

Missouri Master Naturalist



State Program Manual 2026



Revised January 2026



Introduction

The Missouri Master Naturalist State Program Manual is a resource for conducting the Missouri Master Naturalist Program. It is designed to provide uniformity across all Missouri Master Naturalist Chapters and offer insight into areas of flexibility to meet local Chapter circumstances and requirements.

This publication is intended to deliver guidance for Chapter Advisors, officers, and board members to perform Chapter business operations and assist in developing, training, and managing a local Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program.

This manual contains approved current operational policies and procedures to regulate decisions, actions, and principles that govern Chapter operations. It should be used as a resource for all members of a Chapter as appropriate.

This manual is available electronically from the resource section of the Missouri Master Naturalist website at <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-master-naturalist>

Please review this manual carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise.

State Program Coordinators,



Rebecca O'Hearn
Missouri Department of Conservation
Rebecca.O'Hearn@mdc.mo.gov
573.522.4115 ext. 3155



Robert A. Pierce II, Ph.D.
University of Missouri Extension
PierceR@missouri.edu
573.882.4337

Table of Contents

Mission, Objectives and Overview	1
Local Partnerships	2
Membership Categories	2
Code of Ethics	3
Standards of Conduct	4
Chapter Organization	5
Insurance	7
Background Screening Requirements.....	9
Core Training Course and Certification Brief Overview.....	9
<i>NOTE: "Conducting a Core Training Course" is a separate document.</i>	
Certification Requirements	11
Volunteer Service Requirements	12
Capstone Projects.....	12
Advanced Training	14
Program Name and Logo Use	16
Missouri Master Naturalist Logo & Avoiding Conflict of Interest.....	17
Program Marketing Guidelines	18
Media Contacts	18
Additional Information	21
Chapters Hosting Events on MDC Conservation Areas	21
MDC Forms and When to Use Them	21
Recognition Awards.....	21
Fundraising	21
Member Transfer	22
Membership in Multiple Chapters	22
Inactive Members	22
Procedures for Disciplining and/or Removing Members	22
Rescission of a Chapter	23
Project Approval Form	24
Annual Certification Pins	25
Milestone Pins and Name Badges	26

Mission, Objectives and Overview

Program Mission

To engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service.

Program Objectives

1. Improve public understanding of natural resources ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resources ecology that can be used to enhance education efforts within local communities.
2. Enhance existing natural resources education and outreach activities by providing natural resources training at the local level, thereby developing a team of dedicated and informed volunteers.
3. Develop a self-sufficient Missouri Master Naturalist volunteer network.

Sponsorship

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program is sponsored and jointly administered through a partnership established by a Memorandum of Understanding between University of Missouri Extension (MU Extension) and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). As a partnership program, the Missouri Master Naturalist Program is committed to growing and sustaining an equitable, diverse, and inclusive learning and working environment for all Missourians and the culture and practices that empower and serve that purpose.

Mission of MU Extension

To serve Missouri by extending the research-based knowledge and problem-solving resources of the University of Missouri System to people throughout the state.

Mission of the Missouri Department of Conservation

To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state, to facilitate and provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about these resources.

Program Overview

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program is a natural resource educational and volunteer service program designed for adult learners who are interested in increasing their knowledge, supporting conservation, and conducting volunteer service within their community.

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program started in 2004. The Program is directed at the state level by two State Program Coordinators who are employed by the sponsoring organizations, MDC and MU Extension through the MU School of Natural Resources (which serves as the academic home for this MU Extension "named" Program).

The Program is designed as a "Chapter-based Program" and currently exists as a collection of 13 Chapters across the state that adhere to an established set of training and learning objectives, Program guidelines and requirements.

Prospective participants accepted into the program are expected to complete an initial training course, eight hours of advanced training, an internship, and to provide 40 hours of volunteer service to become certified as a Missouri Master Naturalist. Certification is maintained by completing eight hours of advanced training and 40 hours of service annually.

