

## Texas Master Naturalist Program PREVIOUS COVID GUIDELINES

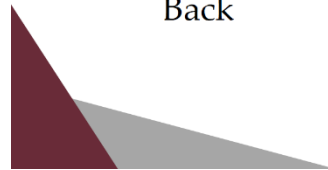
UPDATE – 7.3.20

On July 3rd, 2020, AgriLife Extension released an updated **Transitioning Back Guidance** document, linked below. This guidance document makes updates to the wave timeline for the **May 20th Reopening Guidance** document and updates additional guidance for youth, outdoor events and reporting. As always, Texas Master Naturalists are required to follow these protocols and their local ordinances set by county and city officials.

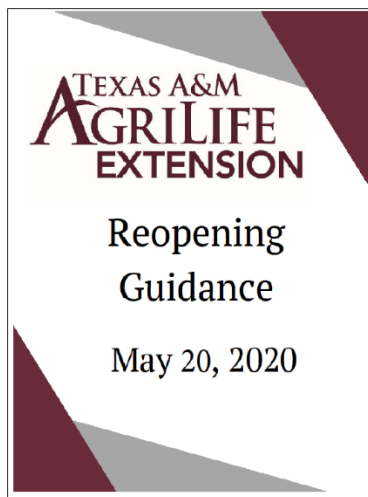


Transitioning

Back



<https://txmn.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Agency-Transitioning-Back-Final-July-3-2020.pdf>



[https://txmn.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Agency-Reopening-Guidance-5.18.20\\_5.20.20.pdf](https://txmn.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Agency-Reopening-Guidance-5.18.20_5.20.20.pdf)

TMN Chapters should follow the three waves of guidance outlined in the **AgriLife Reopening Guidance Document** and summarized below. Additional guidance for Master Naturalist Return to Service can be found in **Appendix F** of the attached as well. TMN Volunteers will adhere to guidelines that apply to employees, office and events by wave and as set by local county offices. Please also make note of the **Face to Face**

## Texas Master Naturalist Program

### PREVIOUS COVID GUIDELINES

**Program Preparedness Plan** that starts on Page 12 of the attached as it contains guidance that all AgriLife county offices will follow in preparing for events during the next few months.

#### **Wave 1** – Beginning May 18th

- No gatherings until Wave 2 is in place.
- Local offices should consider setting a schedule with rotations if a large number of volunteers are frequently present.

#### **Wave 2** – Beginning June 1st

- Group meetings of 10 or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- Additional volunteer may return to work with the office capacity not exceeding 50% but should practice social distancing. Wearing masks is encouraged when in public spaces.

#### **Wave 3** – Delayed until AUGUST 1st

- Group meetings of 25% capacity of space or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- All volunteers may be at work site but should practice social distancing. Wearing masks is encouraged when in public spaces..

Also to note, some chapters may choose to interpret these restrictions at a higher level based on local county ordinances or guidance. Chapter Boards may also choose to restrict volunteer service projects based on exposure risk potential at sites where social distancing or individual safety may be difficult to manage. Chapters may not, however, loosen their restrictions based on a desire to “get out” – those guidelines outlined above and attached are the minimum level of restrictions (& maximum occupancy levels).

- <https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/coronavirus/> – a resource page for updates

### Certification Requirements – 2020 Events & Situations

- The mission of the Texas Master Naturalist Program is to *develop a corps of **well-informed volunteers** to **provide education, outreach, and service** dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.*
  - *Key Tenets of our Program* – are a ‘Masters’-level Basic Training & Volunteer Service
- The requirement for a full 40 hours of Basic Training and 40 hours of Volunteer Service **will not be changed** for 2020.
- Exceptions will be made for Advanced Training in 2020 as described below, but 8 hours minimum will still be required.

### Basic Training Requirements – 2020 Events & Situations

- For chapters in the midst of a spring basic training class and who choose to continue Spring Basic Training Classes Online
  - Host remaining class subjects through Zoom/Online platforms

## Texas Master Naturalist Program

### PREVIOUS COVID GUIDELINES

- Field based education delayed until shutdown lifted
  - Field based training waived for 2020 spring basic training classes. But encourage members to audit field courses in future years.
- Coordinate training opportunities with nearby/regional TMN chapters
- Take advantage of presentations from state office\* (*\*pending*)
- Encourage members to audit future in-person basic courses for reinforcement of subject matter
- MUST include question/answer and discussion period with presenter
- Make-up exceptions for basic training courses need to be submitted to chapter leadership or to the state office for input (i.e if a trainee misses an online training day, how do they make it up?)

### Advanced Training Annual Requirements – 2020 INTERIM POLICY

- Online-based training and webinars will accepted for **all of the minimum of 8 hours** of advanced training hours required for certification. Additional AT hours can be earned through distance or in person courses once shutdown lifted.
- We encourage members to consider attending in person advanced trainings in the fall once travel & health restrictions lift.
- We encourage chapters to host multi-chapter or regional advanced training webinars/online programs to limit stress on presenters.
- We encourage the priority of those online training/webinars that are live, allow for speaker/audience interaction and allow for questions/discussion at the end.
- We encourage chapters to host post-training discussion groups if speaker isn't available for questions/discussion.
- We encourage limits to those advanced trainings that are pre-recorded, not live or not interactive in their online format. No "learning by YouTube".

### Volunteer Service Requirements – 2020 Events & Situations

- There will be **no change in the minimum requirements for volunteer service** for certification/recertification in 2020
- But there are some options to switch to distance service:
  - Write a newsletter article spotlighting a local SGCN species or make a presentation to give in the fall.
  - Verify or assist with curating observations in iNaturalist or eBird \* (\*more guidance on CitSci volunteer service coming soon.)
  - Contributing to the chapters blog/newsletter
  - Planning your chapter's 20th anniversary events/celebration/etc.
  - Planning for fall trainings, ATs and projects
  - Grant writing
  - Updating chapter websites
  - Updating chapter brochures and outreach materials
  - Reviewing/making comments to the TMN bylaws, CMOP and COH documents for possible considerations to state program office should consider for 2020 updates.
  - Join a planning committee for the TMN Annual Meeting and events.
  - Assist leadership with managing your chapter, going through and organizing chapter files whether they are electronic or paper files.

**Texas Master Naturalist Program**  
**PREVIOUS COVID GUIDELINES**

- Encourage your members to share their service ideas with us to share across the state!
- **IMPORTANT NOTE** – ALL volunteer service MUST meet local and federal guidelines for limited travel and social distancing. Local Guidelines currently vary city to city and county to county.
  - Some considerations – We encourage members to carefully consider their engagement in service at parks, nature centers, gardens even if following distancing and cleaning guidelines – consider your travel there (i.e stopping at a gas station) or the potential safety situations when working by yourself at a remote site. It is recommended that these types of service practice caution and social distancing guidelines as listed above.