

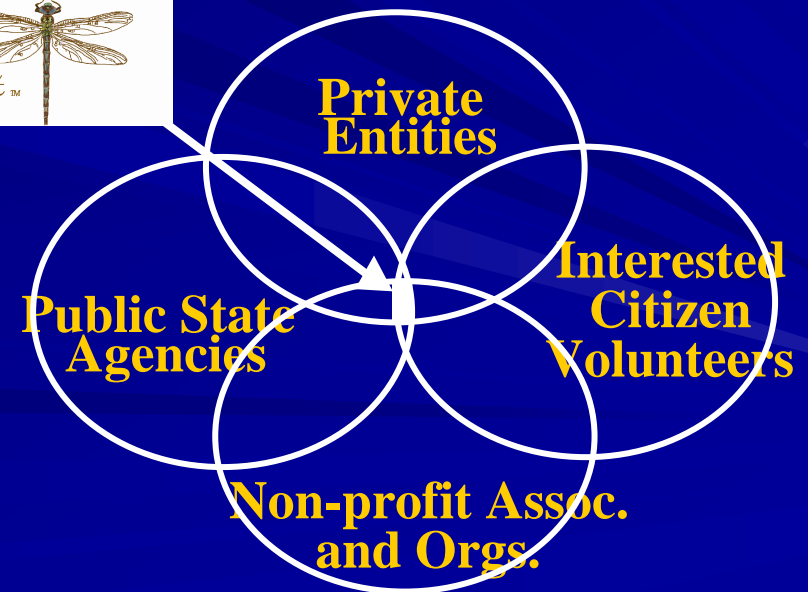
# RECONNECTING WITH PARTNERS

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Texas Master Naturalist Program  
Cradle of Texas Chapter



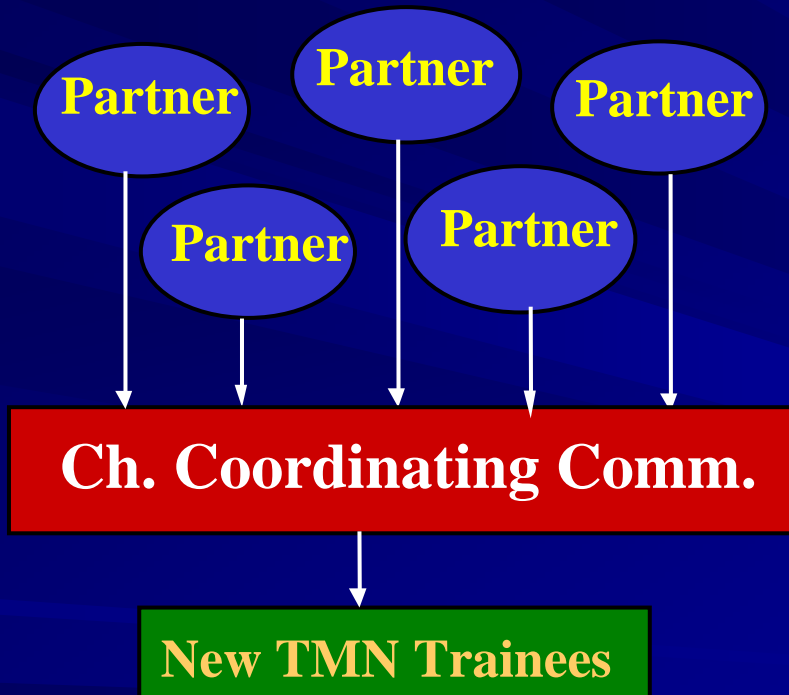
# TMN Program Partnerships

- ❑ TPWD & TCE Statewide Program Partnership
- ❑ 38 Texas Master Naturalist Chapters
  - 300+ Partnerships