Training is organized and conducted for volunteer participants at the Chapter-level by a team comprised of Chapter Advisors that represent MU Extension, MDC, and Chapter members. Following the Program guidelines, this team collaborates with educators and resource professionals to develop, conduct, and evaluate the training course. Each Chapter provides information and registration materials for conducting and hosting their training course, and reviews and approves applicants to be enrolled in the course.

Advanced training opportunities are provided throughout the year and are focused on subject-matter that is approved by the local Chapter. Volunteer service is fulfilled through a variety of projects related to environmental stewardship, natural resources education and interpretation, citizen science, and programming support.

Continued...

Each year, following initial certification, volunteers complete an additional eight hours of advanced training and 40 hours of volunteer service within the calendar year to maintain their certification as a Missouri Master Naturalist. Master Naturalists are recognized as MU Extension and MDC volunteers and represent these organizations when volunteering within their respective community.

Chapters are self-sustaining organizations with elected officers and members providing guidance and leadership for Chapter activities and educational events. MU Extension and MDC personnel serve as “Chapter Advisors” and provide administrative and leadership for the Program. In addition, Advisors represent their respective organization and form the administrative connection for the Chapter with the State Coordinators.

It is important for Missouri Master Naturalist Chapters to capitalize on local resources and expertise through partnerships with local organizations. Representatives of these local partners might also serve on Chapter committees. These committees may similarly include natural resources personnel, leaders of local natural resources groups, interested landowners, and other community leaders.

Local Partnerships

Developing partnerships with local organizations in the community is the key to a successful Master Naturalist Program and Chapter. Partnering organizations help shape the path for volunteers to meet the educational and volunteer service needs within the local community. Local partner organizations can host trainings, conduct advanced training programs, sponsor volunteer service projects and programs, and help the Chapter build a corps of trained and skilled volunteers ready to participate.

Partners benefit from association with the Master Naturalist Program and from local service projects that volunteers perform. However, it is important that partner organizations share a mission for natural resource-related outcomes in the community. Partnerships must be mutually beneficial to both the Chapter and the partner organization. Chapters may have partners that periodically change as the Chapter focus might change. To sustain viable partnerships, Chapters should be in the

practice of evaluating their relationships with their partner organizations on a regular basis.

Examples of local Chapter partnerships:

- Federal agency “friends” groups (Ex: USFW Friends of Big Muddy)
- State park “friends” group (Ex: Friends of Babler State Park)
- County or city parks department
- Non-governmental organizations such as local chapters of Audubon Society, Native Plant Society, etc.
- Non-profit organizations such as a watershed alliance

Requirements and services local partner organizations should provide:

- Compatible natural resource missions
- Training opportunities
- Volunteer service opportunities
- Financial or in-kind contributions (meeting space, equipment, resource materials)
- Promotion of the Master Naturalist Program
- Participation in Chapter activities

Master Naturalist Volunteer Membership Categories

Missouri Master Naturalist in Training (Trainee):

Participant of an official, core training course from the first session to the end of the training period. This includes a minimum of 40 hours of classroom and field training. After completion of the core training course, the trainee receives a “Certificate of Completion”.

Missouri Master Naturalist Member:

“Member” is a blanket term for a participant who has successfully completed the initial training requirements. The volunteer may have completed, or has yet to complete, their service or certification requirements for the given year.

Continued...

Mission, Objectives and Overview continued

Missouri Master Naturalist Intern:

A Chapter member who graduated from the core training course and is working towards completing their internship, which includes a capstone project, 40 hours of volunteer service, and 8 hours of advanced training. This internship is typically completed within 12 months after course completion.

Certified Missouri Master Naturalist:

A volunteer who has graduated from core training course and has successfully completed their internship. Members achieving their initial certification are given an initial certification dragonfly pin. This category also includes a Missouri Master Naturalist that maintains

their annual certification. Volunteers that maintain certification receive a limited-edition annual certification pin to commemorate their service for that year.

