

Minutes for STMN Board of Directors Meeting 11/4/2020
Via ZOOM, 7:04 pm to 8:20 pm

Participants:

Bibi Dalrymple – President
Chuck Blend – Vice President
Rosemary Plank – Treasurer
Randy Bissell – Secretary
Paul Silva – Advisor TPWD
Michelle Alvarez – Membership Director
Chad Huckabee – AT Director
Cindy Frank – Volunteer Coordinator
Leslie Hoekstra – Class Rep./Treasurer Nominee 2021
Kim Ogden – VP Nominee 2021
Charlie Ogden – Member
Gary Harper – Member
Ric Garces – Member

Call to Order – 7:04 pm - **Bibi**, Quorum Established, **Randy**

Review and approval of October Minutes - **Bibi**

- Available online at txmn.org/st site and in Chat
- Emailed and corrected
- Without objection, accepted

Reports of standing and ad hoc committees and officers – Bibi

Communications – **Randy Bissell**

- Facebook Group has 346 Members
- IT schedule is now on our website with links to training sites
- Brochure holders are being deployed – test site, Mustang Island State Park

Initial training – **Phil (absent)**

- Randy reminded all that training curriculum is online at txmn.org/st
- Saturday at Nueces Delta Preserve

Treasurer's report – **Rosemary**

- See attachment and detail below

President's report – **Bibi**

- See attachment and detail below
- TMN Conference notes and availability into April 2021
- Virtual Volunteer Fair for 2021
- TMN Tuesdays starting in 2021 – 2nd Tuesday noon hour. AT qualified
- TMN Guidelines 75% capacities, 50 ppl max., coverings/social distancing
- TMN Offering Project Wild Training (see attachment)
 - o All Nueces Delta Staff are trained – **Kim**
 - o High interest in training
 - o Participation will be coordinated
 - o Great value – **Cindy**
- State meeting was a lot of work, looking at balance of support/offering from TXMN State office.
- Remind members/chapters to use website for questions over emailing directly.

Nominating committee – **Bibi/Chuck/Rosemary**

(Inserted Documentation)

Memo: Officer Nominating Committee Forwarded Candidates – 2020 Executive Committee Positions/Election:

Officer Nominating Committee Members:

- *Blyth Swartsfager – Chair & Past President
- *Rosemary Plank – Treasurer
- *Chuck Blend – Vice President

2. Election Process

- a. Nomination. The Officer Nominating Committee, chaired by the Past-President with a minimum of two additional ad-hoc members who are selected by the President with Board approval, shall submit a slate of candidates for Officers to the President. The President must publish the slate to the Chapter membership in writing 15 days prior to the last General Membership Meeting before the end of each calendar year.

2020 Candidates for both open positions on the Executive Committee of the South Texas Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists include:

1. Vice President Candidate: Kim Ogden
2. Treasurer Candidate: Leslie Hoekstra

Respectfully submitted by the Officer Nominating Committee for chapter vote on 4 November 2020.

Dr. Chuck Blend, Vice President – South Texas Chapter

Unfinished Business - Bibi

Bibi discussed the need to reconcile our operations with the State's Chapter Operations Handbook document and ByLaws. COH as chapter operating manual with additions from our developed PPP as needed. All Board members were provided copies and encouraged to read.

Bibi reviewed the shift from Chairs to Directors in accordance with the language of the COH and encouraged all presently in positions to continue in their service.

Bibi announced the plan to have a Board of Directors Retreat in January. Randy recommended a simple visioning exercise. Michelle and Randy will meet about location and facilitation.

New Business - Bibi

Board acceptance of AFEC report – **Chuck**, chair ad hoc Annual Financial Examination Committee (findings report from **Cindy** is attached).

President recommended acceptance of AFEC Report. Chuck made motion, Cindy/Randy seconded, and the Board of Directors approved the review unanimously.

Board approval of 2021 Proposed Budget – **Cindy**, chair Finance Committee
(Presented Budget is attached below)

Cindy moved to accept the budget as proposed, Chuck seconded. Motion was withdrawn for revision (see below).

Bibi opened discussion.

- **Randy** objected to the budget's line item designation of discretionary spending towards the items listed under "Support." Suggested that the amount can be designated but the spending should be left to the 2021 Board.
- **Rosemary** expressed concern that no support would be given to the items listed, the TMN Conference attendees, TMN Foundation, Botanical Gardens, and State Meeting Auction.
- **Paul and Chad** agreed that the spending should be left to the new Board, not as line items.

- **Kim** pointed out that whatever we commit needs to be aligned with the recipients.
- **Randy** reiterated that the items listed were the decisions of the new Board and that those items would not be forgotten. Also, that other items might be added.

Randy moved to close discussion, then withdrew the motion on procedural point by Paul

- **Bibi** closed discussion and suggested vote.

Cindy made revised Motion to accept proposed budget with revision to Support \$800, unspecified. Randy seconded. Passed 8 yeas/1 nay. Proposed budget with revision was accepted.

- **Bibi** solicited voting.
- Motion passed.

Discussions

Virtual voting procedure for election of officers – **Bibi**

- Should the voting be open or private?
- Should we use Google Docs or Chat to vote?
- Can we move to accept the nominations by consensus?
- Discussion among Board members were confident that a general election process can be simple so long as the positions are uncontested.
- **Randy/Paul** suggested that a single vote to accept may be fine for two officers.

Set agenda for November 17 chapter meeting – **Bibi**

- **Election**
- **Budget**
- Social activity!

Board of Directors meetings – verify next meeting dates – **Bibi**

- Suggestion of five meetings for Board in 2021
- Notional dates: Jan 4, March 1, May 3, Aug 2, and Oct 2
- Favorable comments by several

Bibi encouraged Directors to review Chapter documents on roles and seek help from the membership

Adjourn – 8:20 pm

Administration/BoD meeting - 1.25 hours

Respectfully submitted 11/5/2020 – Randy Bissell, Chapter Secretary

Audit information – November 1, 2020 (updated 11/2/2020)

Beginning bank balance (checking account) – 1/31/2020	\$3,360.60
Receipts #96010-96040 and 95301-95326	+3056.00
Missing receipt to Susan Kern -Rosemary has written documentation (receipt# 96022 voided, 96040 voided, 95326 voided, 96030* missing)	+ 125.00*
Checks # 1006 – 1015	(1010.66)
Discrepancy in check 1008 – written check says \$193.51; Bank took check out of bank for \$195.51 {Rosemary will go to bank and get the \$2 back}	(2.00)**
Transfer to savings	<u>(1500.00)</u>
Bank balance as of 10/29/20	\$4028.94
Add in check 1015 – O/S as of end of October	+37.88
And check 1014 – O/S as of end of October	+55.00
Bank balance as of 10/29/2020 (reconciled)	\$4121.82

NOTE: November bank statement was not yet available when these totals were run. However, no checks nor receipts are expected between now and the end of the year, unless we have the invoice from Crackajack Engravers for name badges. (as of 11/1/2020, the new name badges have not yet been ordered)

*Rosemary went back through her emails and determined that receipt #96030, which is listed as “missing”, was in fact the receipt to Susan Kern for \$125 and is documented in an email

**Rosemary called the Credit Union on 11/2/2020 and they have now reimbursed our account for the \$2 bank error

2021 Budget: Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter

2021 Budget

Budget Summary:

The 2021 Chapter budget is Fiscally Conservative. With the 2020 budget, membership and intern training numbers were calculated at numbers and protocols based upon previous years functioning. This led to overestimation of actual income generation and potential for poor fiscal outcomes.

To circumvent that potential in 2021, the Finance Committee identified base membership as 50 and Intern training numbers as 12. It is a probability that both of these numbers could be either above or below these estimates. Discussion by the Finance Committee determined that the probability of greater numbers is of a higher probability than lesser.

Currently there are two income generating methods for the South Texas Chapter; membership dues and new intern training. To expand income to further the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist: South Texas Chapter, evaluation of potential grants and donations should occur.

Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter

2021 Annual Budget

Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter 2021 Budget			
Finance Committee			
Chairman: Cindy Frank			
Member at Large: Art Siebert			
Treasurer: Rosemary Plank			
INCOME			
Membership Dues	50 x \$25.00 ¹	\$1250.00	
Intern Training	12 X \$125.00 ²	\$1500.00	
Other: Grants, Donations, etc.	0	0	
TOTAL		2750.00	
EXPENSES			
MISSION BASED			
Membership Education		500.00	
Earth Day/Bay Day		50.00	
Mission Based Events (TBD ³)		325.00	
SUPPORT			
State Conference Member Attendance Support		250.00	
State Texas Master Naturalist Foundation		100.00	

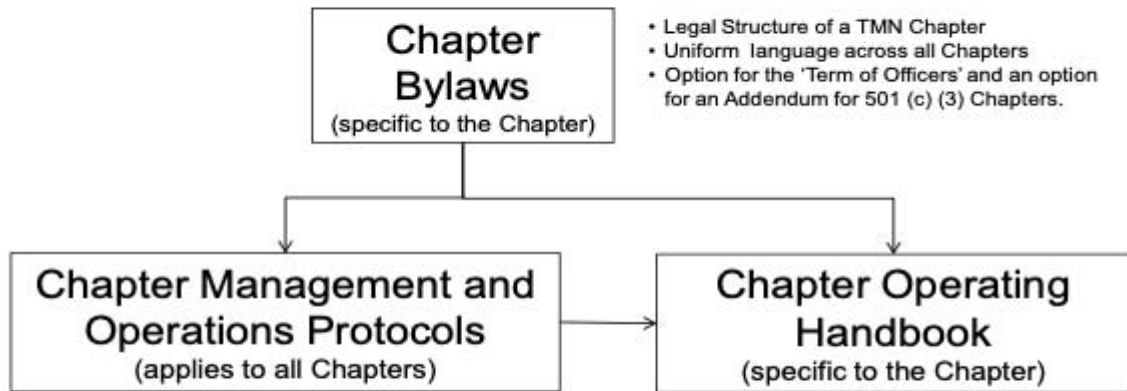
¹ Conservative # of members; consideration for inactive requests, transfers, etc. Overage will be identified and placed in contingency. At year end decisions to be made regarding investment strategy for chapter

² Breakdown of Training fee = \$10 name tag fee, \$25.00 Next year's annual dues, \$90.00 training fee. Text through University Press is SERVICE – chapter income \$1.38/book.

³ Mission based events unspecified in annual budget, must be approved by Executive Committee

South Texas Botanical Gardens		350.00	
State Meeting Auction		100.00	
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES			
Stamps, printing, paper, cards, receipt books, checks, bank fees, etc.		300.00	
Committee Expenses		500.00	
Contingency Fund		155.00	
Name Badges		120.00	
NOTE: TREASURER SERVICE ACTIVITY			
Ordering Curriculum texts from TAMU Press for Interns as needed	2020 Cost = \$38.70/book		Cost to Interns \$40.00/book
TOTAL		2750.00	

Texas Master Naturalist Documents



- Legal Structure of a TMN Chapter
- Uniform language across all Chapters
- Option for the 'Term of Officers' and an option for an Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters.

Contains:

- Information on how to operate your Chapter
- Defines the Mission, Objectives, Sponsorship
- Training Curriculum
- Membership
- Award Pins
- Advanced Training Requirements
- Volunteer Service Requirements
- Discipline
- Appendix
- FAQs

Contains:

- Details of Individual Chapter Organization
- Language on Nomination of Officers
- Allows for specific functions of a Chapter
- Duties of Officers
- Duties of Directors
- Responsibilities of the Board
- Committee Structure



**STMN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING**

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Agenda

- Call to order
- Review and approval of minutes – Oct. 7 meeting
- Reports of standing committees and officers
 - Communications - **Randy**
 - Nominating – **Blyth**
 - President – **Bibi**
- New Business
 - Board approval of AFEC report – **Chuck**, chair ad hoc Annual Financial Examination Committee
 - Board approval of 2021 Proposed Budget – **Cindy**, chair Finance Committee

Last meeting's minutes were emailed and posted to our website on October 7, 2020. Are there any corrections to the minutes? The minutes will stand as emailed and corrected.

Bibi:

Attended Presidents meeting Mon, Nov. 2, Key points:

(Slides, notes, and chat available at: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-presidents-meeting-november-2nd-2020/>)

Annual Meeting Recap

- Please do not share or reuse recordings for chapter trainings/meetings - for registered attendees only
- Watching recordings post event counts as AT
- Recordings available until April 2021

Virtual Volunteer Fair 2021

- 2020 virtual volunteer fair is still active
- Very popular thus we will continue to do this
- Will expand it to all partners in chapters / area

- Soliciting for proposals – mid-November
- Save the dates: Jan 26, 27,28 OR Feb 2,3,4 (tbd)

TMN Tuesdays 2021

- 2nd Tuesday of month, Virtual Advanced Training around Noon – 1:00
- Hosted via Webex and they will be recorded
- Open to all current TMN folks
- Send Mary Pearl and Michelle your ideas on what can be presented

Return to Service

- 75% capacity of space with max and of 50 people
- Applies to indoor and outdoor gatherings
- Face coverings required when 6 ft distance is not possible

Wordpress Update

- Restructuring of staff
- First call helpdesk is still available – but it’s slammed by all users
- Recordings of training is available
- <https://tmn.tamu.edu/wordpress-trainings-recordings>
- Hoping to get training started up again in 2021

Master Naturalist Project WILD

- Feb 2 & 9 2021 6-8 PM, Zoom
- Fee \$35
- 6 total hours of Project Wild training
- Chapters – need 5 members at each chapter/region before fee is collected and registration confirmed, also need a point person to get material

State Office Capacity

- 2020 has been a Year of Innovation
- MMH & MPM
 - o What do drop to better manage new tasks
 - o How do we change the execution of the Programs missions so that we don’t lose the soul of the program
 - o It will take longer to reply to questions from members
 - o **Members need constant reminder that the State website is the best place to find information – MMH & MPM get an overwhelming amount of email that can be found there**

- ☐ It may require management making decisions on what should come off the list
 - No more new chapters?
 - Other big projects could come off – e.g. junior naturalist program
 - Maybe we make small cuts in small portions that aren't as painful

I emailed proposed board structure. If anyone does not want to be director next year, please let me know.

Chairs/directors will be appointed by the president and approved by **Executive comm + advisors** after final (Nov) chapter meeting. (Bylaws, p.5) Would like to do this by email – any objections?

In January let's have a retreat for the board – elected officers and directors.

Agenda(cont.)

- Discussion
 - Virtual voting procedure for election of officers
 - Set agenda for November 17 chapter meeting
 - Board of Directors meetings – set next year’s meeting dates
- Meeting adjourned at:
- Administration/board meeting **1.25** hours

Bylaws p5:

c. Nominations from the Floor. **Nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor** prior to a vote at the last General Membership Meeting of the calendar year.

d. Election. The election shall take place by secret ballot, or as stated in the local Chapter Operating Handbook, at the last General Membership Meeting of the calendar year and winners determined by a simple majority.

e. Single Candidate. If only one candidate is nominated for an office, that candidate may be elected by voice vote.

How do we go about recording voice vote via Zoom?

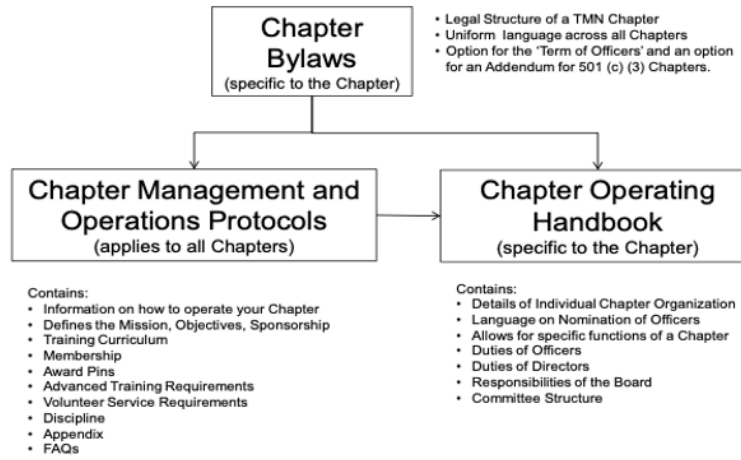
Final chapter meeting of the year: Tuesday, November 17 –election of new officers
2021 Board of Directors meetings - **suggested**: First Monday of every other month beginning in Jan 4, March 1, May 3, Aug 2, Oct 4

The duly Appointed Directors shall consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

- · Immediate Past President (Blyth Swartsfager)
- · Membership Director (Michelle Alvarez)
- · New Class Director (Philip Woods)
- · Communications Director (Randy Bissell)
- · Advanced Training Director (Chad Huckabee)
- · Volunteer Service Projects Director (Cindy Frank)
- · New Class Representative (Leslie Hoekstra)
- · State Chapter Representative (President)
- · Advisor(s) if available to the Chapter (Paul & Kevin)



Texas Master Naturalist Documents



Chapter Management and Operations Protocols



Texas Master Naturalist Program™

December 2017

[This document is intended to provide the minimal requirements for TMN Chapters and assist Chapters in initiating, developing and managing a local Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. It is intended also to clarify and amplify articles of the Chapter Bylaws and to aid in developing a local Chapter Operating Handbook.]

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

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Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

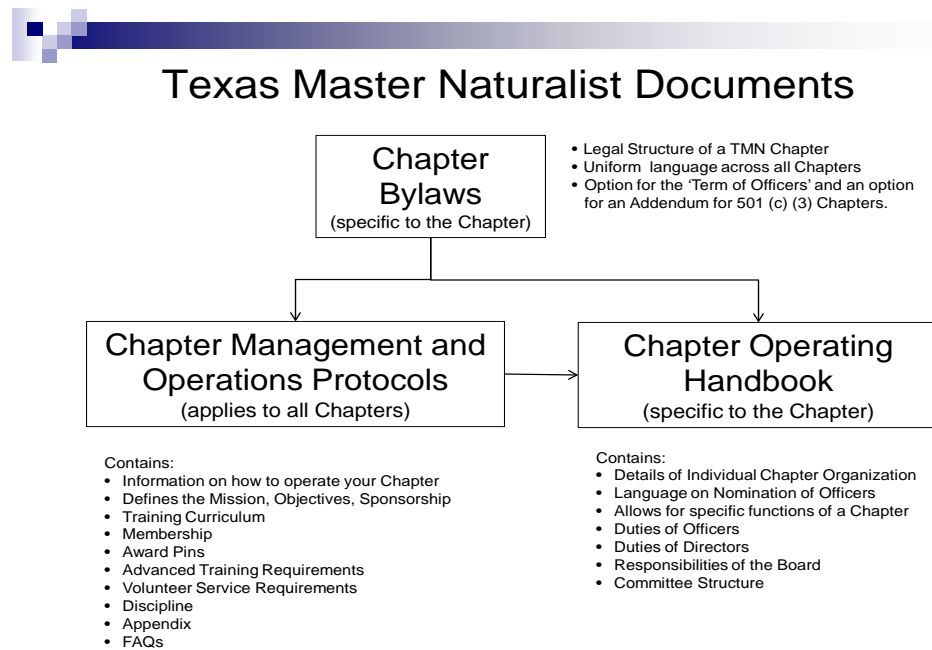
Article I. Texas Master Naturalist Program

A. Mission. 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.

B. Chapter Bylaws.

Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article I, E. Bylaws Compliance.

All Texas Master Naturalist Chapters must adopt Chapter Bylaws for its Chapter using only the language specified in the Chapter Bylaws Template. Chapters may only select from two Chapter specific options, 1) the 'Term of Officers and Directors' (see Chapter Bylaws, Article V, G.) and 2) the Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Chapter Bylaws adoptions and amendments must meet the procedures in Article X, Adoption and Amendment of Chapter Bylaws. In case of any conflict between the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and the Chapter Bylaws, the Chapter Bylaws shall prevail. The following chart shows the relationship of the Texas Master Naturalist Program governance documents for a Chapter.



C. Sponsorship. At the state level, the Texas Master Naturalist Program™ is sponsored jointly by *Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service* and *Texas Parks & Wildlife Department* (TPWD). Partnerships at the local level are necessary, encouraged and may include other public agencies, as well as private organizations whose interests are within the boundaries of the program. At the state level, the Texas Master Naturalist Program is supported financially by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service along with grants from other outside sources.

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

D. Objectives

1. To improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by supporting a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance technical guidance and conservation efforts within local communities within the State of Texas.
2. To enhance existing natural resource technical guidance, stewardship and outreach activities of the sponsoring agencies by providing natural resources guidance and advanced professional development at the local level, thereby assuring a succession of dedicated and informed volunteers who can share their knowledge, experience, and expertise in peer-to-peer technical guidance and outreach at the local level.
3. To develop a Texas Master Naturalist coordinated volunteer network that aids the TMN Program Mission and those of Texas AgriLife Extension and TPWD.

Article II. Program

A. Overview

The Texas Master Naturalist Program exists as a collection of local Chapters that adhere to a set of objectives, procedures, and minimum requirements set at the state level. The Program, at the state level, is guided by the Texas Master Naturalist State Committee (TMN State Committee) made up of Certified Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers, statewide sponsor representatives from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and with support from Program Advisors. The TMN State Committee also has responsibilities as outlined in Article VIII. Disciplining and/or Removal of Members.

Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are trained and certified at the local level through their respective Chapters. When feasible, each local Chapter should have participation by local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and/or Texas Parks & Wildlife Department personnel – these individuals form the administrative and advisory connection to the State Coordinators for the respective sponsoring agencies. It is highly recommended that each local Chapter should engage advisors from each sponsoring organization. Each Chapter should have at least one of the sponsoring organizations involved and supporting their Chapter if possible.

It is important for Texas Master Naturalist Chapters to capitalize on local resources and expertise through partnerships. Representatives of these local partners may serve on committees. Committees may include natural resources personnel, the leaders of local natural resources groups, interested landowners, and other interested individuals. When Chapters are in their early formative stages (Road Map for New Chapter Establishment, I.), the Local Coordinating Committee may be led by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and/or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service personnel or in some cases, a volunteer or other organization. As a Chapter matures, trained Texas Master Naturalist volunteers should assume a larger role in the administration of the Chapter and training program. Once the Chapter has attained a trained cadre of volunteers, these volunteers should take on larger roles in the responsibilities of the Chapter by establishing and maintaining a Chapter Board and committee chairs. At this time, some Member(s) of the original Local Coordinating Committee may begin serving in an advisory capacity to the Chapter and its

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

Board. (Appendix I lists guidelines for these Advisors).

An important function of the early formation of a Chapter is to establish a strong training program around the TMN Statewide Curriculum. There are many ways for Chapters to conduct training sessions. Many Chapters conduct training programs at different times of day and at different times of year to meet the demand and needs of the community and clientele in a Chapter's Charter or service area. How the classes are scheduled is at the discretion of the Chapter. Some Chapters alternate a daytime versus evening training programs. Some Chapters alternate spring versus fall. Other Chapters hold two training programs a year.

