

WISCONSIN Master Naturalist



THE WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST INSTRUCTOR

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

Why become an Instructor?

Instructors train 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 develop a new pool of volunteers to help meet education/interpretation, stewardship, and/or citizen science goals at your site. These volunteers then have a statewide network of support to help them stay engaged and up-to-date on current science and natural resources issues, and to connect with resources, natural resources professionals, and other volunteers. The Volunteer Training Course capstone projects are designed around your host organization's needs, so course participants focus throughout the course on programs and projects at your site.

Becoming a Master Naturalist instructor is also a professional development opportunity. Preparing and teaching the Volunteer Training Course is 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 this conservation effort.

Who can become an Instructor?

A Wisconsin Master Naturalist instructor usually works for an organization, agency, or institution that provides science-based, environmental education opportunities for the general public. Examples include nature centers, Wisconsin state parks, wildlife refuges, museums, and colleges or universities. We refer to these groups as Wisconsin Master Naturalist host organizations, because they agree to provide 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 the Volunteer training course.

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

About the Instructor Training Course

The 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* website tools to help administer the course.

Instructor Course details:

The fee to attend the Instructor Training 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. If you teach your first course within the next year, the \$75 course fee will be refunded.

Teaching the 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 encourage host organizations to train at least two staff people, or to partner with nearby host organizations to provide volunteer courses. Having co-instructors keeps the course moving more smoothly if there is an unforeseen or extenuating event, such as an illness, and makes the time commitment more manageable.

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

The 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 statewide office and covers these topics: geology, ecology, plant communities, wildlife, interpretation, water, water life, and human impacts. Course materials - provided by the statewide office - present a consistent, statewide perspective on Wisconsin's natural resources, ecological processes, and conservation issues.

Volunteer Training Course details:

- Maximum course size is 20, and the minimum is 10 participants.
- Course schedules (such as daily vs. weekly classes) vary.
- 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 four hours may be missed. Participants and the instructor must agree on 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.
- Master Naturalist volunteers must complete 40 hours of service and eight hours of advanced training each year to maintain their certification.
 - All class 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 \$275. The host organization receives \$50 for each enrolled participant.
 - There is no final exam.
 - Course registration is coordinated through the statewide office; online tools are used for course registration and payment.
 - Your organization can host a 40-hour 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 help students complete capstone projects. Guest experts may be invited to present during classes or to demonstrate skills during field trips. The statewide office will not pay guest experts to participate in the course and will not cover fees related to parking, entrance fees, guides, or meeting space for courses or field trips.

Course registration coordinated electronically through the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program; online tools are used for course registration and payment.

To remain active, instructors present a 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. Instructors submit a proposal to teach a Volunteer Training Course in early December of the year preceding the training dates. The course proposal, submitted online, will be reviewed by the statewide office. Once approved, the course will be 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 material is returned to the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program.

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

Please fill out the [Instructor Training Application](#) form to start the process.

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.