

# WISCONSIN Master Naturalist



NEWS

Winter 2015

## *Education, training, and service for volunteers and communities*

### **LOOKING BACK ON A SUCCESSFUL YEAR**

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program (WIMN) took off by leaps and bounds last year. In 2014, the program offered 11 volunteer courses, two instructor courses, and one advanced training course (Wisconsin's Great Lakes). There were 156 new volunteers trained and 19 new instructors. Courses were held in these counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Door, Lincoln, Milwaukee, Portage, Racine, Rock, Vilas, and Waupaca. Ninety-five volunteers posted 6088 service hours. Over half (58%) of the service hours were in the area of education or interpretation, 22% in citizen science, and 20% in environmental stewardship. The total value of their work in Wisconsin during 2014 equates to \$135,713, with each person giving back an average of over \$1400 in donated work. Wow! A hearty thanks to all our dedicated instructors and volunteers!

### **TIPS FOR NEW INSTRUCTORS AND HOSTS**

One of the strengths of the WIMN program is in the diversity of our host organizations. Nature centers, state parks, wildlife reserves, colleges, schools, and government agencies have offered WIMN trainings. If you work for an organization that might like to host a training course, feel free to contact us to discuss how to structure the course to meet your needs. It is easier to give a WIMN training course if two or more organizations collaborate and each provides an instructor. When you plan your class time and field trip schedule, think of your target audience. Will they be more likely to attend a

weekend class or a week day class? Would they prefer a full week's schedule or a series of weekly classes? There are numerous ways to structure the course to fit your community.



Tundra swan, credit: Donna Dewhurst, USFWS

### **BIRDING IN 1911**

Many WIMN volunteers and instructors are avid birdwatchers and Wisconsin ranks second in the nation for residents who participate in birding (33%). Some of you may participate in scouting as well. We recently looked at the official boy scout ornithology merit badge requirements for 1911 and were surprised at the numbers: to earn the badge you needed to personally observe 100 different kinds of birds, identify 45 different species in one day (by sight or sound), photograph a bird, confirm that at least two birds are living in nesting boxes you set out, take daily notes on a nesting pair of birds from egg hatch to fledging, and attract at least three species of birds to a feeder.

## FICTIONAL FRED ASKS...

Fictional Fred sometimes has great ideas. He recently asked us whether time spent on a capstone project during WIMN training counts for service hours. We were pleased to have this discussion with Fred. Yes, 3 hours of your capstone project counts as service hours. In fact, logging into your dashboard and entering these 3 hours is a good way to get started keeping track of all your hours. It helps us too, because we really like to see the range and creativity of the capstone projects. To log 3 hours of your capstone project, first decide whether your project falls under Stewardship, Education/Interpretation, or Citizen Science. Then go to your dashboard and enter the hours under that category. Fred didn't mention what his capstone project was and now we are curious...

## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING COURSES

Last fall, WIMN courses were offered at Welty Environmental Center, Beloit; Hartman Creek State Park, Waupaca; Seno Outdoor Education Center, Burlington; Treehaven, Tomahawk; and Hawthorn Glen Outdoor Education Center, Milwaukee. The schedule for this winter and spring includes the following courses (dates given are start dates):

### 2015 Volunteer Training Courses

1/31	UW-Platteville, Platteville
2/23	Wehr Nature Center, Franklin
3/7	Hartman Creek State Park, Waupaca
5/9	Kohler-Andrae State Park, Sheboygan
3/2	Kickapoo Valley Reserve and Valley Stewardship Network, La Farge
6/15	Lake Superior National Estuarine Reserve and Cable Natural History Museum, Chequamegon Bay area

### 2015 Instructor Training

3/4	UW Extension, Madison
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### 2015 Advanced Training Courses

Several opportunities throughout the state; see

WIMN website. For the latest in course offerings check the website:

<http://wimasternaturalist.org/courses>

## NEW GREAT LAKES COURSE



WIMN Great Lakes Course: Water Monitoring Activity

Once trained, WI Master Naturalist Volunteers must volunteer 40 hours each year and take 8 hours of advanced training to maintain their certification. In 2012, WIMN received support from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to help fund the development of WIMN's first advanced training curriculum. The project, *WI Master Naturalist Program: Expanding Great Lakes Literacy and Volunteer Service*, was completed in December 2014. The purpose of this effort was to:

- Facilitate learning, critical thinking, and volunteer service in coastal communities.
- Create a portal of resources for learners that speaks specifically about the unique roles Wisconsin's Great Lakes play in shaping our natural and human histories, and that creates pathways to lifelong learning about nature in our Great Lakes' basins.

The Great Lakes Advanced Training Course is an outdoor exploration of the natural history of

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
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Great Lakes Students Tour Sewage Treatment Plant

Lakes Superior and Michigan: their unique ecological characteristics, their cultural history, and their value to the state and its residents. The course also provides opportunities for volunteers to learn about and try service activities in coastal communities, and to learn where to find resources to support their service work over time. The course guide, *Wisconsin's Great Lakes*, serves as an information and resource tool.

The new curriculum covers the following Great Lakes topics: geology, ecology, aquatic life, estuaries, invasive species, and human influences. Similarities and differences between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan within these topic areas are highlighted. In addition, the text provides basin-specific information in the *Explore, Teach, and Conserve* sections to offer local, relevant examples for Lake Superior and Lake Michigan learners.

Keep an eye on the WIMN [Advanced Training Course Schedule](#) if you're interested in taking the Great Lakes course.

Thank you to the following for their support of the WI Master Naturalist Program:

- WI Coastal Management Program
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



### FREE NRF MEMBERSHIP FOR VOLUNTEERS

WIMN volunteers and instructors will receive complimentary membership for a year with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, a partner and sponsor. This includes special member access to the field trip registration next spring and a NRF field trip booklet. We're very excited about this opportunity provided by the Natural Resources Foundation and thank them for their generosity.

### ADVISORY BOARD

In November 2014, several members of the WIMN Advisory Committee met to discuss the structure, policies, and institutional support of the WI Master Naturalist Program. It was a productive meeting in a beautiful spot (the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo). Thanks to all the participants. We continue to incorporate your suggestions into the program.

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