

# CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK



## **Hays County Chapter Texas Master Naturalist Program**

# **CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK**

## **Table of Contents**

### **I: CHAPTER ORGANIZATION**

#### **A. BOARD**

1. Officers
2. Duties of Officers
3. Directors
4. Duties of Directors

#### **B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD**

#### **C. COMMITTEES**

1. Standing Committees
2. AD HOC Committees

### **II: MEMBERSHIP**

### **III: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK**

### **IV: APPENDICES**

# **OPERATING HANDBOOK**

## **Hay County 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:

- a. President
- b. Vice President
- c. Treasurer
- d. Secretary

The terms and limits of office: All elected Officers shall serve for a period of 12 months, and are eligible for re-election.

##### **2. Duties of Officers**

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 Annual General 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 officer in the absence of the Treasurer, for amounts over \$1000
- f. Present a summary of the Chapter's accomplishments at the Chapter's last general meeting
- g. Prepare correspondence between the Chapter and the State Office, other Chapters or State agencies as appropriate
- h. Review Chapter's completed annual report before submission to State office
- i. Communicate with Board and Chapter Members as needed; conduct email votes on issues between meetings
- j. Appoint, subject to the board's approval, all committee Chairs

- k. 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 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. Vote in the event of a tie
- p. Recipient of any scholarship given periodically to the Chapter by the State Master Naturalist program for the sole purpose of defraying a portion of the registration fees for attending the State Annual Master Naturalist Meeting. If the Chapter President is not available to attend the annual meeting, the scholarship will be given to another member of the Board for attendance. If no Board member can attend, the Board will select a chapter member to receive the scholarship

### **Vice President**

- a. Assist the President and act for the President in their absence
- b. Participate as a member of the Annual Financial Examination Committee
- c. Chair the Program Committee
- d. Preside over Chapter Meetings

### **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
- c. Pay all bills upon receipt of a written statement or receipt. Treasurer or President may sign all checks and Treasurer and President or one other Officer shall co-sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money over \$1000 or notes of the Chapter
- d. Submit all annual financial records, reports and audits as required by law (and/or sponsoring agencies)
- e. Make a financial report at all Board meetings
- f. Present the financial records to the annual Financial Examination Committee before the last Board meeting of the calendar year
- g. 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
- h. Make available all financial reports and documents to any Chapter member and/or Advisor as may be requested
- i. Write donor-appreciation letters

### **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 permanent file of all minutes and correspondence
- f. 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.
- g. Publish notice of membership meetings and field trips

### 3. **Directors**

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

- Past President
- Advisors
- Membership Committee Chair
- Training Committee Chair
- Advanced Training Committee Chair
- Volunteer Service Projects Committee Chair
- Newsletter Committee Chair
- Webmaster
- Outreach Committee Chair
- Host Committee Chair
- Calendar Committee Chair
- Historian Committee Chair

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, and are eligible for re-appointment.

### 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 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.

#### a. **Duties of Other Board Members**

- **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. Assume the responsibility as the State Representative for the Chapter if that position is not otherwise filled
- e. Chair the Nominating Committee...Ref. Chapter Bylaws, Article V, E, 2
- f. In the absence of an Past President, the President will reassign above responsibilities as needed

- **Advisors**

Reference State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Appendix I, Advisor Guidelines

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.

- **Webmaster**

- a. Create and maintain the Chapter's web page
- b. Work with other Directors to ensure the web page content supports their work

**b. Duties of Standing Committee Chairs**

- **Membership Committee Chair**

- a. Maintain a roster of all Chapter members, including in-training members, with pertinent contact information
- b. Monthly maintain and publish names of members achieving certification and milestone awards
- c. Order and maintain the member certification and recognition awards (e.g. shirts, name tags, certificates, business cards, pins)
- d. Present awards frequently at Chapter meetings
- e. 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
- f. For Chapter Members not having access to the VMS, provide the Chapter Activity form for reporting Volunteer Project and Advanced Training hours by members
- g. Ensure new members/trainees receive appropriate training to use the TMN VMS
- h. Compile the State Annual Report with the support of the preceding year's President and Data Manager
- i. Maintain a record of high level interests and specific expertise of members

