

# TMN/VMS Newsletter

T E X A S



FOR TEXAS MASTER NATURALISTS VMS ADMINISTRATORS

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## Double Dipping

Because the TMN Program project operates under a federal grant, and uses TMN service and training hours as “match” for that grant, TMN volunteer hours should not be used as match for other, outside grants. Because the complexities of the granting programs and our desire to provide our volunteers with straight forward, easy to follow guidance, I’ve held that there is almost never sufficient justification for a TMN volunteer to sign in/sign out on a service project. The only place to sign in /sign out or record one’s hours is through the TMN VMS system.

It could be successfully argued that some partner projects might ask volunteers to sign in/out for safety or insurance purposes, but in those cases, it should be communicated that the hours cannot be used for grants. Even then, a sign in /sign out for safety would not require times.

...Richard Helbrun

## The 2017 VMS Review is complete!

A brief Summary: We have 11,672 volunteers in the system—4,570 TMN Active.

Through 10/27 we had recorded 3,864,480 Hours and participated in 530,581 AT hours.

In 2016: 71.6% of Active Volunteers put in hours—Do you have Inactive People marked as Active?

68.1% of Active Opportunities had hours recorded against them. Do you have Opportunities that you need to mark as expired and remove their approvals?

82% of Active Volunteers have their profiles complete for their CBCs—should the others be TMN-InActive?

Our most common error: opportunity approvals on TMN-Inactive Volunteers

### Special points of interest:

- ◆ DOUBLE DIPPING
- ◆ 2017 DATA REVIEW
- ◆ CBCs
- ◆ HARVEY AREA HOURS
- ◆ TRAINING CLASSES
- ◆ BOARD WORK FOR OTHER AGENCIES
- ◆ FIELD IN FOCUS: DUES AND CLASS

## Criminal Background Checks (CBCs)

We continue to monitor the status of the outstanding CBCs. You can email background check cards to your volunteers. You cannot have a member volunteer without a background check.

We’ve often been asked what’s included in the background check. The official response: “The Texas Department of Public Service (DPS) Computerized Criminal History System provides information on arrests, prosecutions and the disposition of the case for persons arrested for Class B misdemeanor or greater violations of Texas criminal statutes, to include crimes of a sexual nature, and includes limited supervision data reported to DPS.



### Management Team

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### Board Work for Other Agencies

A reminder that Board and support work for other agencies should be recorded to opportunities in the 'Other' category.

Other category hours should never be more than 5% of your total service hours.

### Field in Focus: Dues / Class Year

The Dues field is one that only about 1/2 of the chapters are currently utilizing. However, it has become quite useful at the state level. For those chapters that charge dues, it helps us determine whether or not a volunteer is TMN-Active or TMN-Inactive. That status helps us maintain and monitor our CBC list and evaluate our efficiencies.

There are several automations that you can use to make bulk edits to the dues field.

The class year is also useful when determining the status of your volunteers, and there are automations for those as well.

### Training Classes

We offer a variety of training classes for your admins and Advisors.

**Basic Admin:** Required for all new administrators

**Reporting:** Getting the most out of VMS

**Refresher Admin:** Admin tune-up and a great place to ask questions

**Read Only:** for Advisors or others that just need to see the data.

Sign up for the classes through the help desk at [txmn.org/help](http://txmn.org/help)

### Harvey Update:

The 45 day rule is suspended for Hurricane affected areas.

While the system will still prohibit the volunteer from using the actual date, the Admins can bypass that requirement. Have the volunteers put in a future date and note the actual date in the notes field. Then just edit the entry.

However, all 2017 hours need to be entered by March 15, 2018 so that we can complete the 2017 Annual Report.

*You don't have to run an annual report for 2017, but please be sure that your officers are up-to-date in the system, and that your volunteers get their hours in as soon as possible.*

Need Help? Find it here: [txmn.org/help](http://txmn.org/help)

Quick Login for hours: [txmn.org/hours](http://txmn.org/hours) -or- [tpwd.samaritan.com](http://tpwd.samaritan.com)

Quickly go to the search page: [txmn.org/apply](http://txmn.org/apply)