

WISCONSIN Master Naturalist



THE WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST INSTRUCTOR

A Master Naturalist instructor works in partnership with the UW–Madison Division of Extension’s Master Naturalist program to train adults about Wisconsin’s natural history using provided training materials and resources in a regionally relevant context with local expertise. Instructors teach participants skills that will prepare them in providing volunteer service in citizen science, education, and stewardship efforts across the state. Instructors help connect participants to a network of experts, resources, and conservation projects.

Why become a Wisconsin Master Naturalist instructor?

- Share your passion about natural world and increase conservation volunteer service in your community.
- Attract new volunteers and train existing volunteers using the same standards to strengthen your citizen science, education, and stewardship goals.
- Generate revenue for your organization by receiving a minimum of \$1,000 per training.
- Gain a new audience and potential revenue for future educational programming.
- Use capstone projects to help complete that ongoing “to-do” list of small projects that meet your organization’s needs.
- Be part of a statewide network that meets annually and it’s a great professional development opportunity.
- Current instructors assert teaching the Volunteer Training is both fun and rewarding. Participants are engaged and inquisitive. You’ll also build personal relationships and grow your own professional network.

Who can become an instructor?

An instructor must work or volunteer for an organization, agency, or institution that provides science-based, environmental education opportunities for the public. A few examples of these are nature centers; federal, state, county, or local parks; wildlife refuges; museums; and Friends organizations. These groups, referred to as host organizations, provide Master Naturalist Volunteer Trainings at their facilities and support the staff or volunteer time necessary to lead the trainings. Each site must be able to provide a meeting space for the Volunteer Training.

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.

Instructor Training

All Master Naturalist instructors must attend a two-day Instructor Training, which provides step-by-step instructions on how to organize, teach, and administer the Volunteer Training. It also provides a tutorial on how to access and use the online Portal resource.

Instructor Training Cost

There is no fee to attend the Instructor Training or to become a Master Naturalist instructor. Lunch, refreshments, and materials are provided during the training. Travel and lodging expenses are your or your organization's responsibility.

Instructional Teams

Organizing and delivering the Master Naturalist Volunteer Training is a large commitment. In addition to the 40-hour instructional training commitment, there is also significant preparation and organizational tasks, as well as post-training administrative tasks. We require all Volunteer Trainings to have at least two instructors. Many have 3-5 instructors per volunteer training. Instructors can either be associated with the same host organization or nearby host organizations can partner together to provide Volunteer Trainings. Co-instructors help to keep the training moving more smoothly if there is an event, such as illness, and makes the time commitment more manageable for all involved.

Instructor Training Content

The Instructor Training prepares you *to deliver* the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training. It does not cover the content within the training materials. Below is a snapshot of the volunteer training content.

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training is a 40-hour series of classroom and field experiences. The Training Guide, provided by the statewide Wisconsin Master Naturalist program, covers the following topics: natural history, geology, ecology, plant communities, wildlife, water, aquatic life, weather & climate, human connections, and Master Naturalist service areas. Each topic has key concepts that provide learning objectives for the participants. Provided training materials present a consistent, statewide perspective on Wisconsin's natural resources, ecological processes, and conservation issues, while instructors provide a more regional and local perspective.

Volunteer Training details:

- Maximum participant size is 20 with a 10-person minimum.
- Training schedules (such as daily vs. weekly meeting times) vary based on host organization preference.
- Training includes classroom learning, field experiences, and opportunities to practice new skills through hands-on learning and capstone projects.
- Participants are encouraged to complete 40 hours of training. Only 4 hours of the training may be missed to be certified. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor or in case of an emergency. Participants and the instructor must agree on a strategy to make-up any missed time.

- Master Naturalists must complete 40 hours of service and 8 hours of advanced training each year to maintain their certification.
- All materials are provided at no cost to the instructor or his/her organization.
- The participant fee is \$275. Host organizations receive a minimum of \$1,000 and up to \$1,250 depending on the number of participants.
- There is no final exam.
- Registration is coordinated through the statewide Master Naturalist program.
- An online tool, referred to as the Portal, is used for registration, payment, record keeping, communication, and sharing of resources.

What are the expectations of a Wisconsin Master Naturalist instructor?

- Instructors develop a valuable learning experience complementing the key concepts within the Master Naturalist training materials by leading or facilitating presentations, demonstrations, discussions, and field experiences. Guest experts are encouraged to be invited to present during trainings to provide more in-depth knowledge.
- Instructors facilitate the learning experience, provide continuity for participants, and demonstrate the interconnectedness of the materials.
- They monitor student engagement, attendance and assist in completion of capstone projects.
- Instructors are expected to provide a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training 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 Volunteer Training proposal on-line by mid-November of the year prior to the training or at least six weeks prior to the start of a new training. The proposal will be reviewed and approved by the Master Naturalist program director before being posted on the website.
- The Master Naturalist program does not pay for guest experts and does not cover fees related to parking, entrance fees, or meeting space.

How do I apply to become a Wisconsin Master Naturalist instructor?

Please fill out the [Instructor Training Application](#) form to start the process. Applicants will be notified of acceptance within 7-10 days. Prior to completing your application, your organization should:

- approve your participation as a Master Naturalist instructor and understand they/you are responsible to pay travel costs to the Instructor Training.
- host a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training within a year after the training.
- understand that the host organization is responsible for any costs associated with the training (staff time, speaker fees, meeting space, entrance fees).
- be aware that the host organization will receive a minimum of \$1,000 program revenue per Volunteer Training.
- UW–Madison Division of Extension does not discriminate in the treatment of individuals in admission or access to its programs and activities, in the provision of services, or in employment. Your organization must also certify that it does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.