

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Balcones Canyonlands Chapter 2026



Texas Master Naturalist Program

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

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

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CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

Balcones Canyonlands Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Program

1. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

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

2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2.1 Makeup of the Board

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

2.1.1 Officers

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

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

2.1.2 Directors

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

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

2.1.3 Other Board Members

- Immediate Past President
- Technology Director

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA) Director
- Advisors

2.2 Term of Office

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

2.3 Executive Committee

The elected officers comprise the executive committee [see 5.1.1 Executive Committee].

3. DUTIES OF THE BOARD

3.1 Duties of All Board Members

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

3.2 Duties of Officers

3.2.1 President

- See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members.
- Serve as chair of the board of directors.
- Prepare an agenda for board and chapter meetings.
- Preside at board and chapter meetings.
- Sign all board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the chapter.
- Ensure that the president is one of the three authorized signatories on the chapter bank account.
- Authorize in writing in advance any payments to be made of \$1,000 or greater from the chapter bank account.
- Communicate with board and chapter members as needed.
- Present a summary of the chapter's accomplishments each year.
- Conduct votes by manual or electronic means as required by responsibilities of the board [see 4.4 Voting].
- Present a slate of candidates for all director positions for review and approval by a majority vote of the executive committee, immediate past president, and chapter advisor

- l. Appoint all committee chairs and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, assisting as appropriate
- m. Ensure all officers and directors perform their duties and responsibilities as stated in this COH and are familiar with program guiding documents (i.e., Bylaws, CMOP)
- n. Ensure that before the chapter makes any written commitments to county governments, city councils, etc., or executes contracts or memorandums of understanding with other entities, the TMN state program coordinator's approval is obtained
- o. Communicate with the TMN state office, other chapters, and state agencies as appropriate
- p. Be the chapter's state representative or appoint an alternate to serve [see 3.3.2 Chapter State Representative]
- q. If there is no immediate past president, reassign the duties of that position [see 3.4.1 Immediate Past President]
- r. Serve as immediate past president upon completion of term as president
- s. Facilitate a retreat of all newly elected officers and directors with the outgoing board members to help in the transition of responsibilities and to chart the chapter's new year.

3.2.2 Vice President

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Assist the president and act for the president in the president's absence
- c. Meet with the president to recommend chapter and board meeting dates and locations for approval by the board
- d. Arrange for programs for the chapter meetings
- e. Select and secure the venue for upcoming chapter meetings
- f. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee [see 5.2.1 Financial Examination Committee]
- g. Coordinate chapter field trips.

3.2.3 Secretary

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Conduct necessary chapter correspondence as assigned by the president
- c. Record, publish, and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the board, executive committee, general membership, and any special meetings [see 8.4 Minutes]
- d. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting and whether a quorum is present
- e. Maintain a paper copy or a secure digital record of all minutes and correspondence according to the chapter records retention policy [Reference at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]
- f. At board and chapter meetings, have access to electronic or paper copies of past minutes, the Bylaws, CMOP, COH, and Roberts Rules of Order,
- g. Ensure that a method is in place for maintaining the chapter's paper and electronic files [see 4.6 Records retention]
- h. Facilitate chapter members' compliance with the chapter records retention policy

- i. For 501(c)(3) chapters, ensure that all board members sign the required Conflict of Interest form each year [Reference form at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]

