

Who are our Volunteers?

Vernon Bailey



- “A naturalist studies the natural environment, generally with a **broad range of interests**, rather than with a particular specialty.”
 - Christopher Buddle, *What Is a Naturalist?*
- “He instilled in me the mind and the values of a naturalist: to be **open to all possibilities**, to be a close and **careful observer**, to **discipline** my interpretation with **facts**, and to **work hard** at my **passions** so that they might bear fruit.”
 - Bernd Heinrich, *The Snoring Bird*

Who are our Volunteers?

- Specialized over time – volunteer initiated
 - Master Entomology volunteer
 - Texas Waters Specialist
- New Discoveries
 - *Senecio quaylei*
- Citizen Science Boom
 - 2004 – alignment with Texas Nature Trackers
- Early Invasives Detection
 - Zebra Mussels
 - Emerald Ash Borer (2018)
 - Cactus Moth (2018)





Managing Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers: Best Practices



Agenda
Recruitment & Vetting
Project Management
Retention & Recognition
Unexpected Outcomes

Our Volunteer Recruitment Experiences



Louisa Torrance
Distance Learning Coordinator
Recruiting for: Virtual Volunteers



TPWDiscover

Who:

Volunteers with experience working
with the Texas Essential Knowledge and
Skills (TEKS)

Project:

Adding TEKS-alignment to agency
resources, specifically YouTube videos

Lindsay Pannell, Interpreter/Vol. Coordinator Palo Duro Canyon State Park

- About Me

- Historian
- Family of five

Hobbies include: Reading, Plant care, and
Backpacking

- Projects from last Virtual Volunteer Fair

- Bird Blind
- Virtual Learning Videos
- ADA Trail to Bird Blind
- International Dark Sky Certification



Recruiting in a Virtual Environment



TEXAS MASTER
NATURALIST

**VIRTUAL
VOLUNTEER FAIR**

FEBRUARY 3RD & 4TH, 2021

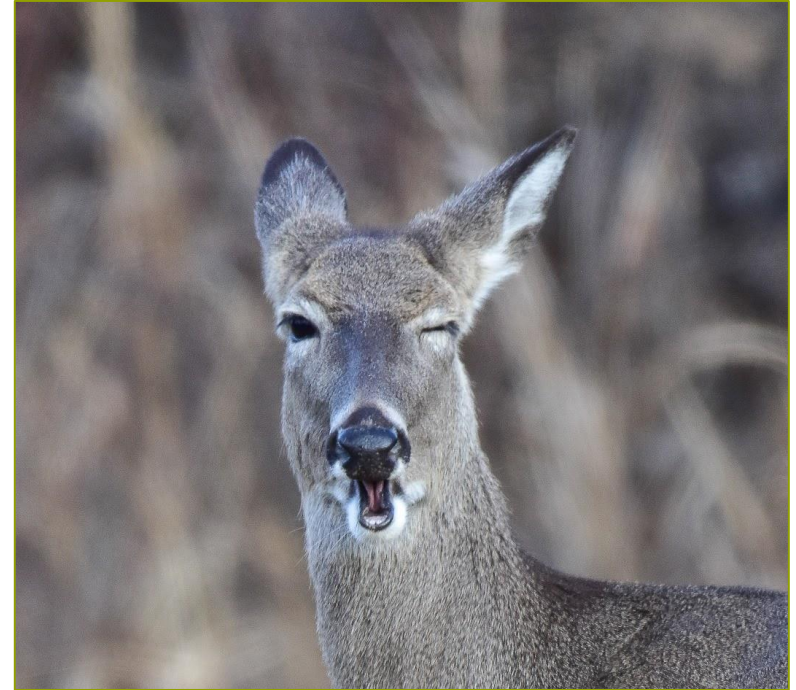


Project Title Name

Project Host Name/Presenter(s)

Recruiting in a Virtual Environment

- K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Sweetheart)
 - Pitch your project with passion and brevity
 - Cut text - opt for an orientation packet
 - Use pictures
- Show your passion and keep your “why” in mind
- Use the TMN template!





