

TMN/VMS Newsletter

T E X A S



FOR TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS VMS ADMINISTRATORS

Volume 7

February, 2016

Double Dipping . . . by Richard Heilbrun, TXMN State Office

George Costanza is watching! The Master Naturalist state office has fielded a lot of questions lately about what constitutes “double dipping” and how to avoid it.

Double dipping refers to a volunteer or organization counting the same Master Naturalist service twice. The rules of our program stipulate that Master Naturalist service hours can only be “counted” once to avoid violating the rules of our federal grant, which funds the entire TXMN Program. Specifically, you should only be reporting your hours to your chapter through the new VMS system, and of course, only to one chapter.

TXMN hours are compiled and submitted to the federal government through non-State Park channels, and TPWD and the State Parks have a responsibility to make sure we are not counting hours twice. With the new system, TXMN, TPWD and the State Parks use 2 separate hours ‘buckets’ in the same VMS system, so double dipping is less likely to occur.

Some volunteers have reported that while volunteering at State Parks or with TPWD Agencies, they are now being asked or required to report their hours only through that

partner’s accounting system. If someone tells you this, they have misunderstood their instructions. Master Naturalists are never required to report their service hours through another accounting program. The Master Naturalist VMS is the default record of your hours. Because the TXMN Program provides the training and support for volunteers to serve and chapters to function, the TXMN Program should be the one to receive and report the hours to the state and federal government.

In rare cases, an organization might need to generate the hours for their own federal or state grant. In these situations, TXMN volunteers ARE allowed to choose whether to give those hours to that other organization. If they are “given” to another TPWD agency or program (like Angler Ed) you will have their opportunity in your VMS drop down box. The given hours will not count towards certification, training requirements, or service milestones. Remember, there are some activities such as selling products, fundraising or any activity that you get paid for that can’t count towards TXMN hours anyway. These service hours can always be “counted” by other organizations for whatever purpose they’d like.

Schedule: The Uploads Are Done!

- 9,852 people added
 - 414,110 AT hours added
 - 2,946,905 Service hours added
- We’ll be working on volunteer transfers during the upcoming months to make sure we have everyone in the system properly.

New Features in 7.4

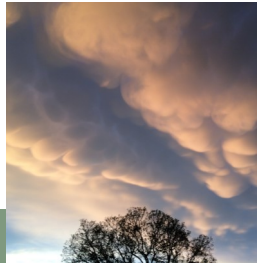
You may have noticed that when you double click on a volunteer or opportunity, it now opens that entry for editing. You can also right mouse click on the entry to manage it.

Special points of interest:

- ◆ DOUBLE DIPPING
- ◆ SCHEDULE
- ◆ FIELD IN FOCUS: OPP REQUESTED/
- ◆ NEW FEATURES IN 7.4
- ◆ ADMIN TRAINING
- ◆ ANNUAL REPORTS
- ◆ AUDITS
- ◆ NEW URLS

Completed Chapters

- ◆ LINDHEIMER
- ◆ PINEY WOOD LAKE
- ◆ CROSS TIMBERS
- ◆ LLANO ESTACADO
- ◆ LONGLEAF RIDGE
- ◆ SOUTH TEXAS BORDER
- ◆ NORTH TEXAS
- ◆ SOUTH PLAINS



TMN/Volunteer Management System Rollout

TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS

Rollout Coordinators

Cheryl Foster (Heart of TX)
Phone: 254.265.4883
cheryl.foster@yahoo.com

Dale Hughling (CenTex)
Phone: 254.630.9422
dalehughling@aol.com

Brad James (Mid Coast)
Phone: 512.699.5865
brad@jamestx.com

Clyde Camp (Blackland)
Phone: 972.727.3945
c.camp@ieee.org

Michelle Haggerty
mmhaggerty@tamu.edu
(new email address)

Annual Reports

Don't forget to send in your 2015 Annual Reports and contact sheet.

Email them to Michelle Haggerty at mmhaggerty@tamu.edu.

Audits

We'll be conducting audits of chapter data throughout the next couple of months.

We'll be looking at things like the logistics tab, approvals for In-active volunteers, Organization names and appropriate opportunity categories.

Double Dipping... cont'd

How do I know if I'm double dipping?

If your opportunity name ends in ': TMN xxx' then it is a Master Naturalist opportunity and your hours will go to the Master Naturalist program, and count towards your recertification and milestones.

How do I know if an outside partner is "counting" my hours without my knowledge?

You can't know that. It's not your responsibility to police how other agency's conduct their accounting. Signing in and out at an event is probably ok, but if they talk about grants, then ask them to contact the Michelle or Richard at the state Master Naturalist office.

Please select from the following survey(s):

Select an opportunity to report hours/service
AT: TMN State Meeting AT Sessions: TMN Report Hours
AT: Training Class Presentations: TMN Report Hours
AT: US Fish & Wildlife Webinars: TMN Report Hours
AT: Wildlife for Lunch Webinar: TMN Report Hours
Audubon Field Trips: TMN Report Hours-1X
Children's Garden Fair: TMN Report Hours
Chipping of the Green: TMN Report Hours
Christmas Bird Count: TMN Field Research Hours
CoCoRaHS Weather Monitoring: TMN Field Research Hours
Community Presentations: TMN Report Hours

Field in Focus - Opportunity Requested vs. Approved

In the logistics tab of the opportunity document the Requested/Approved field determines what happens when the volunteer is approved for an opportunity. When a volunteer is approved, they can submit hours to the opportunity and they can remove themselves from opportunity. The requested option is a little less useful. It will not allow the user to remove the opportunity from their drop-down box. All opportunities should have 'approved' checked rather than 'requested'. The exception would be the 'Apply to' opportunity, which should be 'requested'. After the volunteer is contacted and assigned to a chapter they should be unapproved from the opportunity.

Volunteers who sign-up for this activity on their own should be:

- ☒ approved
- ☐ requested
- ☐ approved into schedule slots if already placed with project

New Admin and Refresher Training

Before you pass on your eCoordinator admin ID or assign a new person responsibility to access eCoordinator, the new admin must go through training with one of the Implementation Team.

We will be holding 2 trainings a month (one during the day and one in the evening). We will also be holding refresher training if it's needed. Put in a help desk request to get in on a class.

Need Help? Find it here: txmn.org/help

Quick Login for hours: txmn.org/hours -or- tpwd.samaritan.com

Quickly go to the search page: txmn.org/apply