3.2.4 Treasurer

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Receive all monies for the chapter and maintain them in a chapter bank account
- c. Develop and maintain an annual budget for the chapter with input and approval by the board. The proposed budget should be finalized and submitted for approval as soon as possible after the start of the new calendar year.
- d. Pay all bills promptly upon receipt of a written statement, invoice, or receipt and any other required documentation for approved expenses
- e. Make all financial reports and documents available to any chapter member or advisor upon request
- f. Ensure that the required three signers are on the chapter bank account.
- g. If any other financial tools are used by the chapter, such as PayPal or Square, ensure that at least two other board members have access.
- h. Sign all checks, drafts, or other instruments for payment or notes of the chapter. In the absence of the treasurer, the president or another designated officer may sign any instruments under \$1,000 for payment or notes of the chapter.
- i. For any payments of \$1,000 or greater, the president or another designated officer must co-sign the payment instrument with the treasurer. Written authorization must be provided in advance by the president for any payments of \$1,000 or more.
- j. Present a financial report at all board and chapter meetings that includes the status of all financial transactions and bank statement reconciliations
- k. Prepare and submit all annual financial records, reports and audits as required by law and sponsoring agencies.
- l. Present the financial records to the financial examination committee [see 5.2.1 Financial Examination Committee] annually as requested.
- m. Maintain the financial records of the chapter in such a way that quality financial reports can be produced that are easily understood by any chapter member or advisor. Financial management systems can be a detailed spreadsheet or commercially available programs such as QuickBooks or Quicken.
- n. For 501(c)(3) chapters, file the 990N or other tax form with the IRS annually
- o. For 501(c)(3) chapters, use a financial management system that meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
- p. Retain a detailed account of all income, expenses, disbursements, and other financial matters (including a paper copy of such documentation) for seven years plus the current calendar year, according to the chapter records retention policy [Reference the *TMN Chapters Records Retention Policy* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>].
- q. Serve as a member of the chapter's committee for grants, contracts, and donations, when required.
- r. Write donor-appreciation letters.

3.3 Duties of Directors

3.3.1 Advanced Training Director

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Maintain and utilize a form or process for members to request that a program be considered for AT credit
- c. Working with the AT committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all AT requests and events [Reference CMOP 5.10]
- d. Coordinate with the membership director to set up and manage AT opportunities in the chapter's Volunteer Management System (VMS)
- e. Notify chapter membership of approved AT opportunities and ensure that upcoming opportunities are on chapter calendars

3.3.2 Chapter State Representative

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

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

3.3.3 Communication Director

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Oversee volunteers or committees to handle these various aspects of chapter communications:
 - newsletter
 - outreach
 - publicity
 - social media
 - website
- c. Write publicity press releases for print and electronic media covering training class application, chapter meetings and special events
- d. Work with training class director and membership director to develop recruiting materials
- e. Arrange for printing and distribution of recruiting or promotional materials
- f. Oversee social media platforms and content developed for chapter members. Social media should be compliant with the TMN Brand Guide [Reference at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/tmn-brand-marketing/>] and with policies of

the TMN sponsoring agencies: Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (AgriLife Extension)

- g. Work with the Outreach Coordinator to identify and organize outreach events and manage the Chapter's outreach materials and make them available to members for outreach events

3.3.4 Membership Director

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Chair the membership committee [see 5.1.3 Membership Committee]
- c. Maintain a roster of all chapter members with pertinent contact information
- d. Manage the chapter's use of the TMN Volunteer Management System for reporting VS and AT hours [Reference *CMOP*, 5 and 6.]
- e. Supervise the chapter VMS administrator's process for reviewing and approving hours logged by members
- f. Ensure all members are trained in the use of the VMS.
- g. Ensure all member VMS profiles are up to date to allow for an annual criminal background check.
- h. Publish names of members achieving certification and milestone awards.
- i. Present awards at chapter meetings.
- j. Coordinate with training class director to manage training class application process.
- k. Coordinate with communication director and training class director to develop recruiting materials.
- l. Coordinate with communication director and officers to manage electronic communications to all chapter members (such as an email list like Google Groups).
- m. Manage the chapter's mentor program in coordination with the training class director. [Reference *CMOP*, Appendix 3.]
- n. Ensure that rosters with member contact information are not shared on public sites such as the chapter website or social media platforms.

3.3.5 Training Class Director

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

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members.
- b. Chair the training class committee [see 5.1.6 Training Class Committee].
- c. Develop a budget for the class and submit to the board for approval.
- d. Recommend class tuition fees to the board for approval.
- e. Work with membership and communication directors to develop recruiting materials.
- f. Work with the membership director to manage the training class application process.
- g. Coordinate with membership director to review applicants and share with the board as appropriate.
- h. Present to the board for approval a proposed class syllabus that covers the state-approved curriculum for Initial Training. [Reference *CMOP* 2.3.]
- i. Serve as manager for the training class, including planning, curriculum development, calendar, instructors, venues, attendance tracking, etc.
- j. Coordinate all communications with trainees.

- k. Ensure that a mentoring program which conforms to the needs of the chapter and trainees is in place for trainees. [Reference *CMOP Appendix 3.*]
- l. Ensure each trainee receives appropriate instruction to use VMS.

3.3.6 Training Class Representative

Note about term of office: Class representative serves from the beginning of a training course for 12 months or until a new training course begins.

