



Texas Master Naturalist 2020 Project Fair

The Texas Master Naturalist Program holds this competition during our Annual Meeting each year to share and award the premier projects of the TMN Program. While this year's meeting may be different as we meet virtually, the work that our TMN Chapters do on the ground and in their communities annually is still just as important to recognize. Our chapter members also continually list this method as a favorite way to learn about projects other chapters are doing and how they may be able to replicate such projects in their areas.

Project Fair VIRTUAL Format:

Both a written entry and a virtual presentation will be required for entry in this year's Project Fair.

Written Entry: Chapters entering a submission into the contest will need to provide a short paragraph describing the project by Thursday, October 1st, 2020. Entries will be made on the TXMN State Website (<https://txmn.tamu.edu/2020-project-fair/>) - dates for virtual presentation will be selected at that time.

Virtual Entry: ***NEW for Virtual*** For the virtual format of this year's meeting, we're asking Project Fair submissions to be done through a **20 minute presentation** via WebEx to be hosted **the week prior** to the Annual Meeting, **October 5-9th, 2020** (final date TBD with the chapter). These presentations will be delivered to a panel of judges, as would have been done in person and will be recorded. Presentations should include all the content normally built into a physical Project Fair submission - a storyline, the project details, the methods for the project and the results. Visuals in the presentation can include pictures, a slide show, true video, interviews/presentations with project members, etc. Additional important pieces to include are listed below. Keep in mind that the last 5-8 minutes of the presentation should allow for questions and answers with the judges. Up to 5 members from any chapters may be on the call to participate in the presentation.

When: ***NEW for Virtual*** **Written submissions** must be sent in by **October 1st**, and then the **virtually delivered presentation** will be scheduled for the week of **October 5-9th, 2020**. The written submissions and recorded virtual presentations will be highlighted and shared on social media and the Annual Meeting website prior to the event for all chapters, members and meeting attendees to view as they would with an in person event.

Judging: ***NEW for Virtual*** A pre-selected panel of judges will join the live 20 minute presentation of the Project Fair on a date selected the week of October 5-9th using the judging criteria below. Keep in mind that the judges will come from partnering organizations/agencies

and may include TMN leaders and volunteers. Judging will also include open Q&A to be hosted during the last 5 minutes of the 20 minute presentation.

Exemplary Projects should be:

*(This is also the criteria by which project fair submissions will be judged)

- Useful and Practical for all chapters—something that is “doable” and sustainable in any given chapter
- Representative of a local need of your chapter’s natural resource issues and community.
- Need driven—a project that addresses a pressing naturalist or natural resource need
- Representative of the goals and mission of the Texas Master Naturalist program
- Led by the chapter (vs. being led or initiated by a chapter partner)
- Visible—for the chapter and the program practices and principles
- A lead into a good program marketing article
- Collaborative of many chapter members’ skills, interests and expertise
- Something that provides several impacts: such as a chapter recruitment tool, provides an educational tool or model for other’s behavior and practices, helps people to appreciate, connect, or reconnect with nature or change their attitude and/or behavior towards natural resources through the presentation of sound natural resource information, management or practices.
- Organized—well planned and well executed.

Project Fair Presentation Content should include:

- Short description of project Needs and Goals
- How the project was conducted?
- What did it take to complete the project?
- Contact information.
- Cost, grants received, etc.
- Sponsors for the project, other organizations, partners and collaborators.
- Hours involved
- Number of people involved.
- Pitfalls to avoid if another chapter were to attempt to recreate such a project in their area.
- Lessons learned and what you would do differently.
- Interesting facts about the project.
- Pictures of the project
- **NEW FOR 2020: Where applicable, describe how this chapter project pivoted this year to provide opportunity for virtual or distanced service for your members.**

Written Entry should include (as a minimum):

- Project title
- Full name of chapter clearly visible
- Project goals
- Short project description
- Methods of project implementation
- Impact of project to the community and/or chapter
- Where applicable, the virtual or distanced service opportunities of the project

Some ideas from chapters: Have a new class take on a class project and prepare the display and accompanying materials for their project to take to the State Meeting. Have a new class work on an existing/ongoing chapter project and then prepare this display and handouts as a class case study and project. Creative ways your chapter is keeping members engaged in projects while at a distance or virtually during COVID-19.

Judging & Awards:

Judging Criteria:

- Reflects goals & mission of Texas Master Naturalist program (0-20 pts)
- Represents a local need (0-10 pts)
- Useful & practical (0-15 pts)
- Originated by chapter & involves many chapter members (0-20 pts)
- Has measurable outcomes & multiple impacts (0-15 pts)
- Well organized & executed (0-10 pts)
- Creates visibility for the chapter (0-10 pts)
- Judges discretionary/Bonus points (0-10 pts)
- **NEW FOR 2020:** Has strong virtual and/or distanced service components (0-10 pts)

Judges' comments from past Fairs:

- Take care to develop your presentation as one for future use with the general public—you'll want to be clear and concise on what the project is, its impacts and the chapter that is conducting it.
- Neatness and creativity counts!
- Correct use of Texas Master Naturalist marketing and ID guidelines is a bonus.
- New, creative and unique projects make for an interesting and exciting judges experience.
- Make yours impactful, attention grabbing and illustrative of your project!
- Verbal narratives by the chapter representatives are always enthusiastic, well-prepared and passionate!
- There is always more to the story than could be represented in the typical display. *And the virtual presentation format may give the option to tell this story!
- Be careful of having too much written information posted and in too small of print to read

Award Notes:

- Awards this year are being supported by last year's Annual Meeting Auction Proceeds.
- Awards will be in the form of a certificate and monetary project grants ranging from \$800 to \$350 based on place level and availability of funds to the winning chapters which are intended to further support the winning projects or new project implementations of the chapters' choice.
- Winners must have submitted a short paragraph (described above about their project) and share the original presentation file for the entry for use on the Texas Master Naturalist state website. Projects may also be highlighted in the State TMN Program Annual Report.