- **Training Committee Chair**

- 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 Outreach Committee Chair to ensure recruiting materials and methods are up-to-date and effective.
  - e. Work with the Membership Committee to manage the Mentor Program and the new class application process.
  - f. Ensures new members/trainees receive appropriate training to use the TMN VMS.
- **Advanced Training Committee Chair**
    - a. Develop an easily accessible method 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 using the State Chapter Management and Operations Protocols, Article VI. Advanced Training Requirements, including VMS as a guide.
    - 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 V. Advanced Training Requirements, including VMS, as a guide to review and approve Advanced Training Codes
  - **Volunteer Service Projects Committee Chair**
    - a. Develop an easily accessible method 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 VI 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, as a guide to review and approve Volunteer Service Project Codes
    - d. Assign Volunteer Service Project Codes to qualifying projects and publicize to Chapter members
  - **Newsletter Committee Chair**
    - a. Responsible for collecting Chapter and State TMN news, producing and distribution of the Chapter Newsletter
    - b. Officers, Directors and members may contribute to the contents of the Newsletter

- **Outreach Committee Chair**
  - a. Responsible for the Chapter outreach activities
  - b. Staff outreach booths
  - c. Acquire and maintain a Chapter display board
  - d. Coordinate activities with the Chapter Webmaster
  - e. Assist the Training Committee in promoting the Chapter
  - f. May assist Training Committee and Membership Committee Chair
  
- **Host Committee Chair**
  - a. Coordinate General Membership meeting host activities
  - b. Plans and coordinate Chapter Summer Social and Graduation/Gala events
  - c. Propose Chapter Summer Social Graduation/Gala budgets and locations to board for approval
  
- **Calendar Committee Chair**
  - a. Maintain the Chapter Event Calendar. Notify Chapter membership with the date, time, location and detail of Chapter activities including chapter and board meetings, annual graduation and other chapter wide events
  - b. Maintain the Chapter Project Calendar. Notify Chapter membership with the date, time, location, and detail of approved projects
  - c. Maintain the Chapter Advanced Training Calendar. Notify Chapter membership with the date, time, location, and detail of Advanced Training opportunities
  
- **Historian Committee Chair**
  - a. Maintain the historical records of the Chapter
  - b. Historical records include but not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook and Chapter Newsletter archives
  - c. May assist the Chapter Secretary

## **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, approved by the membership. Board approval requires either a majority vote of Board members in attendance at a Board meeting where a quorum is present, or a majority vote of Board members via electronic media.

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. 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.

### 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

- Executive Committee
- Training Committee
- Membership Committee
- Volunteer Service Projects Committee
- Advanced Training Committee
- Program Committee
- Newsletter Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Calendar Committee
- Historian Committee
- Host Committee
  
- **Executive Committee**
  - a. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Officers of the Chapter
  - b. Authority: Reference Chapter Bylaws, Article VI, B. 2. Authority
  
- **Training Committee**
  - a. Serves under the leadership of the Training Committee Chair 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 new class trainees 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
- **Training Committee Structure, Tasks, and Primary Responsibilities:**

The Training Committee shall be composed of 10 key positions, with other positions and volunteers added as needed and determined by the Training Committee Chair. The key positions are:

**1. Training Committee Chair - (1 Position)**

- Implement training program in accordance with Board Policy & Operating Handbook
- Determine training needs and facilitate meetings
- Develop list of materials, submit agenda, and arrange for printing prior to class
- Facilitate training classes, introduce speakers, and oversee overall process
- Report to Board on committee progress, class preparation, activities, events, needs, and accomplishments
- Attend Board meetings and serve as liaison to Chapter Executive Board
- Add or modify duties to key positions as necessary

