

## CHAPTER Guidelines

### Why?

As the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program (NMNP) grows, we recognize that graduates of the NMNP will desire not only to volunteer as individuals, but to share experiences with fellow Master Naturalists and Program Members, enrich relationships with natural resource professionals, cooperate in identifying local needs, and become more involved in environmental events and projects in their communities. These guidelines are designed to help the NMNP grow as one network that upholds the existing high standards of the organization.

### What?

NMN Chapters are groups of regional or interest-affiliated Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist Volunteers who abide by the Nebraska Master Naturalist standards, structures and code of ethics. The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program envisions that chapters will consist of at least five CNMN (Certified Nebraska Master Naturalists) that share a common region or interest and meet no less than quarterly.

Chapters will be more formal than Naturalist Groups. Chapters may not organize as a legal entity, other than a charitable organization without the approval of the Executive Board. Chapters will have voting representation on the Executive Board.

### Expectations

- Chapters will be sanctioned through an application / review process (**Details TBD**).
- Chapter membership will be open to all members (Program Members and Master Naturalists).
- Chapters are encouraged to coordinate meeting locations with Program Members.
- Chapters will adopt a name. Names must be approved by the NMNP.
- Chapters will be subject to existing NMNP standards, structures and code of ethics.
- Chapters will operate according to standardized Bylaws provided by the NMNP (**Details TBD**).
- Chapters may collect money or obtain sponsorship in order to conduct the activities of the chapter (refreshments, speaker's stipends, chapter management, field trip expenses, service projects, etc.).
- Chapters will not organize as a legal entity, other than a charitable organization (as defined by the State of Nebraska) without the approval of the Executive Board.
- Chapters will not manage or submit Certified Master Naturalist volunteer hours nor will the chapters conduct "Core Master Naturalist Trainings".

# Master Naturalist Resources Site

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- Chapters may and are encouraged to plan, prepare and conduct Continuing Education or Chapter/Site/Project Specific Master Naturalist Training from the approved specialization and continuing education lists or as approved by the state program or program committee.

## **Getting Started**

Five or more Certified Nebraska Master Naturalists or Program Members who have a common interest and/or are in the same geographic area may form a chapter. The proposed Chapter will create a “startup” committee to guide the Chapter in its beginning stages. The Committee will include at least three members and other interested individuals as needed. A person in the “startup” committee will be named as the Point of Contact.

## **Chapter Structure**

The Chapter may include the following classes of members:

Voting Member – A Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist (CNMN) or Program Member who has paid the required Chapter dues (if any), maintained certification requirements (CNMN only), and complied with the Nebraska Master Naturalist code of ethics.

Non-voting Member – A Master Naturalist who is not certified (has not completed required certification training or continuing education requirements) or a person who has contributed or is likely to contribute to the activities of the Chapter but is not a member of the program.

## **Legal Entity**

Chapters shall not become a legal entity with the exception of a charitable organization (as defined by the State of Nebraska) without the approval of the Executive Board.

## **Chapter Officers**

As minimum, Chapters will have an elected President, Secretary and Treasurer.

## **Chapter Advisor**

A member of the Board of Directors will be designated in the application phase to act as an Advisor to the Chapter. The Chapter Advisor will serve as a supportive contact during both the application and review phase and the “operation” phase after Chapter approval.

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## **Chapter Representation on the Executive Board**

Each Chapter shall elect or designate a person to serve as Chapter Representative. The Chapter Representative will become a voting member of the Executive Board and be expected to attend Executive Board Meetings. The Chapter Representative shall serve on the Board according to limits and restrictions of the Board.

## **Meetings**

Chapters can meet as often as deemed necessary by the chapter, but will meet at least quarterly. One meeting shall be an annual meeting where officers shall be elected.

## **Records**

Chapters shall collect and maintain records of member participation and activities. Copies of these records shall be provided to the State Program Coordinator at least once per calendar year. Examples of records are:

- Minutes of meetings
- Financial Report: This report is required if money is collected or donations are received in the reporting year by the Chapter.
- Annual Report of Activities: A short descriptive report on the activities of the Chapter for the reporting year.
- Other documents as deemed necessary by the Executive Board or State Program Coordinator

## **Finances**

Chapters may collect dues to support operations and activities. If dues are collected, Chapters will create an annual proposed budget and complete an end of year informal audit. This information will be made available to the State Program Coordinator or Executive Board upon request. Chapters must coordinate with the State Program Coordinator and the Executive Board to accept gifts and donations.

## **Name and Logo**

Approved chapters may use the Nebraska Master Naturalist name, Logo and EEO statement in a consistent format for official business and communication.