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members.
- b. Represent the current training class as a member of the board, attending board and chapter meetings.
- c. Participate as a member of the training committee [see 5.1.6 Training Class Committee] planning for the subsequent class.
- d. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee [see 5.2.1 Financial Examination Committee].
- e. Report back to the current training class to provide trainees information about chapter business.
- f. Talk to the subsequent training class about selecting a training class representative.

3.3.7 Volunteer Service Projects Director

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members.
- b. Chair the volunteer service (VS) projects committee [see 5.1.7 Volunteer Service Projects Committee].
- c. Maintain and utilize a form and process for members to request approval of a new VS project, using as a guideline the information required for setting up a new opportunity in VMS [Reference <https://texasmasternaturalist.freshdesk.com/support/home/>].
- d. With the VS projects committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all chapter VS project requests [Reference *CMOP*, 6.8 Appendix 2].
- e. Coordinate with the membership director/VMS administrator to add or modify volunteer opportunities in VMS.
- f. Coordinate with project leaders to ensure their responsibilities are met [see 6.3 Responsibilities of Project Leaders].
- g. Ensure that a complete description of every volunteer service project is accessible to all chapter members through the chapter website, event calendar, email announcements and any other communication methods used by the chapter.

3.4 Duties of Other Board Members

3.4.1 Immediate Past President

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

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Provide continuity from prior board to ensure local policies and procedures are being followed .
- c. Provide counsel to officers and directors on fulfilling duties and responsibilities
- d. Assist the president as requested.

- e. Lead an annual review of the chapter's *COH* and update if necessary to reflect actual chapter policies and procedures as well as to ensure compliance with all TMN state governing documents. [Reference <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/> .]
- f. Chair the nomination committee [see 5.2.2 Nomination Committee] [Reference *Bylaws*, Article V, E, 2]

3.4.2 Technology Director

- a. See 3.1 Duties of All Board Members
- b. Act as primary administrator for all chapter technology and appoint additional administrators as necessary. To include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Slack
 - b. Google Workspace
 - c. Zoom
 - d. WordPress
- c. Provide regular review of technology stack, ensuring that existing technology meets current operational and communication requirements
- d. Evaluate potential additions and/or replacements to the existing technology stack to fill any holes or inadequacies defined in 'c' above
- e. Develop and manage roll out plans for any new technology
- f. Provide coaching to board members on effective use of all technology as needed on an ad hoc basis
- g. Provide annual budget requests for technology licenses and renewals
- h. In coordination with the Communications Director and Webmaster, assists in backend website development
- i. Maintain a secure list of all websites, social media platforms, email distribution lists, apps, data storage sites, financial accounts, and any other tools the chapter uses to conduct its business (include username and password when appropriate)

3.4.3 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility (DEIA) Director

- a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
- b. Chair the DEIA Committee [see 5.1.6]
- c. Develop an annual budget for chapter DEIA needs, submit to the board for approval
- d. Work with Admissions to ensure the Application for Admission meets certain equity standards Work with Training Class Director and Vice President (Programs) to ensure a diverse selection of topics and presenters is selected for Initial Training sessions and Chapter Meetings
- e. Receive and respond to all requests from Chapter members and community groups related to DEIA concerns
- f. Ensure any member activities and VS or AT opportunities are approved in VMS

- g. Coordinate all communications about DEIA committee meetings, activities, and volunteer opportunities with Chapter members by listing opportunities in the Chapter mailings, on social media, and presenting at Chapter meetings

3.4.4 Advisors

The duties and responsibilities of the chapter advisors are described in detail in Appendix 1 of the *CMOP* and in Article V, B of the *Bylaws*. Also see 3.1 Duties of All Board Members.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

4.1 Authority

The board is responsible for the success of the chapter and has the authority to conduct the business of the chapter as defined in the *Bylaws*. [Reference Article VI, A. 2-3]

4.2 Committee Oversight

All committees and their activities are subject to review and approval by the board.

4.3 Expenditure Limits

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

4.4 Voting

All business before the board requires approval by majority vote of board members in attendance (either in person or via electronic method) at a board meeting where a quorum is present. All official board votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

4.5 Setting Dues

The board may set annual membership dues payable to the chapter, with approval of a majority of members present at a duly called and convened general membership meeting.