**2. Training Committee Vice Chair - (1 Position)**

- Assist Chair in implementation of training program
- Assist Chair in determination of training needs, arrange for meetings, provide agenda and facilitate meetings in the absence of the Chair
- Assist in development of list of materials and submit agenda for printing to Texas A&M AgriLife Service prior to class
- Facilitate training classes as directed by Chair
- Represent Training Committee at Board meetings in absence of Chair

**3. Registration and Attendance: - (2 Positions)**

- Greet and obtain signatures for attendees on official sign-in sheets
- Collect money, provide receipts, and deposit funds with Treasurer
- Maintain file copy of registration and submit copies by fax or mail to Chapter Records Committee Chair and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service contact

- Maintain accurate records of advanced training and volunteer hours for trainees
- Provide trainee's attendance and advanced training and volunteer hour reports at last three classes
- Receive, review, and track class makeup reports for absentees
- Maintain and distribute hand-out packet for absentees

**4. Program:**

**4.1. Nature Watch Coordinator - (1 Position)**

- Arrange for artifacts, materials, and plant specimens for discussion at each class
- Facilitate 10 to 15 minute discussion at each class session

**4.2. Logistics & Documentation (videography): - (1 Position)**

- Determine equipment needs
- Set-up, test, and return equipment to secure location
- Set up tripod, camera, and record programs
- Set-up and breakdown tables and chairs
- Clean up and secure building
- Prepare video recording of class for streaming
- Notify Chair and Attendance Coordinator when streaming video is available
- Prepare DVD as need, if students cannot view by web streaming

**5. Field Trip and Site Visit Coordinator - (2 Positions)**

- Contact field trip host and make necessary arrangements
- Provide sign-in sheet and submit completed form to Attendance Coordinator
- Obtain or prepare map and one page public relations flyer
- Distribute, collect, and summarize evaluation forms, and report to Training Committee
- Site Visits: meet with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent, review suggestions and develop calendar
- Obtain map, directions, areas of interest and submit to Chair 10 days before each visit
- Meet host/hostess prior to visit, provide sign-in sheet, and turn in to Attendance Coordinator at next meeting
- Facilitate tour to highlight areas of interest

**6. Secretary - (1 Position)**

- Maintain "Master Course " binder with a full set of handouts for each class
- Maintain class files, including applications and insurance waiver forms
- Create class directory with phone, e-mail, and addresses
- Match trainees and mentors; take digital pictures, match photos in chart format

- Record committee meeting minutes and e-mail draft to Committee prior to next meeting
  - Make edits and provide official minutes to Executive Board and Texas Cooperative Extension Service
  - Contact facilities, reserve space for each class
- 7. Speaker's Contact (includes logistics, gifts, and evaluation) - (1 Position)**
- Contact speakers and discuss Master Naturalist course and needs: fill our Speaker Data Form
  - As reminder, contact speakers one week before class to confirm engagement
  - Obtain and present appropriate unique speaker "thank you" gifts
  - Obtain PowerPoint handouts and provide to Coordinator 1 week before class
  - Set-up equipment and assist speaker in connecting and testing prior to presentation
  - Write personal Thank You note to each speaker and present speaker gifts
  - Collect and tabulate evaluation forms for new speakers
  - Distribute summary report to Training Committee as needed
- **Ad Hoc Training Committees:**

The Training Committee shall have ad hoc committees established by the Chair as determined necessary to fulfill the needs of the Training Class. Two such committees should include:

1. Meals: supported by Chapter's Host Standing Committee - (Coordinator and helpers as needed)
  - Develop menus and coordinate food donors for class meal
  - Maintain stock of paper goods and essential supplies
  - Provide reimbursement forms, review and get signature approvals before submitting to Treasurer
  - Provide names of volunteers to be included in agenda
  - Operate within a specified dollar amount per person for the meal budget as determined by the Chair
2. Graduation: (Chair and volunteers as needed)
  - Arrange for graduation speaker
  - Arrange for location
  - Arrange for food (caterer) and associated needs
  - Order, size, pick up, and pay for shirts
  - Obtain State and County Certificates and Master Naturalist Dragonfly pins (1st year award for completion of training program)
  - Order and pay for name tags
  - Arrange for any extra event/activity if applicable
  - Coordinate efforts with Chapter representatives

