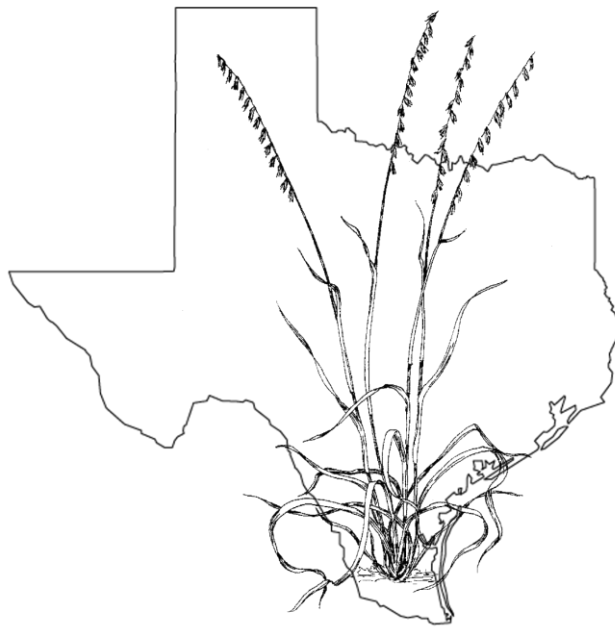




# Native **Prairies** Association of Texas

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## *Chapter Guidelines*

# *2017*

Revised April 4, 2017

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## **Introduction**

The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization and land trust dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas and throughout the United States.

NPAT protects 3,927.02 acres of native Texas prairie in conservation easements and our own fee simple properties.

### **NPAT Mission**

**The Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) is a non-profit land trust** dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native prairies, savannas, and other grasslands in Texas. We are saving a Lone Star legacy.

**We protect** native prairies, grasslands and inter-related habitats through acquisition, partnerships, and conservation easements for future generations.

**We restore** native prairie on our own lands, and promote restoration of grassland habitats on other private and public lands in Texas. We assist landowners as well as those interested in sustainable land-use practices by sharing informational resources and advice on restoration.

**We educate** Texans about native prairies, plant communities, grassland birds, wildlife and sustainable land use practices. We support the important role of grassland habitats in climate stabilization and in water quality resources and conservation. We promote awareness of the natural and cultural heritage of prairies in Texas. We **provide** opportunities to learn more about our prairies through workshops, presentations, field trips and volunteer opportunities.

### **What is a Land Trust?**

A land trust is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that, as all or part of its mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements.

### **Ways that Land Trusts Acquire Land**

#### **Fee Simple**

A land trust can conserve land through an outright purchase or donation, in which the landowner sells or grants all rights, title and interest in the property to the land trust. The land trust maintains perpetual stewardship and management responsibility for the land. It

owns the land and may grant conservation easements on land it owns in fee to another conservation organization, agency or town.

### **Conservation Easement**

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. A landowner may sell a conservation easement, but usually easements are donated. If the donation benefits the public by permanently protecting important conservation resources and meets other federal tax code requirements, it can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation. The amount of the donation is the difference between the land's value with the easement and its value without the easement. Placing an easement on property may or may not result in property tax savings.

The restrictions that protect the conservation values of the property are contained in a conservation easement document that goes with the land in perpetuity. Basically the conservation easement prohibits the development of the land in perpetuity.

Perhaps most importantly, a conservation easement can be essential for passing land on to the next generation. By removing the land's development potential, the easement lowers its market value, which in turn lowers estate tax. Whether the easement is donated during life or by will, it can make a critical difference in the heirs' ability to keep the land intact.

Maps of NPAT properties & easements is in the Supplemental Documents Sections and available at the NPAT website <http://www.texasprairie.org/>

## **What is a Chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas Land Trust?**

In 2010 the Native Prairies Association of Texas modified its bylaws to allow chapters. NPAT chapters have assigned counties or precincts. Local chapters follow the same set of bylaws set forth by the state organization which includes Chapter Guidelines by reference. Chapters must adopt and abide by NPAT bylaws and the Chapter Guidelines. Chapters may not alter or change the NPAT bylaws or the Chapter Guidelines but they may add additional items to Chapter Guidelines if they do not conflict with bylaws or rules. Chapters may not create modifications in conflict with the state board's mission or philosophy.

### **How to Form an NPAT Chapter**

To form an NPAT chapter, a group must have at minimum of 12 current registered NPAT members. Upon member registration of 12 people in a local area, members may inform the NPAT state board of their intent to form a chapter with a "Letter of Intent". This

letter should also propose the range of counties the proposed chapter will represent. Upon acceptance of the submitted “Letter of Intent” by the board, the new chapter may begin working toward the election of a board and to hold meetings in their area. Chapters represent the State Organization. New leadership should work with the state coordinator or another designated liaison to plan the first months of Chapter activity.

Local chapters of the Native Prairies Association of Texas hold regular meetings where they learn about the native prairies of their area. They may organize field trips, workshops, demonstration gardens and other kinds of things to learn about and promote native prairies. **One must be a member of the Native Prairies Association of Texas in order to be a member of a local chapter.** However, some members of the association may elect to not join a local chapter either out of personal preference or because there is not a local chapter close enough to where they live.

NPAT is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and from a legal and tax standpoint, all chapters are part of the same organization. Chapters may not charge extra dues for membership in the chapter. However, they are permitted to raise and hold money of their own.

