

Guidelines for Chapter Donations to Organizations:

The State's recommendation is that chapters donate member's time and expertise vs. donating money to outside organizations. The Master Naturalist program and chapters are to be service organizations first and foremost vs. donators of monetary funds.

If a chapter insists on donations to other organizations, then it should be understood that this is on a very limited basis least the requests become overwhelming and further removes the focus of the chapter from the heart of the program – which is to donate the organization's member's time and expertise to natural resource conservation, education and management.

The Master Naturalist program is sponsored by two state agencies, and chapters wishing to donate to an outside organization need to consider the following guidelines to insure the organization is in keeping with the Master Naturalist mission, goals and principals. Exceptions to this would be donations to the State Master Naturalist Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

All other organizations (including chapter partners) should be vetted with the following in mind:

- It should be a non-profit organization.
- The organization should state clearly what the monies would be used for. (For example: is it paying for native plants, or someone's salary? Chapters should learn the specifics of what their donations would be buying/supporting, and it should be in keeping with the spirit of the Master Naturalist program)
- How does the organization conduct fundraising otherwise? Is it in keeping with the goals and ideals of the Master Naturalist program?
- Can the organization guarantee that none of its funds are used in any way for lobbying, political interests or campaigning?
- How will the chapter's/Master Naturalist organization's name (and logo) be advertised as a result of the donation? (Is it something and/or in a way you would want the chapter (and TMN program) advertised

Members that feel very passionate about a particular cause are always welcome to donate their own monies and even personal time to that cause, outside of the realm of the Master Naturalist program.

Received from Michelle Haggerty Nov. 5 2012