

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

T E X A S

Master
Naturalist™



**Lost Pines Chapter
Texas Master Naturalist Program**

CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK

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OPERATING HANDBOOK

Lost Pines Chapter

Texas Master Naturalist Program

A: DUES

1. 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 subject of increased dues will be brought before the convened general membership for action. The Board of Directors under special circumstances may waive individual membership fees, on a case-by-case basis, if set by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
2. Dues Schedule. Dues shall be payable in advance of the first day of January in 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 If dues are not paid by March 31 in each fiscal year, then all privileges afforded a certified member are rescinded until dues are paid.
3. Current Dues are \$10.00 per year.

B: ADDITIONAL BOARD MEMBERS.

1. Past President
2. Chair — Training Committee (formerly known as Education Committee)
3. Chair — Membership & Outreach
4. Chair — Volunteer Service Projects Committee
5. Chair — Advanced Training/Program Committee (formerly Program Committee)
6. Chair — Newsletter/Communications Committee
7. Chair — Hospitality Committee
8. Chair — Outreach Committee
9. Historian
10. State Representative

C: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **President.**
 - a. Preside at all meetings of the Chapter.
 - b. Serve as Chair of the Board of Directors.
 - c. Appoint, subject to the Board's approval, committees and committee chairs
 - d. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - e. Sign all Board-approved documents that may be legally binding on the chapter
 - f. Co-sign checks with another officer in the absence of the Treasurer.
 - g. Present an annual report at the last annual meeting of the chapter

- h. Become Immediate Past President upon completion of term as President.
 - i. Works with the membership committee to fulfill and submit the chapter's annual report to the state office annually.
 - j. Votes when there is a tie.
2. **Vice President.**
- a. Assist the President and act for the President in his absence.
 - b. Chair the Program Committee.
3. **Secretary.**
- a. Conduct all necessary chapter correspondence.
 - b. Record, publish and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors, General Membership meetings or special meetings;
 - c. Furnish the minutes to all Board members and make them available to other Chapter members when requested
 - d. Keep a record of attendance at each meeting and whether a quorum is present.
 - e. Maintain a hard copy file of all minutes and correspondence.
 - f. Bring to each meeting the minute book, a copy of the bylaws, rules and policies, a list of all committees and a copy of the parliamentary authority adopted by the Chapter;
 - g. Publish notice of membership meetings and field trips.
4. **Treasurer.**
- a. Maintain budget and accounting records.
 - b. Receive all dues and monies for the association and maintain them in a separate chapter bank account.
 - c. Keep an account of all income, expenses, disbursements and other financial matters.
 - d. Keep a list of all donated or purchased inventory, equipment or other property. Update list, monthly or as needed.
 - e. Pay all bills upon receipt of a written, approved statement or receipt. Treasurer, or President and one other officer shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes of the Chapter.
 - f. Make a monthly report to the membership
 - g. Develop an annual budget for approval by the Board of Directors.
 - h. Present the financial records for audit on or before the last day of the fiscal year.
 - i. Submit all annual financial records and audits as required by law

D: DUTIES OF OTHER BOARD MEMBERS.

1. Past President

- a. Assist the President.
- b. Chair the Nominating Committee.

- c. Provide continuity from prior Board of Directors
- d. Assume the responsibility as the State Representative for the chapter if that position is not otherwise filled.
- e. In the absence of a past-president, the president will reassign necessary responsibilities.

2. Advisors – Additional Duties.

- a. Advises, recommends and informs the chapter on appropriate business.
- b. Review the chapter's financial status and participate as a member of the annual audit committee.
- c. Assist the State Program Advisory Committee in implementing and enforcing program regulations and policies.
- d. Facilitate opportunities for Master Naturalist volunteers to exercise initiative and judgment within proper measure of autonomy when coordinating chapter events and activities.
- e. Participates in event planning and attends events when possible or when identified as necessary through the planning process.

E: STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Training Committee

- a. Coordinates training of Master Naturalists for the Chapter's training program.
- b. Plans, implements and evaluates the chapter training curriculum and develops training calendar.
- c. With the Treasurer develops the class budget and recommends the class tuition to the board.
- d. Acquires and prepares class manuals
- e. Select all presenters and make arrangements for their class/presentation including materials, handouts and audio-visual equipment needed for the class/presentation.
- f. Arranges for speaker gifts, travel and lodging needs, and confirmation and thank you letters.
- g. Arranges for publicity – Newspaper, fliers, Internet.
- h. Arranges for room seating and equipment for all classes.
- i. Manages the on-going class through graduation.

2. Membership Committee

- a. Maintain a roster of the Chapter's member names including in-training members plus addresses, phone numbers and Internet/email addresses.
- b. Maintain a record of volunteer and advanced training hours and class training attendance.
- c. Notifies the Board of members meeting certification and threshold hour achievements.