Overall, Chapters that hold training classes once a week for 12 to 15 weeks (vs. once a month over the course of a year) have better training class retention, certification rates and long term Member retention rates.

Many Chapter training programs include hours above the minimum 40 hours of state required training to adequately cover local issues and regional/state topics.

B. Curriculum Development

Because Texas has such a diversity of climate, population and land types, the natural resources (and their uses) in each area of the state are unique. Therefore, each local Chapter should consider customizing their training program based on the TMN Statewide Curriculum to focus on their local ecological region(s).

The TMN State Office will periodically review the Chapter's curriculum and training agenda to ensure the minimum requirements are being met and delivered. It is required the Chapter have its training agenda reviewed if any curriculum item changes from the last time it was reviewed by the TMN State Office. Each Member-in-Training of the Texas Master Naturalist Program shall receive an official TMN Program Statewide Curriculum. The Curriculum is the assurance that every TMN Member has the same basic knowledge statewide. The Chapter has the option to add to the curriculum with ecoregion specific material. Curricula can be ordered by the Chapter at bulk prices by contacting the Texas A&M University Press, Gayla Christiansen gayla-c@tamu.edu Ph: 979-845-0148; <http://www.tamupress.com/product/Texas-Master-Naturalist-Statewide-Curriculum,8373.aspx>

When planning the training schedule, the local New Class Training Committee should try to use expertise from local universities, major educational institutions, nature centers, and research centers, as well as local landowners and managers. The local coordinators should plan and facilitate the training sessions so that class and field sessions adequately cover the following suggested categories of topics:

- **Roles, responsibilities, and benefits of being a Texas Master Naturalist.**

A Member-in-Training should understand the purpose and Mission of the Program – and they must commit to participate as a volunteer to a project as they are able. A Member-in-Training should also understand that as a volunteer of the Texas Master Naturalist

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

Program they are volunteers of—and representatives of—Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. TMN Volunteers serve under the auspices of the Program and sponsoring agencies and are subject to the strict level of conduct required by the Program. This should be briefly discussed during the first meeting of the class; the Mission of the Program should be continually reinforced throughout subsequent training sessions. It shall also be the responsibility of the Training Coordinating Committee or other appropriate Chapter representatives for informing and enforcing appropriate adherence to the content of this Chapter Management and Operations Protocols document to the new Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training of each class.

- **Historical perspectives of naturalists in Texas and elsewhere.**

Naturalists were frontiersmen, pioneers, observers, interpreters, and teachers. They were important in the history of our state. Texas Master Naturalist training should include programs designed to create an appreciation for the role that these early naturalists played in Texas and US history. Because many of the early naturalists kept accurate records of what they observed, this study can provide an interesting way for people to realize the changes in our landscapes over time. Also, studying those early “master naturalists” creates a sense of appreciation that goes along with the title of Texas Master Naturalist.

- **Traditional disciplines of a naturalist.**

The original naturalists were *botanists, entomologists, ornithologists, mammologists, herpetologists, paleontologists, and geologists*. Professionals within these disciplines are available at universities, nature centers, and research centers. These natural scientists are generally eager to share their disciplines and may be excellent teachers. An effective way to incorporate these disciplines into a training session is in a field trip situation. Inviting natural scientists along as “Master Naturalist faculty” on field sessions is an effective way for a Master Naturalist Member-in-Training to be exposed to these disciplines first hand. Many of those enrolled in Texas Master Naturalist training may also have some formal training in these disciplines.

- **Ecological concepts.**

Ecological concepts may be discussed in a classroom situation – but when combined with case studies and/or field demonstrations, these concepts take on more relevant meaning. A Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training should come away from their training sessions with an accurate baseline understanding of what is meant by some of the ecological concepts and ideas that need to be understood in order to manage natural resources. These include the functional definitions of ecosystems, landscapes, communities, species assemblages, and populations. They should be exposed to concepts of biodiversity, carrying capacity, hunting, and species diversity. Training sessions should provide instruction on the dynamics of natural systems including, succession; natural and human disturbances; recovery and restoration.

- **Ecoregions of Texas.**

Texas Master Naturalists should be trained to understand the basic differences among the various ecoregions of the State. In addition, they should be trained to understand the

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unique characteristics and interactions among the geology, climate, water, soils, flora, fauna, and major land uses in their local ecoregion(s). Chapters need to include at least one field session in each of the ecoregion(s) occurring within their Chapter's territory as part of the Chapter's New Class Training Curriculum.

- **Management of natural systems.**

Texas Master Naturalists should be exposed to the management of natural systems, including forest ecology & management, rangeland ecology & management, wetland ecology & management, urban ecology & management, and aquatic ecology & management as they apply to your Chapter's ecoregion(s). These applied fields are each represented by natural resource professionals to lead these sessions. Because not all parts of the State have land types suitable for all managed systems, training sessions should focus, but be limited to, those managed systems that are a dominant feature in the local ecoregion.

- **Interpretation and communications.**

The Master Naturalists you are training will represent Chapter efforts to the public. Through training, a Member-in-Training should be given an opportunity to develop presentation skills and active learning techniques. The Texas Master Naturalist Chapter should function as a reservoir of teaching resources and materials for use by Chapter Members. The availability and effective use of these resources should be reviewed as part of the initial training.

- **Natural Resource Stewardship, Laws, Regulations, Ethics and Citizen Science**

The Texas Master Naturalist Program curriculum should include an introduction to the history of land conservation, stewardship and land management ethics, focusing on the local regions and habitats of the Chapter. New Member training should promote a discussion of ethics, with each Member-in-Training being encouraged through the use of best practices, to develop their own conservation ethic. Emphasis should be placed on the interconnected relationship between good land management practices, carrying capacity, hunting, habitat and all wildlife survival. Appropriate local, State and national laws and regulations pertaining to conservation and the protection of natural resources should be emphasized. Citizen Science and its role in the TMN Program, as a means to contribute to natural resource research, better management practices and conservation efforts in Texas, should also be presented.

C. Mentor Program

Where formal Mentor Programs have been developed, there is a distinct correlation to the number of new Member-in-Training certifications and ultimate Chapter retention of new Members. The role and responsibility of the mentor cannot be over emphasized in the success of a Member-in-Training's interest, involvement and completion of the required curriculum and certification requirements. The mentor must be fully informed of their responsibilities and the governing documents of the Chapter in order to provide the most beneficial and accurate counsel to the Member-in-Training. See: Appendix II, Mentor Program for overview and procedural information.

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D. Class Attendance

In anticipating the need to set standards for maintaining class attendance, the TMN State Committee has set the following policy:

Each Chapter may set a local standard for the maximum number of class hours that may be missed during a given training cycle. Chapters are required to keep the use of this standard to a minimum, but in any case, the minimum of 40 hours of training must be maintained. Regardless of the number of classes that can be missed, a participant must make up the class(s) by attending the appropriate class(s) within 12 months.

‘Appropriate’ means the Chapter can allow an advanced training (AT) class to count as make-up or the Chapter may require that it be the same subject class presented during the next training cycle. If an advanced training class is used as make-up, then for that individual, it does not also count as reported advanced training hours. In this case the session must account for only one type of training, initial training or advanced training. A participant may also attend the same subject class of a neighboring Chapter within the same ecoregion given adequate prior notification and space availability of the neighboring Chapter. If a participant must miss more classes than the local standard allows, then the respective Chapter may consider an exception to their rule in special circumstances, such as medical problems, family illness, accidents, etc. However, this should be the exception, not the rule. Until these classes are made up, a Member-in-Training cannot become a ‘Certified’ Texas Master Naturalist, but may earn volunteer service hours or advanced training hours towards certification.

E. Texas Master Naturalist Title

The title, Texas Master Naturalist™ or Master Naturalist (in Texas) is a trademark of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and is to be used **only** by individuals defined by one of the Member Categories, Chapter Bylaws Article IV B. This membership includes all approved programs that are officially affiliated with, and operating under the certification, training, and curriculum policies established by the TMN State Committee. The Texas Master Naturalist title **may not** be used for advertising or other business, personal or professional purposes. The Texas Master Naturalist Program is a public service program operated by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to provide accurate, unbiased natural resources information. The Texas Master Naturalist title **may not** be identified with any particular political viewpoint and **may not** be used by groups or individuals who participate in political advocacy. The title is to be used **only** when doing unpaid volunteer work associated with and approved by the Program.

Violation of the policy concerning the use of the title of Texas Master Naturalist is grounds for removing the certification of a Member, removing the Member from the Chapter or Program, dismissal from the Program, and/or possible grounds for revoking the Charter of a Chapter.

When a Texas Master Naturalist speaks before groups on natural resource subjects they may accept unsolicited expense reimbursements or gifts of nominal value of \$25 or less.

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Administrators of the Texas Master Naturalist Program, the TMN State Committee Members and members of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department who are in a direct supporting role may show or wear the Texas Master Naturalist logo, thus supporting, promoting and/or advertising the Program. However, they may not promote themselves as a Master Naturalist, Texas Master Naturalist or Certified Master Naturalist unless they have completed their training and all certification requirements.

A Chapter may, and is encouraged to, provide shirts, nametags and other wearable items for their volunteers with the expectation that the Chapter include at least a Texas Master Naturalist logo and the “Texas Master Naturalist” text with the Trade mark (™) symbol. The volunteer’s name and Chapter identifier text should be similar to the “Texas Master Naturalist” text (See the Texas Master Naturalist Marketing and Identity Guide, MKT-3342 for further information) http://txmn.org/files/2010/02/TMN_IDMKTguide6-14.pdf. Texas Master Naturalist shirts, hats, patches, back packs and other items are available at: www.agrilifebookstore.org. In the event a Chapter sets up their own shirts with a local vendor, the design must meet the TMN Program Marketing and Identity Guidelines. The TMN logos are trademarked, and vendors will need permission from the State office to reproduce the logo.

Article III. Membership

A. Membership Categories – Reference Article IV, Chapter Bylaws A-D.

Texas Master Naturalist volunteers in any given year are either ‘Certified’, or working towards certification for that given year.

B. Active/Inactive Membership

For the purpose of fulfilling a Chapter’s State Annual Report, the TMN Volunteer Management System (VMS) database must be maintained to reflect both active and inactive Chapter Members, applying the following tests:

1. Active

A Texas Master Naturalist on the membership roll of a viable Chapter of the state Program, is current in dues, if required, and reports volunteer and advanced training hours in VMS.

2. Inactive

- a. A Texas Master Naturalist on the membership roll of a viable Chapter of the state Program who is not current in dues, if required, and has not reported volunteer service hours or advanced training hours within the period of a calendar year for which the State Annual Report is submitted
- b. A Texas Master Naturalist Member on the membership roll of a viable Chapter of the state Program who has submitted a request to the Chapter to become ‘inactive’, or
- c. Inactive Members who in the past were on a Chapter membership roll in which they were active in the past may request to be reinstated. The Inactive Member must pay dues for the current year, if applicable, and begin Reporting VMS activity. Inactive Members may also request reinstatement at a new Chapter in the event of a residence change or

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personal preference using the Member Transfer process below.

3. Deceased

The Texas Master Naturalist Member is deceased.

4. Not Reportable/Not Eligible

This would be a category of support people for the Chapter who have TMN Volunteer Management System (VMS) 'system log-ins' to assist with running agency reports, but do not have a need to report service in the system such as Chapter Advisors.

C. Member Transfer

When a Member moves to a different part of the state or wishes to become active in an alternative Chapter, that Member may join the nearest Chapter of choice. The transfer process must satisfy all of the following conditions:

1. The transferee brings written documentation (a letter or email) from the old Chapter certifying that the transferee is a Member in good standing, which includes paid dues if applicable. In addition, the letter should reference the transferee's VMS reporting activity and whether the transferee has received annual certification and any due milestone awards. (Cumulative volunteer hours during the exiting Chapter membership should be verified versus VMS entries).
2. It is *strongly* recommended that a transferee complete additional training that is applicable to the new area, Chapter and/or ecoregion(s).
3. The transferee must agree to adhere to all the rules and policies of the new Chapter even if they are more stringent than those of the old Chapter.
4. The new Chapter should accept all volunteer service and advanced training hours certified in the transfer letter from the old Chapter. This includes, but is not limited to dues, volunteer service, initial training and advanced training requirements.
5. Transferees from other US States Programs: Due to the significant differences among other Master Naturalist Programs in other US States in regards to training, Program requirements and certification standards accepting transferees from other US States is not recommended. However, they should be given preference as an applicant for the next training class. A simple transfer from a US State Program to a Texas State Program will not be able to take place in this case in the same manner as a transfer within the state of Texas.
6. The receiving Chapter must verify that the transfer applicant has undergone a current Criminal Background Check (CBC) before being accepted into membership.

D. Multiple Chapter Membership

Membership in multiple Chapters is not allowed. (Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article IV, G.)

Article IV. Requirements

The *minimum* training requirements include 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences. These educational sessions should be designed to expose volunteers to a wide variety of natural resources disciplines, providing them with a high-quality learning experience. The sessions should be designed not only to teach the volunteers, but also to provide them with access to the resources that they may, if they desire, need in order to teach this information to others in an

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interesting, useful and meaningful way.

All Texas Master Naturalist Members are required to have a Criminal Background Check (CBC). In order to perform volunteer work and record VMS hours on any approved opportunity including approved Chapter projects, administrative work, committee memberships, Chapter Officers, etc., Chapter Members are required to have a valid CBC in effect. For new Members, the CBC is part of the application process to become a TMN Member-In-Training. For existing Members and Members transferring from another Chapter, it is the Member's responsibility, according to the Chapter's process, to either select TPWD to automatically renew their CBC via VMS or, alternatively, re-file paper requests for a CBC as necessary through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

Chapter Officers and Board Members, and administrators of the VMS reporting system have access to personal information of the Chapter Members as part of their administrative responsibilities and are therefore expected to respect the confidentiality of Chapter Members personal information. This includes, a Chapter Member's Volunteer Projects and Advanced Training activity.

A. Certification

To become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a Member-in-Training must be Active according to Article III, B (1) and complete the following:

- The TMN State Committee approved curriculum with a *minimum* of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction.
- Obtain a *minimum* of 8 hours of approved advanced training.
- Complete a *minimum* of 40 hours of approved volunteer service. (Volunteer service hours are those hours spent exclusively on Texas Master Naturalist projects approved by the local Chapter.)

A Member-in-Training or Pledge shall be considered "Certified" when they have completed the three requirements listed above, within the calendar year following the start of the training class period. A Chapter is to allow a Member-in-Training to begin earning volunteer service hours and AT hours for approved Chapter projects and programs once they begin the Texas Master Naturalist training program, and their required background is complete. A special 'Recertification' (AKA "Double Certification") is allowed if an **additional** 8 (total 16) hours of advanced training and an **additional** 40 (total 80) hours of volunteer service are completed within the calendar year following the start of the original classroom training class.

Once the Member-in-Training has completed all the training requirements, they may optionally receive a certificate indicating completion of the training requirements and a temporary nametag from the Chapter. (This is not a service of the TMN State Program office.) Resources for ordering permanent name tags are available at: <http://txmn.org/resources/Chapter-supplies/>. However, the nametag cannot use the term 'Certified' until the Member-in-Training or Pledge has completed their initial training and certification. Generally, Chapters use temporary name badges during the pre-certification period.

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To retain the Certified Texas Master Naturalist™ title during each subsequent year, Members must be Active according to Article III, B (1) and complete a minimum of 8 hours of advanced training and provide a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service through approved Chapter project opportunities within the calendar year.

Training periods for Chapters may vary throughout the State over different periods of time. Some Pledges completing the required field and classroom training will have more time to ‘Certify’ by the end of the following calendar year, but none will have less than one (1) full year. Once a Member has been initially ‘Certified’, the certification years thereafter follow each calendar year.

The TMN Program has a specially designed pin to be awarded for the year a volunteer maintains their certification (i.e. recertification). There will be a new pin design each year and this design will only be available during that given year. Volunteer service hours may **not** be carried forward from one year to the next for certification, with the exception of a Member-in-Training or Pledge working toward certification. Each Member, given that they have attained the requirements, may only receive one of these pins during the given year.

Note: The State Certificate (MKT-3338) and the color dragonfly pin are available through Marsha May Marsha.May@tpwd.texas.gov. Order forms and instructions can be found at <http://txmn.org/resources/chapter-supplies/>. Orders must be placed by Chapter Officers or Directors.

B. Milestone Pins

The Texas Master Naturalist Program offers a series of pins commemorating different milestone achievements for Volunteer Service hours. To view the available pins, please see: www.txmn.org. The milestone pins honor those Members who have given:

- 250 hours — bronze dragonfly pin
- 500 hours — brushed silver dragonfly pin
- 1,000 hours — brushed gold dragonfly pin
- 2,500 hours — polished [shiny] silver dragonfly
- 4,000 hours — polished [shiny] gold dragonfly w/ ruby and US Presidential Volunteer Service Award
- 5,000 hours — polished [shiny] gold dragonfly w/ diamond and letter of achievement from State Program Coordinator
- 10,000 hours — polished [shiny] gold dragonfly w/ emerald. The recipient also receives a letter of achievement from State Program Director, special recognition at the TMN Annual Meeting, and other recognition through social media. Many Chapters also provide a plaque and additional special recognition locally for this grand achievement.
- 15,000 hours – a special award of choice produced by the State TMN Program Office. The recipient also receives special recognition at the TMN Annual Meeting and other recognition through social media. Chapters may also provide a plaque and additional special recognition locally for this grand achievement.
- 20,000 hours – a special award of choice produced by the State TMN Program Office. The recipient also receives special recognition at the TMN

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Annual Meeting and other recognition through social media.
Chapters may also provide a plaque and additional special recognition locally for this grand achievement

The State Program may develop other official milestone pins beyond 20,000 hours as needed.

A Member may reach these milestones within one year or over the course of several years. Volunteers may only receive one of each of these pins during their involvement in the Program once they meet these Milestones. It is important that a Chapter and a Member continue to report service hours above and beyond the 40-hour minimum as volunteer service hours are cumulative year-to-year for the purpose of awarding milestone pins.

Hours for advanced training **do not** count towards milestones.

Chapter Officers or Directors may order pins, up through the 2,500 hour pins by contacting Marsha May, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, at Marsha.May@tpwd.texas.gov or 512-389-8062. Chapter Officers or Directors are to contact Michelle Haggerty mmhaggerty@tamu.edu, or 830-896-2504 for award pins 4,000 hours and over. Please be aware that it is not possible to expedite shipment of pins when there is short notice.

A Chapter may also establish local awards as it may desire. As an example of such, an award might include “the most hours served” or “Chapter Texas Master Naturalist™ of the Year” or milestones in between those recognized by the State Program.

Article V. Advanced Training (AT) Requirements

The purpose of advanced training is to provide Texas Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests on one, or a multiple, specific topics that interest them or just to expand their knowledge base and skill. Also, advanced training on an annual basis promotes continued learning and development. Advanced training is a benefit in itself, providing the experienced Texas Master Naturalist with tools to work in more advanced volunteer efforts. Although the State TMN Program may occasionally provide statewide or regional advanced training opportunities, it is the responsibility of the local Chapter to ensure that there are sufficient advanced training opportunities offered on a local or regional basis. Advanced training can be accepted from workshops, seminars and conferences held outside of the state boundaries, if, and only if, the training material meets the AT guidelines within the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols and the Mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program. It is mandatory that any training material from outside the state be beneficial to the citizens and the natural resources of Texas and be Chapter and/or State Program approved.

Advanced training courses may be made available directly through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, or any number of short-courses provided by universities or nature centers. One way for a Chapter’s Members to meet their advanced training requirements is by actually sponsoring the advanced training sessions. The local Chapter’s Advanced Training Coordinator, Committee, or equivalent, should pre-approve all advanced training opportunities before the volunteer attends. In special circumstances, approval may be

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sought in retrospect. With the exception of college courses, advanced training hours are counted one hour for each hour of advanced training. Travel time is **not** included for advanced training hours. Pre-approval from the Chapter must be obtained for any advanced training session including those that are outside the Chapter boundaries. Advanced training hours should never be counted as service hours.

In the event a college course is accepted as advanced training, each Credit Hour of the course counts as an advanced training hour (not each hour spent in class). This is not retroactive to cover courses taken prior to involvement in the TMN Program.

Chapters may approve advanced training that allows both an exchange between the Member and an instructor as well as online-based training where there may not be an ability for an exchange. In a live classroom setting if material is complex or confusing, it allows the student to be able to ask questions or request clarification. With the advancement of online communication media, new forms of online-based training can be accepted for advanced training hours.

Online-based training and webinars will only be accepted for a maximum of 4 hours of the required 8 hours of advanced training hours. Once the minimum of 8 hours of advanced training has been obtained for the certification year, with a maximum 4 hours via web and minimum 4 hours obtained through traditional offerings, additional advanced training hours can be accumulated from approved online/distance based methods. (Exceptions to this rule may be considered for Members meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act)

The use of mission-specific or related videos, DVDs, and archived webinars for advanced training should be limited in scope. Before approval of this modern media which would not have live interaction between participants and an instructor or program facilitator, a Chapter must consider the criteria listed below:

- The educational experience will supplement a Chapter's approved advanced training program because live instructors are not available on a particular subject germane to the ecoregion of the Chapter.
- The quality and caliber of the particular media resource is of significant relevance to the TMN mission so as to be recognized by known experts in the field and/or organizations renowned for their dedication to education.
- If approval is granted, all efforts must be made for a qualified Chapter Member to introduce the resource and lead a Q&A discussion following its conclusion.
- If there is any question as to the worthiness of a resource or validity of the request for advanced training approval, the State Coordinator should be consulted before approval is granted.

Chapter sponsored Book Clubs, where discussion is directed and related to the mission of TMN may receive advanced training credit for the club discussion and presentation, but time spent reading the book does not receive credit.

The Chapter Advanced Training Coordinator and/or Chapter Advanced Training Committee should use the following criteria or ask the following questions of the opportunity when reviewing and approving advanced training opportunities:

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Does the advanced training opportunity:

1. Promote continued learning and development of naturalist skills?
2. Provide Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts?
3. Direct trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services?
4. Provide natural resource management issues and information applicable to Texas with a preferred emphasis on the Chapter's local community or ecoregion?
5. Directly address the management of natural resources?
6. Provide practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts?
7. Take advantage of local partnerships?
8. Provide Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics?
9. Build on the core curriculum initially provided by the local Chapter?
10. Is the program/training provided by a person who is a recognized authority or skilled in the subject matter?

Each advanced training opportunity must meet all criteria listed in 1, 2, 3, and 4 above to be approved. It is suggested that the remaining criteria also be a part of the approval consideration.

Note: numbers do not represent an order of priority, only designators.

