



WISCONSIN MASTER NATURALIST INSTRUCTORS

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 the natural world and increase nature-based 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 \$1,300 per training.
- Gain a new audience and potential revenue for future educational programming.
- Use training 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 agree teaching the training is 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 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 Master Naturalist 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; OR the ability to provide logistical and coordination support to a team of instructors.

Instructor Training

All Master Naturalist instructors must attend a two-day Instructor Training, which provides guidance on how to organize, teach, and administer the Master Naturalist Training and utilize the online Portal resources. Instructors primarily provide a facilitation and coordination role but can also be topic area presenters.

Instructor Training Cost

There is no fee to attend 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 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 trainings to have at least two to four trained instructors. Instructors can either be associated with the same host organization or regionally based organizations can partner together to provide Master Naturalist Trainings. Co-instructors help to keep the training moving more smoothly if there is an event, such as illness, and make the commitment time more manageable for all involved.

Instructor Training Content

The Instructor Training prepares you ***to deliver*** the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training. It does not cover the content of the training materials. Instructors are expected to have a solid base knowledge of the Master Naturalist content.

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training consists of 40 educational hours delivered primarily through field-based 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 world, ecological processes, and conservation issues, while instructors provide a more regional and local perspective.

Master Naturalist Training details:

- Maximum participant size is 20 with a 10-person minimum.
- Registration is coordinated through the statewide Master Naturalist program.
- The participant fee is \$300 although financial hardship options are available. Host organizations receive \$1,300 per training in program revenue cost share.
- Training schedules (such as daily vs. weekly meeting times) vary based on host organization preference.
- Master Naturalist training materials are provided at no cost to the instructor or his/her organization.
- Training includes primarily field experiences with some indoor learning and opportunities to practice new skills through hands-on training projects.

- There is no final exam.
- 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.
- 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 valuable learning experiences 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 a safe learning experience, provide continuity for participants, and demonstrate the interconnectedness of the materials.
- They monitor student engagement, attendance and assist in completion of small training projects.
- Instructors are expected to provide a Wisconsin Master Naturalist 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 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 Training within a year after the Instructor 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 \$1,300 in program revenue per Master Naturalist 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.