- d. Orders and maintains the member certification and recognition awards (e.g. shirts, name tags, certificates, business cards, pins).
- e. Ensures members have a current signed liability form on file.
- f. Maintain a record of high level interests and specific expertise of members.

3. Outreach Committee

- a. Responsible for the chapter outreach activities
- b. Arranges for staffing of outreach booths
- c. Creates and maintains chapter brochure
- d. Acquires and maintains a chapter display board and other outreach materials
- e. Assists the Training Committee in promoting the chapter

3. Volunteer Service Projects Committee

- a. Approves and notifies chapter membership regarding Volunteer Service opportunities and projects.
- b. Uses the state Master Naturalist Program, Chapter Management Guidelines section on Volunteer Service Requirements.
- c. Works with Membership Committee in keeping records of volunteer hours.

4. Advanced Training/Program Committee

- a. Approves and notifies chapter membership regarding Advanced Training.
- b. Uses the State Master Naturalist Program Chapter Management Guidelines section on Advanced Training Requirements and Chapter guidelines (see Chapter Policy and Procedures Advanced Training section) to review Advanced Training for approval.
- c. Develops and maintains chapter calendar of activities
- d. Schedule chapter programs and field trips for membership meetings
- e. Notifies membership of field trip requirements (i.e. water, safety, maps, logistics, etc.)
- f. Ensure speakers or trip leader is recognized appropriately.
- g. Arranges and reserves meeting locations

5. Newsletter Communications Committee

- a. Responsible for collecting chapter and state news, producing and distribution of the Chapter Newsletter.
- b. Officers and members will contribute the contents of the Newsletter.
- c. Builds and supports the chapter web page.

6. Historian

- a. Maintains the historical records of the chapter.
- b. Historical records include but not limited to: Training classes, projects, recognitions, events, elections, meetings, and Chapter Newsletter archives.

7. Hospitality Committee

- a. Assist Training Chairman with class host activities – drinks, snacks, catered lunches, making handouts.
- b. Coordinates General Membership meeting host activities – drinks, snacks, party activities.

F: AD HOC COMMITTEES. Ad Hoc committees are formed for a particular and specific short term purpose.

1. **Audit Committee.** Responsible for conducting the annual audit of the financial records of the chapter. Members will include the vice-president, secretary and advisor (at least one).
2. **Nomination Committee.** Responsible for selecting the annual ballot of officers and board members. Will also serve when an officer vacancy occurs that requires filling. The committee will present a slate of candidates at the annual meeting.
3. **Other Ad Hoc Committees.** Can be formed by the Board as needed to address specific tasks or purposes.

G: ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

Active members are those members who pay the chapter dues for the current year and indicate that they wish to remain active members. Lack of contact with the chapter through attendance at one or more meetings or chapter activities during the preceding year or lack of written notice to the chapter that they wish to remain an active member will indicate that they do not wish to remain active members.

H: ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF THE CHAPTER OPERATING HANDBOOK (COH)

1. **Adoption.** Initial adoption and ratification of the COH is by a majority vote of those present at a general meeting following written distribution of the proposed COH to the general membership ten days before the meeting with notice that the ratification vote will be held at the general meeting. Written distribution may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.
2. **Amendment.** Changes and amendments may be made 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 days before the meeting and be given an opportunity at the board meeting to voice any concerns about the changes or amendments. Written form may be via conventional mail, email or other equivalent means.

ADDENDUM:

Date: 02/08/06

Memo To: TCE/TPWD Master Naturalist Chapter Advisors and Chapter Leaders

From: Neal Wilkins, Pat Morton, Michelle Haggerty, Sonny Arnold

Subject: Volunteer Screening

After review of Dr. Ed Smith's January 9, 2006 letter regarding Extension's revision of volunteer screening policies and after discussions with a number of County Extension Agents we have concluded that Master Naturalist chapters must comply with the minimum requirement mandating the screening of all volunteers currently working directly with youth or those who anticipate any possibility of working directly with youth in the future.

All procedures for screening are set forth in the Youth Protection Standards guidelines developed through the Texas 4-H program. Angela Burkham is prepared to assist with the accepted screening process for all Master Naturalist chapters so that the process will be uniform across all program areas.

Members who choose not to undergo the screening process must sign the statement: "As part of my duties as a Texas Master Naturalist, I will not work directly with youth or if I later choose to work with youth I understand that a background screening is required". This statement should become a part of the application process and maintained with the records of the chapter.

Prior criminal background checks are acceptable by YPS with documented verification from any one of the following sources: school districts, churches, recognized youth groups or associations, law enforcement, Texas Youth Commission, Department of Defense, Child and Youth Services and/or Family Program, concealed handgun license and licensed day care workers.

Several advisors indicated that they have already begun the requirement that all members be screened and that the local board will continue that policy. These chapters have decided to set a higher standard and we support that decision.

Let us know if you have additional questions or concerns about the screening of volunteers.

cc: Angela Burkham, Extension Program Specialist-Volunteer Development