Honorary Member:

An Honorary Missouri Master Naturalist is a person who has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of the activities of a Chapter. Honorary members are selected by an affirmative two-thirds vote of the membership present at a meeting and given a copper dragonfly pin in recognition of their efforts.

More information regarding the Honorary Member designation can be found on page 21.

Code of Ethics

Each Master Naturalist, in striving to meet the mission, goals and objectives of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program, agrees to:

1. Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct.
2. Promote and support the statewide and local Master Naturalist Program.
3. Respect the missions of the Missouri Department of Conservation and University of Missouri Extension and their roles and expectations.
4. Disseminate appropriate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of our natural resources.
5. Strive to increase knowledge and skills to advance as a Missouri Master Naturalist volunteer.
6. Promote competence as a Missouri Master Naturalist volunteer by supporting high standards of education, service and performance.
7. Encourage the use of sound biological information in education and outreach and in management decisions.
8. Support fair and uniform standards of service and treatment of those engaged in the Missouri Master Naturalist Program.
9. Know and follow established Program guidelines and policies.
10. Abide by the Chapter's bylaws.
11. Avoid use of the Missouri Master Naturalist title, logos and trademarks for personal endeavors and/or profit and political arenas.
12. Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
13. Ensure a safe learning environment exists for volunteers, resource professionals, and program partners at all times.
14. Never inappropriately disturb or harass wildlife, and never inappropriately remove anything from its natural state or area.

Standards of Conduct

Missouri Master Naturalist Program volunteers shall at all times:

1. Uphold the commitment made to the Program and complete the required volunteer and advanced training hours.
2. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the Master Naturalist Program. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
3. Conduct themselves appropriately to context and setting at all times.
4. Provide a safe environment where learning and volunteer service can occur.
5. Be considerate and respect the points of view of others.
6. Keep accurate records of volunteer service, training, research, and regularly notify your Chapter of these records.
7. Avoid performing service when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or detrimental to the well-being of the program and its sponsors.
8. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client and/or volunteer project regardless of the degree of remuneration.
9. Be mindful of their responsibility to society and the Program.
10. Studiously avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of Program authority, certification, or membership for personal satisfaction.
11. Cooperate fully with professionals and other Master Naturalist volunteers in the best interest of our natural resources.
12. Refrain from advertising in a self-laudatory manner, beyond statements intended to inform prospective clients or members of qualifications, or in a manner detrimental to the Master Naturalist Program and its volunteers.
13. Avoid all use of alcohol and controlled substances while performing service as a Master Naturalist volunteer. Reporting for service while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in termination from the volunteer program.
14. Accept responsibility for decisions made and actions taken based on these decisions
15. Avoid political advocacy, lobbying or promoting political issues.

MU Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

MU Extension has a volunteer Code of Conduct Policy for all volunteer programs, including the Master Naturalist Program. All currently active volunteers must agree to these standards of conduct by signing an MU Extension agreement and submit this form on an annual basis. The MU Extension Chapter Advisor can provide additional information about this policy to Chapter members.

The Volunteer Code of Conduct form for volunteers can be accessed and signed electronically at:

https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3XcCMH9n9Og9M6F



Chapter Organization

Master Naturalist Chapters are self-administrating groups. Following completion of the first core training course MDC and MU Extension Chapter Advisors work closely with members to identify the organizational needs of the Chapter. Most Chapters have an elected slate of officers and several working committees. Officer elections should take place each year, preferably at the last general meeting of the calendar year. Terms of office are determined by the Chapter. Officers and committees may change over time to meet the Chapter needs.

Role of Chapter Advisors

The MDC and MU Extension Chapter Advisors provide leadership, oversight, and approval for Chapter activities. They also function as liaisons to the State Program Coordinators for conducting the Program and with Chapter management. Chapter Advisors are the volunteer's first point of contact in matters related to conducting the Master Naturalist Program.

