

## Roadmap for Development of Chapter Bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook For NEW Chapters

The governing documents for a chapter are the Bylaws and Chapter Operating Handbook (COH). The Bylaws will be uniform across all chapters and are to be adopted verbatim by each chapter with only the term of officers to be decided by each chapter. On the other hand, the content of the COH is completely flexible and may be adapted to best fit the needs of each chapter. Since Bylaws are to be adopted verbatim and the COH is adaptable to the chapters needs, neither document requires approval by the state TMN office before or after approval by the chapter. While approval is not required, copies of both documents should be sent to the state TMN office once they have been approved by the local chapter membership.

The general process for Bylaws and the COH for new chapters is as follows.

- 1 – Review the Chapter Management Guidelines and the General Guidelines for the Establishment, Operation, and Rescission of Chapters within the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program. Become familiar with the contents as these documents provide the foundation for the formation of chapters and how they operate.
- 2 – Review the Texas Master Naturalist Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics as they establish the values and principles upon which the Master Naturalist program is built and will provide clarification when questions arise about behavior and intentions for the program.
- 3 – Review the “Establishment of a Chapter” section in the General Guidelines for the Establishment, Operation, and Rescission of Chapters within the Texas Master Naturalist™ Program to assure all necessary information for the development of a new chapter will be taken into consideration.
- 4 – Review the Annual Report Information for chapters so that reporting requirements will be factored into the organizational development of the chapter and the details of the Bylaws.
- 5 – Review the Bylaws template, these articles are requirements for all chapters and must be adopted verbatim with only the term of officers to be decided by the chapter.
- 6 – The COH template may be modified as appropriate for each chapter. This template is a consolidation of the best practices of all existing chapters. While the organizational structure may be changed to meet the individual needs of each chapter, the responsibilities, roles and tasks have been found to be essential for effective chapter design and operation. Hence the template may be molded and modified as needed to meet each chapter’s unique local administrative and organizational needs but the functions and tasks most likely need to be included in some form or manner.
- 7 – New chapters should follow a two step adoption process. The drafts of the Bylaws and COH should be sent to all members at least ten days before a general membership meeting and at that meeting, the members present must approve both documents by a simple majority (>50%) of those members present.