CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

South Texas Border Chapter
January 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.

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CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK
South Texas Border 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*. [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(s). All are voting members of the board.

2.1.1 Officers are elected by the membership according to *Bylaws* Article V, A. and E. They are:

- President
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

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

- Advanced Training (AT) Director
- Chapter State Representative
- Communication Director
- Membership Director
- Training Class Director (term begins when training class ends)
- Training Class Representative (term may be shorter than other directors)
- Volunteer Service (VS) Projects Director
- Outreach Director
- Historian/Archivist
- At-Large Directors to include
  Member At-Large: South Texas Border Chapter Region
  Member At-Large: Winter Texan

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.

3. DUTIES OF BOARD

3.1 Duties of all board members

a. Communicate effectively with the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) state office about any questions or issues that arise and keep it informed of what the chapter is doing.
b. Maintain confidentiality when dealing with individual member issues.

c. Whenever possible, maintain the privacy of members' personal information.
d. Strive to further the TMN mission in everything that one does.
e. Adhere to the *TMN Code of Ethics* and *Standards of Conduct*.
f. Remember that every chapter and every member represent the public face of the TMN Program and its sponsoring agencies.
g. Serve as a model of leadership and recruit and develop new leaders for the chapter.

3.2 Duties of officers

3.2.1 President

a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
b. Serve as chair of the board of directors
c. Prepare an agenda for board and chapter meetings
d. Preside at board and chapter meetings
e. Sign all board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the chapter
f. Ensure that the president is one of the three authorized signatories on the chapter bank account
g. Authorize in writing in advance any payments to be made of $1,000 or greater from the chapter bank account
h. Communicate with board and chapter members as needed
i. Present a summary of the chapter's accomplishments each year
j. Conduct votes by manual or electronic means as required by responsibilities of the board [see 4.4]
k. 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 Chapter's Advisor(s) and the TMN state program coordinator's review 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]
q. If there is no immediate past president, reassign the duties of that position [see 3.4.1]
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
t. Write donor-appreciation letters
u. Present recognition awards to out-going officers and board members

3.2.2 **A.** First 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. Select and secure the venue for upcoming chapter meetings
e. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee
f. Oversee volunteers or committees to handle all Chapter Projects
g. Oversee volunteers or committees to handle all Chapter Outreach Activities

B. Second Vice President

a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
b. Arrange for programs for the chapter meetings
c. Participate as a member of the annual financial examination committee
d. Oversee volunteers and hospitality committee to coordinate General Membership meeting social activities

3.2.3 Secretary

a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
b. Conduct necessary chapter correspondence as assigned by the president
c. Record, publish, and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the board, executive committee, general membership, and any special meetings [see 8.4]
d. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting and whether a quorum is present
e. Maintain a paper copy or a secure digital record of all minutes and correspondence according to the chapter records retention policy.
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 as a guidance.
g. Ensure that a method is in place for maintaining the chapter's paper and/or electronic files.
h. For 501(c)(3) chapters, ensure that all board members sign the required Conflict of Interest form each year.

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 two or 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 unbudgeted payments of $1,000.00 or greater, the president must provide written authorization in advance (and filed with the chapter), and/or must co-sign the payment instrument with the treasurer or other designated officer.
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 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
q. Serve as a member of the chapter's committee for grants, contracts, and donations.

3.3 Duties of directors

3.3.1 Advanced training director

a. See 3.1 - Duties of all board members
b. Chair the advanced training (AT) committee
c. Maintain and utilize a form or process for members to request that a program be considered for AT credit
d. Working with the AT committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all AT requests and events
e. Coordinate with the membership director to set up and manage AT opportunities in the chapter's Volunteer Management System (VMS)
f. Notify chapter membership of approved AT opportunities and ensure that upcoming opportunities are on chapter calendars
g. Coordinate chapter field trips.

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 coordinators
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
    - 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* and with policies of the TMN sponsoring agencies: Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension (AgriLife Extension)

3.3.4 Membership director

a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
b. Chair the membership committee
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
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
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 director begins upon the conclusion of the current training class or at a reasonable time thereafter.

a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
b. Chair the 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
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 is in place for trainees
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.

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 planning for the subsequent class
d. Participate as a member of the annual 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
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
d. With the VS projects committee, review and recommend for approval or disapproval all chapter VS project requests
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
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

3.3.8 Outreach director

a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
b. Oversee volunteers or committees to coordinate Chapter Outreach activities
c. Coordinate requests for Chapter Outreach activities in the community or partnering agencies
d. Arrange for printing and distribution of recruiting or promotional materials
e. Maintain all chapter outreach materials.

3.3.9 Historian/Archivist

a. See 3.1 – Duties of all board members
b. Facilitate chapter members' compliance with the chapter records retention policy
c. Maintains complete and authentic records for the Chapter
d. 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 if appropriate)

3.3.10 At - Large STBC Region Director

a. See 3.1 – duties of all board members
b. Represent members within the general region covered by the South Texas Border Chapter counties.
c. Assist in recruitment and retention of Master Naturalists within the region.
d. Assist as needed in Chapter operations.
e. Participate on one or more standing or ad hoc committees.

