

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

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

Chapter Bylaws for the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Program must be adopted verbatim by each chapter with only two allowable changes, as with every Chapter Bylaws update done in the past. 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.]

- Not editable by TMN Chapters
- Operationally effective at the state level on January 1, 2026
- Adoption Process & Timeline:

Step 1: Complete Bylaws Options Form

- Chapters fill out the form linked below selecting their two options:
 - Term of Office (12 months or 24 months)
 - 501(c)(3) Status (include or omit Addendum)
- [Chapter Bylaws Options Form](#)
- Submitting this form generates a state office–approved *Chapter Bylaws* document tailored for each chapter.

Step 2: Review and Chapter Leadership Approval

- Chapter President and Chapter Advisors review and approve the *Chapter Bylaws* generated by the state office.
- Once approved, the Chapter President and/or Advisors distribute the Bylaws to chapter membership for review.
- Goal: Complete this step by **January 1**.

Step 3: Notification of Membership Vote

- Chapters must notify all members at least 15 days prior to the membership meeting where the vote will occur.
- Notification must be in writing (via mail, email, or equivalent means) and must include the date, time, and location of the meeting.

Step 4: Chapter Membership Meeting and Vote

- The membership votes to adopt the Chapter Bylaws.
- Adoption requires a two-thirds vote of members present, with a quorum established as defined in current bylaws.

Step 5: Submit Adoption Record to State Office

- Within 30 days of the membership vote, chapters must submit the:
 - [Adoption Notification Form](#), and
 - A copy of the chapter meeting minutes documenting the vote record.
- Submit materials to the TMN State Office for official recordkeeping.
- Goal: Complete this step by **March 1**
- **Deadline: All Chapters should have completed adoption of Bylaws by April 1.**

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.]

- Chapters must adhere to the CMOP at least by January 1, 2026
- Not editable.
- No adoption process.

The *Chapter Operating Handbook (COH)* is a document tailored to the individual chapter while also providing a consistent statewide framework for standard operations across the state. 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.]

- Operationally effective at the state level on January 1, 2026
- Editable by Chapters in sections where { } brackets and *italics font* are in place.
- Chapters must work off the state offered 2026 COH Framework document and may edit based on the sections in brackets and italics.
- Adoption Process:
 - **Revisions** – Revisions can be made following State Framework in sections noted by { } brackets and *italics font*.
 - While not required, Chapters may choose to send substantial changes to state office early in the process (after review and discussion from local chapter task force or sub committee) for a compliance review with Bylaws and CMOP. Please note there may be a time lag from the state office for this review request. Substantial changes may include use of at large committees/titles, adding additional committees or large shifts in position duties.
 - **Board** – Revisions must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board members in attendance, either in person or remotely/virtually, at a regular board meeting.
 - **Notice** – General membership must be notified in writing (conventional mail, email, or other equivalent means) of the proposed amendments or revisions at least 15 days before the next chapter meeting, with notice that the ratification vote will be held at that meeting.
 - **Discussion & Vote** – The general membership will have the opportunity to discuss the changes at the meeting. Approval requires a majority vote of those in attendance, either in person or remotely/virtually.
 - **State Office** – Once a chapter has adopted, revised, or amended the COH, an electronic copy must be sent to the TMN state office within 30 days.
 - Submit via state website form or via email to state coordinator.

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/>.