
- 8.4 Minutes** – Minutes are the legal record of a meeting and are never destroyed. Electronic minutes and reports reside on the chapter’s Microsoft One Drive site. They include actions considered by the board or general membership and business topics discussed. These items should always be included:
 - a. Date and place of meeting. If held by remote communication technology or with a combination of remote and in-person attendees, that must be stated. [see 8.3]
 - b. Who presided at the meeting and who recorded minutes if the secretary was absent.
 - c. Time of call to order and of adjournment.
 - d. The number of members in attendance (to establish a quorum). May include the titles of officers and directors in attendance.
 - e. Whether previous minutes were approved (as published or as corrected)
 - f. Summary of the treasurer’s report (beginning balance, totals of income and expenses, and ending balance). Entire report will be attached to the minutes.

- g. Motions made and votes taken. Include names of those making motions; names of seconders are not necessary. Discussion on motions is not usually included, but may be signified by a phrase such as, “After much discussion, the motion carried.”
- h. The fact that a report from a committee was given, but not usually the details of the report unless it involves a recommendation or requires a vote.
- i. Name of presenter of a program and the topic, but no summary of the program.

9. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK

9.1 Initial adoption - For a new chapter, the proposed COH must be distributed to chapter members in writing (conventional mail, email, or equivalent means) at least 15 days before the next general meeting, with notice that the ratification vote will be held at that meeting.

9.2 Amendment or revision

9.2.1 Board approval - Amendments or revisions to this *COH* must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board members in attendance, either in person or remotely/virtually, at a regular board meeting

9.2.2 Notification requirements - The general membership must be notified in writing (conventional mail, email, or other equivalent means) of the proposed amendments or revisions at least 15 days before the next chapter meeting, with notice that the ratification vote will be held at that meeting.

9.2.3 Membership approval - The general membership will have the opportunity to discuss the changes at the meeting. Approval requires a majority vote of those in attendance, either in person or remotely/virtually.

9.3 State office notification - Once a chapter has adopted, revised, or amended the *COH*, an electronic copy must be sent to the TMN state office within 30 days.

10. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

10.1 TMN state website: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/>

10.2 State documents: All referenced state documents (or guides to creating chapter-specific documents) can be found on the state website at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/> .

10.3 Volunteer Management System (VMS) help desk:
<https://texasmasternaturalist.freshdesk.com/support/home/>

10.4 Chapter website: <https://txmn.org/hillcountry/>