- a. The board must notify voting members at least 30 days prior to the general meeting that the subject of dues or their increase will be brought before the convened general membership for action.
- b. The board, under special circumstances, may waive part or all of an individual's annual membership dues on a case-by-case basis, if approved by a majority vote of the board.
- c. Dues shall be payable on or before January 31 each calendar year. If dues are not paid by January 31 each calendar year, then all privileges afforded a TMN member are rescinded until dues are paid. A TMN member who is not current in the payment of dues will be considered inactive and categorized as such in VMS.

4.6 Records retention

The board must conduct chapter business in compliance with the chapter records retention policy, that in turn must meet requirements as outlined in the state policy.

[Reference *TMN Chapters Records Retention Policy* at <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/>]

- a. Ensure the chapter has a records retention policy in place.
- b. Establish and maintain a remote data storage system (e.g., Dropbox) that gives appropriate access to chapter members responsible for retaining records of their positions.
- c. Train all chapter members who are in leadership positions (officers, board members, committee chairs, project leaders) in the requirements of the records retention policy and the proper use of the chapter's designated data storage system.

5. Committees

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

5.1 Standing Committees

5.1.1 Executive Committee

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

5.1.2 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee

- a. Assist the DEIA Director to help ensure a purposeful effort of the Chapter to represent and engage with and reflect in membership the whole community in which the Chapter serves
- b. Help create a welcoming environment by reviewing training materials and presentation topics to ensure inclusive, diverse, accessible, and culturally appreciative appropriate information
- c. Assist the DEIA Director in ensuring a diverse selection of topics and presenters for Initial Training sessions and Chapter Meetings
- d. Review admissions application annually to ensure equitable access, non-biased questions, and inclusive wording
- e. Assist in organizing and hosting events for members with DEIA topics or activities.
- f. Provide DEIA resources to organizations events, and endeavors within the community to Chapter members

5.1.3 Membership Committee

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

5.1.4 Program Committee

- a. Support Vice President in reviewing, contacting, soliciting, planning and approving relevant program and field trip opportunities for chapter members.
- b. Assist in publicizing approved programs and field trips to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications and website event calendars.
- c. Assist in drafting a complete description of those programs and field trips where all chapter members can easily access them (e.g., on the chapter website, Slack, etc.).
- d. Assist in organizing, leading or identifying leaders for chapter field trips.
- e. Assist in maintaining contact information of program and field trip contacts for future planning.
- f. Assist in gathering feedback from chapter membership on desired programs or field trips and the outcomes of programs and field trips.

5.1.5 Scholarships Committee

- a. Serve under the leadership of the Scholarship Committee Chair appointed by the President
- b. The scholarship committee will consist of three to five chapter members
- c. The committee will review the current Scholarship Application and propose any new changes for the upcoming year
- d. The committee will review all scholarship applications submitted for the upcoming class
- e. The committee will award up to four (4) community member applicant scholarships of \$100 (towards the \$150 community member training fee) and up to four (4) student member scholarships of \$50 (towards the \$85 student member training fee)
- f. Additional scholarships in excess of these eight (8) may be awarded with Board approval

5.1.6 Training Class Committee

- a. Serve under the leadership of the training class director.

- b. Help plan, implement, and evaluate the chapter training curriculum and develop the calendar for Initial Training course.
- c. Acquire the *TMN State Curriculum* for each class member and prepare additional class materials.
- d. Help select presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts, and audio-visual equipment needed.
- e. Help arrange for speaker gifts, any travel, any lodging needs, confirmation, and thank you letters.
- f. Help arrange for publicity, e.g., newspaper articles, flyers, brochures, electronic media.
- g. Help arrange for training venue and required facilities equipment for all in-person class periods.
- h. Assist with class field trips.
- i. Ensure there is a method in place for tracking attendance of trainees and monitoring their progress toward completion of Initial Training course.
- j. Host training class orientation and course completion events.
- k. Arrange for refreshments/amenities during in-person class periods.
- l. Support AT director in reviewing and approving AT opportunities for chapter members.
- m. Assist in publicizing approved AT opportunities to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications or website event calendars.
- n. Assist in managing the chapter's AT opportunities in VMS.