However, in order to be a viable and workable Chapter, much more needs to be done. The purpose of these guidelines is to help make that task less formidable by sharing information that has been learned over the years. Chapters provide an opportunity for members to become personally involved in their communities and to take a hands-on approach to prairie conservation, restoration and education.

## **Requirements to Be a Chapter of Native Prairies Association of Texas**

### **Chapters MUST**

- **Elect 4 Officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer**
- **Adopt NPAT’s Mission, NPAT State Bylaws and Chapter Guidelines (to be voted on by steering committee and general membership of chapter)**
- **Hold at least 1 Meeting per quarter during a year**
- **Maintain a Website or Send in Quarterly Reports**
- **Have a minimum of 12 registered NPAT members**

**Chapters CANNOT Charge extra dues above state NPAT dues**

## **Chapters ARE:**

- **Part of the State organization for legal and tax reporting purposes**

## **Chapter Officers**

Duties of Officers are set by the Chapter Guidelines and do not correspond to duties of state board officers. Chapters may elect to add additional duties for the officers but are required to uphold the duties in the Chapter Guidelines.

### **President**

The President is one of the four officers that every Chapter is required to have. The exact duties of the President will be determined by the Chapter Guidelines and may differ from one Chapter to another. The President usually presides over all Chapter meetings.

The President is responsible for submitting a chapter activity report or implement and maintain a chapter website. The NPAT Executive Director will include a chapter report for each chapter each month from quarterly reports or (preferred) chapter website updates. The President does not have to prepare a report or create a website but may delegate this requirement to other officers such as secretary or web master. The treasurer creates the budget report. An activity report form is in the Supplemental Document Section of the Chapter Guidelines for chapters without a website.

Presidents are not required to be NPAT board members or to attend NPAT board meetings but they are encouraged and invited to become board members if they would like to. Being a board member provides greater insight into the organization and how a land trust works. It also gives a chapter more input into how NPAT is run and decisions made. Other officers may also become State Board members.

The Chapter President serves as the point of contact between the State Office and the Chapter. The State Office may send information and materials to the Chapter President for distribution to Chapter Members. The State Office may also contact the Chapter President about other Chapter matters. The President should notify the State Office about changes in meeting times and locations, changes in elected officers and other relevant information.

The President is also in charge of election of officers at the end of officer term. The President may coordinate the election or form a nominating committee. They may appoint someone to run an election or they may do it themselves if they are not up for election or their term is up and they are leaving office.

The NPAT Executive Director or State Board Member may set method of election or it may be done by the outgoing President. It is suggested that non-contested slates should

be done by acclamation either verbal or in writing at a meeting. It may be more appropriate to elect officers via email. All members present at the election meeting may vote, if by email, all paid members should be sent a private ballot to vote. Members should be notified of election process in advance.

A plan of activities for the year and a budget should be submitted to the State NPAT office each year in early January. The President is responsible for seeing this completed.

### **In Summary:**

#### **The Chapter President**

- **PRESIDES over and runs chapter meetings**
- **Is the CONTACT PERSON for State Office and for the public**
- **Is responsible for submission of activity report or maintenance of website**
- **Ensure budget REPORTS are sent to State Office**
- **May be an NPAT State Board Member but is not required**
- **Read the NPAT Executive Director's Report for each month**
- **Lead planning activities & budget for year and submitting to State Office**
- **May have additional duties prescribed by the chapter**
- **In charge of officer elections**

### **Vice President**

The Vice President is one of the four officers that every Chapter is required to have. They must fill in for the President to run meetings and other President duties when the President is not present. The Vice President is responsible for programs and speakers for chapter meetings. They may appoint a chair person(s) or committee to obtain speakers and programs but the VP must make sure that programs and speakers have been obtained. The Vice President may have other duties assigned by the chapter such as development of partnerships.

### **In Summary:**

#### **The Chapter Vice-President**

- **is responsible for speakers/presentations at meetings**
- **Fulfills President's duties when President cannot be present**
- **may have OTHER duties as prescribed by the Chapter**

### **Secretary**

The Chapter Secretary is one of the four officers every Chapter is required to have. The Chapter Secretary shall keep minutes of Board, Election, or any scheduled decision-

making meetings. Recorded minutes are necessary in order to keep track of decisions and responsibilities. Minutes can be archived in a notebook or they may be stored online. The secretary is responsible for posting or emailing minutes of the meeting to members. Because we are an accredited organization, NPAT must have accurate records of our activities.

The secretary notifies members of meeting locations and times in advance.

The secretary is responsible for maintaining the membership email list and coordinating with state office staff to keep the membership list updated. The chapter may select a membership chairman and/or committee to assist with this.

In some Chapters the Secretary may be assigned other duties such as safekeeping of records or chapter property or doing the website or facebook. Additional duties can be assigned by the chapters.

## **In Summary:**

### **The Secretary**

- **RECORDS minutes of chapter meetings**
- **POSTS/MAILS minutes to membership**
- **Maintains MEMBERSHIP and EMAIL lists**
- **Notifies membership of meetings and other activities**
- **May have OTHER duties as prescribed by the Chapter**

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer is one of the four officers that every Chapter is required to have. The President has the responsibility to find a Treasurer and will function as President/Treasurer until one is found.