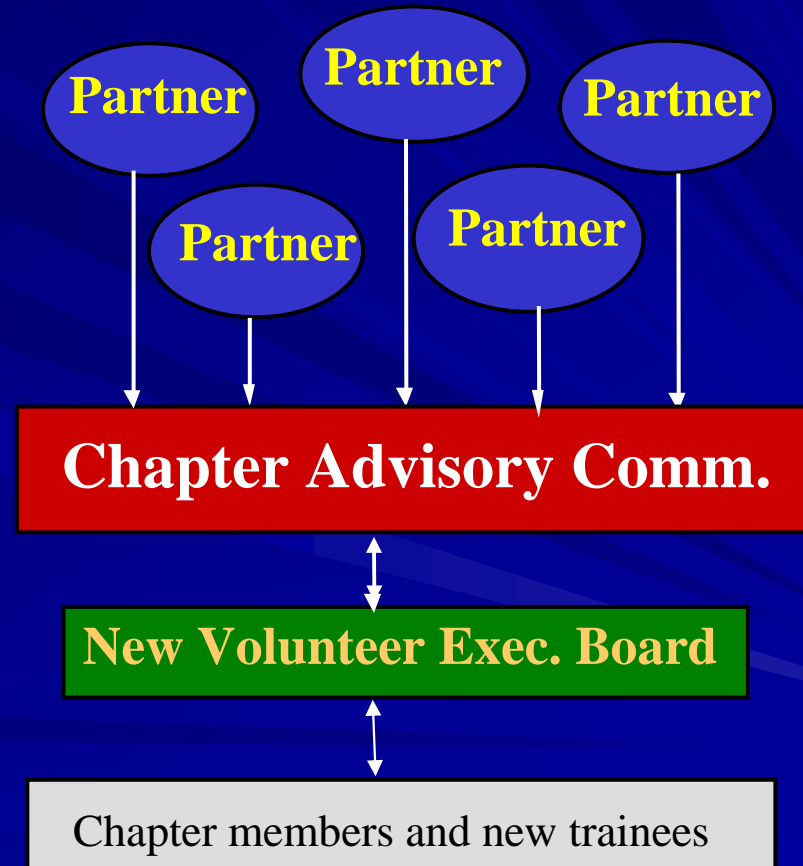


# TMN Chapter Partnerships

*Pre-training phase*



*Post-training phase*



# TMN Program Partnerships

- ❑ Developing local chapters + local community partners = greater success
- ❑ Cradle of Texas Chapter developed in 2001
  - 9 Chapter Partners

# SYMPTOMS

- ❑ Quiet Undercurrent
- ❑ Rumors
- ❑ Grumblings
- ❑ No Shows

# Chapter Members' Disconnect

- ❑ Boredom with “promoted” volunteer activities.
- ❑ Interested in activities/projects but didn't know what else was “out” there.
- ❑ Didn't know who to contact.
- ❑ Once at the Partner's facility no one would help in lining out the volunteer activity.

# Partners' Disconnect

- ❑ Rarely saw any Master Naturalists.
- ❑ Communication process between Partner and Chapter poor or confused.
- ❑ Could not “count” on the Master Naturalists to “stick” with a project or show up after the initial phase of the project.
- ❑ Disappointed in the lack of variety of activities that Master Naturalists would do.

# The Steps I Took...

# First: Created a Survey

- ❑ Where do you currently volunteer?  
(List your top 3 Partners)
- ❑ What do you do?
- ❑ Interested in trying a new volunteer activity? (Which ones)?
- ❑ Need training:
  - Current activity?
  - New activity?

# Survey – Key Learning Points:

- ❑ Master Naturalists wanted a variety of things to do i.e. habitat restoration, citizen science, etc. – not just environmental education.
- ❑ Chapter focused on 4 out of the 11 Partners.
- ❑ Specific advanced training was needed.
- ❑ Chapter may have stagnated to routine activities with little/few projects.

## Second: Revised the Old Partner Agreement form

- Key Points to consider:
  - Mission statement/objectives – in sync.
  - Reciprocal relationship i.e. training, volunteer service, projects, facilities.

## **Partner Agreement**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
1212 N. Velasco  
Angleton, Texas 77515

To: Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter

We would like to **partner** with the Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter. We feel that we have the much to offer such a program.

### **Mission of Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter**

*To establish a core of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within Brazoria County and vicinity.*

**As a partner, our mission** is considered to be in agreement with the above stated mission statement. *(Please write your mission statement here or attach a separate sheet.)*

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission is working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is:  
"to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."*

### **Objectives of Texas Master Naturalist, Cradle of Texas Chapter**

- 1. Improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance education efforts within Brazoria County.*
- 2. Enhance existing natural resource education and outreach activities to provide natural resources training in Brazoria County, thereby developing a supply of dedicated and informed volunteers.*
- 3. Develop a Brazoria County Master Naturalist volunteer network that can be self-sufficient.*

**As a partner, our objectives** are also considered to be in agreement with the above stated objective statement. (Please write your objective statement here or attach a separate sheet.)

1. *Manage refuge habitat to provide quality habitat feeding, resting, and nesting for migratory birds.*
2. *Manage refuge wildlife to maintain native resident wildlife populations.*
3. *Restore deteriorated habitats to provide quality habitat for wildlife.*
4. *Where compatible, provide quality wildlife-oriented public use opportunities including wildlife observation, interpretation, environmental education, photography, hunting and fishing.*

**Specifics:**

As a partner, our organization feels that it can contribute to the program in the following areas: (inclusive but not limited to)

**A. Resources:**

- Personnel expertise (Wildlife Biologist, Botanist, Refuge Managers, Environmental Specialist)
- Facilities (Refuge Field Trips, Discovery Complex)
- Mentors
- Educators (See above)
- Resources (Marsh Buggies, EE Equipment)

**B. Volunteer Opportunities**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Environmental Education	BNWR	Bryan Adams
Vegetation/Invasive Mapping	Complex Wide	Thomas Adams
Sea Turtle Patrol	Matagorda Peninsula	Keith Ramos
Skimmer Colony Counts	BNWR	Jennifer Wilson
Special Events:		Tom Schneider
Migration Celebration	SBNWR, BRWR	
Night Critters Hike	Hudson Woods	
Develop Interpretive Trails	SBNWR, Hudson Woods	Jennifer Sanchez