Actual Advanced Training Examples

Bad/Unacceptable	Better	Best
A lecture on astronomy and its relationship to astrology	A lecture on astronomy and how the moon and sun effect the habitat of animals and plants	A lecture on how to reduce light pollution and the effects that will have on plants and animals.
Attending a class on the habitat of animals in Alaska	Attending a workshop regarding Texas ecoregions	Attending a workshop regarding the Texas ecoregion where you volunteer.
Watching a National Geographic TV show about southwest US ecology	Watching a recorded webinar about your chapters local ecology with opportunity to email instructor later	Participating in a live webinar with instructor and participant QA about local ecology specific to management of the resources
	Attending a session at the TMN Annual Meeting to learn about the events and opportunities occurring throughout Texas	Attending a session at the TMN Annual Meeting and bringing those techniques/tools taught in the session back to your local chapter with a presentation afterwards summarizing what you learned
Taking a course on ornamentals and vegetable gardening in Texas	Taking a course on pollinator plants of Texas and their benefits for the garden	Taking a course on native pollinator plants for your ecosystem and how to plant them and who/what they benefit

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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. All volunteer service hours and advanced training hours are required to be recorded in the Chapter Volunteer Management System (VMS). (Instruction regarding the use of the VMS system is provided as a part of the New Class curriculum, and additional instructional information may be found at: <http://txmn.org/tmn-vms-users> as well as Appendix III.) 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 “New 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 not, as long as they fall within the TMN Mission and are 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 name badge, identifying TMN clothing, or by displaying signage identifying the TMN project and/or participants as Members of the 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 when applicable (see FAQs)
- 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 or natural resource management issue need?

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- 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 defined service area or ecological area? Consideration by the Chapter may be given to 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
Being "on call" as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization (Why: no actual service time)	Transporting injured, native wildlife to licensed wildlife rehabilitation service	Providing outreach on the prevention of unnecessary wildlife captures or 'rescues' (e.g. knowledge to answer questions on "abandoned" wildlife) F
Planting exotic plants or a vegetable garden (Why: this activity is not within our mission)	Planting native plants or a Wildscape at a local school	Leading 5 th graders and school staff in implementing a native plant garden or Wildscape at a local school
Monarch monitoring in Colorado (Why: opportunity is not within Texas)	Monarch monitoring in Texas	Monarch monitoring within your local Chapter's area
Cleaning the elephant cage at a zoo (Why: not a native species and does not fall within our mission)	Caring for the Prairie Chicken area at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter	Leading interpretive programs about Prairie Chickens at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local Chapter
Maintenance at a private native plant nursery (Why: is a private business)	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	Holding a workshop on how to install and maintain a Wildscape or other similar type of native habitat.

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<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 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>Time spent representing your local TMN Chapter’s interest to a Board/organization which has developed a designated “Master Naturalist Representative” spot on their leadership team. (Such as liaison positions)</p>	<p>Serving on a TMN Board or as a Committee Member at any level within the TMN program.</p> <p>Training other organizations how to conduct natural resource management activities. Providing natural resource technical guidance expert advice on/to a municipal advisory committee or land trust council.</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>

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Manning a “store” or native plant sale that raises funds for non-TMN organization. (Why: not part of the TMN mission)	Answering phones/emails and doing basic office work for your local County Natural Resources Agent	Serving as an information docent by giving programs, leading tours, and/or organizing outreach events on native wildlife and habitats
Preparing food items for social activities of the Chapter (Why: Preparation of food for an activity that is purely social does not meet the mission of the TMN)	Planning and organizing logistics for a Chapter volunteer recognition event. Serving on the hospitality committee. Coordinating the creation of a new Chapter Volunteer Project	Mentoring a TMN Member-in-Training Teaching at a New Class training event Serving on a New Class committee

Texas Master Naturalist Service Project Opportunity Categories and Examples

To assist the TMN State Program in its administrative functions, Chapters are required to use the following Service Activity codes when reporting hours to the state.

Service/Activity	Code	Description	Examples
Direct Outreach (Training & Educating)	DO	Leading, organizing, developing, delivering instructing or staffing an educational activity where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event (e.g., planned start and end times with a single agenda).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction • Delivering Workshops • Developing & delivering training Presentations • Conducting/Leading Webinars • Delivering/an instructor for Chapter MN Members in Training/interns class • AT you prepare and present as a TMN Member to other TMN Members • Interpretive hikes
Advanced Training	AT	Advanced Training you attend as a participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT sessions at TMN Statewide Annual Meeting • Rainwater Harvesting Steward Program Training • Project WILD Instructor/Facilitator Training

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Indirect Outreach (Public Outreach)	PO	Leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where participants come and go and are able to inquire on a broad set of topics. <or> Writing an educational article or brochure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a docent for a nature center (excludes selling items) • Writing articles, brochures or newsletters • Answering a Wildlife Hotline (not on call)
Technical Guidance	TG	Providing free, detailed natural resource management advice or assistance for any natural resource related program or related business. For example: providing expertise in land management guidance, in consultation and/or written form, to Chapters, partners, land owners and/or land managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits for and writing ecosystem management plans • Land Management Assistance Program (LMAP) • Serving on a City/Community/Regional Habitat Conservation Plan Committee • Advising other organizations on natural resource management (outside of serving as a board or committee Member of an organization) •
Natural Resource Management (including Natural Resource Stewardship and Conservation)	RM	Activities that improve the health of a public natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration, rescue and rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing foreign debris that improves the health of a public natural area or resource • Invasive species removal • Plant and/or /endangered Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) species rescue (not rehab) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g.: Turtle Patrol • Restoring or improving natural habitat • Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys • Tree planting
Nature/Public Access	NPA	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	<p>Developing new or maintaining and/or improving existing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiking trails • Interpretive native species gardens (NOT vegetable gardens) • Wildlife viewing blinds • Wildscapes/native plant gardens • Cleanup activities in habitat

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Field Research (Including Surveys and Citizen Science)	FR	Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where the results are intended to further scientific understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field surveys • Banding and tagging • Species watch • Texas Nature Trackers Programs • CoCoRaHs • Stream Watch/Stream Team/ Water Quality Monitoring • Nestbox monitoring • Citizen Science
Chapter & Program Support, Business and Administration	CB	Activities related to managing and running a Texas Master Naturalist Chapter and its committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMN Chapter Board of Director or committee duties—including New Class Director • TMN Chapter Newsletter, website or social media management • Management of TMN Chapter records and reporting • Representing TMN Chapter at multi-Chapter events • Other TMN Chapter administration • Assistance to TMN State Program and State Program Office
Other	OT	Any activity approved by a Chapter not defined above. In general a Chapter should only have a small percentage of hours in this activity (< 5%). When this activity code is used, a Chapter should investigate the reason.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife rehabilitation (not SGCN animal rescue)

Article VII. Chapter Donations

The State’s recommendation is that Chapters donate Member’s time and expertise to natural resource conservation, education and management efforts versus donating money to outside organizations. The Texas Master Naturalist Program and Chapters are to be natural resource service organizations first and foremost versus donors of monetary funds to or for other organizations. For donations to a Chapter, see Chapter Bylaws, Article IX, D, Gifts and Donations.

If a Chapter insists on donations to other organizations, then it is critical that this be on a very limited basis and that the Chapter’s focus of donations must remain in the heart of the TMN Program Mission. Donations not directly meeting the TMN Mission goals must be denied.

Chapters wishing to donate to an outside organization need to consider the guidelines which follow, to ensure the organization is in keeping with the Texas Master Naturalist Mission, goals and principles. Exceptions would be donations to the State Texas Master Naturalist Program, or

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Program sponsoring agencies, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

All other organizations (including Chapter partners) should be vetted with these points 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 Mission and spirit of the Texas Master Naturalist Program)
- How does the organization conduct fundraising otherwise? Is it in keeping with the goals and ideals of the Texas 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 organizational name (and logo) be advertised as a result of the donation? (Would it be done in such a way you would want the Chapter (and TMN Program) advertised and associated with?)

Article VIII. Disciplining and/or Removing Members from a Chapter or from the Program

It is strongly recommended that all Executive Committee members read and understand the following procedural policy before proceeding with any disciplinary activity. If there is any question on interpretation of this procedure, consultation with the State Program Coordinator is strongly advised.

- 1. General Policy.** It is the policy of the Texas Master Naturalist Program (Program) to make every effort to be fair, objective, accurate and comprehensive during the assessment of possible disciplinary actions. However, a Member may be reassigned to another Chapter or dismissed entirely from the Program at the discretion of the State Program Coordinator. The Program strives to promote consistent and fair treatment of all Texas Master Naturalist Members. When it becomes obvious that a Member or group of Members participating in any capacity of the Program is misrepresenting the Program's written Policies, Protocols, Standards of Conduct or Code of Ethics, then those Members or group of Members may be removed from a Chapter or the Program. Recommendations for disciplinary action may be initiated by the Chapter Executive Committee, Chapter Advisor(s), the State Program Coordinator or the TMN State Committee. If a discipline or removal incident reaches the TMN State Committee, the Committee will deliberate on all findings and then consider recommendations for disciplinary action, if warranted. This may take the form of disciplinary Counseling or the removal of individuals from positions of leadership and/or participation in a Chapter, or dismissal from the Program in its entirety. Disciplinary action may only be taken by the Chapter Executive Committee with the written approval of the State Program Coordinator.
- 2. Definitions:** The following terms when capitalized in this section shall have the meaning as found in Chapter Bylaws or as may be defined herein. With any and all conflicts, the Chapter Bylaws shall prevail.

Certified Mail

Correspondence (Corrective Action Letter or Written Reprimand) delivered by the US

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Postal Service, Fed Ex or equivalent carrier with delivery confirmation.

Chapter Advisors

An appointed position to advise the Chapter leadership with the responsibilities as defined in the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP).

Chapter Executive Committee

A committee who has as its Members only the Chapter's President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and has the first line responsibility for overseeing that Chapter Members adhere to the Program Policies, Protocols, Code of Ethics, and Standards of Conduct.

Corrective Action Letter

A written notification advising a Chapter Member(s) of the level of formal disciplinary action being taken to address violations of the Program Policies, Protocols, Codes of Ethics, or Standards of Conduct. These violations are to be clearly stated in the letter.

Counseling

A face-to-face session with the Chapter Member(s) in which a Member of the Chapter Executive Committee or the State Program Coordinator gives the Chapter Member(s) notice of the Member's undesirable performance or conduct and requests that the Member(s) adhere to the Program standards and expectations and refrain from any further Misconduct as the term is defined herein.

Insubordination

A Chapter Member's failure to comply with the Program Policies, Protocols, Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct; failure to follow instructions from the State Program Coordinator or TMN State Committee as related to any actions or instructions taken under Article VIII.

Misconduct

Examples of Misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Refusing to follow or adhere to the Program Policies, Protocols, Standards of Conduct, or Code of Ethics
2. Physically or verbally abusing members of the public, Chapter Members, advisors, volunteers of other organizations, State Program Coordinators, or the Program participants
3. Engaging in violence of any sort
4. Disrupting normal volunteer routine or the performance of other volunteers
5. Falsifying training or volunteer time reports or other state documents
6. Using association with the Program for personal gain
7. Knowingly disclosing confidential information to an unauthorized individual
8. Failing to report a conflict of interest
9. Violating conflict of interest laws/policies
10. Using humor, jokes, or other comments which might be insulting or demeaning to others, including ethnic, racial, or sexual comments which create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment
11. Conducting any form of sexual harassment

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12. Conducting any form of discrimination and retaliation
13. Being under the influence of intoxicants, inhalants, alcohol, drugs, or illegal stimulants of any kind, while participating in Program activities, or on State property, or while conducting functions sponsored by any TMN Chapter
14. Contributing behavior which compromises the health and safety of Members, non-member volunteers, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees, or clientele
15. Being habitually disruptive to a Chapter's function and the overall Program
16. Violating the confidentiality of data recorded in VMS as outlined herein
17. Using information in VMS to shame Chapter Members for any reason
18. Being unwilling or unable to work amicably with Chapter Advisor(s) and/or Chapter leaders
19. Conduct which is harmful to the reputation of the Program as determined by the TMN State Committee in accordance with these examples of misconduct
20. Failing to relinquish/rotate Chapter leadership roles
21. Possessing, using, selling or offering for sale or gifting illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia, while participating in the Program
22. Being convicted of an offense which affects the Member's ability to perform his or her duties
23. Misusing or unlawfully using State or a Chapter's property, including vehicles, computers or other equipment
24. Violating a state or federal law, while engaged in the Program functions, or violating a state or federal law which affects any Chapter Member's ability to perform his or her job duties
25. Falsely representing one's status as a TMN Member, in written or verbal form under any circumstance
26. Providing false information as part of a Program investigation
27. Failing or refusing to cooperate with a State Program Coordinator or TMN State Committee investigation
28. Failing or refusing to adhere to actions as may be required in a Corrective Action Letter or Written Reprimand
29. Engaging in any activity deemed by the TMN State Committee as Misconduct worthy of disciplinary action

Policy Violations

Chapter Member conduct that is inconsistent with the Program Policies, Protocols, Code of Ethics, and Standards of Conduct as established by the Program.

Protocols

The Chapter Management and Operations Protocols is a document posted on the TMN website that is established by the Program.

State Program Coordinator

An employee of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, who has the responsibility for daily operations of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and the authority to take disciplinary actions, such as Counseling or Written Reprimand concerning adverse TMN Member actions and the revoking of a Chapter's

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Charter.

TMN State Committee

A Texas Master Naturalist Program committee comprised of employees of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and appointed Certified Texas Master Naturalist Members with previous leadership experience.

Volunteer

A Member of a TMN Chapter or any person, who may be participating in a volunteer project sponsored or supported by the Program.

Witness

A person who has personally witnessed an action of a Chapter Member's misconduct or violation of Program Policies, Protocols, Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct and provides a written statement documenting the Misconduct or violation.

Written Reprimand

A formal, written notification advising a Chapter Member of the violation(s) of Policy, Protocol, rules or other offense, the expectations of the State Program Coordinator for corrective actions and the potential consequences of failing to rectify Misconduct. A Written Reprimand is generally issued when a Chapter Member has committed serious Misconduct or has not corrected a prior performance or conduct problem.

- 3. Applicability.** All Volunteers, Chapter Members, Chapter Executive Committee (Officers), Chapter Advisors, and Chapter Committee Chairpersons are subject to the same level of conduct and adherence to the tenets of the Program.
- 4. Congenial Approach.** When any Member of the Program and/or public thinks an infraction of the Policies, Protocols, Standards of Conduct or Code of Ethics of the State or Chapter has occurred, that person, should weigh, with good judgment, whether or not to speak with the offending party directly, or to defer to the Chapter President or Advisor with the matter. Not all Members are fully aware of the Policies and Protocols of the Program and may just be acting out of a lack of knowledge or understanding, and not malice. A congenial approach to bring the misunderstanding to the Member's attention often prevents future problems for the Chapter and the Program. It is expected that the majority of conflicts should be resolved using this 'congenial approach'.

If this approach is unsuccessful in resolving the problem, then follow the procedure defined in sections 5 and 6 below.

- 5. Procedures for disciplining and/or dismissal.** When any Member of the Program and/or any member of the public thinks an infraction of the Policies, Protocols, Standard of Conduct or Code of Ethics of the State or Chapter has occurred and the Congenial Approach has been unsuccessful, then that person should promptly bring the incident directly to the attention of

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either the Chapter President, a Member of the Chapter Executive Committee, Advisor and/or State Program Coordinator.

The subsequent procedures are to be followed by the Chapter Executive Committee when making recommendations to the State Program Coordinator for Counseling or dismissal of a Member(s) from a Chapter or the Program. When following these procedures, any disciplinary communications must be discrete, respectful of privacy and held in the strictest confidence with only those having a 'need to know'. Discussions may only take place in Chapter Executive Committee sessions, where only the Chapter's Officers and Chapter Advisor(s) are present, documented appropriately, and become a part of the confidential report material forwarded to the State Program Coordinator before any action is taken.

6. Detail Disciplining and/or Removal of Members Procedure

There are three steps that must be carefully followed to bring disciplinary action for a Member(s) in the Program. Each of the following steps must be sequentially followed and carefully documented prior to any actions being taken.

a. Step 1 - Initial Counsel

The Chapter Executive Committee will review the allegations and supporting documentation and determine if disciplinary action is warranted. Please see Chart 1 – Initial Counsel Process. Evidence submitted to support the allegations must be statements from Witnesses who were present during the alleged infractions. Hearsay evidence from someone that is unverified, unofficial information gained or acquired from another and not part of one's direct knowledge should carry no or little weight in making a final recommendation. If a determination is made to recommend disciplinary action, the Chapter Executive Committee must consult with the State Program Coordinator, who may or may not approve further action.

If disciplinary action is authorized, a Corrective Action Letter, approved by the State Program Coordinator, must be presented in the 'Initial Counsel' with the offending Member(s). The Initial Counsel meeting should be face-to-face (preferred) or by phone, by a Member(s) of the Chapter Executive Committee or TMN State Committee representative(s), when reviewing the Corrective Action Letter with the Member(s).

In the Corrective Action Letter and in the conversation that follows, the Member(s) should be given notice that a recurrence of similar or additional offenses, stated in the letter and conversation, could lead to dismissal from a leadership position, the Chapter and/or the Program.

The conversation should be documented by the person(s) conducting the counseling, in written format, and submitted to the State Program Coordinator within 7 days of the counsel. Documentation should all be contained in a single complete package of information including signed Witness statements. This step cannot be over-emphasized even for a first offense. The counseled individual shall have an opportunity to respond to the counseling session within 7 business days, in written format, to the State Program Coordinator.

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If the 'Initial Counsel' is unsuccessful in resolving the problem or the Member persists in continued unacceptable behavior, the Chapter Executive Committee or TMN State Committee should then proceed to the Formal Process.

b. Step 2 - Formal Process

All documentation from the 'Initial Counsel' must be in order and the Chapter Executive Committee must demonstrate additional grounds for this action. Please see Chart 2 – Formal Process. The supporting documentation must include signed written statements from Witnesses, who have personal knowledge of the incident(s) and provided to the Executive Committee if the case involves a Chapter Member, Director or committee Member(s). If the infraction involves Member(s) of the Chapter Board or Chapter Advisor(s), then the written case must be directly submitted to the State Program Coordinator by the party bringing the allegations.

All supporting documentation and disciplinary recommendations must be complete and chronologically compiled into a single documentation package and be sent to the State Program Coordinator.

The State Program Coordinator will review the documentation and recommendation(s) presented and either approve, amend, or deny further disciplinary action. The State Program Coordinator may ask the TMN State Committee to review any recommendation(s).

If the State Program Coordinator approves, the offending individual(s) shall be notified by 'Certified Mail' of the pending disciplinary action within 7 days by the Chapter Executive Committee or State Coordinator as appropriate. The accused Member(s) shall have 7 days to respond in writing, via 'Certified Mail', to the Chapter Executive Committee or State Coordinator, from the date of receipt of the letter, to the allegations. Strict adherence to the confidential provisions herein must be maintained throughout the process.

After the 7-day period, if no response from the offending party(s) is received or a response that indicates an acceptance of the recommendation is received, the disciplinary action will be implemented. At this point, the incident is closed and the resolution, along with any additional supporting documentation, is forwarded to the State Program Coordinator.

If agreement is not reached, the State Program Coordinator would review the additional information and provide any supplemental recommendations and supporting documentation, which must include any statement(s) from the offending Member(s) and the original written case documentation. The State Program Coordinator will consider all information submitted and make a decision for disciplinary action. The State Program Coordinator may ask the Chapter Executive Committee for a written or recorded vote. The State Program Coordinator may instruct the Chapter Executive Committee to implement the disciplinary action. The Chapter Executive Committee or State Program Coordinator will send a 'Certified Mail' letter outlining the Formal Process resolution and disciplinary actions to be taken regarding the offending Member(s).

c. Step 3 – Appeal Process.

The Member(s) will have 7 days, from receipt of the letter outlining the Formal Process

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resolution, to directly respond or appeal to the State Program Coordinator and ask for the final resolution to be determined by the TMN State Committee. Please see Chart 3 – Appeal Process. Circumstances that may warrant reconsideration might include a substantive error or omission of information submitted to the Chapter Executive Committee and/or the State Program Coordinator.

The State Program Coordinator will present the case and supporting documentation to the TMN State Committee for validation of a final decision. The State Program Coordinator will inform the Chapter Executive Committee and the Members(s) involved by Certified Mail of the final decision. The final decision of the TMN State Committee is without further appeal by the Member or the Chapter Executive Committee. The Chapter Executive Committee is required to implement the decisions of the TMN State Committee, if given the task, without further protest or consideration. Strict adherence to the confidential provisions herein must be maintained throughout the process.

Decisions made by the TMN State Committee are final. The accused Member must accept the decision of the TMN State Committee or resign from the Program. Likewise, Board Members are required to accept the decision of the TMN State Committee or resign from their position.

d. Flow Diagrams of Disciplining and/or Removal of Members

The following charts represent the generalized flow of the disciplinary process. If any conflicts are found between the charts and the text in Article VIII, the text shall prevail.