The Treasurer keeps the financial records of the Chapter. The Treasurer is responsible maintaining a checking account and in some cases starting a checking account. The Treasurer is responsible for paying any bills the Chapter may accrue. The Treasurer is responsible for sending monthly financial bank statements to the State Office. They may also submit a treasurers report quarterly if needed for clarification of expenses. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting any sales taxes as required by State Law. The Treasurer usually prepares an annual budget in cooperation with the President and presents it to the membership at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Treasurer may have other responsibilities designated by the Chapter.

**Non Profit IRS Identification, EIN number and Sales Tax Exemption Permit will be sent to the President and Treasurer of the organization. Requests should be made to the Chapter Liaison in the State Office.**



## **In Summary:**

### **The Chapter Treasurer**

- **Keeps financial records**
- **Gives Treasurer's report at each chapter meeting**
- **Assists President & Chapter Board in Preparing Yearly Budget**
- **Pays bills, writes checks and deposits funds in chapter account**
- **May need to set up a chapter bank account (using NPAT procedure)**
- **Sends monthly bank statements to the State Office & reports as needed**
- **Collects Sales Taxes when needed.**

### **Other Chapter Officers**

NPAT requires chapters to have minimum positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, allowing the President to serve as Treasurer until one is elected. Chapters may create additional officers or chairmen positions as needed and added to the required four officers. Additional chapter officers other than the stated 4 are not required. Duties of additional officers will be assigned by the chapters.

#### **Suggestions for Other Officer/Chairmen Positions:**

**Hospitality Chairman/Officer**  
**Membership & Outreach Chairman/Officer**  
**Webmaster**  
**Communications & Social Media Chairman/Officer**  
**Events & Field Trip Chairman/Officer**  
**Program Committee Chairman/Officer**

### **Terms of Office**

The President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and any other officers shall hold office for a period of one year. At the end of the year, officers may elect to run again or not. The President or Nominating Committee is responsible for finding new members to fill vacant positions.

### **Chapter Committees**

Chapters are not required to have committees but are strongly encouraged to. Committees provide more opportunities for members to be actively engaged in chapter activities and help to set and accomplish goals and objectives of the chapter. Below is a descriptive list

of possible committees that a chapter may want to have but is not required to have any of them. There are many other types of committees that chapters may choose to have than those listed below. It is best to limit the number of committees to 6 or less. A committee should have at least 3 members including a chair.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering committee is made up of all 4 required officers plus any additional officers or chairmen as designated by the chapter. The steering committee is not required but strongly advised. A steering committee should lay out the goals and objectives of the chapter. A steering committee meets as needed and the meeting is called by the President who is responsible for the agenda, time and place of the meeting. The purpose of the steering committee is to plan for activities, fundraisers, events and meetings for the year, and to discuss business items prior to a general meeting with members. The steering committee may meet on a regular basis or as needed.

### **Nominating Committee**

The President may want to appoint a nominating committee to run an upcoming election. The nominating committee would seek members to fill officer positions and help with the selection/voting process as directed by the President. The nominating committee should not have anyone on the committee that is running for office for the upcoming session other than the President and it is best if the current President is not on the committee if they are running for re-election.

### **Program Committee**

This committee arranges educational speakers for meetings. In many chapters the Program Committee Chair is also the Vice-President but that is not required. If there is a program committee the chair finds speakers, presentations and activities for the meeting under the direction of the VP.

### **Events and Field Trip Committee**

The events and field trip committee arranges for field trips, outings, fairs, festivals, restoration activities, seed collecting, special projects and many other possible activities of the chapter. The committee chair may coordinate or have on their committee other officers as well as members. This committee has the potential to increase membership through participation in prairie events. Advertising events and creating press releases for newspapers might be assigned to this committee. This committee would seek and find activities that give the Chapter opportunities to meet the public to educate about prairies.

### **Membership/Outreach Committee or Publicity**

Increasing membership year over year is an important goal of a Chapter and part of the reason Chapters exist. This committee keeps a membership roll, may send reminders of meetings and other events to members under the direction of the Secretary who is responsible for notices and the Membership Chairman. This committee looks for ways to interact with the general population to solicit new membership. The membership committee will help provide a membership data for the quarterly report to the state under the direction of the Secretary. A membership Committee should encourage membership and donations to NPAT and the chapter. The membership committee may be responsible for greeting and assisting new members at meetings and events and may coordinate a **Hospitality subcommittee.**

### **Education Committee**

Educational partnerships and opportunities would be suggested and implemented by this committee. This committee might develop educational tools for teaching about prairies. This committee could coordinate with schools on educational events, functions, partnerships or school yard pocket prairies.

### **Fundraising Committee**

This committee explores ways to raise funds and makes proposals to the steering committee or officers on how to raise funds. They may also implement fundraising activities.

### **Partnership Committee**

This Committee would seek partnerships with corporations, businesses, state and local government entities and others to further the NPAT and Chapter mission goals. Partnerships could lead to or support fundraising activities. Partnerships are often required for grant applications and may be needed to support projects.

## **Adoption of State Bylaws and Chapter Guidelines**

When a chapter first forms, the new President-elect must ask the steering committee and the general membership to adopt the state Bylaws and Chapter Guidelines that are referenced in the State Bylaws but are in a separate document entitled “Chapter Guidelines”. Some bylaws do not apply to chapters.