5.1.7 Volunteer Service Projects Committee

- a. Support VS projects director in reviewing and approving volunteer opportunities for chapter members.
- b. Assist in publicizing approved volunteer project opportunities to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications and website event calendars
- c. Assist in drafting a complete description of those project activities for which volunteer service hours may be accumulated and assure the descriptions are kept up to date where all chapter members can easily access them (e.g., on the chapter website).
- d. Assist in organizing and hosting volunteer project fairs or similar events for chapter members (in particular for members-in-training enrolled in the chapter's Initial Training course).
- e. Assist in managing project opportunities in the chapter's VMS.
- f. Assist project leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities [see 6.3 Responsibilities of Project Leaders].

5.2 Ad Hoc Committees

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

5.2.1 Financial Examination Committee

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

5.2.2 Nomination Committee

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

- a. For elected officers, proceed in accordance with Bylaws, Article V, D. 2. Election Process.
- b. For director positions, proceed in accordance with Bylaws, Article V, E. 2 and 3.
- c. President appoints members to the committee, chaired by the immediate past president.
- d. Committee must review the required skills, duties, and responsibilities of each position with the proposed candidate to assess the candidate's understanding and willingness to perform the functions of the position prior to nominating the candidate.
- e. Committee presents a slate of candidates to the president, considering the following attributes. Selection of candidates based on these attributes would maintain experience and continuity for the board while recruiting new members to serve.
 - 1) Officer candidates must be certified Texas Master Naturalists and members in good standing. An exception is made for chapters in their first year of operation.
 - 2) The committee shall endeavor to select candidates from the chapter membership who demonstrate appropriate skills for managing the position for which they are being nominated. Candidates should not be selected only on length of time in a certain position, length of time in the chapter, or on amount of service hours attained.
 - 3) Where possible, candidates should be selected with an eye to increasing diversity. Diversity considerations should not be limited to sex, ethnicity, creed, or national origin, but include attributes such as age, sexual orientation, gender identity, formal education, background experience, and county of residence.
- f. Election procedure:
 - 1) President must publish the slate of officer candidates to the chapter membership in writing at least 15 days prior to the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.
 - 2) Nomination committee will conduct the election at the last general membership meeting of the calendar year.
- g. TMN state program coordinator may provide oversight to a chapter's nomination process.

5.2.3 Grants, Donations and Contracts Committee (when needed)

- a. Any grants or donations solicited for the chapter must be approved by the chapter board.
- b. Membership on the grants and donations committee should at least include the chapter treasurer and the project leader of a project that has grant funding or receives donations.
- c. Any chapter that receives a grant or donation of \$5,000 or more must notify the TMN state office. Chapters are encouraged to share with the state office any news of grants or donations received.
- d. The term of service for the committee or any subcommittees is based on the specific functions performed by the committee or on the required reporting period of a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOA), grant, donation, or project.
- e. Volunteer service hours cannot be used as match for any grant, contract, or MOU/MOA.
- f. Chapters cannot enter into any contract, MOU or MOA without prior review and approval by the TMN state office.
- g. Functions of this committee may include:
 - 1) Review grant opportunities for the chapter.
 - 2) Coordinate grant application process.
 - 3) Track progress of grants.
 - 4) Ensure that reports are made to grantors as to the progress on grant spending.
 - 5) Monitor MOUs and MOAs. Form ad hoc subcommittees as necessary for monitoring each MOU/MOA. The project leader of projects that fall under the MOU or MOA should chair the subcommittee and must report regularly to the Executive Committee.

6. CHAPTER PROJECTS

6.1 New Projects

A new or expanded volunteer service project may be proposed by any active chapter member to the board, following the instructions provided by the VS projects director. Proposals should include information such as intent and scope of project, location, budget, requirements, any specialized training needs, partnering organizations, etc.

6.2 Travel Time

Members may include a reasonable, typical amount of travel time when recording volunteer service hours, not to exceed one hour total travel time. Travel time should not include side trips for personal activities.

6.3 Responsibilities of Project Leaders

- a. Keep the chapter membership informed of events concerning your project, including information about location, date, time, and equipment needed for workdays.
- b. Provide contact information for the leader at each workday.