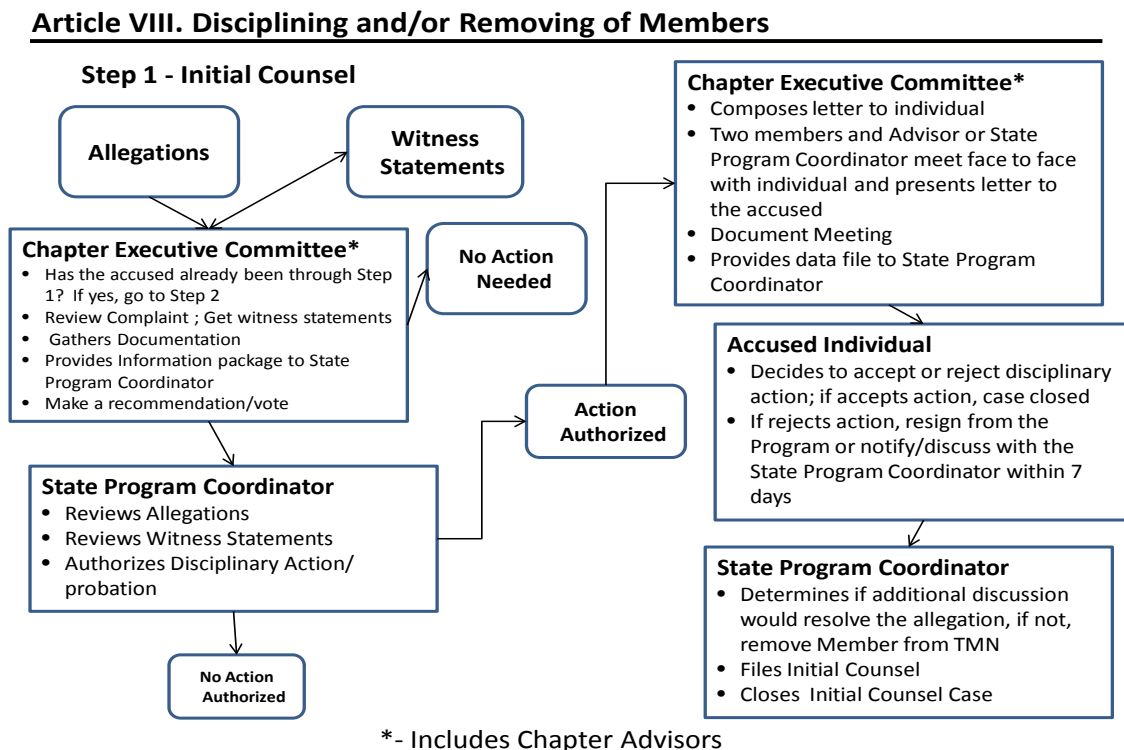


Chart 1 – Initial Counsel Process

Article VIII. Disciplining and/or Removing of Members

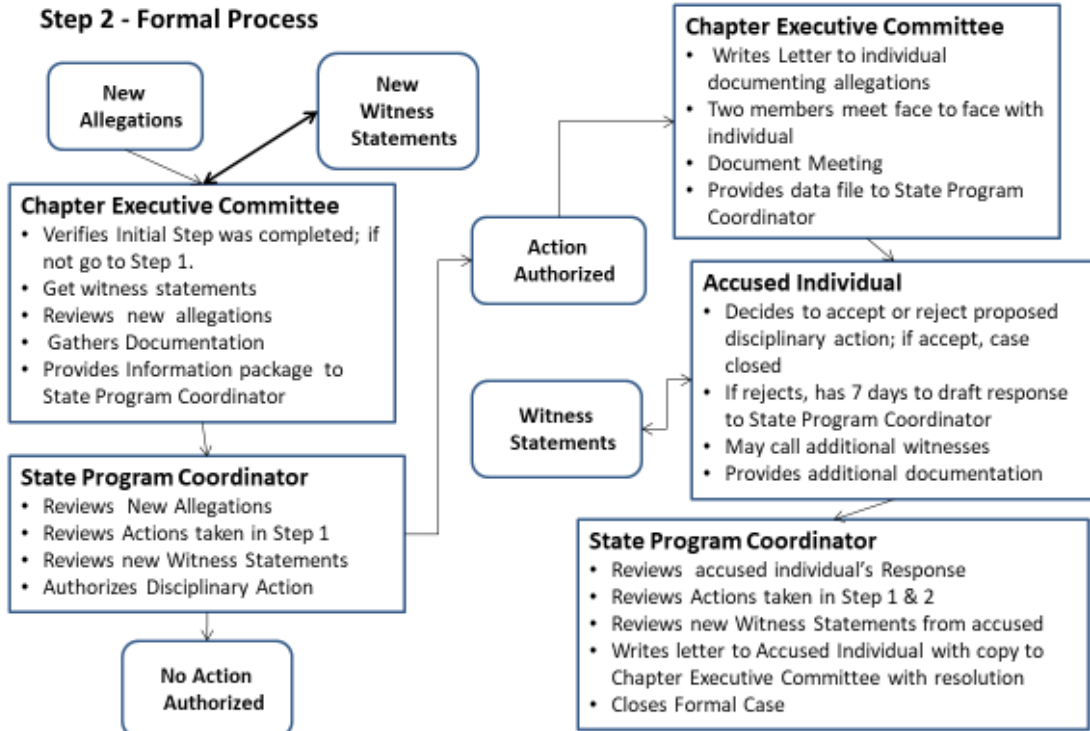


Chart 2 – Formal Process

Article VIII. Disciplining and/or Removing of Members

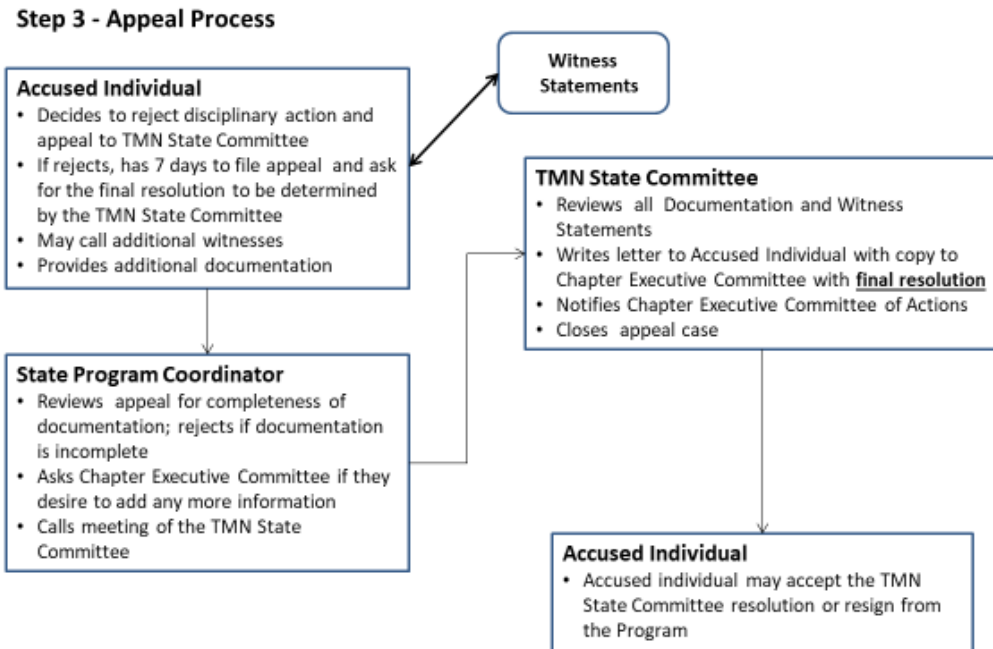


Chart 3 – Appeal Process

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Article IX. Dissolution of a Chapter

A. Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article XI, Dissolution

Article X. 501 (C) (3) Chapters

A. Reference Chapter Bylaws, Addendum for 501 (C) (3) Chapters

Article XI. Additional Information

For any point not yet addressed by this document, Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, or for any issue that arises that may need development of formalized procedures, please inform the State Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinator (see Appendix I, B Contacts). Issues will be brought forth and reviewed by the TMN State Committee. When possible and appropriate, guidelines and protocols will be developed and amended to the current statewide Chapter Management and Operations Protocols document. It is the responsibility of the local Chapter representatives to inform the State Coordinator of such issues.

A. Available Documents for Download: <http://txmn.org> / (See the Chapter Resources tab)

- Texas Master Naturalist Program Chapter Bylaws
- Texas Master Naturalist Program Operating Handbook Template
- Texas Master Naturalist Program Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Background Check
- Texas Master Naturalist Program Marketing and Identity Guide (MKT-3342)
- Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer Management System

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Appendix I, Advisor Guidelines

A. The Advisor's Role:

1. Give advice, make recommendations, vote in Chapter Board motions, inform and notify the Chapter Board on appropriate business in a professional way.
2. The Advisor should not be the manager of the Chapter business or activities. They are to be a Chapter supporter and available to advise, recommend, inform and notify the Chapter Board of appropriate and professional matters.
3. Be familiar with the goals, activities and mission of the organization.
4. Be willing to meet with the Officers and Directors of the Chapter to discuss expectations for roles and responsibilities.
5. Assist the organization in maintaining the original goals, mission, vision, and operational framework set forth by the organizers of the Chapter as well as assist in further developing realistic goals with the Chapter's Executive Board that are within the parameters of the statewide TMN Program.
6. Facilitate opportunities for Texas Master Naturalist volunteers to exercise initiative and judgment within proper measure of autonomy when coordinating Chapter events and activities. In keeping with this approach, Advisors should participate in event planning and attend events when possible or when identified as necessary through the planning process.
7. Be aware of the Chapter's financial status via review of financial statements and approval of expenditures.
8. Be aware of the TMN State documents, including the Chapter Bylaws and Chapter Management and Operations Protocols; also, relevant documents of the State sponsoring agencies, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, that establish expectations for volunteer requirements, behavior and activities. Ensure that the Officers, other Members of the Board and the Chapter Members know where these documents are published, their significance and the consequences for choosing to operate outside their parameters.
9. The Advisor should be ready to assist the TMN State Program Coordinator and TMN State Committee as needed, as the Advisor may be called upon to implement regulations or policies from time to time.
10. The Advisor is responsible for notifying the Chapter Officers and the TMN State Program Coordinator regarding Chapter concerns. The Advisor is expected to report violations or potential violations to the TMN State Program Coordinator. The Chapter Officers are responsible for notifying the TMN State Program Coordinator regarding Advisor problems or concerns.
11. Also see: Chapter Advisors, Article V, B, Chapter Bylaws

The Chapter Advisor relationship is not a one-way street, in that the Chapters and their 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.

Chapter Management and Operations Protocols

B. Contacts

Texas Master Naturalist™ Program Office

Michelle Haggerty
Texas Master Naturalist State Program Coordinator
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
309 Sidney Baker South Kerrville, TX 78028
Phone: (830) 896-2504, Fax: (830) 792-6167
E-mail: mmhaggerty@tamu.edu

Mary Pearl Meuth
Texas Master Naturalist Assistant Program Coordinator
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
534 John Kimbrough Blvd, 2258 TAMU College Station, TX 77843-2258
Phone: (979) 845-7294, Fax: (979) 845-7103
E-mail: mpmeuth@tamu.edu , State Program Website: <http://txmn.org>

Texas Master Naturalist™ State Committee Members

Certified Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers

Tom Hynes	Certified Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer
Floyd Trefny	Certified Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer
Vern Crawford	Certified Texas Master Naturalist Volunteer

Committee Chairs

Michelle Haggerty	- TX Master Naturalist Program State Coordinator (TPWD)
Mary Pearl Meuth	- Asst. TX Master Naturalist Program Assistant State Coordinator (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)

Administrative

John Davis	TPWD--Wildlife Diversity Program
Dr. Larry Redmon	AgriLife Extension--Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries, and Soil and Crop Sciences
Richard Heilbrun	TPWD- Wildlife Diversity Program, Conservation Outreach

Program Support, Contract Staff and Volunteers

Dr. Barron Rector	AgriLife Extension--Rangeland Ecology & Management
Marsha May	TPWD Texas Nature Trackers and TMN Program
Tania Homayoun	TPWD Texas Nature Trackers and TMN Program
Alaya Keane	TMN Student Worker
Clyde Camp	TMN Volunteer Management System Management Team
Cheryl Foster	TMN Volunteer Management System Management Team
Dale Hughling	TMN Volunteer Management System Management Team
Brad James	TMN Volunteer Management System Management Team

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APPENDIX II, Mentor Program

The Membership Director and the Training Director should begin to solicit and vet mentor candidates for the New Class applicants when the application process is opened for new members.

The Membership Director will convene a meeting of mentors as soon as possible following the Board approval of New Class applicants to conduct the following business:

- Distribute the New Class Curriculum, New Class Manuals, and other materials, including a copy of the Mentor Guidelines for Mentors
- Review Mentor Guidelines (Ref. Mentor Guidelines below) stressing timing of material delivery to the applicant, New Class Reception/Orientation date and location (if applicable), responsibilities and their review of Chapter governance documents and where they can be found
- Stress that a mentor's responsibility to the Member-in-Training never expires
- Be familiar with Chapter governance documents to enable answering all questions thoroughly, particularly regarding when advanced training and Volunteer Service hours may begin being accumulated and reported by the Member-in-Training
- Mentors should be informed of the Chapter's Volunteer Service Project Opportunity Code to report their hours associated with all mentoring activity

Mentor Guidelines

Mentors will attend a meeting of mentors scheduled and convened by the Membership and Training Directors at a location of the Class Director's choice. Each mentor may receive for distribution to a New Class Member-in-Training; the New Class Curriculum, New Class Manuals, and other appropriate materials. Alternatively, the Membership Director may use experienced mentors to lead a welcome meeting for all mentors and give out the TMN Statewide Curriculum, New Class Manual and materials.

These Mentor Guidelines have been established to help provide a positive mentoring experience, and must also be distributed and reviewed with each mentor. Each mentor may have been assigned one or more New Class applicants, generally within their geographical area, and will have been provided a copy of the Application of each of their assigned applicant(s) to provide the mentor biographical information.

Mentors should:

1. Contact their assigned Member-in-Training by phone and set up a physical meeting in order to deliver their class material. Try to have all materials in the hands of the Member-in-Training prior to the New Class Reception/Orientation date (if applicable).
2. Provide the New Class Curriculum and Class Manual, stressing reading assignments prior to each class (if applicable).
3. Provide personal contact information and review the local Chapter list of contacts and where the information can be found.
4. Inform the Member-in-Training of early programs to attend such as, Monthly Chapter meetings, other naturalist related organization programs, the Texas Master Naturalist State Meeting, or an event in your immediate area.

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5. Talk to the Member-in-Training about your experience as a Texas Master Naturalist and volunteer projects you are involved with.
6. Provide a New Class Roster for any Member-in-Training interested in carpooling to classes
7. Provide information on how to make-up a missed class or field trip (Ref. Chapter Operating Handbook and the Chapter Management Operations and Protocols).
8. (If Applicable) Provide information on the New Class Reception/Orientation, including time, date and location; plan to carpool with them or meet them at the event.
9. (If applicable) At the New Class Reception, introduce your Member-in-Training and present a biography that can be delivered orally in less than 2 minutes. **Lengthy biographical discussions or overly praising of prior accomplishments should be avoided.** Provide your Member-in-Training with a copy of their biography by e-mail for review before the reception for comment and approval. Write a condensed version of each biography, and e-mail it to your Member-in-Training to review before releasing to any published source.
10. Plan to attend one or more classes with your Member-in-Training, if possible; coordinate attendance permission with the New Class Director, as space may be limited.
11. Emphasize the commitment and requirement of Volunteering and Advanced Training, and, how and when to report those hours.
12. Mentors should meet often throughout and following the Class schedule with the Member-in-Training on a mutually convenient basis to answer questions and help solve problems, and to help assure eventual certification of the Member-in-Training.
13. Mentors should be aware of obstacles or reasons a Member-in-Training falls behind in class, drops out of the class, fails to eventually 'Certify' or fails to remain engaged in the organization. The mentor should report such information to the Training Director, Membership Director or Board as appropriate.
14. Mentors should develop a lasting relationship with their assigned new Members that continues following the training class and should continue to provide guidance and assistance as needed. Special attention should be focused on those new Members who have not completed their initial certification or otherwise have not become engaged in Chapter volunteer activities.

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Appendix III, Volunteer Management System

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has established, through the Volunteer Management System (VMS), a platform for all Texas Master Naturalist Members to report volunteer project and advanced training hours in one uniform database.

The VMS operates with the following operational structure:

- TPWD contract and interface with VMS vendor
 - Texas Master Naturalist Program Coordinator & Assistant State Coordinator
 - VMS Management Team (state level)
 - VMS Chapter Administrators
 - VMS agency Read Only Administrators
 - Chapter Members

The VMS consists of three components:

1. eRecruiter – used by individual Members of the Chapter to enter and track both volunteer and AT hours
2. eCoordinator – used by VMS Chapter Administrators to approve and monitor hours recorded by their Chapter Members. eCoordinator is also used to oversee the statewide VMS operation
3. Administrator Management System(AMS) – used by the VMS Management Team to manage the addition or removal of VMS Chapter Administrators and agency Read Only Administrators

It is the solemn responsibility of VMS Chapter Administrators to adhere to the strictest level of confidentiality regarding the disclosure of individual Chapter Member VMS information to anyone other than the Chapter Member who created the information. Information considered confidential in VMS includes:

1. Passwords
2. CBC info
3. Any other data in VMS concerning an individual Chapter Member, except reporting of data in VMS concerning an individual's completion of a milestone listed in Article IV Section B along with the individual's total number of hours is acceptable.

The VMS is required to be used by all TMN Chapters to:

- enter, approve, and monitor all Member volunteer service project, advanced training, and initial training hours
- enroll a New Class Member-in-Training
- monitor and document the required Criminal Background Check of all Chapter Members
- control and document the transfer of Members from one Chapter to another

The VMS documentation can be found at <http://txmn.org/help>. Please see:

- *TMN VMS Volunteer Guide* (for hours entry by individual Chapter Members)
- *TMN VMS Administrator Guide* (for state and Chapter VMS Administrators)
- *New Volunteer Onboarding Process* (for Chapter educational teams)

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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).

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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.

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

December 2017



[_____] Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Program

[This document is intended to assist the TMN Program Chartered Chapter in structuring its operational procedures and to provide insight into areas of flexibility to meet local Chapter circumstances, needs and resources. This document should be a resource for all Members of the Chapter and should contain day-to-day operational procedures and references to other Chapter documents as appropriate. All local options, policies and procedures contained in the local Chapter Operating Handbook must meet the requirements of the approved and adopted Chapter Bylaws and the State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. In the final version of the Chapter Operating Handbook, the italicized words may be deleted for clarity]

December 2017

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

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{State documents are being given more attention to provide uniformity across all the Chapters of the TMN Program and thus are subject to more frequent changes and updates. It is suggested that only appendices created by the Chapter be attached to this document. State documents and state appendices should only be 'referenced' in the local Chapter Operating Handbook to avoid frequent updates to state documents' changes.}

OPERATING HANDBOOK

[_____] 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 **12 months** or a period of **24 months**, and are eligible for re-election.

2. Duties of Officers

{The Chapter is encouraged to add or modify items to the listed duties as required by the Chapter's operational requirements while adhering to the strict requirements of the Chapter's Bylaws and the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Duties listed below that are not shown as optional must be included to adhere to the Chapter's Bylaws and the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols. Duties listed as optional are not required and may be customized by the local Chapter}

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. Authorize in writing credit/debit card and PayPal transactions for accounts greater than \$1000
- g. Present a summary of the Chapter's accomplishments at the Chapter's first general meeting of the new year
- h. Prepare correspondence between the Chapter and the State Office, other Chapters or State agencies as appropriate
- i. Review Chapter's completed annual report before submission to State office
- j. 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
- k. Appoint all committee Chairs and be an ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate
- l. Appoint and present a slate of candidates for all new Director positions for review and approval by a majority vote of the elected Officers, Past-President, and Advisor(s)
- m. Become Immediate Past President upon completion of term as President
- n. 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
- o. Be an ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate
- p. 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
- q. Be the Chapter's representative to State Annual Meeting or appoint a Chapter State Representative (See Chapter State Representative under 3. Directors)
- r. The use of Chapter credit/debit cards or PayPal is highly discouraged. If a Chapter chooses to do so, and it is to be used for a transaction greater than \$1000, a written authorization from the President is required prior to proceeding with the transaction.

{Options}

- Facilitate a retreat of all newly elected Officers and Directors with the outgoing Board Members before the first Board meeting of the coming year to facilitate exchange of responsibilities and chart the Chapter's new year
- Write donor-appreciation letters
- 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. Prior to the September Board meeting, meet with the President to establish Chapter and Board meeting dates for the following year, to be presented for review and approval at the September Board meeting
- c. Participate as a member of the Annual Financial Examination Committee

{Options}

- Chair the Program Committee scheduling Chapter programs for membership meetings
- Select and secure the venue for monthly Chapter meetings for the following year based on approved Board meeting dates
- Schedule Chapter field trips
- Schedule and coordinate annual Chapter social activities

Treasurer

- a. Receive all dues and monies for the Chapter and maintain them in a Chapter bank account
- b. Develop and maintain an annual budget for the Chapter with input and 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. Present a financial report from the Chapter's financial management system at all Board meetings that includes the status of all financial transactions and bank statement reconciliations
- g. Present the financial records to the annual Financial Examination 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. Make available all financial reports and documents to any Chapter Member and/or Advisors as may be requested
- j. It is highly recommended that the Treasurer maintain the financial records of the Chapter using a financial management system such as QuickBooks, Quicken, or equivalent method software processing systems that is able to produce quality financial reports easily understandable by any Chapter Member and/or Advisor.
- k. For Chapters who maintain a 501(c)(3), the Chapter's financial management system must meet Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) using either accrual, modified accrual accounting, or modified cash basis
- l. 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

{Options}

- 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 the parliamentary authority adopted by the Chapter.

3. Directors

The duly Appointed Directors shall consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

- Immediate Past President
- Membership Director
- New Class Director
- Communications Director
- Advanced Training Director
- Volunteer Service Projects Director
- New Class Representative
- State Chapter Representative
- Advisor(s) if available to the Chapter

All Director positions are by appointment and approved according to the Chapter Bylaws ARTICLE V, F and G.

The terms and limits of office: All appointed Directors shall serve for a period of **12 months** or a period of **24 months**, and are eligible for re-election.

4. Duties of Directors

The duties of Directors shall be to assist the Officers in their respective responsibilities. In addition, their specific duties are listed under their title in the local Chapter Operating Handbook as required for the operation of the Chapter. All Directors and Advisors are voting Members of the Board. The list which follows may be considered the critical appointments for a successful Chapter operation, but is not intended to encompass all requirements a Chapter may have. Neither does it state all responsibilities that may be required of a Director's position.

{Where the detailed duties of a particular Director, such as that of the Membership, New Class Director or other, are extensive or subject to changes from time to time, it is suggested that a separate Chapter document be created and posted on the Chapter website covering that position. That document should be referenced in this document by name at that Director position, and should be sent along with this document to the State Coordinator's office.}

- 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

- Membership Director
 - a. Maintain a roster of all Chapter Members with pertinent contact information
 - b. Oversee Chapter position of Data Manager
 - c. Monthly maintain and publish names of Members achieving certification and milestone awards
 - d. Present awards frequently at Chapter meetings
 - e. Organize, publicize and manage New Class Application process
 - f. Manage the Chapter's Mentor Program (Ref. State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Appendix II, Mentor Program)
 - g. 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
 - h. Supervises the VMS Chapter Administrator(s) activity for in reviewing and approving volunteer service hours and advanced training for accuracy, correct categorization and appropriateness
 - i. Ensure all Members or a Member-in-Training receives appropriate training in the use of the TMN VMS
 - j. Compile the State Annual Report with the support of the preceding year's President and Data Manager

- New Class Director
 - a. Form the Training Committee
 - b. Serve as Manager for the New Class, planning, curriculum development, calendar, instructors, venue, reception, etc., through graduation
 - c. Recommend the class tuition to the Board of Directors
 - d. Work with Membership and Communications Directors to develop the New Class recruiting brochure
 - e. Work with the Membership Director to manage the Mentor Program and the new class application process.
 - f. Ensures each Member-in-Training receives appropriate training to use the TMN VMS.