Chapters may not write their own bylaws and must operate under the Chapter Guidelines they may add additional duties or requirements to the Chapter Guidelines if they so choose as long as the Chapter Guidelines are not changed. Additions to existing guidelines such as number of meetings or additional officers are acceptable. .

**Conflict of Interest Policy:** Chapter Officers will sign NPAT's Conflict of Interest Policy that can be requested by an officer of the chapter from the state office.

**Land Transactions:** A chapter may not participate on its own in land acquisition activities or conservation easement endeavors unless expressly given permission by the Property and Acquisition Committee of the State Board and the full State Board of NPAT. Chapter Officers do not have authority to sign on any land transactions. Land transaction negotiations are done by the State Board and Staff. Chapters may assist in various ways like identifying properties, interacting with potential landowners if it has prior approval by the State Board, encouraging conservation, and viewing a potential property if requested by State Board. No NPAT member can give legal advice to a potential easement donor. The Chapters are also not allowed to store any important, irreplaceable, or sensitive documents. All original documents of this nature are to be sent to the State Office for storage. NPAT follows a strict set of guidelines and policies when participating in any type of land transaction. Any deviation from these policies can jeopardize our status as an accredited land trust or our status as a nonprofit organization.

NPAT Bylaws can be found at <http://www.texasprairie.org/>  
Chapter Guidelines can be found at: <http://www.texasprairie.org/>

## **Member Meetings**

A Chapter is required to have at least one meeting per quarter or 4 per year. It is encouraged that Chapters typically hold meetings on a monthly basis, except they may want to skip December or other months when members are otherwise preoccupied. The number of meetings to be held and the times and places to meet should be determined by the required officers or steering committee.

Meetings typically consist of three elements: an educational or entertainment element, a social element, and a business element.

### **Meeting Elements**

Members are more likely to attend meetings if there is an educational or entertaining program scheduled. Programs should be consistent with the mission and purpose of the Association.

#### **Education Element**

Include short workshops, hands-on activities, or speakers that present topics relative to the NPAT mission such as seed collection, growing out plants, restoration, urban restoration, pollinators and prairies etc.

#### **Social Element**

Members join a Chapter partly to learn from other members and share experiences. Time should be allowed at meetings for members to get to know one another. New members and visitors should be welcomed. Having a designated greeter to welcome new guests and introduce them to other members can increase returning guests and increase membership. Many Chapters like to provide refreshments for members to enjoy while they socialize.

### **Business Element**

The business meeting may be informal, but should be conducted with Robert's Rules of Order in mind. The Chapter President conducts the meeting and should prepare/publish an Agenda. The main objective is to communicate the status of projects the Chapter is engaged in and to make decisions about what the Chapter should do. It is important for Chapters to be transparent in their operations and keep the membership informed and involved.

Business meetings should be brief and efficient. Details can be worked out in committee meetings. Chapter leaders and especially Chapter Presidents are highly suggested to obtain and consult a copy of Roberts Rules of Order. There are inexpensive condensed versions available which should suffice in most cases. Agendas help keep meetings on track.

### **Some items that may appear on an agenda include**

- Read and approve minutes of previous meetings
- Report of Treasurer
- Reports of Committee Chairs
- Announcements of Upcoming Events
- Motions regarding future projects or chapter business
- Appointments of committees
- Election of officers
- Recognition of volunteers or special guests
- Introduction of Speaker
- Name of Presenter/Presentation

### **Suggested Chapter Activities and Events:**

#### **Chapter Adoption of an NPAT prairie**

Stewardship and maintenance of NPAT prairies is costly and difficult as the properties are spread out across the state. Chapters are encouraged to vote to select an NPAT property within the Chapter's area for Chapter adoption. This property can serve as an educational site for chapter members and an opportunity to volunteer to help maintain and restore the prairie site. Prairie preservation is critical at all NPAT sites and volunteers

are welcome to assist in the care of and education about these highly valuable prairies. Some chapters will not have nearby NPAT sites and may wish to adopt another prairie site owned by a city, county or school district where applicable and work on restoration and maintenance of these sites.

### **Prairie Month**

October is designated as Prairie Month by a number of Prairie Organizations. Chapters are encouraged to participate by holding or supporting at least one event during Prairie Month to promote education and appreciation for native prairies in Texas. This is a great opportunity to partner with other like minded organizations to promote prairie awareness. Advertising all prairie related events during Prairie Month helps educate the public about prairies.

### **Prairie Demonstration Gardens or Urban Pocket Prairies**

A prairie demonstration garden organized in a public place to provide both an educational and aesthetic offering to the general public is a great way to support urban prairie plants and wildlife and encourage the public to conserve and restore prairies. A prairie demonstration garden project offers opportunity for experienced members to work side-by-side with newcomers to teach and learn. This is always fun. A critically important aspect of “demonstration” is the how-to of restoration and maintenance. Native plants become more appealing to the public when it is made clear that a native garden can look well-kept and attractive year round. Establishment of a demonstration garden is organized as a project with a team leader and work broken down and shared by team volunteers. Ongoing maintenance can be organized separately. **Liability forms are required for volunteers are available through the State Office.**

### **Prairie Plant or Seed Rescues**

A Prairie Plant or Seed Rescue is an attempt to salvage valuable native plants from areas where they are likely to be destroyed or they are not wanted. This activity is important to prairie restorations. Always make sure you have permission of the property owner before entering a property to take plants. **Liability forms are required.**

### **Seed Collecting Field Trips and Seed Packing Parties**

A great field trip is to host a seed collecting trip to a location where permission has been granted for members to collect native seed which may be used in local restoration projects or by members on their own properties. Seed packing parties can be a meeting or a special event where seeds are sorted and packed to be delivered to those who want to grow them out during the year to be used in restoration efforts at local sites.