Advisors' roles are to:

1. Ensure the Master Naturalist Program is conducted according to the guidelines established by the MDC and MU Extension.
2. Provide leadership for the Chapter, including oversight, making recommendations, and informing Chapter members of appropriate business in a timely manner.
3. Provide guidance for conducting the core training course and all subsequent trainings that are hosted by the Chapter as well as for ultimately approving volunteer service and advanced training that is conducted.
4. Know and communicate the goals, activities, and mission of the Program.
5. Provide guidance to the officers of the Chapter; communicating the expectations for the roles and responsibilities.
6. Facilitate opportunities for Master Naturalist volunteers to exercise initiative and judgment within proper measure of autonomy when coordinating events and activities. In keeping with this approach, Advisors may participate in planning

and attend sponsored activities when possible or necessary.

7. Be aware of the Chapter's financial status including income and expenditures. The local MU Extension Center should be the repository of Chapter funds.
8. Be aware of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program guidelines and other agency or organization guidelines that establish expectations for volunteer requirements, behavior, and activities. Ensure the group and its officers know where these guidelines are published, why they exist and the consequences for choosing to operate outside their parameters. Advisors are expected to report violations or potential violations to the appropriate agency official.
9. Be available to assist the Master Naturalist State Program Coordinators as needed.
10. Be responsible for notifying the officers regarding Chapter members, partners, or State Program Coordinator concerns. Encourage and facilitate, when necessary, appropriate communication between and among Chapter members, officers, partners, and Program Coordinators to address concerns in a timely manner.
11. Encourage Chapters to keep accurate records of volunteer and training hours, as well as active and inactive status of members.

Chapter Officers & Committees

Listed are suggestions for organization of Chapter officers and committees:

Officers

A Chapter will most likely decide to have a slate of officers that include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Possible duties of these positions include:

President - preside at meetings, appoint committees, oversee Chapter activities, organize development of the required annual report (due to State Coordinators at the end of the year), serve as the point of contact with the state Master Naturalist Program Coordinators, and transfer information from the State Program Coordinators to Chapter members.

Continued...

Vice President - assume the duties of the President when the President is absent or temporarily unable to carry out their duties, be responsible for the education program, and serve as chair of the Advanced Training Committee.

Secretary - keep a record of Chapter activities, report on meetings, ensure accurate and up-to-date record and reporting of members' volunteer and training hours are kept.

Treasurer - regularly request financial account statements from the local MU Extension office, collect and disburse funds as needed, provide financial reports to the Chapter.

Officers do not always need to be the sole decision makers for Chapter activities. Involving the full Chapter can often be useful in the decision-making process. Likewise involving members in the administrative objectives of the Chapter can help avoid having only a few volunteers performing all of these tasks. Ideally, every volunteer should log some Chapter administration service hours each month along with their in-the-field service hours. This avoids a few volunteers logging all administration hours and quickly tiring of these duties.

Officer Elections

Officer elections should take place at the last general meeting of the calendar year. All Program participants should be encouraged to participate. Master Naturalist members in good standing, including Interns and certified Master Naturalists, are allowed to vote. Honorary Master Naturalists may vote if the Chapter chooses. Master Naturalists in Training (Trainees) are not allowed to vote.

Officer Responsibilities

Participants of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program represent the sponsoring organizations (MU Extension and MDC). In addition, they represent their Chapter's local partners and any other entity they provide service to. In this capacity, it is expected all participants will uphold a certain degree of professionalism and standard

of conduct. Every action undertaken by participants should uphold the mission of the Master Naturalist Program as well as those of both MDC and MU Extension. Chapter Advisors and Officers are responsible for ensuring every member of the Chapter understands the overall mission for the Program. All activities performed by members of the Chapter should support these missions and adhere to the Program's Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

Committees

At a Chapter meeting, the officers, Chapter Advisors, and members should discuss the main tasks that need to be conducted and determine what committees are needed to accomplish those tasks. Call for volunteers to serve on the committees. Encourage committee membership as a way for Master Naturalists to claim the Program as their own, support the activities of the Chapter, and earn volunteer service hours. Possible committees and related activities can include:

Volunteer Service and Project Committee

- With oversight from the Chapter Advisors approves volunteer service opportunities.
- Informs members of volunteer opportunities.
- Keeps records of all approved volunteer service projects.
- Works with members to identify potential service projects.