- Communications Director
 - a. Oversee a committee(s) or positions performing the functions of:
 - Publicity Manager

- Newsletter Editor
- Webmaster
- Outreach
- Historian/Archivist
- b. Write publicity press releases for print and electronic media covering New Class Application, Chapter meetings and special events
- c. Arrange for printing and distribution of New 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 Director
 - a. Develop a form for Members to request that a program be considered for an Advanced Training Code
 - b. Review and recommend for approval or disapproval all Advanced Training requests and events.
 - c. Assign Advanced Training Codes and Advanced Training Titles to qualifying events and notify Chapter membership of approved Advanced Training opportunities
 - d. Set up and manage Advanced Training opportunities in the Chapter's TMN VMS
 - e. Use State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI. Advanced Training Requirements, including VMS, to review and approve Advanced Training Codes
- Volunteer Service Projects Director
 - a. Develop a form for Members to request a Volunteer Service Project Code
 - b. Review and recommend for approval or disapproval all Chapter volunteer service project opportunity requests using the State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VII Volunteer Service Requirements as a guide to review and approve.
 - c. Use State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI. Volunteer Service Requirements, including VMS, to review and approve Volunteer Service Project Codes
 - d. Ensures that a complete description of those Project activities for which volunteer service hours may be accumulated. Ensures detailed descriptions are promptly posted in Chapter VMS Opportunities.
 - e. Assign Volunteer Service Project Codes to qualifying projects and publicize to Chapter Members
- New Class Representative
 - a. Represent the New Class as a member on the Board attending all Board meetings
 - b. Participate as a member of the New Class Committee
 - c. Participate as a member of the annual Financial Examination Committee

- d. Attend selected New Class training sessions to provide the new class insight into the New Class Representative Board position
- Chapter State Representative
{This position should be assumed by the President or appointed from the Board membership by the President.
 - 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, only if:
 - a. three business days' notice is given to each person entitled to participate in the meeting and includes relevant information to be discussed; and
 - b. the system provides access to the meeting in a manner or using a method by which each person participating in the meeting can communicate with each other; and
 - c. motions are made and votes are recorded in the written minutes of the meeting; and
 - d. documentation of each of the requirements of paragraph a, b, and c above must be contained in the secretary's minutes.
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

{The Chapter must perform the following functions as outlined below; however, the Chapter may combine functions or reorganize committee structures as necessary}

- Executive Committee
- Training Committee
- Membership Committee
- Volunteer Service Projects Committee
- Advanced Training Committee

{The following functions are required functions of the Chapter}

- 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 Committee

- a. Serves under the leadership of the New Class Director for the Chapter's training program.
 - b. Plans, implements and evaluates the Chapter training curriculum and develops training calendar
 - c. Acquires the TMN State Curriculum for each new Member-in-Training and prepares additional class materials
 - d. Select all presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts and audio-visual equipment needed for the class/presentation
 - e. Arranges for speaker gifts, travel, lodging needs, confirmation, and thank you letters
 - f. Arranges for publicity – newspapers, flyers, brochures, electronic media
 - g. Arranges for training venue, and required facilities equipment for all class periods
 - h. Facilitates class field outings/trips
 - i. Hosts initial New Class social and presentation reception
 - j. Arranges for refreshment amenities during class periods
- **Membership Committee**
Serves under the leadership of the Membership Director, typically composed of the Data Manager(s).
 - 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 a 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. Provides support for compilation of the State Annual Report
 - e. Supports the Membership Director in ensuring that VMS time reported is accurate and fitting of 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
 - **Volunteer Service Projects Committee**
 - a. Supports the Volunteer Service Projects Director in reviewing, organizing, assigning codes and notifying Chapter Members of approved Volunteer Service opportunities and projects.
 - b. Assists in drafting a complete description of those Project activities for which volunteer service hours may be accumulated and assures such detail descriptions are promptly posted in the Chapter VMS Opportunities.
 - c. Assists in managing project opportunities with the Chapter's TMN VMS
 - **Advanced Training Committee**
 - a. Supports Advanced Training Director 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

{The following functions are optional committees the Chapter may desire to develop and adopt. Not all options to the Chapter are listed here.}

- Program Committee
 - a. Assists the Vice President in obtaining programs, as necessary

- Newsletter Committee
 - a. Collects, produces, and distributes Chapter and state TMN news in the Chapter's Newsletter
 - b. Solicits and accepts contributions from Officers, Directors and Members for the Newsletter
 - c. Assists the Chapter Communications Director, as necessary

- Outreach Committee
 - a. Coordinates the Chapter outreach activities under the direction of the Communications Director
 - b. Ensures that outreach booths are staffed when planned
 - c. Acquires and maintains a Chapter display board
 - d. Coordinates activities with the Chapter Webmaster
 - e. Assists the Training Committee in promoting the Chapter
 - f. Assists the New Class Director and Membership Director as necessary

- Historian/Archivist
 - Maintains the historical records of the Chapter under the direction of the Communications Director
 - a. Historical records include but are not limited to: training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook and Chapter Newsletter archives
 - b. Assists the Chapter Secretary as necessary

- Host Committee
 - a. Assists the New Class Director with class social activities
 - b. Coordinates General Membership meeting social activities

2. AD HOC Committees

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

{The Chapter must perform the following functions outlined below}

- Annual Financial Examination Committee. Responsible for conducting the annual examination of the financial records of the Chapter. Members will include the Vice-President, New Class Representative, Secretary and Advisor(s) if applicable. The President appoints the Chair. The Treasurer provides the financial records for review. The results of the Financial Examination 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 formed by Chapter Members who are appointed by the Chapter President. The committee will present their slate of Officer candidates to the President, taking into account the following attributes.

The Officer Nomination Committee shall endeavor to select candidates from the Chapter membership who demonstrate appropriate skills for managing the office of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer; and where possible, with an eye to increasing diversity. Diversity being not limited to sex, ethnicity, creed, or national origin, but including attributes such as age, sexual orientation, gender identity, formal education, background experience, and county of residence. Preference may be given to candidates whose total time in any Board capacity and total time of service in a single Board position is less than other candidates for the same position. Selection of candidates based on these additional diversity attributes would maintain experience and continuity for the Board while recruiting new Members to serve. Officer candidates must be Certified Members of the Chapter, except for Chapters in their first year of operation.

The Officer Nomination Committee must review the required skills, duties and responsibilities of each Officer position with the proposed candidate to assess the candidate's understanding and willingness to perform the functions of the office prior to nominating the candidate for any position.

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. The committee may serve at the request of the incoming President upon election to present a slate of Director Candidates.

The TMN State Program Coordinator may provide oversight to a Chapter's nomination process.

- Director Nomination Committee. Proceed in accordance with Chapter Bylaws, Article V, F. 3 Appointment Process for Board Members other than New Class Director. The Director Nomination Committee may be created at the discretion of the incoming President.

The incoming President will chair the Director Nomination Committee formed by Chapter Members who are appointed by the incoming Chapter President. The

committee will present their slate of Director candidates to the incoming President, taking into account the following attributes.

The Director Nomination Committee shall endeavor to select candidates from the Chapter membership who demonstrate appropriate skills and where possible, with an eye to increasing diversity. Diversity being not limited to sex, ethnicity, creed, or national origin, but including attributes such as age, sexual orientation, gender identity, formal education, background experience, and county of residence. Preference may be given to candidates whose total time in any Board capacity and total time of service in a single Board position is less than other candidates for the same position. Selection of candidates based on these additional diversity attributes would maintain experience and continuity for the Board while recruiting new Members to serve.

The Director Nomination Committee must review the required skills, duties and responsibilities of each Director 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.

The incoming President will present a slate of Director candidates to the newly elected Officers, Past President and Advisor(s) for confirmation by a majority vote of this Executive Committee prior to the end of the calendar year in which they are elected.

The TMN State Program Coordinator may provide oversight to a Chapter's nomination process.

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

II: MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a Chapter is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, age (must be 18 years of age or older), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability or national origin. All persons who are Chapter Members or persons applying for TMN membership must submit to, and pass the required Criminal Background Check.

Member Categories (Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article IV, Membership)

- Texas Master Naturalist-in-Training
 - Texas Master Naturalist Pledge
 - Certified Texas Master Naturalist
 - Texas Master Naturalist Member
 - Honorary Texas Master Naturalist
1. Where Chapters have established dues, by a majority vote of Chapter Members, a qualifying Member must be current in the payment of those dues as defined by the local Chapter Operating Handbook.

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. 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

{It is recommended that Appendices be added pertaining to frequently referenced documents helpful to both Board and Chapter Members that are not already available on the state or Chapter's website. Referencing documents by including the website URL where appropriate provides helpful guidance to the reader, while allowing flexibility if changes are made to those documents outside of the COH approval process. When including language from the Chapter Bylaws, the language must be verbatim. Documentation from other state sources should also be included as written. Any appendices added or modified must also be approved by the Chapter membership as would any other change to the Chapter Operating Handbook}

Examples are:

- Criteria for Evaluating New Class Applications
- FAQs specific to the Chapter and not contained in the Chapter Management and Operations Protocols FAQs

BYLAWS



South Texas Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Program™

[This state template must be used by all Master Naturalist Chapters to adopt and amend their Chapter's Bylaws. Chapter Bylaws must be adopted and amended according to Article X, Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws.]

12/28/2018

12/28/2018

12/28/2018

BYLAWS

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BYLAWS

South Texas Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

ARTICLE I

Chapter Relation to State Program/Organization

- A. Parent Organization. The parent organization is the Texas Master Naturalist Program™ or “State Program”.
- B. State Program Sponsors. *Sponsors for the statewide Texas Master Naturalist volunteer program are the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Sponsors in the Texas Master Naturalist program are those agencies or organizations taking responsibility for the state and local Chapter.*
- C. State Committee Role. The State Committee is comprised of Certified Texas Master Naturalist volunteers and employees of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The State Committee sets the minimum standards and curriculum requirements of the statewide program. The Committee also reviews and approves new Chapter development and educational curriculum.
- D. Texas Master Naturalist State Coordinator Role. The Texas Master Naturalist State Coordinator manages the day to day activities of the State Program and provides guidance to all chapters and assists new chapters to become operational. The Coordinator has oversight authority to oversee and audit any Texas Master Naturalist Chapters' practices and procedures for compliance to State Documents and may exercise appropriate remedial action as required up to and including disbanding the offending Chapter.
- E. Commitment to Texas Master Naturalist State Program Requirements. In return for the general supervision, guidance, supplies, resources, and cooperative helpfulness afforded by the statewide Texas Master Naturalist Program a Chapter of the Master Naturalist Program agrees to comply with all requirements, guidelines, and standards and to produce and submit an annual report conforming to the standards set forth by the TMN State Committee.
- F. Bylaws Compliance. All Texas Master Naturalist Chapters must adopt Chapter Bylaws using only the language specified in the State Bylaws Template selecting two Chapter specific options, 1) concerning the ‘Term of Officers’ (see Bylaws, Article V, G.) and 2) the Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Chapter Bylaws adoptions and amendments must meet the procedures stated in Article X, Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws.
- G. Revocation Compliance. In the event this chapter ceases to follow Master Naturalist state program guidelines the Chapter agrees to abide by revocation of the chapter’s Charter along with the right to use the Texas Master Naturalist name, title and trademarks.

ARTICLE II

Chapter Sponsors, Partners and Donors

- A. Chapter Sponsors. Chapter Sponsors for a Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program are permanent and committed to a long-term relationship with the Chapter. Chapter sponsors provide advisors to the chapter. Local Chapter sponsors have been identified through the Chapter's Charter Application.
- B. Partners. Partners for a Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program are providers of resources in exchange for volunteer service. Partners and the resources provided for a Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program are outlined in the Chapter's Annual Report to the State Program Office and the State Committee. Partners for the local Chapter may change on a regular basis depending on the project needs of the community and the resource needs of the Chapter.
- C. Donors. Donors of a Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist program are those businesses, organizations or persons giving, donating or presenting money or supplies for Chapter activities for no return compensation from the Chapter. Donors and their donations are reported through the Chapter's annual report to the State Program Office and the TMN State Committee.

ARTICLE III

Purpose

- A. Overall Purpose. *A Chapter is not organized for profit, nor shall any of its net earnings inure in whole or in part to members, employees, or other individuals. In support of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, this Chapter shall be an educational, non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to fulfilling the state program's mission 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 with objectives of the following:*
1. Natural Resource Service. *To provide, promote and fulfill volunteer service while recognizing and utilizing sound natural resource management, enhancement and conservation practices in accordance with the partners' and program's mission.*
 2. Public Understanding. *To improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance education efforts within local communities.*
 3. Enhance Education and Outreach. *To enhance existing natural resources education and outreach activities by providing natural resources training at the local level, thereby developing a supply of dedicated and informed volunteers.*
 4. Volunteer Network. *To develop a Texas Master Naturalist volunteer network that can be self-sufficient.*

- B. Advocacy Prohibition. *No part of the activities of the Chapter shall be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas or businesses and personal endeavors, by propaganda or otherwise, using the Master Naturalist name or themselves as a Texas Master Naturalist.*

ARTICLE IV Membership

A. Membership Requirements

1. Minimum Statewide Requirements. Membership in the Chapter shall be achieved by completing the Texas Master Naturalist State minimum requirements of 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences, 8 hours of Advanced Training and 40 hours of volunteer service. (Reference ‘Master Naturalist™ Program’, Chapter Management Guidelines, Requirements section)
2. Membership in the Chapter is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, age (must be 18 years of age or older), sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

B. Member Categories

1. Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training. Volunteer Participant of an official class from the first day of class to the end of the training period continuing until the Trainee has completed the Chapter Training requirements.
2. Texas Master Naturalist Pledge. Volunteer Participant who has completed the Chapter Training requirements and has yet to complete the State or Chapter minimum Certification requirements for advanced training and volunteer service to become 'Certified' within the calendar year following the end of the training period.
3. Certified Texas Master Naturalist. Volunteer or previously Certified Texas Master Naturalist who has completed the State or Chapter minimum Certification requirements (Reference ‘Master Naturalist™ Program’, *Chapter Management Guidelines*, Certification section) for advanced training and volunteer service hours for the year.
4. Texas Master Naturalist Member. Volunteer who has previously been a Certified Texas Master Naturalist but has not yet to complete the required volunteer service of 40 hours, and an additional 8 hours of Advanced Training toward re-certification requirements for more than one year.

- C. Voting Membership. Voting membership in the Chapter shall be extended to Texas Master Naturalist Member-in-Training, Texas Master Naturalist Pledge, Certified Texas Master Naturalists, and Texas Master Naturalist Members in “Good Standing” for the current fiscal year. “Good Standing” is defined as current in dues, if required, and in compliance with Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

- D. Honorary Membership. An Honorary Texas Master Naturalist is a person who has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of the activities of the Chapter. The candidate typically is not a Texas Master Naturalist. Honorary Members shall be entitled to all of the

privileges as a Texas Master Naturalist Member of the Chapter without payment of dues, including the right to vote as a Member of the Chapter.

The names of candidates for Honorary Membership may be submitted, by any Chapter Member, to the Chapter Board for approval. With Board approval, the candidate for Honorary Membership will be placed before the general membership for a vote. Honorary members shall be selected by the affirmative two-thirds voice vote of the membership present at any General Membership Meeting..

- E. Disciplinary Action or Termination
 - 1. Voluntary Termination. A member may voluntarily terminate membership in the Master Naturalist program by written communication to the Chapter Board of Directors.
 - 2. Disciplinary Action or Removal. Removal of a member from the membership roll or disciplinary action of a member shall follow the Master Naturalist™ program Chapter Management Guidelines section on Policy and Procedures for the Disciplining and/or Removal of Members.
- F. Membership Transfer. Transfer to or from the Chapter should follow the Master Naturalist™ program Chapter Management Guidelines section of Membership Transfer.
- G. Multiple Chapter Membership. Membership in Multiple Chapters is not permitted.

ARTICLE V

Officers and Other Board Members

- A. Officers. The Officers of the Chapter shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Officers shall be elected by the Chapter membership at the last General Membership Meeting of the calendar year.
- B. Chapter Advisors.
 - 1. Home Base. Advisors are typically staff members of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and/or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.
 - 2. Board Membership and Vacancies. Chapter Advisors are permanent members of the Board. When a vacancy arises in an Advisor position, the replacement is selected collaboratively between the TMN state coordinator, the Chapter President and the exiting Advisor.
 - 3. Duties.
 - a. Assists the Chapter in upholding the missions, goals, objectives, operational framework and activities of their respective agency/organization and the Master Naturalist statewide program.
 - b. Ensures that the Chapter operates under the mission, goals and objectives of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and/or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

C. State Representative – Duties

1. Represent the Chapter in State level matters of the Texas Master Naturalist program
2. Attend the semi-annual State Volunteer Representatives Council meetings.

D. Other Board Members. Other Board Members must include the Past-President position and other Board Members as required in the Chapter Operating Handbook.

E. Election of Officers

1. Officers Elected. The only elected positions are those of the Officers.
2. Election Process
 - a. Nomination. The Officer Nominating Committee, chaired by the Past-President with a minimum of two additional ad-hoc members who are selected by the President with Board approval, shall submit a slate of candidates for Officers to the President. The President must publish the slate to the Chapter membership in writing 15 days prior to the last General Membership Meeting before the end of each calendar year.
 - b. State Coordination. The State Master Naturalist Coordinator(s) may provide oversight and additional input to an individual Chapter's nomination process.
 - c. Nominations from the Floor. Nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor prior to a vote at the last General Membership Meeting of the calendar year.
 - d. Election. The election shall take place by secret ballot, or as stated in the local Chapter Operating Handbook, at the last General Membership Meeting of the calendar year and winners determined by a simple majority.
 - e. Single Candidate. If only one candidate is nominated for an office, that candidate may be elected by voice vote.
 - f. Assumption of Office. The newly elected Officers shall assume their duties within the month of January of the following calendar year.

F. Appointment of Board Members

1. Appointed Positions. All positions other than the Officers, Past-President and Advisors are appointed positions.
2. New Class Director Appointment. The Officer Nominating Committee or an ad-hoc committee selected by the sitting President shall recommend candidate(s) for the New Class Director position to the sitting Board for confirmation following the last formal training class session of each year. The New Class Director shall assume his/her duties following appointment and confirmation by the sitting Board.
3. Appointment Process for Board Members other than New Class Director
 - a. Recommendation of Candidates. The incoming President must recommend candidates for the appointed positions to the newly elected Officers following the last General Membership Meeting. The President may use the Officer Nominating Committee or may appoint a separate ad hoc committee to recommend candidates for

his/her consideration.

- b. Selection. All appointed positions must be confirmed by a majority vote of the newly elected Officers, Past-President and Advisor(s) prior to the end of the calendar year in which they are elected.
- c. Assumption of Office. The newly appointed Board Members shall assume their duties within the month of January of the following calendar year.

G. Terms and Limits. All members of the Board of Directors shall serve for a period of 12 months or a period of 24 months , and are eligible for re-election or re-appointment.

H. Vacancies. If any Officer or other member(s) of the Board of Directors resigns or is unable to fulfill their duties of the office, the President shall select a slate of candidates qualified to fill the vacancy and be approved by a majority vote of the remaining Board members for the remaining unexpired term of the vacancy.

I. Removal of Officers and Board Members.

- 1. Attendance. Any Officer absent from three consecutive Board of Directors meetings without notice and/or excused absence shall be subject to removal by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors. Any Board member other than an Officer absent from three consecutive Board of Directors meetings without notice and/or excused absence shall be subject to removal by a simple majority vote of the Officers of the Chapter.
- 2. For Cause. Any Officer in serious malfeasance of their responsibilities or behavior inconsistent with the principles of the Texas Master Naturalist Chapter may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the remaining Board of Directors. Any Board member other than an Officer in serious malfeasance of their responsibilities or behavior inconsistent with the principles of the Texas Master Naturalist Chapter may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Officers of the Chapter.

ARTICLE VI

Board of Directors and Executive Committee

A. Composition, Rights and Responsibilities

- 1. Board Composition. The Board of Directors shall include the Officers, the State Representative, the Advisors and other Board members as shown in the local Chapter Operating Handbook.
- 2. Authority. The Board of Directors shall have the power to conduct the business of the Chapter as defined in these Bylaws with the approval of the membership.
- 3. Authority Boundaries. All resolutions and actions that do not fall within the assigned duties of the Board of Directors or are not assigned by these Bylaws will be presented to, and voted upon by a quorum of the general membership at a duly called and convened general membership meeting.
- 4. Nomenclature. The term "Board" when used in these Bylaws in relation to any power or

duty requiring collective action, means "Board of Directors."

5. Eligibility. All Board members must be Texas Master Naturalist Members or Certified Texas Master Naturalists in "Good Standing" at the time of election. The only exception is that the Advisor(s) does not have to be a Texas Master Naturalist. "Good Standing" is defined as current in dues and in compliance with Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.
6. Voting. All members of the Board have full voting privileges. Resolutions or actions of the Board of Directors shall be effective if passed by the majority vote (or 2/3rd if applicable) of those Board members present at a duly called and convened meeting of the Board of Directors, subject, however, to the quorum requirements listed in Article VII - "Meetings".
7. Compensation. Board members will receive no compensation for serving on the Board other than expenses that are approved by the Board.

B. Executive Committee

1. Composition. The Executive Committee shall include the Officers of the Chapter.
2. Authority. In the event that Board action is required before a Board meeting can be called or the matter does not warrant calling a special meeting, the Executive Committee may take action with the same authority and boundaries as the Board. Such action must be reported to the entire Board within one day of taking the action.

ARTICLE VII
Meetings

A. Board Meetings

1. Frequency: The Board of Directors may meet as often as required but shall meet at least quarterly.
2. Time and Location. Meetings shall be conducted at a time and location designated by the Board of Directors.
3. Notification. The Chapter membership shall be notified of all Board meetings at least ten days prior to the meeting.
4. Open meeting. Attendance at the meeting shall be open to the public as well as all Chapter members.
5. Quorum. A majority of the Board members shall constitute a quorum.
6. Alternate Format. Meetings may be held by teleconference or other remote electronic means, so long as a quorum is present and the electronic media permits the democratic participation of all Directors.

B. General Membership Meetings

1. Frequency. General Membership meetings or other Chapter-sponsored activities will be held at least once every two months. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the President.
2. Time and Location. Meetings shall be conducted at a time and location designated by the Board of Directors.
3. Notification. Notification of each meeting shall be published in written form via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to all members at least ten days prior to the meeting.
4. Quorum. Those voting members present at each duly called and convened meeting shall constitute a quorum.
5. Governance. The acts of the majority of the voting members present at each duly called and convened meeting shall be the acts of the general membership.