### **Texas Native Prairie Heritage Registration**

Chapters can help landowner or entities to register native prairies in their area. Forms for registration are submitted to the state NPAT office. The forms can be located and

downloaded at the NPAT website under Protect or it is in the Supplemental Documents section of these Chapter Rules.

## **Field Trips**

**Volunteers and Field Trip Participants must sign a Liability Waiver Form. The current Liability Form may be obtained from the state office or website**

Field trip possibilities are wide ranging and can include anything from remnant prairies, restoration sites, NPAT properties, prairie tours, and visits to public and privately held local prairies surveys of selected prairies and prairie mapping trips. Ideas for field trips can be brainstormed and catalogued at one of the chapter's meetings and then serve as a guide for planning and scheduling. These activities usually can be managed by an individual or a small committee. Publicity can encourage non-members to join in. Chapters are urged to coordinate monthly speakers/ presentations with trips and activities in their local area. Liability forms are required.

## **Communications**

Chapters need to communicate with their members and with their community. Ways to communicate include

### **Chapter Announcements & News**

Each month our Chapter Liaison will ask for announcements and newspaper articles they would like posted on the monthly or quarterly newsletters. The NPAT ED will view chapter websites to prepare monthly chapter reports to the board. If additional information is needed the chapter secretary will be contacted.

### **Website**

A Chapter website is encouraged because it provides a public place where chapters can show their purpose and list the activities they are engaged in. They can also provide valuable educational information. This helps define the chapter to the community, provides resources and encourages members to join and become involved.

For more information visit

*NPAT website- <http://www.texasprairie.org/>*

*NPAT Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/NativePrairiesAssocTX>*

*HNPAT example- <https://hnpat.wordpress.com/>*

### **Mailing List**

A Chapter needs to be able to send announcements and reminders to their members. You may also want to encourage non-member visitors to join your mailing list in order to encourage them to return. Most chapters now use email instead of regular mail.

Chapters may want to use Mail Chimp, Constant Contact or similar mail/contact programs for announcements.

Chapters with websites can allow members to subscribe to chapter updates. Then they can post updates on the website and allow it to be used as a mailing list. Example <https://hnpat.wordpress.com/>- <https://hnpat.wordpress.com/>

## **Budgets**

Chapters must have an appointed committee often the steering committee create an Annual Budget at the beginning of the year and have it approved by that committee. Every Chapter will have some income and expenses. Chapter income comes from the State Office in the form of 20% rebates on Membership Dues for the first two years plus any fundraising activities of the chapter. This 2 year rebate is based on the number of paid memberships within the area a chapter and the State Board have agreed on. This area is usually based on the county or surrounding counties a Chapter is in, but could be an area not defined by a county but some other geographical designation.

A Budget is a Financial Plan, a list of your expected income from rebates, donations, fundraising events and other sources, along with a list of how you want to spend those funds. As the year progresses you may find that your income and expenses are different from what you had anticipated. This is okay, but you want to try to make the Budget as accurate as you can. Usually the Budget is drawn up by a Committee that includes the Treasurer and the President along with any others that are appointed. The Budget should voted on by this special committee and copies made available to the members.

**Chapters should use the Budget Template provided by the State Office – please request.**

## **Fundraising and Bank Accounts**

Chapters should plan for fundraisers to meet budgetary needs. Chapters may do as many fundraisers as they wish but the fundraiser that produces the highest income will be split with the State Organization in a 75/25 split. This 25% that goes to the state is needed to support Staff that must devote time to managing the membership, budgetary and other items that are needed to support the growth and functionality of the Chapters. Proceeds from fundraisers other than the highest earning fundraiser, are retained by the chapters. Chapters may maintain a bank balance up to \$5,000 with amounts over that going to the state. If more funds are needed by a chapter than allowed, then the chapter President may request that the Chapter be allowed to raise and keep additional funds at an agreed upon amount to provide funding for the agreed on special project.

## **Fundamentals of Fundraising**

**A Chapter will be able to hold a bank account and maintain banking records. The treasurer keeps these records and must submit monthly bank statements or report to the state.**



**Chapters are encouraged to solicit donations for NPAT, for special state or chapter area land acquisition or site projects.**

**Chapters are also encouraged to make an annual donation to the State for maintenance of NPAT held properties and to support the staff required for management of easements and fee simple properties.**

**Chapters may help fundraise for land purchases or land stewardship projects that have been approved in advance by the State Board, Executive Committee or Steering Committee.**

**Chapter requests for donations for properties that are not NPAT fee simple properties or conservation easements can be made and accepted by the Chapter with prior approval by the State Board.**

**ALL donations must have a contemporaneous written gift acknowledgement letter sent to the donor recognizing the donor by the STATE OFFICE acknowledging the amount of donation and a statement that no goods and services were received for this donation as well as a thank you note.**