Recruitment & Vetting

Pro tip: Further vetting

Step 1: Send an acknowledgement email with a thank you and survey link

Step 2: Further vet the applicants to discover strengths, motivations, project alignment, good team fit

Step 3: Use the survey results to make final selections and send individualized project emails

Texas Master Naturalist - Distance Learning Opportunity

Page 1 of 1

1. Please share your first and last name:*
2. Please share the best way to connect with you (ex: email - louisa.torrance@tewd.texas.gov or text - 512.550.8425)*
3. Please select the grade levels you are most excited to work with:*
4. Do you have experience working with the TEKS?*
5. Which subject areas are you the most familiar with?*
6. If yes, please share your experience:

Recruitment & Vetting

Pro tip:
Volunteer
organization

D	E	F	G	H
Please select the grade levels you are most excited to work with:	Do you have experience working with the TEKS?	Which subject areas are you the most familiar with?	If yes, please share your experience:	Please select the project(s) you would most like to assist with:
Early childhood;K-2;3-5	Yes	Math;Science	Teaching	YouTube video TEKS-alignment;Modifying current activities and lessons for TEKS-alignment;Creating new TEKS-aligned content for TPWDDiscover
6-8	Yes	Social Studies;English Language Arts/Reading	I am certified in and have taught 4th & 5th grades, all subjects (including implementation of Project Wild); 6th-8th ELA; and 8th social studies.	YouTube video TEKS-alignment;Modifying current activities and lessons for TEKS-alignment
6-8;9-12	Yes	Math;Science	Taught H.S. bio, chem, phys, env sci, astro, algebra, geometry; correlated TEKS to Discovery Ed and PBS videos; integrated TEKS for alg 1 with IPC	YouTube video TEKS-alignment;Modifying current activities and lessons for TEKS-alignment
Early childhood;K-2;3-5	Yes	Math;Science	wrote K-1 science activities for Houston ISD to align with the science TEKS	Modifying current activities and lessons for TEKS-alignment;Creating new TEKS-aligned content for TPWDDiscover
6-8;9-12	Yes	Social Studies;Science	Teacher, technology coach, curriculum coach, Director of Instruction, and consultant training and planning with middle school teachers of all	YouTube video TEKS-alignment;Modifying current activities and lessons for TEKS-alignment;Creating new TEKS-aligned content for TPWDDiscover

Recruitment & Vetting

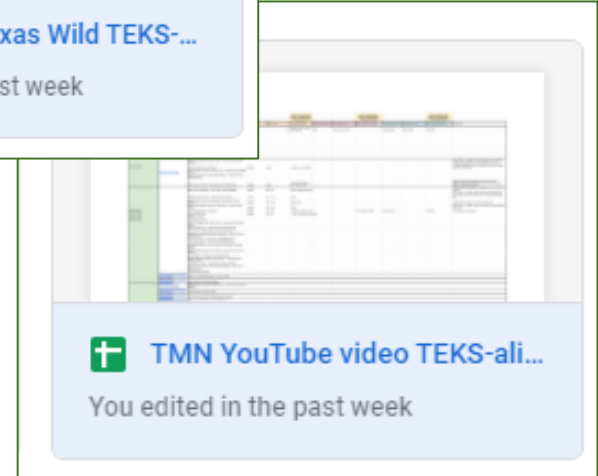
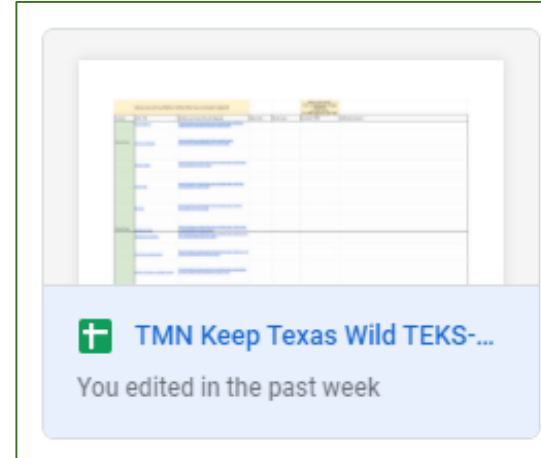
- **Alternative tracking:** make a folder of the project or volunteer to keep track of correspondence in your email folders list
- Over the phone interviews
- Keep other volunteers in mind
 - Who works well together?
 - Who can take a leadership role for you?



Project Management

Pro tip: Establish your project goals, specific assignments and timelines in advance

- Develop a process to check in on project accomplishments
- Have a system for collaborative projects