C. Last General Membership Meeting (Election of Officers)

1. Scheduling. The last general Chapter meeting of the calendar year will be known as the last General Membership Meeting.
2. Election of Officers. Election of Officers will be held at the last General Membership Meeting.
3. Quorum. Those voting members present at a duly called and convened last General Membership Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

D. Special Meetings

1. Calling a Special Meeting. A special meeting may be called at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
2. Notification. Special meetings shall be announced to members by phone, mail, e-mail or other equivalent means at least two days before the meeting date.
3. Quorum. A quorum is 25% of the voting members.

E. Board Action Without a Meeting.

1. Rationale. In the event that Board action is required before a meeting can be called or the matter does not warrant calling a special meeting, Board action may be taken without a meeting.
2. Voting. Action may be taken by phone or e-mail by an affirmative vote of a simple

majority of the voting members of the Board. Such action must be reported to the entire Board within one day of taking the action.

ARTICLE VIII

Compliance with Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

- A. **Compliance.** All members of the Chapter will adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as established by the Texas Master Naturalist Program.
- B. **Violation.** Violation of either the Code of Ethics or the Standards of Conduct is a serious matter that reflects unfavorably on the entire Chapter. A formal process to investigate a charge of misconduct against a Member of any status, as well as disciplinary actions for those found in violation of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct has been established by the Texas Master Naturalist Program and will be used to deal with these violations.

ARTICLE IX

Financial Controls

- A. **Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.
- B. **Chapter Funds**
 - 1. **Signature Authority.** The Treasurer or President shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of Chapter money or notes up to \$1000.00 for the Chapter. The Treasurer and President or the Treasurer and one other Officer approved by the Board shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes of \$1000.00 or greater for the Chapter. Writing multiple checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of Chapter money or notes to the same entity for the same purpose to avoid the two signature requirement is prohibited.
 - 2. **Expenditure Limits.** Expenditure limits will be established and approved by the Board of Directors as set forth in the Chapter Operating Handbook.
- C. **Financial Examination.** The Chapter will conduct an examination of the financial records of the Chapter prior to the last scheduled Board meeting of the calendar year to review the Chapter's financial activities since the prior examination. The Treasurer will present the Chapter Financial Books to an ad hoc Financial Examination Committee. Results of the financial examination will be reported to the Board of Directors for approval at the last scheduled Board meeting of the calendar year. The report or a summary thereof may also be presented to the membership at the first general membership meeting of the new calendar year.
- D. **Gifts and donations.**
 - 1. **Authority.** The Chapter is authorized to accept and receive contributions, donations, and grants from any and all sources.

2. Endorsement. Acceptance of any grant or gift - restricted or unrestricted - does not imply any form of endorsement by the Chapter for the source, services, products, or policies. Nor does it imply any benefit - past, present, or future - to be granted by the Chapter. Acceptance of any contract will not imply any endorsement, benefit or product beyond the deliverable services and products expressly contained in the contract.
3. Right of Refusal. It will be the general policy of the Chapter to accept contributions from any source. However, the Chapter retains the right to refuse any gift where, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, the reputation or perceived image of the grantor may be deemed injurious to the Chapter.

ARTICLE X

Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws

- A. State Bylaws Template. The Texas Master Naturalist Program provides a template for all Chapters to use to adopt and amend individual Chapter Bylaws. All Chapter Bylaws must be uniform across all Chapters and are to be adopted verbatim by each Chapter selecting an option for the 'Term of Officers' and an option for an Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Chapters that desire to meet additional requirements to be recognized as a tax-exempt organization may or may not adopt the Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters.
- B. Approval Before Vote. In order to ensure consistency, continuity and adherence of statewide guidelines, the initial Chapter Bylaws and any subsequent proposed amendments to Chapter Bylaws must be submitted in writing for approval by the Chapter Advisors and then the Director of the Texas Master Naturalist Program as a representative of the TMN State Committee before being submitted to the Chapter's general membership for a vote.
- C. Notification. Notice of the proposed adoption of Chapter Bylaws and all proposed amendments to the Chapter Bylaws with the date, time and place of consideration shall be presented in written form via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to members at least 30 days prior to consideration by the membership.
- D. Membership Vote. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members constituting a quorum after the proposed amendment has been approved by the Chapter's Advisors and the Director of the Texas Master Naturalist Program acting on behalf of the TMN State Committee.

ARTICLE XI

Dissolution

- A. Dissolution Procedures. The Chapter may be dissolved via either of the following procedures:
 1. By The Membership.
 - a. Prior to a vote on dissolution, the State Director of the Texas Master Naturalist Program must approve the proposed dissolution.
 - b. The proposal for dissolution must be presented at a regular or special meeting with 30 days announcement to the membership prior to the vote.

- c. A vote of 2/3 of the certified members present at the regular or special meeting is required for dissolution.
- d. A letter must be submitted to the State Committee stating the results of the vote and why the Chapter chose to dissolve.

2. By The TMN State Committee.

- a. This action shall be taken for reasons of gross malfeasance or serious violation of the ethics and standards of conduct of the Texas Master Naturalist organization by the Chapter and the belief that the situation is endemic and irreconcilable within the Chapter.
- b. The Program Coordinator and State Committee will follow the procedures defined in the Chapter Management Guidelines.
- c. The Program Coordinator will give notice of this action to the Chapter President and Board of Directors.

3. Merger With Another Chapter. As an alternative, a Chapter may petition the State Program Coordinator to dissolve the Chapter and to merge with an adjoining Chapter. The acquiring Chapter's membership and Board of Directors must be in agreement with the merger and formally approve the acquisition. The 'dissolving' Chapter's request must follow the guidelines of ARTICLE XI ,paragraph 'A' 1.

B. Distribution of Remaining Assets.

- 1. Dissolution Via ARTICLE XI , 'A' 1 & 2. Upon the dissolution of the Chapter, its net remaining assets shall be distributed to the State Program Coordinator to continue support and resources for the Chapters and Statewide Program or to other non-profit or charitable organizations involved in our Master Naturalist program activities as approved by the Chapter's Advisors and the State Program Coordinator.
- 2. Dissolution Via ARTICLE XI, 'A' 3. The Chapter requesting dissolution may petition the State Program Coordinator to transfer their remaining assets to the acquiring Chapter, to be held in trust for a nominal period of time, to be utilized by the acquiring Chapter to support activities in counties of the dissolving Chapter to support activities consistent with the mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program. At the end of that nominal period, the remaining funds would become the assets of the acquiring Chapter.

[The following Addendum for 501(c)3 chapters may be adopted by any Chapter]

Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters

Article I – Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Organization or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Article II – Definitions

1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family: a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, b. A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing Board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III – Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing Board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing Board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining Board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing Board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest

- b. The chairperson of the governing Board of committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing Board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing Board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
4. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy
- a. If the governing Board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing Board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV – Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing Board and all committees with Board-delegated power shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for the discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V – Compensation

- a. A voting member of the governing Board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the governing Board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI – Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing Board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with policy, and
- d. Understands the Organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII – Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII – Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing Board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

PROTOCOLS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER OF TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

Voted Upon and Approved by Chapter Membership

21 January 2020

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER



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Protocols, Policies and Procedures Manual

Purpose:

The Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter Protocols, Policies and Procedures (PPP) Manual serves as the Chapter Operating Handbook. This is intended to define and document policies, management guidelines, and operating procedures. Refer to the State Bylaws for any content issues not addressed by this document. This manual is designed to:

- Maintain a current, easily accessible guide to all policies and procedures.
- Facilitate continuity of operation regardless of changes in officers and committees.
- Ensure the periodic review and updating of all policies and procedures.
- Notify the membership of policies and procedures.

Section I: Definitions

Chapter Name

The name of this organization is the Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter (referred to as the “Chapter”). It may also be referred to in this document as the South Texas Chapter or STMN.

Parent Organization

Texas Master Naturalist Program™ or State Program.

State Program Objectives

1. Improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance education and conservation efforts within local communities.
2. Enhance existing natural resources education and outreach activities by providing natural resources training at the local level, thereby developing a supply of dedicated and informed volunteers.
3. Develop a Texas Master Naturalist coordinated volunteer network.

State Program Sponsors

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Chapter Mission

Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter, a nonprofit organization, takes the mission from the State parent organization: “[T]o 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.”

Reporting Volunteer and Advanced Training (AT) Activities

Volunteer service and training are reported through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Volunteer Management System (VMS) and assist the TMN State Program in its administrative functions. Our chapter is required to use the Service Activity Codes when reporting hours. ([Appendix A](#)).

Insurance

Coverage is available by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department as well as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for approved volunteer activities. Each Chapter is responsible to perform due diligence and to understand the limits for all aspects of insurance coverage: personal liability, volunteer event property liability, and Chapter Directors and Officer (D&O) Insurance as pertains to the local Chapter. Resources for this subject can be found at: State Office of Risk Management (SORM) – <http://www.sorm.state.tx.us> and the Texas A&M University System Office of Risk Management.

Officer

An Officer shall mean an elected official of the South Texas Chapter: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Executive Board

The Executive Board consists of the elected officers for the South Texas Chapter: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and immediate Past President.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors are the elected officials, the immediate Past President, the committee chairs, the new intern class representative and the chapter advisor(s) of the South Texas Chapter.

Standing Committees

Standing committees carry out the missions of the Chapter. Committee chairs are appointed by the President for a term of one calendar year, with the consent of the Board of Directors. Committee chairs choose their own committee members. Current standing committees for STMN are:

- Membership.
- Education.
- PPP.
- Historian / Archivist.
- Outreach / Communication.
- Finance.

Special Committees

An ad hoc committee may be appointed by the President to perform a specific task. Once the task is completed, the committee is disbanded. Special committees likely to be appointed include:

- Nominating.
- PPP Manual Review.

Members-in-Training

Individuals currently enrolled in the Texas Master Naturalist training course may participate in activities of the Chapter, but do not have voting privileges and may not hold elective office or serve on Committees. Members-in-Training must participate in a minimum of 40 hours of initial training to become Interns.

Members-in-Training who fail to meet certification requirements will be required to complete comparable classes as approved by the Board of Directors.

Interns

Individuals who have completed a minimum of 40 hours of training, but who have not completed the requirements for certification as a Texas Master Naturalist, are Interns and may participate in all activities of the Chapter, may vote, and may hold committee positions. Interns must attain certification by completing a minimum of 8 hours of approved AT and a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service within 12 months (15 months from Orientation Training) of the end of their initial training. Failure to do so may result in being placed in inactive status. The Executive Board may consider an exception to this rule in special circumstances.

Certified Texas Master Naturalists

Individuals who have completed the requirements and received certification as a Texas Master Naturalist are Certified Members and may participate in all activities of the Chapter, may vote, and may hold elected office. In order to retain the Certified Member status, members must perform a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service and receive 8 hours of AT each year. A Certified Member in good standing who does not maintain certification for any given year will be classified as a Texas Master Naturalist Member until such time as he/she has completed recertification.

Certified Members who become inactive may become active by requesting reinstatement. Their previous hours and milestones will be verified, a criminal background check performed, and dues must be paid for the current year. Since they were previously certified, no training will be necessary. Their status will be Texas Master Naturalist Member until such time as they have completed the recertification requirements.

Texas Master Naturalist Members

A person who has not completed certification for the current year.

Transfer of Membership

When a Texas Master Naturalist Member wishes to become active in the South Texas Chapter, that member may do so under the following conditions, given approval by the Board of Directors:

- A person who wishes to transfer to STMN from another chapter must be processed through State ([Appendix B](#)).
- The South Texas Chapter will accept all volunteer service and AT hours certified in the transfer correspondence from the former chapter. The transferee will not owe dues for the year in which the transfer occurs if he/she has paid the current year's dues in the chapter from which they are transferring; otherwise, current dues are paid to the South Texas Chapter upon transfer.
- The transferee must agree to adhere to all the rules and policies of the South Texas Chapter.
- It is strongly recommended that a transferee arrange with the Initial Training Director to complete training that is specific to the South Texas area.
- Master Naturalists may transfer from any other chapter within the State of Texas.

In compliance with State requirements, South Texas Chapter Members may not carry membership in multiple chapters.

Texas Master Naturalist Honorary Members

The Chapter may bestow honorary membership to individuals with similar objectives of the Chapter.

Membership VMS Status

- TMN Active – certified, paying dues and reporting hours.
- TMN Inactive – not paying dues, not reporting hours or moved without transferring to another chapter.
- Not Eligible – honorary members, advisors, ineligible, deceased.

Good Standing

Members are considered to be in good standing if current in dues payment and in compliance with Texas Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct ([Appendix C](#)). Interns and Certified Texas Master Naturalists in good standing may vote and hold committee positions. Only Certified Texas Master Naturalists in good standing may hold elected office and chair Committees and Subcommittees.

Partners

A Chapter Partner provides resources (defined below) to the Chapter in exchange for and support of volunteer services. Chapter Partners may change depending on project and resource needs. The partnership can be dissolved at any time by written request from either party. A list of Partners is available at [Appendix D](#).

Limited Partners

Limited Partners provide the STMN members with volunteer opportunities that meet the Chapter mission but provide no resources in support of the activity. A list of current Limited Partners is available at [Appendix D](#).

Partner Resources

Partner resources include supplies, equipment, or other assets necessary to carry out a volunteer project. Partners may provide meeting space or other support for conducting Chapter business.

Donors

A donor is a business, organization, or person giving money or other resources to the Chapter with no compensation in return.

Parliamentary Authority

All Chapter meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Section II: Chapter Policies

State TMN Requirements

The South Texas Chapter agrees to comply with State requirements and standards in return for the general supervision, guidance, supplies, resources, and cooperative helpfulness afforded by the Texas Master Naturalist Program. The Chapter agrees to produce and submit an annual report conforming to the standards set forth by the State Advisory Committee.

Texas Master Naturalist Title

The title, Texas Master Naturalist or Master Naturalist (in Texas), is a trademark of the Texas Master Naturalist Program and is to be used only by individuals trained through recognized Texas Master Naturalist Chapters. The Texas Master Naturalist title may not be used for advertising or other business, personal, or professional purposes. The Texas Master Naturalist title may not be identified with any particular political viewpoint and may not be used by groups or individuals as they participate in political advocacy. The title is to be used only when doing unpaid volunteer work associated with and approved by the program. Violation of the policy concerning the use of the title of Texas Master Naturalist is grounds for disciplinary action or possible grounds for revoking the charter of the Chapter.

Chapter Description

The South Texas Chapter consists primarily of Nueces, Kenedy and Kleberg Counties but also serves the surrounding counties.

Chapter Management

The management authority of the Chapter is the will of the members in good standing expressed by attending membership meetings and proposing and voting on motions at those meetings.

Membership

Membership in the Chapter is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, age (must be 18 years of age or older), gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or national origin.

New members come into the Chapter through the training program. Applicants are accepted in this order:

- South Texas Chapter area applicants deferred from the previous year's training.
- Former members needing to retake training.
- Applicants from the South Texas Chapter area.
- Other applicants deferred from the previous year's training.
- Applicants from adjacent counties with no TMN chapter.
- Applicants from nearby counties that have a TMN chapter.
- Applicants from other areas of Texas.

Classification of Membership

Member categories are: Members-in-Training, Interns, Certified Texas Master Naturalists, Texas Master Naturalist Members and Texas Master Naturalist Honorary Members.

Dues

- The Executive Board may propose a change in the annual dues payable to the Chapter. All members must be notified 30 days prior to the meeting at which the dues change will be addressed. A majority vote of members present is required for passage.
- Certified and previously certified members owe dues in January of each year. Members who have not yet certified and Members-in-Training owe dues beginning in January of the year following their required training (e.g. begin Member-in-Training Program in August 2016, dues paid in January 2018).
- All dues must be paid by the end of March for the current calendar year. Failure to pay dues will result in suspension of active status at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Financial Policies**Chapter Funds**

All Chapter funds shall be handled in accordance with the State's Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP) and Best Practices: of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Financial Resource Management Manual. Chapter funds will be maintained in one or more bank accounts authorized by the Executive Board and managed by the Treasurer using approved software. All received cash and checks will be directed to the Treasurer. Checks will be made payable to the Chapter.

The Treasurer or President shall sign all checks, drafts, or other instruments for disbursement of Chapter money or notes up to \$1,000. For any payments greater than \$1,000, the Treasurer must co-sign the payment instrument with the President. Writing multiple checks, drafts or other instruments for disbursement of Chapter money or notes to the same entity for the same purpose to avoid the two signatures requirement is prohibited. Checks written to either the President or the Treasurer related to chapter expenditures must have the signatures of both the President and the Treasurer.

Gifts and Donations**Accepting Donations**

The Chapter is authorized to accept and receive contributions and donations from any source. However, the Chapter retains the right to refuse any gift which, in the judgment of the Board of Directors, would not be in the best interest of the Chapter.

Acceptance of any gift or donation, restricted or unrestricted, does not imply any form of endorsement by the Chapter. Nor does it imply any benefits; past, present, or future-granted to the Chapter.

Making Donations

The State's recommendation is that chapters donate members' time and expertise to outside natural resource conservation, education, and management versus donating money to outside organizations. The Texas Master Naturalist Program and Chapters should donate members' time and/or expertise versus monetary funds.

The Chapter will only make monetary donations to 501 (c)(3) organizations and will comply with guidelines in the State's CMOP. The Board will review the donation amount and rationale prior to membership vote.

Grants

The Chapter may apply for grants from any source. The decision to apply for a grant will be made by the Board of Directors and the grant application signed by the President. Granted funds will be accounted for separately from general chapter funds.

Budgets

The Chapter will operate under an annual budget developed by the Finance Committee (FC), approved by the Executive Board at the first Board meeting of the year and voted upon at the first general membership meeting of the year.

Purchasing

All purchases will be made as part of the established approved Chapter budget or as otherwise authorized by the Board of Directors as an organization identified by the IRS and Texas Comptroller's Office as a tax-exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(3). Purchases by the Chapter will come from sources that recognize the Chapter's tax-exempt status.

Persons with signature authority may write checks for items within the approved annual budget.

Contracts

Issuance or acceptance of a contract does not imply any endorsement or benefit beyond the deliverable products and services expressly contained in the contract.

Financial Review

The Chapter fiscal year shall be from January 1 to December 31 of the same calendar year. IRS tax forms are submitted by May 15 for the previous tax year.

The FC will conduct an annual review of the Chapter financial records prior to the last annual Board meeting and submit the review to the Board. The FC will submit an annual budget to the Board at the same time. The Board-approved annual budget will be submitted to the membership at the first general meeting of the new year.

Records

Financial records will be retained for a minimum of seven years. Electronic records (e.g. Excel spreadsheets) will be duplicated and stored in another location.

Meetings

Board of Directors meetings will be held immediately preceding each monthly meeting or at the discretion of the President. All Board meetings are open to members. A simple majority of membership of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

General Membership meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month except for June, July and December. The Executive Board may reschedule meetings due to special circumstances. The last general membership meeting of the year shall be designated the annual meeting. All meetings will be held at the South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center at 6:30 pm unless it is unavailable. Those members in good standing

present at each duly called and convened meeting shall constitute a quorum. Other membership meetings may be called by the Executive Board.

Members will be notified by email of all Board of Directors and General Membership meetings with a tentative agenda for all meetings 10 days prior to the date of the meeting.

Any member wishing to add an agenda item for any meeting should contact the President for approval at least seven days prior to the meeting date.

Special meetings shall be announced to members by phone, mail, e-mail or other equivalent means at least five days before the meeting date.

Election Process

- A. **Nomination:** The Officer Nominating Committee, chaired by the Past President with a minimum of two additional *ad-hoc* members who are selected by the President with Executive Board approval, shall submit a slate of candidates for Officers to the President. The President must publish the slate to the Chapter membership in writing 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting before the end of each calendar year. Due to unforeseen circumstances the Executive Board has the authorization to reschedule the Election Process.
- B. **Officer Election Offset:** The President and Secretary are elected to a 2 year term, and the Vice-President and Treasurer are elected the following year for a 2 year term.
- C. **State Coordination:** The State Master Naturalist Coordinator(s) may provide oversight and additional input to an individual chapter's nomination process.
- D. **Nominations from the Floor:** Additional nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor prior to a vote.
- E. **Election:** The election shall take place by secret ballot, or as stated under "Voting" (below). Winners are determined by simple majority.
- F. **Single Candidate:** If only one candidate is nominated for an office, the candidate may be elected by voice vote.
- G. **Assumption of Office:** The newly elected officers shall assume their duties within the month of January of the following calendar year. Outgoing officers are responsible for all duties related to their term of office from the date of the election through the first Board of Directors meeting of the new year. Outgoing officers shall:
 1. Participate in preparing the annual report to AgriLife and to the State due January 15.
 2. Train successors.
 3. Pass accurate and complete records to successors.

Voting

Actions Requiring Membership Votes Include:

- Routine matters of business.
- Election of officers.
- Dues Changes.
- Policies and Procedures.

- PPP changes require member notification at least 15 days prior to the meeting at which the vote will be called.
- Chapter Dissolution.

All actions require a simple majority vote of members in good standing.

Voting Procedures

Members will be notified at least 10 days prior to the meeting at which an issue will be voted upon except in the case of special meetings called by the Board of Directors as stated in in Article VII, Section of the Chapter Bylaws.

Voting at a Meeting

Members may vote by voice, by a show of hands, or by paper ballot. The Secretary, with the help of the Hours Keeper, will certify that members voting are in good standing.

Absentee Voting

Upon receiving notification of the vote, members in good standing may request a ballot and return it to the Secretary by U.S. mail or email by the date of the vote. Votes received after the date of the meeting will not be counted.

Proxy Voting

A member may not vote as proxy for another member. A paper ballot in a signed, sealed envelope may be hand-carried to a meeting by another member.

Initial Training (IT)

- State minimum training requirements include 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences.
- The intent of the training is to provide Members-in-Training with the information, tools, and skills they need in order to teach this information to others and function as responsible members of the South Texas Chapter.
- Each Member-in-Training shall receive an official TMN Program State Curriculum.
- If a Member-in-Training cannot complete the minimum 40 hours of IT, the Chapter allows the hours to be made up at that specific session during the IT the following year, or special arrangements must be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Until the 40 hours of IT are completed, a Member-in-Training cannot become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist.
- He / She may earn volunteer service hours or AT hours toward certification. The Executive Board may waive the time frame allowed for completion of volunteer service or AT hours in special circumstances (i.e. medical issues).
- Upon completion of initial South Texas Chapter Master Naturalist training, the Member-in-Training becomes an Intern.
- Upon completion of all the requirements within the first year, the member becomes a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, is awarded a South Texas Chapter name badge and may request a state certificate.