- **Chapter treasurers shall notify the State Office of any donations and any restrictions placed on the donations by the donor.**
- **Chapters are also encouraged to write and send their own thank you notes as well.**
- **All restricted donations (donations where the donor requests, in writing, that the donation be allocated to a specific purpose or use) are to be forwarded or transferred to the State Office so that these restrictions can be properly noted within the State Office bookkeeping system and the donated funds can be transferred to the proper holding account.**
- **The only exceptions to the aforementioned policy are anonymous or ‘collection jar’- type donations. These donations do not need to be accompanied by an acknowledgement letter but are to be reported to the State Office as a general donation.**

**It is best to include state sales tax for all taxable items sold. If you wish to purchase an item we have sales tax exemption documents available to chapter treasurers.**

**Chapters may not solicit funds until they are an official chapter**

### **Number of Fundraisers**

Each Chapter is required to hold a minimum of one fundraising event per year. There is no limit on the number of fundraisers held. The objective of the required fundraiser is to increase awareness, appreciation, activities and education about native prairies. Along with membership rebates from the State Office, the prairie fundraiser is the primary

means for raising chapter funds. If it is the only fundraiser for a chapter, then proceeds also support NPAT statewide activities.

### **Sales Taxes Exemptions**

NPAT is exempt from having to pay Texas Sales Tax on purchases made for its use to support its purpose. It is also exempt for having to pay state sales tax for purchase of items intended for resale. In addition, individuals who would like to purchase an item to donate to NPAT may be exempt from paying sales tax on the item, provided they do not use the item before donating it. Forms for claiming these exemptions are available from the State Office.

### **Collecting Sales Tax**

NPAT must collect Texas Sales Tax on all items it sells, except during two tax-free days allowed per year. Each chapter must fill out Form AP-204 and submit a copy of that form to the Texas Office of the Comptroller and to the NPAT state office for our records. The form is available for download on the 'chapters' page of [www.TexasPrairie.org](http://www.TexasPrairie.org). This form allows that chapter to conduct their own two tax-free days per year. The sales tax rate charged should be 8.25% regardless of location. Chapters should always display a copy of its "Texas Sales and Use Tax Permit." (Exemption in Supplemental Documents Section) when selling items.

### **Fundraiser Examples (these are only a few – many more possibilities)**

- Tours
- Workshops
- Festivals
- Special Event Celebrations
- Barbecues
- Banquets
- Auctions
- Sales of Items at an Event (like T shirts)
- Plant Sales
- Raffles
- Exclusive Field Trips
- Runs or Bike Rides
- Entertainment Events

### **Chapter Sponsorships**

Chapters must act within IRS guidelines for non-profit fundraising. Sponsorships can only be solicited for 2 yearly non-taxable events. Donations however, can be accepted at any time. **Solicitation of sponsorship for an event or project is considered a fundraising activity.**

## Grants for Chapters

Chapters may solicit grants but the intent to apply must be pre-approved by the State Organization and written/coordinated with state guidance. The State Organization is responsible for grant award administration and funds. Any grant applied for by a chapter is actually an application by NPAT and NPAT is ultimately responsible for the grant administration and completion. Funds from grants therefore go thru the NPAT office.

Chapters wishing to apply for grants must work closely with Staff and Board to write, coordinate and carry out the terms and conditions of the grant to successful completion.

## Insurance and Liability

NPAT carries liability insurance on its officers and staff and general liability for purposes of field trips and event participants. Members and Non-members participating in any chapter activities are required to sign Release of Liability Forms.

Members and Non-members participating in any Chapter Activities are required to sign Release of Liability Forms. It is a good idea to have new forms signed once a year and keep them on file. **Release of Liability Forms is available from the state office and in the supplemental documents of these guidelines.**

## Relationship with State Office

### **State Office & Staff –**

Our state office is located at 100 N. Edward Gary St, Suite B-115, San Marcos, Texas 78666. You are welcome to stop by for a visit during business hours. You can contact us by phone at 512-772-4741. Current Board of Directors listed at [www.texasprairie.org](http://www.texasprairie.org)

Executive Director, Chapter Coordinator	Pat Merkord	<a href="mailto:pat_merkord@texasprairie.org">pat_merkord@texasprairie.org</a>
Program Director	Phillip Quast	<a href="mailto:phillip_quast@texasprairie.org">phillip_quast@texasprairie.org</a>
Chapter Liaison	Pat Rinn	<a href="mailto:pat_rinn@texasprairie.org">pat_rinn@texasprairie.org</a>

## **Chapter Financial Report**

All Chapters must report their income and expenses for each month using banking statements to the state office. Income and expenses from the Chapter Financial Reports are combined with state income and expenses and reported to the IRS annually on the IRS 990 form, due May 15 which is prepared and submitted by the Project Director and the Treasurer of NPAT and not by any chapter officers.

### **Chapter Rebates**

If the chapter has a bank account, the chapter will be issued a rebate of 20% of membership dues received during each year for a period of 2 years from the creation of the chapter. Rebate will be added to the bank account by the State and a notice sent to the treasurer. If the chapter has no bank account staff will maintain record of the account and money accrued by the Chapter and the Chapter may request funds/checks from the State office.

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

All NPAT members and Chapters will be invited to an annual membership meeting once per year during the annual State Conference or at another announced selected time, place and date. NPAT as a land trust is required to have an annual membership meeting and the members will convene at that meeting.

