

A Roadmap -- Governing Documents for TMN Chapters: What They Are and How to Use Them

The Texas Master Naturalist™ Program governing documents for a chapter are the

- *Bylaws*
- *Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP)*
- *Chapter Operating Handbook (COH)*
- *Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct*

Chapter Bylaws for the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Program must be adopted verbatim by each chapter with only two allowable changes. Chapters may choose between one year or two years for the term of officers/directors and may choose to include an Addendum for 501 (c) (3) Chapters. Once adopted, the Bylaws establish the rules of the road for the chapter. Chapter Bylaws only change under one of the following circumstances: the state office publishes a revised version of the document, or the chapter chooses to change the term of office or add or remove the Addendum. [Reference the most current version of the Bylaws template available on the TMN Program state website.]

The **Chapter Management and Operations Protocols (CMOP)** documents all the procedural requirements for managing and operating a TMN chapter. The *Bylaws* set the rules of the road; the *CMOP* gives specific directions and instructions. All chapters must comply with and adhere to the procedures defined in the *CMOP*. [Reference the most current version of the *CMOP* available on the TMN Program state website.]

The **Chapter Operating Handbook (COH)** is a document tailored to the individual chapter. It is intended to assist the chapter in structuring and defining in detail its local operational procedures and practices. The *Chapter Operating Handbook Framework* document provided by the state office assures compliance with the *Bylaws* and the *CMOP* while allowing flexibility for the chapter to adapt its *COH* to local needs and resources. [Reference the most current version of the *COH* “framework” available on the TMN Program state website.]

All members of the TMN Program must adhere to the **Code of Ethics** and **Standards of Conduct**. Those two documents establish the values and principles upon which the TMN Program is built and provide clarification when questions arise about member behavior and intentions for the program. [Reference the most current versions of those two documents available on the TMN Program state website.]

New members of the TMN Program shall be provided with copies of all these basic governing documents to learn how the program and the chapter functions. Chapter members elected or appointed to board positions shall review all these documents to gain familiarity with their respective responsibilities.

To access all these documents provided by the TMN state office (and others relevant to TMN chapters), visit <https://txmn.tamu.edu/chapter-resources/chapter-documents/> .