

Thurston Nature Center Committee (TNCC) Bylaws

(Amended August, 2026)

Committee Governance

1. The Thurston Nature Center Committee is a committee of the Thurston Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).
2. The TNC Committee will consist of at least 11 voting members, whose roles are defined in a later section.
 - a) The Principal of Thurston Elementary School or his/her designee, at his/her option.
 - b) An Executive Board consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair (when filled), Treasurer, and Secretary.
 - c) Land Steward(s).
 - d) Water Steward(s).
 - e) A Communications Coordinator.
 - f) One teacher from Thurston Elementary School.
 - g) One Thurston PTO member/parent of Thurston Elementary School child(ren)
 - h) One OHAC Board Member, selected by the OHAC Board.
 - i) Additional committee members: Other neighbors from the community, parents of Thurston Elementary School child(ren), and/or other educators may be named to the committee.
3. Meetings will occur during the school calendar year on a schedule set by the Chair. Summer meetings may occur if needed.
4. All meetings are open to all interested persons of the community and school. Anyone may ask for an item to be considered for an agenda, serve on a sub-committee, lead or participate on a project and provide input into issues being considered. However, only Committee members may vote on motions.
5. All major decisions concerning the Nature Center and its operations will be brought before the committee for approval. A quorum shall be 1/2 of the committee size, rounded up to next whole number if a fraction (e.g., 6 members of an 11-member committee, 6 of 12, etc.) to conduct official TNC business.
6. The OHAC Board will be contacted on decisions, issues and long-term planning for their portion of the property that is considered part of the Nature Center.
7. All financial aspects of the Nature Center will be handled by the Committee Treasurer, working with the Treasurer of Thurston PTO as needed. The Nature Center operates under the 501(c)(3) status of the Thurston PTO; however, TNCC has a separate banking account.
8. All funds for projects and/or maintenance will be approved by a vote of the Committee. Coordination for large projects (over \$5000) will be done with the Thurston PTO and/or Principal, as appropriate.
9. The TNCC obtains funds from donations and grants. Donations may be made by check or through a Donation button on our website. A donation receipt is available upon request. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous can do so, by designating this by letter, dated and signed for auditing purposes. For further information please see our Donation Policy.
10. Any concerns about any aspect of the Nature Center may be shared with a committee member or brought before the TNCC or Thurston PTO at a scheduled meeting. Responses will be decided on by the appropriate person(s) (e.g., Executive Board officers, stewards, other committee members, or the full committee).
11. Meeting minutes are posted online at www.thurstonnaturecenter.info.
12. Financial records are kept in the TNCC share drive.

Nature Center Operations and Activities

1. The Nature Center is considered to include: (a) the Oak Savanna, (b) the wooded area north of the school, (c) the Prairie areas, and (d) the areas north of these sites (including Thurston Pond), to the northern school property line. Per agreement with Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC), their property immediately adjacent to the pond is considered to be part of the Nature Center, for habitat-related purposes only.
2. The TNC Committee will identify the needs of the Nature Center, identify and organize volunteer support for implementation of projects and activities, and provide current information about activities to the community.
3. The Nature Center will provide educational opportunities for students, Scout Troops, university students, and other groups.
4. The Nature Center Committee will cooperate with the Ann Arbor School District Physical Property Director for large capital projects and any permanent structures (such as the bridge).
5. The Newsletter for the TNC will be issued periodically, as needed. Newsletters are sent to an email list and are available online. Any interested person can subscribe at www.thurstonnaturecenter.info.

TNC Committee Members, Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Board terms are for two years. Executive Board members may reapply for additional two-year terms. There are no term limits for other members. Members are considered and voted on at any time when the need arises. Otherwise, these changes will occur in October.

All committee members are expected to attend committee meetings and assist during work days and other projects, when available.

A. Chair (Executive Board Member)

- a) Lead and delegate on issues, projects and activities that occur or involve any facet of the TNC.
- b) Determine meeting time and dates. Inform Principal so that information is placed onto the school calendar. Also inform the website administrator so that information may be placed on the Nature Center website.
- c) Set meeting agenda, coordinate meetings, call for vote when necessary, and maintain order.
- d) Coordinate implementation of projects. Recruit and delegate projects to appropriate committee and/or community members, and maintain involvement until completion.
- e) Be a part of the Committee Selection process.
- f) Communicate with Principal of Thurston Elementary on a regular basis regarding activities in the TNC.
- g) Network with organizations, businesses, and community on a regular basis regarding TNC needs/activities/projects.
- h) Prepare year-end summaries of the TNC Committee, its functions, projects and activities, to give to the PTO President and Principal.
- i) Prepare a periodic newsletter about the activities in the Nature Center.
- j) Respond to phone calls, concerns, safety issues, maintenance issues that involve the TNC as needed. Report any issues to the Principal of Thurston Elementary School or AAPS Facilities if required for follow-up.
- k) Support the Thurston Teacher member in defining and carrying out Earth Week activities in the Nature Center.

I) Attend PTO meetings as follows:

- i. September to explain the TNC, recruit volunteers, announce any committee changes, present budget and year-end financial forms.
- ii. As needed to inform the PTO of TNC activities, goals, or financial requests.

B. Vice Chair (when filled, Executive Board Member)

- a) Support and assist Chair in duties as needed.
- b) Network with organizations, businesses, and community on a regular basis regarding TNC needs/activities/projects.
- c) Support Fundraising efforts for TNC.

C. Treasurer (Executive Board Member)

- a) Maintain records of expenses, grants and donations.
- b) Make arrangements for payments and reimbursements.
- c) Coordinate the development of a budget proposal, prior to September PTO submission.
- d) Provide an annual financial report to the PTO Treasurer.

D. Secretary (Executive Board Member)

- a) Record meeting minutes and upload onto the website.

E. Land and Water Stewards

- a) Regularly monitor TNC for habitat and wildlife concerns.
- b) Create a year-end list of issues, needs, activities and observations.
- c) Assist in defining and guiding Scout and other projects in each of their areas.
- d) Be involved in long-term planning and special projects.

F. Communications Coordinator

- a) Maintain the Nature Center website, Social Media site(s) and e-mail list(s).
- b) Approve other committee members to contribute to these sites, as needed.
- c) Support the dissemination of announcements, the newsletter, and other information.

G. Teacher Representative and Thurston PTO member/Thurston parent

- a) Maintain communications between the school, the PTO and the Nature Center Committee.
- b) Support educational activities related to the Nature Center for Thurston students.
- c) Lead the scheduling and implementation of Earth Week activities for Thurston students.

H. OHAC Representative

- a) Provide communications between OHAC and the Nature Center Committee.

I. All Other Committee Members

- a) Must be a parent of Thurston Elementary School child(ren), an educator, or a member of the local community.
- b) Communicate projects, events, or concerns to the TNC Chair for meeting consideration.