### **Southern Plains and Prairies Conference**

Chapter members are encouraged to participate in and attend the annual Southern Plains and Prairies Conference. This is one of NPAT's signature events that draw prairie enthusiasts and professionals together with exceptional field and education event offerings. Volunteer opportunities are available for chapter members.

### **Annual Chapter Leadership Conclave**

Each year all chapter leaders and those interested in chapter leadership are invited to attend a Conclave in a central location to meet with other chapter leaders, share ideas, update the Chapter Guidelines and discuss chapter related issues and how to solve them. The first meeting was held in 2017 at Fort Parker State Park near Mexia, Texas. The meeting is for one day.

### **State Board Members & Meetings**

The State Board meets four times a year, usually on a Saturday of January, April, July and October. Any Chapter officers may attend the meetings. Each chapter is encouraged to have a representative on the State Board as an official board member but it is not a requirement. Participation at the State Board level allows the chapters a better understanding of how NPAT functions and its obligations, needs and requirements. We encourage chapter officers and members to consider a position on the board.

## **Supplemental Documents List**

1. Chapter Form for Quarterly Report to NPAT State Board
2. Waiver of Liability for Field Trip Participants
3. Waiver of Liability for Work Volunteers
4. Texas Native Prairie Registration Form
5. Board Member Agreement

## **Chapter Form for Reporting Quarter Activities:**

**(Use this form or for more space create on another document – submit via email to Chapter Liaison – form not needed if website maintained and updated by chapter)**

1. How many meetings were held during the quarter? – Describe topic, speaker and numbers in attendance – location of meeting place
  
2. How many new members were added this quarter? How were members solicited?
  
3. What activities were completed this quarter? – describe activity type (field trip, workshop, or other) tell how many attended and goals of activity and if goals achieved
  
4. Were any fundraisers held this quarter? Was this fundraiser one to be split with NPAT? Describe the nature of the fundraiser, how much money was raised and how many participated in this fundraising activity.
  
6. Describe how activities, meetings and events this quarter meet the mission and goals of NPAT?
  
7. Are there any individuals that should be noted or honored for their contributions/volunteering this quarter?
  
8. Report any changes in officers or chapter organization.



## Release and Waiver of Liability for Field Trip Participants

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! THIS IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT THAT AFFECTS YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS!**

This release and Waiver of Liability executed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (Participant's Printed Name) in favor of the Native Prairies Association of Texas, a nonprofit land trust, their directors, officers, employees, contractors, volunteers and agents

The Participant hereby freely, voluntarily, and without duress executes this Release under the following terms:

**Release and Waiver:** Field Trip Participant does hereby release and forever discharge and hold harmless the Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT), successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from Participant's Activities with Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT). Participant understands that this release discharges Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT) from any liability or claim that the Participant may have against NPAT with respect to any bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, or property damage that may result from Participant's Activities with NPAT, whether caused by the negligence of NPAT or its officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, volunteers or otherwise.

**Insurance:** Participant also understands that, in the event of injury incurred while engaged in NPAT Field Trip as Participant, Participant's insurance, if any, shall be primary and NPAT's insurance shall be secondary. NPAT does not assume any responsibility for or obligation to provide financial assistance or other assistance to Participants including, but not limited to, secondary medical, health or disability insurance in excess of what it currently provides.

**Medical Treatment:** Participant does hereby release and forever discharge NPAT from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid, treatment, or service rendered in connection with the Participant's Field Trip Activities.

**Assumption of Risk:** The Participant understands that the Field Trip Activities include activities that may be hazardous to the Participant including but not limited to field collecting, insect or animal bites, walking, carrying equipment, lifting, using tools and equipment, walking over uneven terrain, exposure to inclement weather, being in the field and transportation between field trip sites. Participant hereby expressly and specifically assumes the risk of injury or harm in the Field Trip Activities and releases NPAT from all liability for injury, illness, and death or property damage resulting from the Field Trip Activities.

**Each Field Trip Participant is expected and encouraged to obtain his or her own medical or health insurance coverage.**

**Photographic Release:** Participant does hereby grant and convey unto NPAT all right, title and interest in any and all photographic images and video or audio recordings made by NPAT during the Participant's Field Trip Activities with NPAT including but not limited to, royalties, proceeds, or other benefits derived from photographs or recordings.

**Volunteer has executed this Release as of the day and year first above written,**

**VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GAURDIAN SIGNATURE (IF 18 OR UNDER)** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE (MOBILE OR WORK)** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE (MOBILE OR HOME)** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

NPAT will never share your email address. May we contact you by email on the latest NPAT news/events? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: You are required to follow all safety procedures as prescribed. NPAT recommends the use of closed toed shoe, rubber boots when wet, safety glasses when using chemicals and equipment, insect repellent and sunscreen when in the field and weather appropriate clothing.*



## Release and Waiver of Liability for Volunteers

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! THIS IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT THAT AFFECTS YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS!**

This release and Waiver of Liability executed on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (Volunteers Printed Name) in favor of the Native Prairies Association of Texas, a nonprofit land trust, their directors, officers, employees, contractors, volunteers and agents

The volunteer hereby freely, voluntarily, and without duress executes this Release under the following terms:

**Release and Waiver:** Volunteer does hereby release and forever discharge and hold harmless the Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT), successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from Volunteer’s Activities with Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT). Volunteer understands that this release discharges Native Prairies Association of Texas and its Chapters (NPAT) from any liability or claim that the Volunteer may have against NPAT with respect to any bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, or property damage that may result from Volunteer’s Activities with NPAT, whether caused by the negligence of NPAT or its officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, volunteers or otherwise.

