

## Updates on logging hours in VMS

- 1. Travel Time: When submitting Volunteer Service Hours, you may include no more than 1.5 hours of Travel Time** (up to 45 min each way or 1.5 hours round-trip).

The TMN program is funded by grants from the Federal Government. To stay in compliance with the grants and further the mission of the TMN program, the State TMN office periodically gives guidance to the chapters as issues and circumstances arise.

The limit on Travel Time reinforces the mission of the TMN program:

...to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas ***within their communities*** for the State of Texas. (emphasis added)

The limit on Travel Time ensures that most members continue to focus on the needs in our community, while still allowing members with the requisite knowledge and skills to volunteer where they feel they can be of service.

- 2. Independent iNaturalist observations will no longer be allowed.** Projects that include iNaturalist as a more or less incidental part of a larger project will still be allowed.

Independent iNaturalist activities helped to fill gaps in volunteer opportunities during the pandemic. With the easing of pandemic era restrictions more opportunities are now available, so it makes sense that iNaturalist use is limited to projects more closely aligned to the mission of the TMN program. We encourage members to organize and participate in Bioblitzes, the City Nature challenge, and other projects with incidental use of iNaturalist like the WFC Fauna survey, the Brackenridge Field Lab Herbarium project, and the camera-trapping project.

Identification and Curation in iNaturalist is limited to the same projects as allowed for observations (Bio-blitzes, City Nature Challenge, etc.). If you are a subject area specialist or expert and wish to propose a new project, please contact [preapprovals@CAMN.org](mailto:preapprovals@CAMN.org) to discuss.

- 3. Chapter Meetings: Two separate entries, .5 hours for VS and 1 hour for AT, are required, if you want to claim full credit for the newly approved rule from the state.**

The new rule from the state has created some confusion. Since Advanced Training and Volunteer Service are tracked separately, two entries are required if you attend the full meeting and wish to claim full credit:

**VS - 0.5 hour CB:** Chapter Business Chapter Administration: Chapter Meeting from 6:30-7pm. **AT - 1 hour AT:** CAMN Chapter Meeting for the guest speaker/presentation from 7-8pm.

- 4. Service Dates - please be sure to log the correct service date(s).** When submitting hours on a later date, you must update this field to the correct service date.

VMS auto fills the entries with today's date. Typically, you'll need to change this unless you are submitting the VMS entry on the same day of the Service or Training.

If you have any questions or need further clarification on logging hours in VMS, please contact [Membership@CAMN.org](mailto:Membership@CAMN.org).