3. Other: Volunteers as needed and determined by Chair and Vice-Chair
- **Training Committee Membership:**
    1. Training Committee Chair shall be nominated by the Chapter President, and approved by the Board.
    2. The Board will appoint a Training Committee Chair no later than August of the year prior to the start of the next Training Class.
    3. The Training Committee Chair will appoint the Vice-Chair. Board approval is not necessary.
    4. All Chapter members shall be notified in a timely manner that the Board is taking requests for volunteers to serve on the Training Committee. The descriptions of the key positions to be filled shall be attached to the notice. Names of individuals applying for a position shall be submitted by the Board to the Training Committee Chair for consideration.
    5. Appointments to key positions as stated in 3.4 (does not include Chair and Vice-Chair) shall be nominated by the Chair and approved by the Board. The Board will consider the requests of individuals desiring to be on the Committee and the Chair's needs in forming the Committee in a fair and equitable manner and with the assumption that some Training Committee membership rotation will occur.
    6. All members of the Training Committee should be appointed by the end of October of the year prior to the next Training Class.

- **Class Time Frame:**

The training class schedule should begin in February and extend through class graduation in October of the same year. Class timing should be consistent with this schedule within reason but can vary with the needs of the Training Committee. Any significant change in scheduling must be presented by the Chair to the Chapter Board for approval. The Chapter President will make a determination of the significance of the change before it is determined necessary to bring the action before the Board.

- **Training Class Location:**

Training Class location and meeting facility shall be determined by the following:

1. Class location shall rotate geographically within each year to include seminar locations that provide relevant, diverse, and effective learning environments to the county population.

2. Class room facility shall be:

2.1. Determined by the Training Committee Chair and Vice-chair.

2.2. Guidance can be given by the Board but the Training Committee shall maintain its responsibility to acquire a suitable class room setting that meets the needs of the Training Class.

○ **Future Amendments To Training Committee/Class Structure:**

Any future amendments to the items addressed above must be brought before the Board and approved before being incorporated into the Chapter Operating Handbook.

● **Membership Committee**

- a. Serves under the leadership of the Membership Committee Chair, typically composed of the Data Manager
- b. Manages and/or assists in managing the Chapter's records and reports within the TMN VMS
- c. Maintains a roster of the Chapter member names, including in-training members, plus pertinent contact information within the TMN VMS
- d. Maintains a record of volunteer and advanced training hours within the TMN VMS
- e. Supports Membership Committee Chair with compilation of the State Annual Report
- f. Reports members achieving Certification and Milestone awards regularly

● **Volunteer Service Projects Committee**

- a. Supports Volunteer Service Projects Committee Chair to review, organize, assign codes and notify Chapter members of approved Volunteer Service opportunities and projects
- b. May assist in managing project opportunities with the Chapter's TMN VMS

● **Advanced Training Committee**

- a. Supports Advanced Training Committee Chair to review, organize, assign codes, and notify Chapter members of approved Advanced Training opportunities
- b. Assists with managing the Chapter's Advanced Training Opportunities within the TMN VMS

● **Program Committee**

- a. Serves in support of the duties and responsibilities of the Vice President

● **Newsletter Committee**

- a. Supports the Newsletter Committee Chair in collecting Chapter and State TMN news and producing and distributing the Chapter Newsletter

● **Outreach Committee**

- a. Responsible for the Chapter outreach activities under the direction of the Outreach Committee Chair
  - b. Staffs outreach booths
  - 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. May assist Training Committee Chair and/or Membership Committee Chair
- **Calendar Committee**
    - a. Assists the Calendar Committee Chair as needed
  - **Historian Committee**
    - a. Maintains the historical records of the Chapter
    - b. Historical records include but not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, Chapter scrapbook, and Chapter Newsletter archives
    - c. May assist the Chapter Secretary
  - **Host Committee**
    - a. Supports the Host Committee Chair
    - b. Coordinates General Membership meeting host activities

## 2. **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

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

- 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/or Advisor. The President appoints the Chair person. The Treasurer provides the financial records for review.
- 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, race, creed, or national origin, but including attributes such as age, 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, at least 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 his/her election to present a slate of Director Candidates.