- A Member-in-Training may also attend the same subject class of a neighboring chapter within the same ecoregion, given prior permission from the Executive Board or the Training Coordinator and the neighboring chapter.
- Class size is currently limited to 20 per class. The Executive Board and/or the IT Training Coordinator may change the class size at the Orientation when fees are paid.
- The Chapter reserves the right to cancel the IT program for any year in which too few applicants are registered to comprise a viable class.
- IT is typically held once a year beginning in August.
- The Members-in-Training may not bring guests.
- Topics may include:
 - Orientation to Texas Master Naturalist Program: Roles, Responsibilities and Benefits of Being a Certified Texas Master Naturalist.
 - Observational Skills and Field Notes: Techniques for Observation and Recording of Field Data.
 - Welder Wildlife Foundation: Range Management and Introduction to Flora and Fauna.
 - Padre Island National Seashore (PINS): Plant Identification, Island Ecology and History.
 - Lake Corpus Christi State Park: Chaparral and Lake Ecology.
 - Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve: Urban Park and Urban Ecosystem Flora and Fauna.
 - Marine Development Center: Fish Hatchery Research and Current Marine Mariculture.
 - Nueces Delta Preserve: River Delta Ecology, Halophytes and Water Quality.
 - Aransas National Wildlife Refuge: Ecology and History.
 - Hazel Bazemore County Park: Riparian and Riverine Ecology.
 - USDA National Resources Conservation Services: Wildflower Seeds, Grasses and Soils.
 - Other topics as approved by the Board of Directors.

Volunteer Service

To become and remain a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a member must complete a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service annually. Volunteer service may begin as soon as payment is received from Members-In-Training, they have attended Orientation and the Criminal Background Check has been completed.

The pre-approval of volunteer service projects and opportunities:

- Provides an up-to-date list of service projects for volunteers of the Chapter.
- Ensures the objectives of the organization and the partners are met.

To be approved, volunteer service must meet the following guidelines:

- Must be consistent with the TMN mission statement: “[T]o provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within our communities.”
- Must be performed in Nueces and other counties with approval.
- Volunteers who belong to two organizations that both require volunteer service as part of membership may not count the same work hours twice, getting credit from both organizations. A member may count volunteer hours to the South Texas Chapter and a Partner who keeps hours for grant writing purposes.
- Work for the South Texas Chapter that can be counted:

- Hours spent by officers, committee chairs and committee members preparing for, executing, and reporting official Chapter functions.
- Attendance at Chapter meetings.
- Work that results in a profit to another organization cannot be approved:
 - Volunteers may not count volunteer work for a for-profit organization.
 - Volunteers may not count work for a nonprofit organization that results in the organization earning money for its own programs.
- Paid work cannot be counted for volunteer service.
- Once volunteer work has been approved, the volunteer uses the TPWD VMS to report hours.
- Volunteer hour credit is earned for time spent preparing for a volunteer activity or presentation as well as for the actual activity or presentation. Travel time to and from any volunteer activity earns volunteer credit.
- All TMN Members are required to have a criminal background check (CBC) when working on any approved project. TPWD conducts annual checks and information is available through the VMS. When on-line registration is completed, authorization for background check is granted.

Volunteer Service Examples may be examined in [Appendix A](#).

Advanced Training (AT)

To become and remain a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, a member must annually complete a minimum of 8 hours of approved AT.

The purpose of AT is to provide Texas Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests on specific topics that interest them and provides the TMN with tools to work in more advanced volunteer efforts.

To be approved as AT, an activity must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Provides natural resource information applicable to our region.
- Builds on the core curriculum.
- Promotes continued learning and development of naturalist skills.
- Teaches knowledge and skills required to work in an approved volunteer effort.
- Provides information required for the development of new volunteer efforts.

Milestone Awards

A volunteer shall be presented with an enameled dragonfly pin upon completion of the required 40 hours of TMN training, 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of AT.

The Master Naturalist program offers a series of awards commemorating milestone achievements of volunteer hours:

- 250 hours (bronze dragonfly pin).
- 500 hours (brushed silver dragonfly pin).
- 1,000 hours (brushed gold dragonfly pin).
- 2,500 hours (polished silver dragonfly pin).
- 4,000 hours (polished gold dragonfly pin with ruby).
- 5,000 hours (polished gold dragonfly pin with diamond).
- 10,000 hours (polished gold dragonfly pin with emerald).

The State Program has developed 15,000 and 20,000-hour awards and may develop other milestone awards as needed. These milestones are cumulative.

The Master Naturalist program has a specially designed pin for each calendar year a TMN maintains his or her certification and is only available during that calendar year. Members may receive the annual pin for the year they complete their initial certification provided they complete an additional 40 hours (total of 80) of volunteer service and 8 hours (total of 16) of AT within the same calendar year as they receive their initial certification. Each volunteer will receive one annual pin during a given year.

Compliance and Disciplinary Actions

All members of the Chapter will adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as established by the Texas Master Naturalist Program. Violation of either reflects unfavorably on the entire Chapter. The Texas Master Naturalist Program has established a formal process to investigate a charge of misconduct and to take disciplinary action. This process may be found (www.txmn.org or [Appendix C](#)).

Removal and Replacement of Officers or Directors

If an elected officer is removed for cause, a replacement shall be elected by a simple majority vote at the next general membership meeting or as soon as possible.

- **Attendance:**
 - Any Officer absent from three consecutive Board of Directors meetings without notice and/or unexcused absence shall be subject to removal by a simple majority vote of the Board of Directors.
 - Any Board Member other than an Officer absent from three consecutive Board of Directors meetings without notice and/or unexcused absence shall be subject to removal by a simple majority vote of the Officers of the Chapter.
 - Officers and Board Members are encouraged to attend monthly Chapter meetings.
- **Ethics Violation:**
 - Any Officer derelict in their responsibilities or exhibiting behavior inconsistent with the principles of the South Texas Chapter and TMN Program may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors.
 - Any Board Member other than an Officer derelict in their responsibilities or exhibiting behavior inconsistent with the principles of the South Texas Chapter and TMN Program may be removed from office by a three-fourths vote of the Officers of the Chapter.

If an elected position is vacated for any reason, a replacement shall be appointed by the Board of Directors until a special election is held. The special election is to be held as soon as possible after the office is vacated. The President may appoint an interim Board Member to fill the vacant position if there is less than one year remaining in the term.

Dissolution of the South Texas Chapter

The Chapter can be dissolved by the Executive Board and membership or by the TMN State Committee for appropriately identified and documented purposes. This shall be done in accordance with the TMN State Committee (see Article XI of the State TMN Bylaws) and in concert with the IRS code 501 (c)(3) statements of

dissolution for tax-exempt organizations. Upon dissolution of the Chapter, assets shall be distributed according to the State TMN Bylaws and IRS code 501 (c)(3) dissolution of tax-exempt organizations statements. Procedures for dissolution are in Article XI of the State Bylaws.

Revocation of Charter

If the State organization determines that the South Texas Chapter has failed to comply with State requirements and policies, it may revoke the Chapter Charter. The Chapter agrees to abide by revocation of the Charter along with the right to use the TMN name, title, and trademarks. See CMOP for State processes.

Chapter Online Presence

All Chapter online presences will adhere to the TMN Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. No posted information or photos shall be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas, businesses or personal endeavors, by propaganda or otherwise, using the Texas Master Naturalist name or themselves as a Texas Master Naturalist.

Website

The Chapter manages a website at www.txmn.org/st/ that is maintained and updated by the Webmaster.

- Purpose: To provide information about Chapter activities and resources.
- Policy: News articles and such types of information are not posted on the website because of accuracy and copyright infringement issues. The site adheres to subject matter that is directly related to our specific Chapter with two exceptions:
 - Links to TMN mission-related sites.
 - Articles written by members that the Chapter uses in the “Postings” section.

Chapter Photos

The Chapter manages an account with Google under the Chapter email southtexasstmn@gmail.com. Members of the South Texas Chapter should upload photos of chapter activities into the Google Photos. Members can obtain the password from the President.

- Purpose: Provide member access to photos of chapter activities; provide photos for media, Historian and other members to utilize for presentations; Facebook, Website, Newsletter or other activities.
- Policy: Photos uploaded into the Google Account are to represent Chapter purposes. Password is not to be shared beyond the Chapter membership without approval of the President.

Facebook

The Chapter maintains a Facebook page.

- Purpose: To post articles, photos, and other information that may be of interest to group members.
- Policy: This site is managed by an administrator who can add and remove posted material as required, and membership is by invitation.

Dropbox

A Dropbox account will be maintained by a volunteer appointed by the President.

Newsletter

The South Texas Chapter shall publish a monthly newsletter, The Naturalist. This publication is provided electronically. The Chapter has an Editor/Writers to compile the monthly publication. The newsletter serves as an interim medium for keeping the membership up-to-date on Chapter activities and issues.

- Purpose: To provide information compliant to the TMN mission, updated information on Chapter activities, project updates, member biographies, links to articles or other knowledge of South Texas ecological information.
- Policy:
 - All members are encouraged to submit articles to the newsletter.
 - Submitted articles shall adhere to the TMN Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. (Appendix C).
 - The Editor has the authority to reject any submitted article that does not comply with TMN policy or that of the South Texas Chapter.

Protocols, Policies and Procedures (PPP) Manual

- Amendment:
 - When a situation arises that requires a formal process for which no protocol, policy or procedure exists, appropriate guidelines will be developed and added to the current Chapter PPP Manual.
 - Any chapter member may present a proposed change in writing to the Executive Board. The proposed change must be presented via conventional mail, email, or other equivalent means at least 10 days before the next Executive Board meeting.
 - Changes or amendments to the PPP Manual approved by the Executive Board will be addressed at the next meeting and sent to the Chapter membership via conventional mail, email, or other equivalent means at least 10 days before the next regular Chapter meeting. Changes or amendments will be presented at that meeting for approval by a simple majority of the Chapter membership present.
 - The Secretary can make clerical changes to correct errors in the PPP Manual.
 - Upon Chapter membership adoption of an amendment, an electronic copy of the revised PPP Manual will be sent to the State Office within 30 days.
- Review:
 - This PPP Manual will be reviewed annually by the PPP Committee. Recommendation revisions will be forwarded to the Executive Board prior to the last Board meeting of the year.

Section III: Responsibilities and Operating Procedures

Officers

Tasks may be delegated among Chapter Officers with the knowledge and consent of the Board of Directors. Officers are expected to train their successors during the period between election and assumption of office.

President

Mission: To serve as chief officer for the Chapter.

Policy: Responsible for overseeing the business of the Chapter. It is the duty of the President to propose goals for the year and to serve as liaison among committees, the Board of Directors, and membership.

Responsibilities:

- Establish and publish the agenda for all meetings.
- Preside at all meetings of the Chapter.
- Serve as Chair of the Executive Board and the Board of Directors.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Sign all approved documents that may be legally binding to the Chapter.
- Vote when necessary to break a tie.
- Serve as Chapter Representative to State and other meetings as appropriate.

Vice-President

Mission: To assist the President.

Policy: Substitutes for the President as necessary.

Responsibilities:

- Act for the President in his/her absence.
- To select and coordinate speakers for the monthly meetings.
- Formally thank speakers immediately following their presentations.
- Establish locations for meetings.
- Work with the Projects and Education and Training Chairs to provide training or volunteer opportunities in conjunction with general membership meetings.

Secretary

Mission: To maintain all current and recent non-financial Chapter records.

Policy: Ensures that all non-financial activities (e.g. agendas, attendance, minutes) of the Chapter are recorded, maintained, and accessible to the Board of Directors and general membership. Records will be retained for two years and then turned over to the Historian for the Chapter archive.

Recording and Record-Maintenance Responsibilities:

- Record, publish, and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the Executive Board and general membership meetings.

- Keep a record of attendance, determine whether a quorum is present, and report this to the President prior to the business meeting.
- Maintain paper or electronic copies (.pdf) of all minutes and legally binding correspondence.
- Bring to each meeting the agenda, Executive Board and general membership minutes for the current and prior year, a copy of the State Bylaws, PPP Manual, and a copy of the parliamentary authority (i.e. Roberts Rules of Order) adopted by the Chapter.
- Ensure that the membership is notified (via the minutes) of all scheduled meetings.
- Retain sign-in sheets of Chapter meetings and send copies to AgriLife Extension agent in charge of TMN.
- Support committee functions by providing information from Chapter records as requested.
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

Recording and Record-Maintenance Procedures:

- **Minutes:**
 - Take minutes at all Chapter meetings.
 - Send Board and General membership minutes to the President for review and/or changes.
 - Send approved General membership meeting minutes to the Webmaster for posting on the website.
 - Items discussed at the Board Meeting that are to be voted on by the General membership are to be presented at the General Meeting and included in the General membership minutes.

Treasurer

Mission: To serve as Chief Financial Officer for the Chapter.

Policy: Records all Chapter financial transactions using Excel or other approved software that are retained for seven years.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Financial Resource Management (<https://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/fiscal/fiscal-banking-and-receivables/best-practices-financial-resource-management/>) shall be used as the STMN Financial Resource Manual in conjunction with the State TMN Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP).

Responsibilities:

- Works with Board to establish a three-member (minimum #) Finance Committee (FC).
- Works with FC to verify financial record accuracy annually. FC submits annual reports to AgriLife and Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- Assures that the Treasurer and Chapter President have access to the STMN bank account and signatures are verified at the Chapter bank.
- Creates annual budget and reviews Chapter Investment Policy (**Appendix E**) with FC for presentation to Board and membership following Board approval.
- Along with the FC and by the last Board meeting submits new annual budget and Chapter Investment Policy for discussion and approval by the Board.
- Responsible for filing required IRS forms.
- Receives dues and provides information to the VMS Data Manager Notifies all members NOT paying annual dues with dues deadline following the February meeting.
- Submits monthly financial reports to Board and membership at all scheduled membership meetings.

- Answers/responds to financial questions at general membership meeting or within one week if data not immediately available.
- Maintains inventory listing of all items having a useful life of more than 2 years.
- Brings to each meeting current year's financial records.
- Maintains all bank accounts at bank chosen by Board using online bank portal, hard copy monthly bank statements and/or in-person bank visits.
- Assures all bank signatures for Chapter finance are current and accurate for continuation of chapter business and all necessary information is given to the new Treasurer. A succession form ([Appendix F](#)) is signed by incoming and outgoing Treasurers.
- Saves end of year financial documents as binder hardcopies and uploads all financial documents to digital storage device. Web administrator will upload appropriate financial documents to suitable web site(s).

Treasurer Operating Procedures:

- **Receipts:**
 - Receives and deposits all monies coming into the chapter not later than ten business days.
 - Monies received by other chapter members are given to the Treasurer, are double counted and the transaction is recorded and signed.
 - Receipts are provided for ALL (cash, check, money order, etc.) monies using a sequentially pre-numbered receipt book.
 - Donations greater than \$25.00 are acknowledged in writing by a letter of appreciation from the Board.
- **Disbursements:**
 - All payments are made with serially numbered checks.
 - At no time should checks be made out to cash.
 - Payments to AgriLife, Texas A&M University Press, and name badge vendor may be paid by the Treasurer when invoice is received.
 - Payments other than those listed above must be approved by a simple majority of members at a membership meeting following payment request.
 - The Board of Directors may approve disbursements if a time critical payment is required; a report to membership is made at the next meeting.
 - Each disbursement MUST include a Check Request Form ([Appendix G](#)) with invoice attached or an Affidavit of Expenditure Form ([Appendix H](#)) when there is no invoice.
 - Disbursements to Chapter Committees are made following submission of the Committee Fund Request Form by the Committee Chair and approval by the Board.
- **Equipment Inventory:**
 - An itemized list of tangible goods or property purchased by or donated to the Chapter shall be kept by the Treasurer. The list is recorded on the annual receipt/disbursement statement and recorded in the minutes at the time of purchase or donation.
 - The brand name, general name, cost, model number, place stored, and purpose of use shall be documented on the financial statement.
 - The inventory list is included in the annual report.

Other Members of the Board of Directors

Past President

Mission: To support the new President and the Board of Directors.

Policy: Provide Chapter knowledge and management continuity.

Responsibilities:

- Continue to serve on the Board of Directors upon completion of term as President.
- Present the annual report at the first General membership meeting of the Chapter.
- Serve as Nominating Committee Chair.
- Lead an annual review and update, if necessary, the PPP Manual.

Chapter Advisors

The South Texas Chapter selects its Chapter Advisors from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service due to the close association with both organizations.

Mission:

- Assist the South Texas Chapter in maintaining the mission, vision, and operational framework set forth by its organizers.
- Assist the Chapter in developing additional goals that are within the parameters of the statewide TMN Program.

Policy: Supports the Chapter and is available to advise, recommend, inform, and notify the Chapter and its members of the Texas Master Naturalist policies and guidelines and other agency or organization guidelines that establish expectations for volunteer requirements, behavior, and activities.

When a vacancy arises in the Chapter Advisor position, the replacement is selected collaboratively by the TMN State Coordinator, the existing Advisor, and the Chapter President with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure that the South Texas Chapter and its officers know State policies and guidelines and the consequences for choosing to operate outside the TMN parameters.
- Be familiar with the objective, activities, and mission of the South Texas Chapter.
- Serve as a member of the Board of Directors.
- Participate in event planning and attend events when possible.
- Be aware of the Chapter's financial status via review of financial statements.
- Notify the State Program Advisory Committee of Chapter concerns.

Chapter Representative to State

Mission: To provide direct communication between the South Texas Chapter and the State organization.

Policy: The current Chapter President serves as the Chapter Representative to the State.

Responsibilities:

- Represent the Chapter in state-level matters of the TMN program.
- Participate in the State Volunteer Representatives Councils meetings.

Class Representative

Mission:

- Serve as a member of the Board of Directors to act as liaison between the Board and the represented class.
- Serve as a member of the Intern Training Committee.
- Participate as a member of the Mentoring Committee.

Policy: He / She is selected by the members of each training class near the end of training and serves for one year.

Standing Committees and Responsibilities

The South Texas Chapter Standing Committees (6) include, but are not limited to, the following: Membership, (Mentoring, Hospitality, Publicity), Finance, Education (Initial Training, Advanced Training, Advanced Training Approval), PPP, Historian / Archivist, and Outreach / Communications (Chapter Projects, Webmaster/Website Coordinator, Facebook and Newsletter). Each Standing Committee has a Chair (Director) who selects Chapter members to serve with them. All members in good standing and interns are eligible to serve on Standing Committees.

Mission: To conduct the business of the Chapter.

Policy: Create and execute a plan of action for the year, establish goals, monitor and report progress toward those goals.

Responsibilities Of All Committees:

- Each Chair is responsible for presenting a report of the prior year's activities to the incoming Board at the first Board of Directors meeting in the new year. This report should include successes, failures, and suggested improvements.
- Each Chair is responsible for an assessment of costs associated with Committee activities.
- If a Committee requires funds, the Chair submits a Committee Check Request Form to the FC or to the Treasurer.
- The term of Committee Chairs begins at time of approval by Board and ends at the beginning of the next Board term in January.
- The Chair is responsible for conducting committee meetings.
- All committees must meet a minimum of two times a year.
- Each Chair is responsible for an assessment of costs associated with the activity(-ies) and must inform the Treasurer.
- Each Chair is responsible for turning over all committee records and materials to the incoming Chair.
- If applicable, login and password(s) needed for any electronic access to STMN accounts (e.g. Dropbox, Facebook, Google, Mail Chimp, Website, etc.) are to be given to the President.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee comprises the elected Officers of the Chapter. In the event that action is required before a Board of Directors meeting can be called or if the matter does not warrant calling a special meeting, the Executive Committee may take action with the same authority and boundaries as the Board. Such action must be reported to the entire Board within one day of taking the action.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors comprises the Officers of the Chapter, the Past President, Chapter Advisors, Class Representative, and Chairs: Membership, Finance, Education, PPP, Historian / Archivist, Outreach / Communications.

Mission: To conduct the business of the Chapter.

Policy: Create and execute a plan of action for the year, establish goals, approve budgets, and monitor progress toward those goals.

Responsibilities:

- Establish and publish the calendar for the year.
- Approve an operating budget that establishes expected income and expenses for the fiscal year.
- Authorize expenditure of Chapter funds.
- Review recommendation from the PPP Committee and approve or disapprove.

Operating Procedures:

- The business of the Board of Directors may be carried out by email, teleconference, or internet conference as well as in a regular or special meeting.
- Any Board member may request a special meeting.
- Voting by the Board of Directors shall be simple majority of Board members present. Each standing committee is allowed only one vote. Unfilled Board positions are not included in determining a simple majority.
- At the first Board of Directors meeting of the year, the Board will establish the annual calendar.

Membership Committee

Mission: Primary interface between the Board of Directors and the membership.

Policy:

- Supports current members in meeting the TMN mission within the South Texas Chapter area.
- Supports recruiting of new members.
- Shall consist of 3 subcommittees: Mentoring, Hospitality, Publicist.

Responsibilities:

- Monitor and encourage member participation in volunteer activities.

- Report status of membership activities to the incoming Board of Directors at the first meeting of the year, including successes, failures, and suggested improvements.
- Support recruiting of new members and assist them with the application process.
- Initiate social functions for membership.

Procedures:

- Update contact information, interests, and expertise immediately after the first of the year.
- Contact non-participatory members to encourage participation.
- Coordinate social activities, such as potluck, lunches in conjunction with training sessions or other events.
- Educate the membership concerning their responsibility for recruiting new members.
- Coordinate with Outreach / Communications Committee to advertise for potential new members.
- If needed, schedule and hold recruiting/orientation by county.

Mentoring Subcommittee

Mission: Facilitates the transition from Intern to Certified Texas Master Naturalist for year immediately following Initial Training.

Policy: To support Interns and ensure the Mission statement is accomplished.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain contact with new Interns throughout their training period.
- Provide encouragement and enthusiasm to Interns throughout training.
- Provide a conduit for questions or concerns of Interns.
- Be available to provide information to Interns.

Procedures:

- Routinely contact each intern to gather concerns they may have throughout the training and relay this to the Intern Training Subcommittee Chair.
- Design, analyze, and report evaluations for each training.
- Design and implement a contact tree to encourage Interns to carpool to training sessions.
- Make immediate contact with members who miss training sessions.
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

Hospitality Subcommittee

Mission: To coordinate refreshments served at meetings or other functions.

Policy: Provide refreshments as needed.

Responsibilities:

- To coordinate food and drink and supplies.
- Utilize budgeted monies for hospitality expenses (e.g. plates, napkins, etc.).
- Ensure that meeting room is cleaned up immediately after each meeting.

Procedures:

- Procure necessary materials prior to monthly meetings.
- Coordinate the setup of serving table(s) prior to the meeting start time.
- Bag up all disposable waste and clean all equipment used by STMN for the meeting.
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

Publicity Subcommittee

Mission: Present positive active message to the public about STMN through media venues.

Policy: Ensure that Chapter activities and training are communicated to the public.

Responsibilities:

- Act as liaison with media.
- Coordinate with appropriate committee and/or subcommittee chair(s) for details concerning activities and events.