Project Management

	Please use this format: Subject Area Grade Level.Reporting Category(Standard)	Please use this format: Subject Area Grade Level.Reporting Category(Standard)	Please use this format: Subject Area Grade Level.Reporting Category(Standard)	Please use this format: Subject Area Grade Level.Reporting Category(Standard)
Video Title	Associated TEKS	Associated TEKS	Associated TEKS	Associated TEKS
Save Water for Wildlife - Texas Parks and Wildlife [Official]	Science 4.7(C), 4.8(B), 5.9(C), 7.8(C), 7.9(A), B.12(E)			
Blanco River Restoration - Texas Parks & Wildlife [Official]	Science 7.8(A), 7.8(B), E.8(A), E.8(C), E.9(E), 3.9(C)			
Guadalupe Bass Success - Texas Parks and Wildlife	Science E.9(E)			
Growing Green, Austin Library Garden -Texas Parks & Wildlife [Official]	Science E.9(I), E.9(J)			
Kemp's Ridley Ranger Helps Find Turtle Eggs - Texas Parks and Wildlife	Science E.9(E)			
Amazing Amphibians Whiteboard	Science 3.10(A-B); 4.10(A,C) 5.10(A)		Social Studies 3.3(C); 4.8(C); 5.8(B)	Art 5.3(D)
Mysterious Monarchs	Science 3.10(A); 4.10(A-B);5.9(A),10. (A-B)	Math 3.1(A); 4.1(A); 5.1(A)		Art 5.3(D)
Predator vs. Prey	Science 3.9(B); 4.9(B); 5.9(B,C)			Art 5.3(D)
Weird, Wacky, & Wild	Science 3.9(A),10(A); 4.10(A); 5.10(A)			Art 5.3(D)

Collaborative, virtual space, updated in real time

In person project assignments

- (In-person projects) Have a specific date and time carved out in your schedule
- Make sure your volunteers work well together
- Work with your team to ensure smooth project:
 - Tools and PPE needed
 - Overnight accommodations for out of towners
 - Communicate with colleagues

On-Boarding

Pro tip: Virtual
onboarding training



Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact

Resource Type ▾	Subject ▾	Topic ▾	Audience ▾	Grade Range ▾	TEKS ▾	Linked Title ▾
Video	Science	Water Conservation	Children	Grades 3-5	4.7(C), 4.8(B), 5.9(C)	Save Water for Wildlife
Video	Science	Habitats	Children	Grades 6-8	N/A	Wonderful Wetlands!
Video	Science	Environment	Children	Grades 6-8	7.8(A), 7.8(B)	State of the Gulf: Forces of Nature

Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact



Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact
- Offer a professional development or special interest training

**Zoom Webinars
for Virtual
Programming**

**AGENDA
Who
What
Why
How**

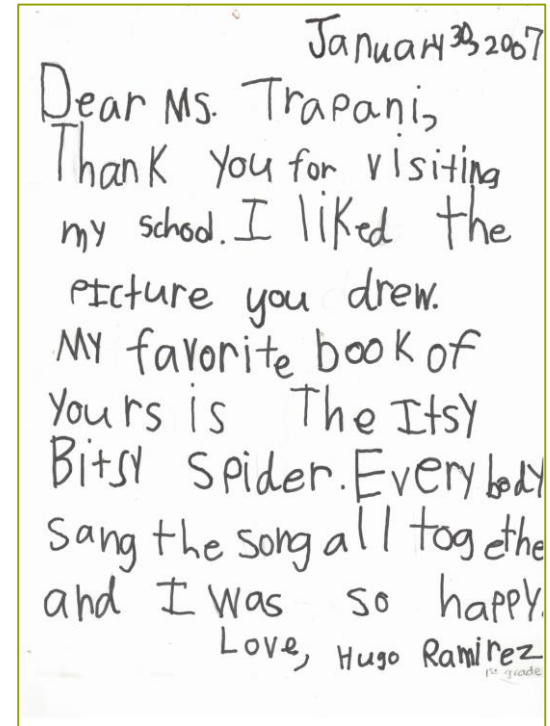
Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact
- Offer a professional development or special interest training
- Maintain community



Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact
- Offer a professional development or special interest training
- Maintain community
- Thank you letters the right way



A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The letter is dated 'January 30, 2007' in the top right corner. It is addressed to 'Dear Ms. Trapani,' and expresses gratitude for a school visit. The student mentions liking a drawing and naming 'The Itsy Bitsy Spider' as a favorite book. The letter concludes with 'Love, Hugo Ramirez' and a small '1st grade' signature.

January 30, 2007
Dear Ms. Trapani,
Thank you for visiting
my school. I liked the
picture you drew.
My favorite book of
yours is The Itsy
Bitsy Spider. Everybody
sang the song all together
and I was so happy.
Love, Hugo Ramirez
1st grade

Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact
- Offer a professional development or special interest training
- Maintain community
- Thank you letters the right way
- Thoughtful gifts



Retention and Recognition

- Show them their impact
- Offer a professional development or special interest training
- Maintain community
- Thank you letters the right way
- Thoughtful gifts
- Pitch the next project at the current one



Unexpected Outcomes

- Project additions
- Better management
- Survey results
 - Use [Surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)
 - Examples:
 - Favorite/least fav parts of the project
 - Suggestions for improvements
 - What projects or volunteer work they would like to do next

In summary

Recruiting & Vetting

Project Management

Retention & Recognition

Unexpected Outcomes

Questions or comments?