Training Coordinating Committee

- With oversight from the Chapter Advisors approves advanced training opportunities.
- Informs members of training opportunities.
- Plans advanced training programs, field trips, and educational activities.
- Works in cooperation with the Chapter Advisors in planning core training courses for new classes.

Continued...

Chapter Organization continued

Communications Committee

- Maintains Chapter website, newsletter, or other identified methods for communication.
- Develops Chapter directory and member manual.
- Develops publicity materials.
- Provides local media releases covering Chapter activities.

Hospitality Committee

- Organizes social activities and coordinates refreshments for meetings and gatherings.
- Celebrates positive recognition of members.
- Keeps records of Chapter activities for historical purposes.

Insurance

Defense and Protection for Missouri Master Naturalist Volunteers

The University of Missouri provides defense and protection against loss, damage or expense for its employees, students, and volunteers. The terms and conditions of coverage are outlined in the **University's Collected Rules and Regulations 490.010** which can be read below and found at this link: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/benefit/ch490/490.010_defense_and_protection_of_employees

490.010 Defense and Protection of Employees

Bd. Min. 5-3-85; Bd. Min. 7-13-00; Bd. Min. 12-11-14; Amended 7-28-20.

A. Defense and protection against loss, damage, or expense may be provided, on a case-by-case basis and subject to the conditions below, to:

1. Employees — An officer, faculty member, or other employee of (a) the University of Missouri or (b) a subsidiary or affiliate of the University that has been designated as eligible for coverage under this Rule by the Assistant Vice President of Management Services in connection with any claim or suit allegedly arising out of the performance of duties for, or employment with, or by the Curators of the University of Missouri, a public corporation, or a designated University subsidiary or affiliate; and
2. Students — A duly enrolled student at the University of Missouri in connection with any claim or suit allegedly arising out of the performance of

duties as a member of a University of Missouri committee to which the student has been appointed by a duly authorized University of Missouri administrative officer, subject to the following conditions.

3. Volunteer — A duly authorized volunteer of the University of Missouri in connection with any claim or suit allegedly arising out of the performance of duties of volunteer service for the University of Missouri or the performance of duties as a member of a University of Missouri committee to which the volunteer has been appointed by or requested to provide the services by a duly authorized University of Missouri administrative officer, subject to the following conditions.
4. Such an officer, faculty member, employee, authorized volunteer, or student who, individually or with others, is named a defendant in legal actions or proceedings submits a request for such defense and protection to the President.
 - a. Such a request shall include:
 - (1) A brief description of the circumstances surrounding the incident giving rise to the legal action;
 - (2) Documentation to verify that the named individual was acting within the scope of the individual's official duties at the time of the incident; and
 - (3) A copy of the summons or petition served on the named individual.
 - b. The President determines that the named individual was acting in good faith and within the scope of the individual's employment or authority.

- c. Such defense or protection is legally permissible.
- d. No protection will be provided if a court determines that the action arose out of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton action or neglect of duty.

B. While such defense and protection normally will be provided by insurance maintained by the University, this policy applies without regard to the availability of insurance coverage. If the initial determination is made by the President that the named individual is entitled to defense, it shall be provided either by insurance or by the General Counsel or by an outside counsel appointed by the General Counsel on behalf of the individual.

Documentation that demonstrates the validity of the volunteer service activity is Important to show. Here are some important steps to take:

1. Require all Chapter volunteers have signed the MU Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct: https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3XcCMH9n9Og9M6F
2. This provides evidence that the volunteer is a Missouri Master Naturalist volunteer. This Code of Conduct MUST be signed on an annual basis.
3. Make sure that ALL Chapter volunteer service projects with partner organizations have been fully vetted and approved by the Chapter and partner. Master Naturalist Volunteer Partner Agreement Forms can help to document that the volunteer service project has been approved and a paper trail is important to have for providing evidence of this documentation.
4. Make sure that the volunteer(s) conducting the community service project have been fully trained and have the proper supervision (as needed) for a safe and successful outcome. Have documentation of this training or programs that provided specific skills for accomplishing the project.