- c. Ensure that the president and website editor or calendar keeper are informed of details so event listings can be kept up to date.
- d. Record impact data in VMS about each workday or appoint one of the volunteers to do it.
- e. Report on your project periodically via the newsletter, email blasts, newspaper articles, or at a chapter meeting.
- f. Submit a budget request for expenses associated with your project.
- g. Work with the chapter board to solicit grants or donations if appropriate. The TMN state office must be notified of any grants of \$5,000 or more received by the chapter.
- h. Maintain contact with partners at the event venue or worksite for your project. (Partners may include cities, counties, schools, parks, non-profit organizations, or site supervisors.)
- i. Maintain an updated file for your project on the chapter's data storage system, if required by donors or other contracts. Include pictures, reports on workdays, and partner and volunteer contact information.

7. MEMBERSHIP

[Reference *Bylaws*, Article IV]

7.1 Non-discrimination and Inclusion

Membership in the chapter is open to individuals aged 18 or over, based on the equal opportunity policies of the state sponsoring agencies, TPWD and AgriLife Extension.

7.2 Member Categories

- Texas Master Naturalist-in-Training (Member-in-Training) – a member enrolled in a chapter's Initial Training course.
- Texas Master Naturalist – an active member who has completed Initial Training course requirements.
- Certified Texas Master Naturalist – an active member who has met all the requirements of initial certification and thereafter, attains annual recertification.

7.3 Membership Status

7.3.1 Criminal background check

All persons who are chapter members in any category must submit to and pass the required annual criminal background check.

7.3.2 Dues

Members must be current in the payment of any dues set by the chapter.

7.3.3 Transfers

Members may transfer between chapters within the state of Texas. [Reference *CMOP*, 3.2]

7.3.4 Reinstatement

Members who have been moved to inactive status may petition a local chapter for reinstatement, providing all chapter membership requirements are met.

8. MEETINGS

8.1. Chapter Meetings

Our chapter has regularly scheduled membership meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m, unless that date occurs the day after the chapter's Board Meeting or the date conflicts with a chapter special event. In those cases, the President shall determine an alternate date and communicate the new date to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Any number of members present at a meeting, in person or remotely/virtually, constitutes a quorum.

8.2 Board Meetings

Our board has regularly scheduled Board meetings on the first Monday of each month, unless that date occurs on a national or state holiday, occurs the day before the Chapter meeting, or conflicts with a chapter special event. In those cases, the President shall determine an alternate date and communicate the new date to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. A majority of the members of the board must be present in person or remotely/virtually to constitute a quorum.

8.3 Meeting Remotely

All meetings may be conducted by remote communication technology if the following requirements are met:

- a. Reasonable notice is given to persons entitled to participate in the meeting and includes relevant information to be discussed.
- b. The system provides access to the meeting in a manner or using a method by which all meeting participants can communicate with each other.
- c. Minutes include documentation that the requirements in *a.* and *b.* above were met.

8.4 Minutes

Minutes are the legal record of a meeting and are never destroyed. They include actions considered by the board or general membership and business topics discussed. These items should always be included:

- a. Date and place of meeting. If held by remote communication technology or with a combination of remote and in-person attendees, that must be stated. [see 8.3 Meeting Remotely]
- b. Who presided at the meeting and who recorded minutes if the secretary was absent.
- c. Time of call to order and of adjournment.
- d. The number of members in attendance (to establish a quorum). May include the titles of officers and directors in attendance.
- e. Whether previous minutes were approved (as published or as corrected).
- f. Summary of the treasurer's report (beginning balance, totals of income and expenses, and ending balance). Entire report will be attached to the minutes.
- g. Motions made and votes taken. Include names of those making motions; names of seconders are not necessary. Discussion on motions is not usually included, but may be signified by a phrase such as, "After much discussion, the motion carried."

- h. The fact that a report from a committee was given, but not usually the details of the report unless it involves a recommendation or requires a vote.
- i. Name of presenter of a program and the topic, but no summary of the program.

9. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK

9.1 Initial Adoption

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

9.2 Amendment or Revision

9.2.1 Board Approval

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

9.2.2 Notification Requirements

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

9.2.3 Membership Approval

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

9.3 State Office Notification

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

10. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

10.1 TMN State Website

<https://txmn.tamu.edu/>

10.2 State Documents

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

10.3 Volunteer Management System (VMS) Help Desk

<https://texasmasternaturalist.freshdesk.com/support/home/>

10.4 Chapter Website

bctxmn.org

10.5 Parliamentary Reference

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 12th edition, by Henry M. Robert III, Daniel H Honemann, Thomas J Balch, Daniel E. Seabold, Shmuel Gerber