

TMN/VMS Newsletter

T E X A S



FOR TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS VMS ADMINISTRATORS

Volume 4

November, 2015

Why We Report Hours: Grants at TPWD/AgriLife

The Texas Master Naturalist Program is funded through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Federal Aid grants program. For a state to be eligible to receive assistance under this particular grant, the state must provide a "match" of 25% of the grant total received. In other words, this grant pays \$0.75 for every \$0.25 that is submitted as a match. Our volunteer service hours provide this match.

The funding supports the TMN Program, its state staff and interns; the Urban Wildlife Program, the Nature Trackers Programs and the Wildscapes Program--just to name a few.

Currently, the in-kind value of each hour that you report is \$23.00. Statewide, in 2014, our 45 chapters reported over 398,800 hours which amounted to more than \$9.17 MILLION in value.

Prior to VMS, only a fraction of the TMN service hours reported were able to be substantiated and used to match our federal grant. The VMS system should allow us to be more compliant and enable us to capitalize on additional grant funding through this and other sources. Properly reported service hours with the correct federal categories applied can have a multiplier effect in the overall budget, so every unreported hour is a missed conservation opportunity!

In addition to matching the Federal grant, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service also reports TMN activity monthly to the state legislature and local county commissions which use those numbers to determine funding both statewide and locally. Additionally, the hours are used to support your local Extension office.

Special points of interest:

- ◆ THE GRANT PROCESS
- ◆ SCHEDULE
- ◆ FIELD IN FOCUS: OPPORTUNITY TITLES
- ◆ ANNUAL MEETING OPPS
- ◆ NEW TMN-INTERESTED STATUS
- ◆ TRACKING YOUR TRAINING CLASS
- ◆ NEW FIELDS—DUES & CLASS YEAR

New Fields! - Dues Paid & Class Year

After feedback from the Annual Meeting, we've added fields for you to keep track of the last date that dues were paid and the class year of the volunteer. You can find the fields in the volunteer profile, in the User-Defined Tab and the Certifications grid. We've also added automations that will populate the fields.

Completed Chapters

- ◆ CRADLE OF TEXAS
- ◆ PANHANDLE
- ◆ GOOD WATER
- ◆ INDIAN TRAILS
- ◆ ROLLING PLAINS
- ◆ ELM FORK
- ◆ TRANS PECOS

Schedule—Next Uploads

People Uploads: The next people upload will be due to your coordinator by 11/24. This is the last People Upload that we expect to do.

Hours Uploads: The last hours upload was almost 1.5 million hours of service time. The next hours upload will be about 1 week after the next people upload.

2015 Data: All 2015 data will need to be in the system by 1/15/2016.

Annual Meeting Opportunities

Did you have members that attended the state meeting?

If so, you'll need to create an opportunity for AT. If you have volunteers that are working at the meeting, you'll also need to setup a service opportunity for them.

TMN/Volunteer Management System Rollout

TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

Rollout Coordinators

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**Default
Birthdate
1/1/1900**

When the TPWD started doing our Background checks, the Birthdate field became required.

If you are editing an existing volunteer and don't know their birthdate, use 1/1/1900 to get through your edits.

We will run an automation to set this field for volunteers that don't have a date already set.



Tracking your Training Class Progress

New volunteers must have 40 hours of Service and 8 hours of AT to become initially certified. This can often overlap years and for uber-volunteers, they can become initially certified and annually re-certified in the same year. We've added the Initial Certification to the TMN Standard Awards & Recertification Grid. When Vicky Volunteer hits 80 service hours and 16 AT hours, you can update the recertification field.

A New TMN-Status ... TMN-Interested

People who are interested in working with your chapter fill out a volunteer profile when they select your 'Apply To' opportunity on the TPWD/TXMN website. Their volunteer profile then ends up in the Inbox. You want to keep track of them, but you don't want them showing up in your active lists until they enroll in your class—the answer—assign them a 'TMN-Interested' status in the User Defined Tab/Certifications group. There is a new grid for Interested Volunteers where you can keep track of them and stay engaged until your next class.

Fields in Focus - Opportunity Title

The Opportunity Title is the primary interface with your volunteer and how your volunteer determines where to apply hours. Depending on your chapter background and history you should title your opportunities so that your volunteers can easily identify their volunteer projects. This may mean that you use a variety of acronyms or codes for your projects. The volunteer drop down box will sort the project list alphabetically.

Examples might be: 'Fort Parker Public Outreach' or 'Fort Parker PO'.

All Advanced Training should start with AT:

Many volunteers have no experience with the project category list that we rely on as administrators, you may need to publish that for your volunteers.

Be aware that when the volunteer opens their logbook, they can only see the first 27 characters of the name.

Help on the Web:

Find them here: <http://texasmasternaturalist.freshdesk.com/support/home>