Procedures:

- Communication outlets may include TV, radio and newsprint media.
- Brochures shall be maintained and available for all outreach events.
- To budget cost of materials for printing (i.e. via AgriLife).
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

Volunteer Management System (VMS) Data Manager (Admin 1)

Mission: To serve as hours keeper for the Chapter.

Policy: Oversee all hour entries.

Responsibilities:

- Serve as VMS administrator responsible for member volunteer records.
- Maintain Chapter roster and provide copies for Board of Directors and Initial Training Chair as requested.
- Track member progress toward recertification and milestones.
- Prepare certificates and awards.

Procedures:

- Approve VMS hours input to the database or request corrections.
- Inform members of progress toward certification, recertification, and milestones.
- Receive dues-receipt information from the Treasurer and enter into VMS.
- Keep inventory of awards and order these supplies as required.
- Order name badges for the current class of Interns and members as necessary.
- Provide a list to the Secretary of awards presented at each meeting and awards due but not presented for the minutes.
- Remind last year's Members-in-Training, who have not certified, that they have until the end of the current Initial Training session to complete certification requirements.
- Remind Members what they lack for recertification.

- Receives and acknowledges each application for membership.
- Note the date application for membership received for each applicant.
- Remind Members-in-Training that training fee is due by Orientation.
- Accept applicants until 5 days prior to the Orientation Training. Special consideration may be made if there are still spaces available.
- Offer any applicant a place on a waiting list if the class capacity is reached at any point prior to the Orientation Training.
- Keep Treasurer and IT Chair apprised of applicant status.
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

VMS Data Manager (Admin 2)

Mission: Verify federal requirements for volunteer members of the Chapter.

Policy: Assure all federal requirements are met by Chapter.

Responsibilities:

- Serve as administrator for creating, writing and editing opportunities; granting approval or disapproval for members to access opportunities.
- Create and define opportunities as required by federal statutes.
- Check and maintain Criminal Background Checks (CBC) and contact member about issues.
- Ensure that all opportunities meet the TMN mission.
- Assist Admin 1 as requested by Executive Board or Admin 1; approve hours of Admin 1.

Procedures:

- Add new opportunities to VMS as they arise.
- Remove VMS access to opportunities that are no longer used.
- Maintain clear, accurate descriptions for each opportunity for membership viewing in VMS.
- Report status and updates to Board of Directors and membership.
- Bring to the attention of the Executive Board any issue concerning CBC.
- To review annually the approved opportunities for the Chapter to ensure conformity to State and National codes for our accredited opportunities.
- Pass accurate and complete records to successor.

Outreach / Communication Committee

Mission:

- Identify potential outreach opportunities and activities for the South Texas Chapter membership.
- Coordinates outreach information about activities and opportunities.

Policies:

- To canvas the membership and determine needs for Texas Master Naturalist outreach activities.
- To disseminate outreach opportunity information.

Responsibility: To review Chapter Website, Facebook page and Newsletter.

Procedure: Meet at least semiannually in order to plan and discuss possible social activities.

Chapter Projects Subcommittee

Mission: Identify potential projects in which STMN members may participate or conduct.

Policy: Projects initiated by members of the STMN must be approved by this subcommittee.

Responsibility: A member who initiates a project will serve as its coordinator.

Procedures:

- Meet at least semiannually in order to compile and discuss potential projects in which STMN may participate.
- Ensure project coordinator submits project description to Admin 2.
- Report periodically on progress of projects to the membership by available means of communication.

Webmaster/Website Coordinator Subcommittee

Mission: To maintain Chapter website.

Policies:

- Supports all Chapter functions by providing accurate, up-to-date information on the website.
- Recruit STMN volunteers to assist in Webmaster duties.

Responsibilities:

- Communicate with website host (AgriLife), as needed, to ensure website's appearance and performance is being optimized.
- Webmaster is required to attend webinar on internet security at least every other month.
- Manage access to the website page.
- Report to the Board of Directors on the state of the website page and any upcoming changes / improvements.
- Make changes and additions to the format of the website page as requested and approved by the Board of Directors.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Facebook (FB) Subcommittee

Mission: To maintain Chapter Facebook (FB) page.

Policies:

- Supports all Chapter functions by providing accurate, up-to-date information on the FB page.
- Administrator, Co-Administrator and up to 4 Moderators will preside over the subcommittee.

Responsibilities:

- Report to the Board of Directors on the state of the FB page and any upcoming changes / improvements.

- Make changes and additions to the format of FB page as requested and approved by the Board of Directors.
- Approve daily posts to the FB page as approved by Administrator, Co-Administrator and Moderator(s).
- Post training, volunteer opportunities and activities or articles of interest to Texas Master Naturalists and interested general public in a timely manner.
- Monitor the FB page to ensure contributed posts are on topic / relevant to Texas Master Naturalists and remove the posts that are inappropriate.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Newsletter Subcommittee

Mission: To publish Chapter newsletter.

Policy: Supports all Chapter functions by providing accurate, up-to-date information in the newsletter.

Responsibilities:

- Email the newsletter to members.
- Encourage members to submit articles for publication in the newsletter.
- Report to the Board of Directors on any upcoming changes / improvements to the newsletter.
- Make changes and additions to the newsletter as requested and approved by the Board of Directors.
- Publish articles about chapter projects, opportunities, activities that will occur or have occurred.
- Publicize achievements by individual members and the chapter.
- Provide educational information, internet links and comments from the Chapter President.
- Publish a calendar each month of known upcoming Volunteer and AT Opportunities and other chapter activities.
- Apprise members of issues at the state level.
- Print photos of members conducting chapter activities.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Education Committee

Mission: To provide an informative, appropriate, and interesting educational experience for Members-in-Training and continuing education opportunities for all Chapter members.

Policy: Ensures the availability of Initial Training (IT) and Advanced Training (AT).

Responsibilities:

- Develop a training budget.
- Ensure evaluation of IT and AT programs.
- Report the status of the education and training programs to the incoming Board of Directors at the first meeting of the year, including successes, failures, and suggested improvements.

Initial Training (IT) Subcommittee

Mission: Provide IT for individuals wanting to become Certified Texas Master Naturalists.

Policies:

- Provide nurturing environment for new members to be successful.
- Evaluate IT program.

Procedures:

- Plan annual IT in accordance with State and Chapter requirements.
- Produce a tentative training schedule by May 1 for the Fall IT class.
- Obtain Executive Board approval of planned IT.
- Schedule trainers and locations/facilities for IT.
- Provide IT trainers with objectives, material and information required.
- Allocate IT training seats for Members-in-Training completing requirements from previous year.
- Procure or produce class materials and training agenda for each class.
- Provide Members-in-Training with training procedures, recommended supplies and equipment, and other information at Orientation to include but not limited to:
 - Note taking materials.
 - Loose leaf binder.
 - Lunch.
 - Sufficient water and sodas or juices to stay hydrated all day.
 - Sunscreen and mosquito repellent.
 - Hat, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, sturdy walking shoes.
 - Field notebook.
 - Walking stick if needed.
- Utilize Chapter members at Orientation to facilitate the day's agenda.
- Remind IT Trainer of their presentation at least 2 weeks prior to class date.
- Remind Members-in-Training that attendance is kept and they must sign in and out.
- Remind Members-in-Training that they are responsible for entering VMS hours.
- Track attendance and training hours in coordination with VMS Hours Keeper (Admin 1).
- Remind Members-in-Training that hours will be lost if 45 days pass before they enter hours.
- Members-in-Training elect a class representative to be on the Board of Directors; the class representative, at a minimum, must be an Intern.
- Present the IT Trainer with a letter of appreciation after each training session.
- Contact individuals who miss two consecutive classes without prior notification.
- Provide an evaluation for each training class to determine if changes are needed.
- Determine IT class costs and recommend fee or class size changes to the Board of Directors by the May Board of Directors meeting.
- If an applicant resigns from a class, the full fee will be refunded if the resignation is prior to the second class contingent upon return of the textbook.
- Report class information to the Executive Board.
- Provide time during Orientation at Botanical Gardens to present the Gardens' safety procedures.
- Discuss all procedures at Orientation (e.g. refund of dues, etc.) so new Members-in-Training are fully informed.
- Annually update teaching objectives and class locations for the Outreach / Communications Committee by May 1.

- Help train designated members to do this job.

Advance Training (AT) Subcommittee

Mission: Develop AT that is neither provided by Chapter Partners nor part of IT and monthly meetings.

Policies:

- Utilize STMN Volunteers and other knowledgeable authorities to provide membership with AT opportunities not otherwise available.
- Provide applicable technology and educational techniques to chapter members.

Procedures:

- Develop an annual list of possible AT opportunities and presenters developed by AT Subcommittee.
- Provide contact information forms for AT opportunities ([Appendix I](#)).
- Notify Admin 1 & 2 and Outreach / Communications Committee when this AT is approved.
- Evaluate AT opportunities developed by AT Subcommittee.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Advanced Training (AT) Approval Subcommittee

Mission: Provide approval for AT such that the mission of TMN and standards higher than IT are met.

Policy: Ensure that any AT meets the mission of TMN.

Procedures:

- Screens AT opportunities as to source and content of training before being offered.
- Disseminates the approval of new AT opportunities not provided by Chapter Partners.
- Approves AT opportunities and requests input to VMS by Admin. 2.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Historian / Archivist Committee

Mission: To maintain the historical archives of the Chapter.

Policies:

- Electronically archive and maintain all legal documents, budgets, Treasurer Reports, tax documents, meeting minutes and maintain hardcopy for legal time requirements.
- Archive and make accessible Chapter photos from meetings, activities and opportunities.
- Maintain some hardcopy albums for public display and meetings.
- Archive and maintain chapter awards.
- Provide timely historical Chapter information to the Board of Directors and Chapter upon request.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

PPP Committee

Mission: Meet annually to review and suggest any changes to PPP document.

Policies:

- Membership of this committee to be determined by Executive Board by May 1.
- Committee shall consist of six members.
- Tenure shall be 3-year rotating appointment with one-third of Committee replaced annually.
- Committee shall meet prior to Dec 31 each year.
- Committee shall submit any changes to PPP document to the Executive Board by May 1.
- Committee members shall serve as Parliamentarian during meetings.
- Help train designated members to do this job.

Finance Committee

Mission: Provide support to the Treasurer concerning Chapter finances.

Policies:

- Shall consist of the Treasurer and two appointed members.
- Treasurer shall represent this committee on the Board of Directors.
- Review all Chapter financial documents annually.
- Assist the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget.
- Submit annual reports to AgriLife and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Other Standing Committees

Other standing committees may be established, and their duties defined and approved by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors.

Special Committees (*Ad hoc*)

Committees may be formed *ad hoc* and tasked for specific purposes by the President with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will be formed at least 45 days (i.e. at September meeting) prior to the annual election of Executive Board members. The committee will be chaired by the Past President, with two additional members selected by the chair. The committee will interview prospective nominees for President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer as their positions become available.

Section IV: Appendix Section

The appendix section is not limited to the current items. Other items may be added for the convenience of the Board of Directors, Chairs and members of the South Texas Chapter.

Appendix A: Volunteer Management System Codes

Direct Outreach (Training & Educating)	DO	Leading, organizing, developing, delivering instructing or staffing an educational activity where participants have a planned learning objective and generally stay for the full event (e.g., planned start and end times with a single agenda).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Classroom instruction ◆ Delivering Workshops ◆ Developing & delivering training Presentations ◆ Conducting/Leading Webinars ◆ Delivering/an instructor for Chapter MN Members in Training/interns class ◆ AT you prepare and present as a TMN Member to other TMN Members ◆ Interpretive hikes
Advanced Training	AT	Attending advanced training as a participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ AT during TMN State Meeting ◆ Chapter Training for specific volunteer service projects
Public Outreach (Indirect Education)	PO	Leading, organizing, or staffing an educational activity where participants come and go. <or> Writing an educational article or brochure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Manning booth or visitor center ◆ Writing articles, newsletters ◆ Docent at TMN partner facility ◆ Interpretive hikes ◆ Chapter native plants sale & preparation
Technical Guidance	TG	Technical work for natural resource management or other consultation expertise & recommendations to cooperators, Chapters, partners, or land owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Site visits for & writing ecosystem management plans ◆ City/Community/Regional Habitat Conservation Plan Committee ◆ Expert work for WWF, ANWR, or other partners
Natural Resource Management (including Resource Stewardship & Conservation)	RM	Activities that improve the health of a public natural area or resource. Natural resource management, restoration rescue and rehabilitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Restoring/improving natural habitat ◆ Invasive species or trash removal ◆ Native plant or wildlife rescue ◆ Wildlife houses, towers, chimneys ◆ Developing an eco-system plan
Nature/Public Access	NPA	Field activities that improve & manage the public's access to natural areas or resources. Creating and/or maintaining nature trails, wildscapes or interpretive areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Developing new or maintaining/improving existing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking trails <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretive gardens <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife-viewing blinds
Field Research (Including Surveys & Citizen Science)	FR	Planning, leading or participating in data collection and/or analysis of natural resources where results are intended to further scientific understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Field surveys ◆ Banding and tagging ◆ Texas Nature Trackers Programs ◆ Stream Watch/Stream Team/ Water Quality Monitoring
Chapter & Program Support, Business and Administration	CB	Activities related to managing and running a Texas Master Naturalist Chapter and its committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Board or committee duties ◆ Chapter Newsletter or website ◆ Management of Chapter records ◆ Hours-reporting oversight ◆ Representing Chapter ◆ Assistance to State Program

<p>Other (< 5% of Chapter hours should be categorized as OT, & use should be justified)</p>	<p>OT</p>	<p>Any TMN-mission-related activity approved by the Chapter that is not defined above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Serving as a Board or committee member for an environmental organization ◆ Supporting partner organization (e.g., H/BC, FAMI) activities that are not TMN-mission-related but allow the partner to complete their own environmental missions
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Appendix B: Transferring A Volunteer Between Chapters

When a member moves to a different part of the state or wishes to become active in an alternative Chapter, that member may join the nearest Chapter of choice.

Definitions:

- Losing chapter: the chapter the TMN member is transferring from.
- Receiving chapter: the chapter the TMN member is transferring to (Note: The receiving chapter will, in most cases, initiate the process).

Transfer steps:

1. Usually the receiving chapter will create a Help Desk ticket at txmn.org/help requesting that a transfer be initiated for the member whose information follows:
 - a. Transferee's full name.
 - b. DOB.
 - c. Email address.
 - d. Optionally, the former chapter name.
2. The TMN VMS team (Help Desk) will contact the losing chapter:
 - a. Informing them of the pending transfer.
 - b. Retrieve the current year service and AT hours as well as the lifetime service and AT hours.
 - c. Move the volunteer profile into the "Transfers" folder and into the receiving chapter folder.
 - d. Create the necessary non-opportunity survey logbook entries.
 - e. Notify both the receiving chapter and the volunteer when these actions have been completed.
3. The receiving chapter will need to take the following steps:
 - a. Edit the transfer's profile, changing the chapter name information on the "Certifications" group of the User Defined tab.
 - b. View any notes the losing chapter may have written into the profile.
 - c. Approve the transfer hours logbook entries.
 - d. Approve the volunteer to chapter opportunities.

Important: Service hours, AT hours, and IT hours always stay with the opportunity in which they were earned; that is, the hours stay with the TMN chapter in which they were earned, but certification and milestone "credit" for those hours will be transferred if the volunteer transfers to another TMN chapter.

Appendix C: Texas Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

Code of Ethics

Each member, in striving to meet the mission, objectives and goals of the Master Naturalist program, pledges to:

1. Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct.
2. Promote and support the statewide and local Master Naturalist program.
3. Respect the state sponsors of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas AgriLife Extension and their roles and expectations.
4. Disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of our natural resources.
5. Strive to increase knowledge and skills to advance as a Master Naturalist volunteer.
6. Promote competence as a Master Naturalist volunteer by supporting high standards of education, service, and performance.
7. Encourage the use of sound biological information in education and outreach and in management decisions.
8. Support fair and uniform standards of service and treatment of those engaged in the Master Naturalist program.
9. Know and follow established program guidelines and policies.
10. Abide by State Bylaws.
11. Avoid use of the Master Naturalist title, logos and trademarks for personal endeavors and/or profit.
12. Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
13. Never inappropriately disturb or harass wildlife, never inappropriately remove anything from its natural state or area.

Standards of Conduct

Master Naturalist program volunteers shall at all times:

1. Uphold the commitment made to the program and the required volunteer and advanced training hours required by the program.
2. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the Master Naturalist program. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
3. Conduct themselves appropriately to context and setting at all times.
4. Be considerate and respect others' points of view.
5. Keep accurate records of volunteer service, training and research, and regularly notify your local chapter of these records.
6. Avoid performing service when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or detrimental to the well-being of the program and its sponsors.
7. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client and/or volunteer project regardless of the degree of remuneration.
8. Be mindful of their responsibility to society and the program.

9. Studiously avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of program authority, certification, or membership for personal satisfaction. Avoid advocacy, lobbying or promoting political issues.
10. Cooperate fully with professionals and other Master Naturalist volunteers in the best interest of our natural resources.
11. Refrain from advertising in a self-laudatory manner, beyond statements intended to inform prospective clients or members of qualifications, or in a manner detrimental to the Master Naturalist program and its volunteers.
12. Avoid all use of alcohol and controlled substances while on duty as a Master Naturalist volunteer. Reporting for service while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in termination from volunteer service.
13. Accept responsibility for decisions made and actions taken based on these.

Appendix D — South Texas Chapter Partners

Partners:

- Nueces County AgriLife Extension
- City of Corpus Christi Parks and Recreation
 - Oso Bays Wetlands Preserve
 - Oso Hike and Bike Park
 - Blucher Park
- South Texas Botanical Gardens and Nature Center
- Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Foundation
- Welder Wildlife Foundation
- Nueces Delta Preserve
- Padre Island National Seashore
- Aransas National Wildlife Refuge
- CCA Marine Development Center
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 - Lake Corpus Christi State Park

Limited Partners:

- Texas State Aquarium
- Texas SeaLife Center
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 - Mustang Island State Park
 - Goose Island State Park
- Kingsville Dept. of Agriculture Materials Center
- Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History
- The Natures Preserves at Port Aransas

Appendix E: Chapter Investment Policy

Policy: To sustain the TMN mission and Chapter membership function as identified in the Chapter Protocols, Policies and Procedures (PPP) Manual and State Bylaws.

1. The Finance Committee (FC) shall have explicit understanding of Chapter Investment Policy.
2. The FC and Executive Board identify the investment strategy(-ies) which includes the Chapter's capacity for risk.
3. The FC shall submit all proposed investment decisions to the Executive Board.
4. Investment decision shall be ratified by the Executive Board.

Appendix F: Treasurer Succession Checklist

When there is a change in financial leadership, there is a need for a smooth transition. The Treasurer is a member of the Board of Directors. Being a part of the organization’s Financial Leadership Team and knowing how the Treasurer functions as part of that team is essential for organizational continuity and congruity.

Treasurer responsibilities and Chapter Operating Protocols, Policies and Procedures (PPP) Manual should be read in total before assuming the Treasurer position. The individual assuming the position initials the following statements when reviewed or completed.

1. GENERAL:
 - a. Obtain the resolution of the change in leadership (i.e. minutes of the meeting when change took place) to provide the bank with information of personnel change _____
 - b. Review files of prior Treasurer reports, including annual financial review _____
 - c. Obtain e-mail, phone and home addresses of current membership _____
 - d. Accompany Past-Treasurer and President to bank for change of authorization to access bank information (password, online banking access, address change for monthly and annual banking statements, etc.) _____
2. BOOKKEEPING:
 - a. Transfer software and/or computer files used to track Chapter expenditures and income, including usernames and passwords for each _____
3. DISBURSEMENTS & RECEIPTS:
 - a. Know where to find the following:
 - i. Affidavit or Check request forms found in Best Practices: Financial Resource Management of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension _____
 - ii. Unused checks _____
 - iii. Federal Employer Identification Number _____
 - iv. State exempt information _____
 - v. IRS data that pertains to STMN _____
 - vi. Receipt books remaining from previous year _____

Signature of outgoing Treasurer

Signature of incoming Treasurer

Date: _____

Board President Signature: _____

Appendix G: Check Request Form

Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter

Complete relevant portions of this form and deliver it with all documents and receipts requesting payment from organization(s) to the Treasurer. If there is no receipt(s) available, complete the "Affidavit of Expenditure Form". Please contact the Treasurer if you have any questions - Thank You.

Date: _____

Payable to: _____

Amount (please attach original receipts): \$ _____

Account: Texas Master Naturalist: South Texas Chapter

Disposition of check: _____

Mail to: _____

Return to: _____

Requested by: _____

Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Check amount: \$ _____

Check no. _____

Dated: _____

Purpose of purchases:

Appendix H: Affidavit of Expenditure Form*

Texas Master Naturalists: South Texas Chapter

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the following purchase or expenditure, being presented for reimbursement from funds administered by _____, was made for the purpose of advancing _____, but the original receipt for the purchase or expenditure has been lost, stolen or is otherwise unavailable to be presented for reimbursement. I further certify and promise that reimbursement for this same purchase or expenditure neither has been requested from any other entity nor has been claimed as an unreimbursed expense or in any other way claimed as a deduction for Federal income tax purposes.

Date of Expenditure	Vendor's/Service Provider's Name
\$	
Amount of Expenditure	Vendor's/Service Provider's Address (Street/P.O. Box, City, State, Zip)

Name of the support group for which the Purchase/Expenditure was made:

Reason an original receipt for this purchase/expenditure is not available:

Person Requesting Reimbursement:

Name	Title
Address	Telephone Number
Signature of Person Requesting Reimbursement	Date

*This form is used to request funding when there is no invoice or receipt associated with the purchase. The requesting person submits a rationale for the request or an organizational document that identifies the specific dollar amount and definition of purpose (such as an annual organizational membership). The request must be approved by both the Executive Board and Membership.

*Please print, complete & submit this form and supportive documents by e-mail or in person to the Treasurer.

Appendix I: Application for Advanced Training (AT)

Application to Conduct AT for South Texas Master Naturalist

This form is for programs other than community and Partner AT, Monthly Meeting AT and Intern Training. All presentations should comply with the mission of TMN.

Presenter Name:

Presentation Title:

Type of Training: Is this field (or laboratory), classroom or combination training (Circle one).

Hours for Advanced Training Presentation: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (Circle one).

Objectives for the Presentation:

What should Master Naturalists leave the presentation knowing or understanding?

Facility/Equipment:

Supplies provided by participants (notebooks, lunch, outdoor apparel):

Supply Cost/Gratuity (if any):

Time of Year to Conduct Presentation: Please include season, morning, afternoon or all day.

Possible Dates:

Minimum and Maximum Number of Participants:

TMN Mission: "To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the state of Texas."