**Insurance:** Volunteer also understands that, in the event of injury incurred while engaged in NPAT Activities as a Volunteer, Volunteer’s insurance, if any, shall be primary and NPAT’s insurance shall be secondary. NPAT does not assume any responsibility for or obligation to provide financial assistance or other assistance to Volunteers including, but not limited to, secondary medical, health or disability insurance in excess of what it currently provides.

**Medical Treatment:** Volunteer does hereby release and forever discharge NPAT from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid, treatment, or service rendered in connection with the Volunteer’s Activities with NPAT.

**Assumption of Risk:** The volunteer understands that the Activities include work that may be hazardous to the Volunteer including but not limited to field collecting, restoration activities, walking, construction, carrying equipment, lifting, using tools and equipment, handling and installing materials, being on the job site, loading & unloading, and transportation between work sites. Volunteer hereby expressly and specifically assumes the risk of injury or harm in the Activities and releases NPAT from all liability for injury, illness, and death or property damage resulting from the Activities.

**Each Volunteer is expected and encouraged to obtain his or her own medical or health insurance coverage.**

**Photographic Release:** Volunteer does hereby grant and convey unto NPAT all right, title and interest in any and all photographic images and video or audio recordings made by NPAT during the Volunteer’s Activities with NPAT including but not limited to, any royalties, proceeds, or other benefits derived from such photographs or recordings.

**Volunteer has executed this Release as of the day and year first above written,**

**VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/GAURDIAN SIGNATURE (IF 18 OR UNDER)** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE (MOBILE OR WORK)** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE (MOBILE OR HOME)** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

NPAT will never share your email address. May we contact you by email on the latest NPAT news/events? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: You are required to follow all safety procedures as prescribed. NPAT recommends the use of closed toed shoe, rubber boots when wet, safety glasses when using chemicals and equipment, insect repellent and sunscreen when in the field,*





## Texas Native Prairie Heritage Registration

Submit your native grassland for the Texas Prairie Heritage Registry on this form

For all Texas prairies: tallgrass, mixed grass, short grass, savannahs, pocket prairies, wetland prairies, and desert grasslands

Includes Remnants and Restorations of 1 or more acres

Please provide the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street, State, Zip): \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Prairie: \_\_\_\_\_

GPS Coordinate: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of Prairie: \_\_\_\_\_

Native Grasses of Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Native Forbs of Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of Native Cover: \_\_\_\_\_

Type and % Invasives: \_\_\_\_\_

Past Use & History: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Use & Management: \_\_\_\_\_

With this form submit \$75.00 registration fee with photos and map of property. Additional documents may be included as needed.

If registration is approved you will receive:

A certificate suitable for framing

Recognition via listing in Texas Prairie Heritage Registry

Recognition at annual conference and in newsletter

Complimentary 1 year subscription to our Newsletter

Information on how to care for and protect your native grassland

Durable sign of recognition for placement on your prairie site

Fill out the form for Texas Native Prairie Heritage Registration and Submit to the Native Prairies Association of Texas, 415 N. Guadalupe St. PMB 385, San Marcos, Texas 78666 or send via email to [phillip\\_quast@texasprairie.org](mailto:phillip_quast@texasprairie.org)

Native Prairies Association of Texas  
BOARD MEMBER AGREEMENT

As a State or Chapter board member, I have certain expectations about my involvement with this board. These expectations include both what I want to give and what I want to get back in return.

**What I expect from the board**

I want to serve on this board because:

Things I expect to enjoy the most about being on this board are:

Things I expect to enjoy the least are:

I expect the following from this organization:

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for board and staff members including clear lines of authority.
- Orientation and training necessary to enhance my effectiveness as a board member
- Materials provided in advance of meetings where decisions or deliberations will occur
- Timely and accurate financial reporting
- Appropriate use of committees to assure efficient use of board and staff time.

I also recognize that this board has certain expectations of its members. It is important to the board to get what it needs as it is for me to get what I need from the board.

**What the board expects from me.**

As a board member I believe that I bring the following strengths, skills and knowledge to this organization:

I am willing to serve this organization in the following areas:

I accept responsibility for all of the following:

**Time commitment:**

- Attend board orientation and training sessions as provided
- Attend 4 board meetings (state) and 80% of Chapter meetings a year
- Complete assignments and prepare for meetings

**Participation:**

- Participate in board fundraising activities and make financial contribution to the organization to the best of my ability.
- Participate in meetings and ask appropriate questions when needed
- Serve on at least one committee as part of my board role
- Participate in the on-going tasks of the board
- Act as an advocate for the organization to the public

**Knowledge and preparation:**

- Educate myself on the organization’s purpose, history and needs
- Keep current on the outside trends affecting this organization
- Keep current on the role and responsibility of board involvement

I have read and agree to this commitment as a member of the Native Prairies Association of Texas Board of Directors or one of its affiliated Chapter Leadership Boards

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please make a copy of this document and submit one to the Chapter or State Board President and keep the other for your records