The State Master Naturalist 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 Training Committee Chair. 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, race, creed, or national origin, but including attributes such as age, 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 State Master Naturalist Coordinator may provide oversight to a Chapter's nomination process.

- Awards Committee. Responsible for nominating recipients for the award categories described below, following the given guidelines. Will draft a short biography of the award nominees describing the justification for the award and forward award nominations to the Chapter President for final approval.

### **1. Award Categories:**

- a. Past-President (Outgoing) Award of Service For current HCMN Program President upon the end of the term in office
- b. Outstanding Volunteer (Training Committee) For a volunteer nominated by the Training Committee Chair who excelled in their participation on the training committee based on hours of service, commitment, and dedication to excellence
- c. Award of Recognition (Training Committee Chair) For current HCMN Training Committee Chairperson at the completion of their term of service as chairman
- d. Significant Contributions to the Chapter (1 or 2 persons) - For a certified member who has made significant contributions to HCMN on a continual basis based on years of service, volunteer hours, project participation, chapter leadership, public relations for HCMN, or other category as deemed appropriate by the Awards Committee
- e. Years of Service to Chapter (5, 10, etc.) for Certified Members For recognition of certified members of HCMN upon completion of periods of time (5, 10, 15, etc. years) in which they maintained their certification. Years of service need not be continuous
- f. Outstanding Chapter Volunteer of the Year For a certified member who has made significant contributions to HCMN for the current year based on service, volunteer hours, project participation, chapter leadership, public relations for HCMN, or other category as deemed appropriate by the Awards Committee
- g. Special Achievement Award (case-by-case basis; used only as needed) - For a certified member who has made significant contributions of service and volunteerism to HCMN and the local community through project participation, leadership, public relations or other category as deemed appropriate by the Awards Committee
- h. Honorary Member (optional award each year for individual or group) For any individual, group, or organization that has exemplified the standards of

a HCMN and have made significant contributions to the continued education and stewardship of the natural resources of their community

## **2. Nominating Process:**

- a. The Awards Committee is composed of 3 members appointed by the Chapter President; the Committee will nominate qualified candidates for awards
- b. Majority vote of committee needed to recommend award recipients.
- c. The Awards Committee will draft a short write-up describing the recipients' accomplishments for the following award categories: Outstanding Volunteer (Training Committee); Significant Contributions to the Chapter (1 or 2 persons); Outstanding Chapter Volunteer of the Year; Special Achievement Award; Honorary Member
- d. Once a person has achieved Outstanding Volunteer (Training Committee) and/or Outstanding Chapter Volunteer of the Year, they would not be eligible for either award again within 2 subsequent years. This gives other members an opportunity to receive those awards
- e. If there are no nominations for a category or the committee feels no one merits a particular category award, then the award is not given for that year.
- f. After recommendations are made by the Awards Committee, the list of award recipients and corresponding justifications will be forwarded to the Chapter President for approval. The role of the Chapter President is to insure that all guidelines of section F.3 have been followed by the Awards Committee
- g. Honorary Membership is subject to HCMN Bylaws, Article IV, Section C. Honorary Membership. Membership must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership present at the Annual Meeting

## **3. Award Types:**

- a. All award recipients will receive a Certificate of Appreciation mounted on a plaque with the exception of the Years of Service recipients (Award 3.1.5. above) who will receive only the Certificate
  - b. Honorary Member - honorary membership to HCMN and Certificate with plaque
- 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, religion, disability, or national origin.

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 State Office for its files.

**IV: APPENDICES**