

CMOP CRITERIA FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROJECT APPROVAL

6.8 Criteria for Project Approval - The following are points for the chapter’s VS coordinator and the committee to consider when approving a new project. The project opportunity:

- Represents the goals, practices, and teachings of the TMN Program
- Addresses a pressing naturalist or natural resource management issue need
- Is well defined in terms of when it will be conducted, where, estimated time needed to complete or maintain per month, how many members would be needed, etc.
- Is located within the chapter’s defined service area or ecological area. Consideration may be given to projects outside the chapter’s service area and ecological zone if the project’s service is compatible with the mission, goals, and training of the chapter and the TMN Program.
- Allows the chapter to create visibility, identity, or recruitment opportunities for the chapter
- Describes how its impact on the community and our natural resources can be measured
- Identifies why/how it is beneficial for the chapter and for the program to be associated with it
- **Does not** include fundraising for an organization other than the chapter or the state TMN Program
- **Does not** include lobbying, which is not acceptable under the TMN mission

Volunteer Service Examples

Unacceptable	Better	Best
Being “on call” as a wildlife rescuer for a non-partner organization (Why: no actual service time)	Transporting injured, native wildlife to licensed wildlife rehabilitation service	Provide outreach on prevention of unnecessary wildlife captures or rescues (e.g., knowledge to answer questions on “abandoned” wildlife)
Planting exotic plants or a vegetable garden (Why: not within our mission)	Planting native plants or a wildscape at a local school	Leading 5 th graders & school staff in implementing a native plant garden or wildscape at a local school
Monarch monitoring in Colorado (Why: opportunity is not within Texas)	Monarch monitoring in Texas	Monarch monitoring within your local chapter’s area
Cleaning elephant cage at a zoo (Why: not a native species & does not fall within our mission)	Caring for the prairie chicken area at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local chapter	Leading interpretive programs about prairie chickens at a local zoo that is in partnership with the local chapter

Unacceptable	Better	Best
Maintenance at a private native plant nursery (Why: is a private business)	Maintain a demonstration garden at a park/nature center or be part of a native plant propagation team for the city's botanical garden	Holding a workshop on how to install & maintain a wildscape or other similar type of native habitat
Identifying flora & fauna on your property & uploading it to citizen science website that is not part of a chapter-approved project (Why: Private benefit & activity does not contribute to an approved project following the TMN iNaturalist & eBird community science guidelines)	Uploading imperiled species observations into iNaturalist on public land with permissions set to "public."	Organizing a public or private land "bio-blitz" for citizen scientists & experts to learn from each other & upload data to eBird & iNaturalist
Conducting wildlife management activities on your own land (Why: Private benefit)	Conducting wildlife management practices or activities on public land	Teaching/assisting landowners to develop their own wildlife management plans that the landowner would carry out
A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts in their classroom (Why: person is receiving pay to conduct this work already)	A teacher receiving service credit for natural resource education activities he/she conducts as an unpaid after school environmental club leader	A teacher /volunteer who organizes & conducts a natural resource workshop for other Master Naturalists or the general public
Stream clean-up by a volunteer who is employed by & works for a local watershed protection program (Why: person is receiving pay to conduct this work already)	Stream clean-up by volunteers who do not work for a local watershed protection program	TMN volunteers conducting stream or watershed restoration practices or coordinating a stream clean-up for the local community to participate in
The unplanned altering of species habitat, advocating for bike & hike access trails in sensitive nature areas (Why: not serving TMN Mission)	Conducting endangered species surveys; developing nature trails or habitat brush piles at a local park/nature center that is in a partnership with your local chapter	Maintaining a nature classroom/training area for that same partner who also allows the chapter to keep an office or hold chapter meetings in this same space

Unacceptable	Better	Best
<p>Manning a “store” or native plant sale that raises funds for a state park friends group or other non-TMN organization (Why: not part of TMN mission)</p>	<p>Answering phones or emails & doing basic office work for your local county natural resources agent</p>	<p>Serving as an information docent by presenting programs, leading tours, or organizing outreach events on native wildlife & habitats</p>
<p>Receiving service credit for time spent as a board member or committee member for a ‘for profit’ organization or one whose mission is contrary to that of the TMN Program Time spent fundraising for other than TMN organizations (Why: not acting in the interest of the TMN Program)</p>	<p>With annual review & approval from your chapter, receiving service credit for time spent serving as a board or committee member for a non-profit organization devoted to education, conservation, & management of natural resources or the environment Time spent representing your local TMN chapter’s interest to a board/organization that has developed a designated “Master Naturalist Representative” spot on their leadership team. (i.e., liaison positions)</p>	<p>Serving on a TMN Board or as a committee member at any level within the TMN Program. Training other organizations how to conduct natural resource management activities. Providing natural resource technical guidance expert advice on/to a municipal advisory committee or land trust council Serving on a local government advisory committee making natural resource recommendations</p>
<p>Preparing food for social activities of the chapter (Why: Preparation of food for an activity that is purely social does not meet the mission of the TMN)</p>	<p>Serving on the hospitality committee for chapter meetings or training classes.</p>	<p>Planning & organizing logistics for a chapter volunteer recognition event.</p>