3.3.11 At-Large Winter Texan Director

a. See 3.1 – duties of all board members
b. Represent "Winter Texan" members within the general region covered by the South Texas Border Chapter counties
c. Assist in recruitment and retention of Master Naturalists within the region.
d. Assist as needed in Chapter operations.
e. Participate on one or more standing or ad hoc committees.

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
f. Chair the nomination committee

3.4.2 Advisor

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

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD

4.1 Authority – The board is responsible for the success of the chapter and has the authority to conduct the business of the chapter as defined in the *Bylaws.*

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.
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
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
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

5.1.2 Advanced training committee

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

5.1.3 Membership committee

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

5.1.4 Training class committee

a. Serve under the leadership of the training class director
b. Help plan, implement, and evaluate the chapter training curriculum and develop the calendar for Initial Training course.
c. Acquire the *TMN State Curriculum* for each class member and prepare additional class materials
d. Help select presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts, and audio-visual equipment needed
e. Help arrange for speaker gifts, travel, 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 class periods
h. Assist with class field trips
i. Ensure there is a method in place for tracking attendance of trainees and monitoring their progress toward completion of Initial Training course
j. Host training class orientation and course completion events
k. Arrange for refreshments/amenities during class periods

5.1.5 Volunteer service projects committee

a. Support VS projects director in reviewing and approving volunteer opportunities for chapter members.
b. Assist in publicizing approved volunteer project opportunities to chapter members in a timely fashion by a variety of means such as email notifications and website event 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

5.1.6 History/Archives committee

Under the direction of the Historian/Archivist, maintain the historical records of the Chapter as outlined in the Chapter Records Retention Policy, including but not limited to information on training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook and Chapter Newsletters.

5.1.7 Hospitality committee

a. Assists the New Class Director with class social activities
b. Coordinates General Membership meeting social activities with 2nd Vice-President.

5.1.8 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.

5.1.9 Outreach committee

a. Coordinates the Chapter outreach activities under the direction of the Outreach 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

5.1.10 Program committee

Serves in support of the duties and responsibilities of the 2nd Vice President in identifying and assisting with chapter programs.

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
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&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.
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

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 $5,000.00 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 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, following the instructions provided by the VS projects director.

6.2 Travel time – Members may include a reasonable, typical amount of travel time when recording volunteer service hours. Travel time should not include side trips for personal activities. Following the criteria for TMN Service, travel within the chapter's territory is generally fine. Travel to service projects outside of the chapter's territory but within the chapter's trained ecoregion may be approved at the board's discretion. Travel outside of the chapter's trained ecoregion needs to be critically reviewed and approved at a board level and following criteria for service project approval.

6.3 Responsibilities of project leaders

6.3.1 Keep the chapter membership informed of events concerning your project, including information about location, date, time, and equipment needed for workdays

6.3.2 Provide contact information for the leader at each workday

6.3.3 Ensure that the president and website editor or calendar keeper are informed of details so event listings can be kept up to date

6.3.4 Record impact data in VMS about each workday or appoint one of the volunteers to do it

6.3.5 Report on your project periodically via the newsletter, email blasts, newspaper articles, or at a chapter meeting.

6.3.6 Submit a budget request for expenses associated with your project.

6.3.7 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.

6.3.8 Maintain contact with partners at the event venue or worksite for your project. (Partners may include cities, counties, schools, parks, non-profit organizations, or site supervisors)

6.3.9 Maintain an updated file for your project on the chapter's data storage system. Include pictures, reports on workdays, and partner and volunteer contact information.

7. MEMBERSHIP

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

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 11 times per year typically on the third Monday of the month. 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 meetings 12 times per year typically on the first Monday of the month unless otherwise noted. 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.
b. Who presided at the meeting and who recorded minutes if the secretary was absent.
c. Time of call to order and of adjournment.
d. The number of members in attendance (to establish a quorum). May include the titles of officers and directors in attendance.
e. Whether previous minutes were approved (as published or as corrected).
f. Summary of the treasurer's report (beginning balance, totals of income and expenses, and ending balance). Entire report will be attached to the minutes.
g. Motions made and votes taken. Include names of those making motions; names of seconders are not necessary. Discussion on motions is not usually included, but may be signified by a phrase such as, "After much discussion, the motion carried."
h. The fact that a report from a committee was given, but not usually the details of the report unless it involves a recommendation or requires a vote.
i. Name of presenter of a program and the topic, but no summary of the program.

9. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK

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

9.2 Amendment or revision

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

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

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

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

10. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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

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

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

10.4 Chapter website: https://www.stbctmn.org/

11. STBC Records Retention Policy

Data-Retention-Policy-STBC 2026.pdf