**C. Training Opportunities**  
**Activity**

**Contact**

Prairie grasses, restoration

Fire Management

Sea Turtle surveys

Also see previous Volunteer Opportunities section

**Proposed Projects (other than above)**

As a partner, we feel that we can offer opportunities with the following special projects:

Salt Marsh Restoration – cord grass planting

Create hummingbird/butterfly gardens

Columbia Bottomland Forest restoration

Survey wildlife/plants in Columbia Bottomland units

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Project Leader, Texas Mid-Coast Refuges

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, Cradle of Texas Chapter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Third: Created a Volunteer Service Approved/Not Approved form

- ❑ A separate form for each Partner.
- ❑ Clear understanding of what does and does not qualify.
- ❑ Eliminates confusion for both the Partner and the master naturalists.
- ❑ Easy to up-date.

**TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST  
CRADLE OF TEXAS CHAPTER**

**Volunteer Project and Activity List**

Partner Organization:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Texas Mid-Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
1212 N. Velasco  
Angleton, Texas 77515

The projects and activities listed below identify which projects/activities are approved or are not approved for volunteer service hours from the above partner organization. The qualifier is whether the project or activity supports the Texas Master Naturalist Mission Statement. If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Service Committee Chair. **To add new projects/activities not listed below**, please fill out the Volunteer Project or Activity Request Form.

<b>APPROVED</b>	<b>NOT APPROVED</b>
Discovery Environmental Education Program – BNWR & Hudson Woods (Contact: Bryan Adams)	Manning desk at BNWR Discovery Center
Vegetation/Invasive Mapping – all refuges (Contact: Thomas Adams)	Counting Visitors at Events/Visitor Center- all refuges
Developing Interpretive Trails – Hudson Woods & San Bernard Oak (Contact: Jennifer Sanchez)	Fundraising activities i.e. planning, collecting, PR, cooking, auctions, etc.
Migration Celebration i.e. trail guides, bird banding, kids activities, etc. (Contact: Tom Schneider)	
Skimmer Colony counts – BNWR (Contact: Jennifer Wilson)	
Salt Marsh restoration (Contact: Jennifer Wilson)	
Hummingbird/Butterfly gardens on all refuges (Contact: Jennifer Sanchez)	
Bottomland Forest Restoration (Contact: Jennifer Sanchez)	
Sea turtle patrol (Contact: Keith Ramos)	

## Fourth: Scheduled “Face-to-Face” Meetings with Each Partner

- What has changed since linking up with TMN?
  - Management philosophy
  - Facilities – added/deleted
  - Important projects, etc.
  
- What has worked or not worked in the past in your relationship with TMN?
  - Communication
  - Performance, etc.

## Partner Discussions – Key Learning Points

- ❑ Had a number of very interesting projects plus a lot of routine work.
- ❑ Partners have a lot on their plates – can't stop to send out notices every time they need help.
- ❑ Expected Master Naturalists to take the initiative, take charge when at the facility.
- ❑ Their wish list could never be totally met.

## As A Result Of This Process – Key Questions for the Chapter:

- Do we have too many Partners?
- Do we have the “right” Partners?
- Do we need to double our training to meet the needs of the Partners?
- Are we utilizing our members correctly?
- Should we have a Project Leader/project?
- Should we limit /prioritize the activities of each Partner?

# Keeping The Partners “In The Loop” - Future

- Have the Volunteer Service Chair:
  - Meet routinely with each Partner to evaluate what's working-what's not.
  - Address any new projects or volunteer opportunities coming up and their specific needs/timing.
  - Keep the Approved/Not Approved lists current and send out updates.
  - Notify the Partners of any “personnel” changes i.e. Volunteer Service Chair, President.

# Advice For New Chapters

## □ Partner Relationship:

- Agree on what is “approved” volunteer service and what is not.
- Prioritize the top 3-5 volunteer activities and/or projects for each Partner.
- Document the Agreement.
- Publish “approved” activities/projects to members/Partners and keep current.

# Advice For New Chapters

- ❑ The chapter should:
  - Carefully evaluate what it and its Partners can provide each other.
  - Try to determine what areas its members are most interested in.
  - Factor in Project Leadership training.
  - Offer appropriate advanced training based on interest/needs of its members.
  - Not let the Board unduly influence/sell their “pet” projects/training.

# Projects Resulting From This Process

- ❑ 2 – Interpretative Trail Projects
- ❑ 2 – Flora/Wildlife Survey Projects
- ❑ 3 – Prairie Restoration Projects
- ❑ 2 – Environmental Education Programs
- ❑ 1 – Mottled Duck Banding Project
- ❑ 1 – Sea Turtle Patrol Project
- ❑ 1 – Butterfly Garden Project
- ❑ 1 – Box Turtle Survey Project
- ❑ 1 – Wetland Restoration Project
- ❑ 2 – Trail Maintenance Projects

# The Challenge: Staying Connected

