

Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting

- What's happening?

Article by Donna Otto, President, South Texas Border Chapter

At the conclusion of the 2022 Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting it was announced that the 2023 Annual Meeting would be in McAllen. Sworn to keep this a secret, our advisors and chapter presidents were given only a few days' notice prior to the announcement that we would be hosts for this event. After our initial surprised (stunned?) reaction both the Rio Grande Valley and South Texas Border Chapters got into gear and have been busy preparing for the meeting at the McAllen Convention Center in October.

As you may recall, surveys were sent to our chapter members to determine who could assist and in what areas. Both chapters received an outstanding number of responses, with individuals indicating their area(s) of interest and if they were willing to serve in a leadership capacity. As a result of our survey, it was decided the two chapters could manage the various event activities. Each sub-committee was able to have individuals from each chapter serve as co-chairs.



Leadership members from our two chapters have met almost weekly the last few months, and have met monthly with State Coordinators. Working from a shared folder of documents, team members have developed spreadsheets for potential speakers, field trips, vendors and sponsors. A Master Plan lists all sub-committees with their co-chairs and identifies tasks and timelines.

While the State has been posting requests for speakers and field trip proposals, chapter co-chairs have sent invites to those on our spreadsheets and have been tracking the responses. Follow-up

messages have been sent with a goal of 100 speaker programs and 20-30 field trips. Proposals are being reviewed and schedules will be developed.

Other chapter co-chairs are reviewing the guidelines for the Photo, Arts and Media Contests and have worked on the timeline for soliciting those items including methods for members to electronically view and vote on contest submissions. Sponsors are being sent packages of information on sponsorship levels and related benefits. Vendors have been identified (some of which may also be sponsors) and will be receiving vendor information in the near future. Pricing for vendor spaces is being determined, pending additional input from the McAllen Convention Center. Other areas to be addressed in future meetings include the set-up/take down efforts, registration, room monitors for speakers, and coordination of activities related to the Saturday event off-site.

While work is on-going through this summer, please know that another call for volunteers will be sent to members after the programs and field trip schedules are released. Many of our

members previously indicated their willingness to help in various areas – or wherever needed. With schedules available, you will be better able to identify exactly when and where you want to volunteer, leaving you time to enjoy presentations and field trips. At this time the registration fees have not been determined. Any member wishing to attend will need to pay the registration fee (which includes all meals for the event). Both host chapters are looking at how we can help defray the member expenses.

TEXAS MASTER NATURALIST 2023 ANNUAL MEETING



October 12-15
McAllen, Texas

To view the current information on the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting at McAllen Oct. 12-15, check out the state website: <https://txmn.tamu.edu/2023-annual-meeting/>

Thank you to all our members who are helping and will be helping to bring the Texas Master Naturalist Annual Meeting to the Rio Grande Valley for the first time in the organization's history.