

# WISCONSIN Master Naturalist



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## THE WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST INSTRUCTOR

A Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor uses the Wisconsin Master Naturalist curriculum, tools, and resources to train adult volunteers about Wisconsin's natural resources, teach them how to educate others, connect them to resources, and help create connections between volunteers and conservation projects.

### **Why become an Instructor?**

Instructors train Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteers because they share a passion for our mission to strengthen natural resources literacy and to increase conservation services in their communities. Since the Volunteer Training Course is held at your organization's site, you are providing a new pool of volunteers to help meet education/interpretation, stewardship, and/or citizen science goals for your organization. These volunteers will have a statewide network of support to help them stay engaged, stay up-to-date on current science/issues, and get connected to resources, natural resource professionals, and other volunteers. The Volunteer Training Course capstone projects are designed around your organization's needs, so course participants are focused throughout the course on programs and projects at your site.

Becoming a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor is also a professional development opportunity; preparing and teaching the Volunteer Training Course provides an opportunity to refresh your base knowledge about the state's natural resources and to connect with natural resources professionals across the state. Finally, teaching the Volunteer Training Course is really fun. Participants are eager to learn and to work hard. They enjoy the experience and feel grateful to be part of a statewide conservation effort.

### **Who can become an Instructor?**

An Instructor usually works for an organization, agency, or institution that provides science-based, environmental education, citizen science or stewardship opportunities for the general public. Examples of these are nature centers, state parks, wildlife refuges, museums, and colleges or universities. We refer to these groups as Host Organizations, because they agree to provide Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training at their facilities and support the staff time necessary to lead the training. Each site must be able to provide a technology supported classroom for each of the Volunteer Training classes.

Educational requirements to become an Instructor include a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in environmental science, education, or related field, OR demonstrated practical experience providing educational opportunities to adult audiences.

## **About the Instructor Training Course**

The Instructor Training Course is a two-day workshop which provides step-by-step instructions on how to organize, teach, and administer the Volunteer Training Course. It also provides a tutorial on how to access and use the [wimasternaturalist.org](http://wimasternaturalist.org) website tools to help administer the course.

### **Instructor Course details:**

- The fee to attend the Instructor Course is \$75. You should have the support of your organization prior to registering and be able to cover your course fee, lodging and travel expenses.
- Teaching the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course is a large commitment. In addition to the 40-hour in-class commitment, there are pre-course organizational tasks and post-course administrative tasks. We, therefore, encourage host organizations to train at least two staff people or to partner with nearby host organizations to provide Volunteer Training Courses. Having Co-Instructors keeps the course moving more smoothly if there is an event, such as illness, and makes the time commitment more manageable.

### **The Instructor Course prepares you to teach the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course:**

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course is a 40-hour series of classes and field trips. The course curriculum is set by the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program and covers the following topics: geology, ecology, plant communities, wildlife, interpretation, water, water life, and human impacts. Course materials, provided by the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program, present a consistent, statewide perspective on Wisconsin's natural resources, ecological processes, and conservation issues.

### **Volunteer Training Course details:**

- Maximum course size is 25 and the minimum is 10 participants.
- Course schedules (such as daily vs. weekly classes) vary to your preference.
- Training includes classroom learning, field trips, and opportunities to practice new skills through hands-on learning and capstone projects.
- Participants must complete 40 hours of training during the course. Only one class/course (2.5 hours) may be missed. Instructors may, but are not required, to offer a strategy to make-up a missed class. The field trips are unique and, therefore, cannot be missed. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor in case of an emergency.
- Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteers maintain their certification by completing 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training each year.
- Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program printed materials are provided at no cost to the instructor or his/her organization.
- Although the course materials illustrate a statewide perspective, instructors are encouraged to make the course local and relevant to their participants by adding familiar examples to illustrate course concepts.
- The participant fee is \$250. The host organization receives \$50 for each participant in the course.
- There is no final exam.

- Course registration is coordinated electronically through the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program; online tools are used for course registration and payment.
- Your organization can host a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course by sending a staff member to attend an Instructor Training Course.

### **What are the responsibilities of a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor?**

- Instructors lead classroom lectures, demonstrations, discussions and field trips. They monitor student progress and attendance and assist in completion of capstone projects. Guest experts may be invited to present during classes or to demonstrate skills during field trips. The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program does not cover guest expert fees or costs related to parking, entrance fees, guides, or meeting space for courses or field trips.
- Course registration for all classes is online and will be coordinated with the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program.
- Instructors are expected to provide a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course at least once within the first year after Instructor training, and at least once every two years after the initial training.
- An Instructor submits a proposal to teach a Volunteer Training Course at least six weeks prior to the start of a new course. The course proposal, submitted online, will be reviewed by the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program prior to being posted on the website.
- Instructional materials will be mailed to the Instructor.
- After the course has concluded, instructors submit a list of the individuals who completed the course requirements. Any unused printed materials are returned to the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program.
- Host organizations may invoice the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program for the \$50/registrant any time after the course registration has closed.

### **How do I apply to become a WI Master Naturalist Instructor?**

Please fill out the [Instructor Training Application](#) form to start the process. Fax the form to 608-262-2031 OR send it as a PDF to the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Office, [info@wimasternaturalist.org](mailto:info@wimasternaturalist.org). Your organization should 1) support your participation in a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor Training Course; 2) host a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course within a year after the training; 3) understand that the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program will not pay instructors or guest experts to participate in the Volunteer Training Courses or field trips; and 4) be aware that they will receive \$50 per Volunteer Training Course participant. Application approvals are based on the qualifications of the applicant, suitability of the host organization to provide training needs, and geographic considerations of the Statewide Program. Applicants will be notified of acceptance via email.

The University of Wisconsin Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental, arrest or conviction record or veteran status. Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made. Requests are kept confidential.