Obtaining Insurance Coverage for Master Naturalist Activities or Events that Involve Larger Groups

Although this is not a common occurrence, when conducting or participating in volunteer service activities, Master Naturalists are serving as volunteers on behalf of MU Extension and MDC. When planning group educational activities and other events that involve larger numbers of citizens in the community it is possible for the Chapter to apply for insurance from the University's designated agent that covers accidents or illnesses that may occur to invited participants. This additional coverage may be required to have by the entity that is being used to conduct the activity and should be determined well ahead of the time the program or activity is conducted.

MU Extension Programs can purchase American Income Life Insurance Company's *Special Activities* coverage for MU Extension volunteer leaders, and adults that are participating in activities that are sponsored by the University (issued under Master Policy No. 717). Chapters are encouraged to consider coverage for specific activities by working with the MU Extension Chapter Advisor and MU Extension Center. The cost for coverage per participant is very minimal (about 20 to 30 cents per day per person with a minimum charge of \$8). It is the Chapter's responsibility to budget for these expenses.

Insurance and Events on MDC Conservation Areas

If a Chapter hosts an outreach, public event on a MDC conservation area, the Chapter is not required to provide additional liability insurance for the public. Exceptions: conducting an athletic competition or commercial use*.

**MDC Policy 3 CSR 10-11.111 Commercial Use (1)... Commercial use is defined as any activity that directly or indirectly results in financial benefit or gain, or where money is exchanged in connection with the activity.*

A plant sale would be considered commercial use. Please contact your MDC Chapter Advisor or State Coordinator for waiver of liability insurance for this type of activity on MDC Conservation Areas.

Background Checks

A new background screening policy has implemented in June of 2024. Master Naturalist volunteers who intend to lead a youth program or project are required to undergo a background screening and complete an annual youth protection training program. Refer to the Missouri Master Naturalist webpage "background screening" for details.

<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-master-naturalist/background-screening>.

In addition, University of Missouri policy authorizes MU Extension to request a background screening for volunteer applicants (including trainees) and existing volunteers, regardless of their intended role or involvement with youth programs, prior to accepting or retaining the individual(s) as an approved MU Extension volunteer.

The background check screening may include, but is not limited to, criminal and other public records subject to any limitations imposed by applicable federal and state law. This information may be obtained from public records including government agencies and judicial records.

Any questionable reports on participants are sent to the Chapter Advisors for deliberation and any needed action.

A questionable report does not automatically exclude an applicant from being a part of the Master Naturalist Program. Certain disqualifying convictions or knowledge of pending criminal charges may be reason to delay or withhold acceptance. In the event an applicant or volunteer is not suitable for the Master Naturalist Program, a letter will be sent to the person explaining this decision. If desired, the applicant or volunteer can then appeal the decision following guidelines provided by Chapter Advisors.

University of Missouri Office of Civil Rights and Title IX

Master Naturalists are recognized as volunteers by both the MDC and MU Extension. The University of Missouri is committed to ensuring a safe environment exists for all faculty, staff, and volunteers. Addressing sex-based discrimination including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, intimidation, misconduct, stalking, and partner/ relationship violence is a priority for the University of Missouri. The University's Title IX office exists to support faculty, staff, and volunteers who have experienced sex-based discrimination. Any incidents of sex-based discrimination that occur within the Master Naturalist Program must be reported. Instructions for reporting incidents and more information can be found online at:

Office of Institutional Equity – <https://equity.missouri.edu/>

Core Training and Certification

Overview

The core training, which consists of a minimum of 40-hours of instruction, is designed to expose students to a wide variety of natural resource disciplines, providing a high-quality learning experience. Missouri has a diversity of ecological and natural communities, wildlife populations, and habitat types that are unique to each area of the state. Learning objectives have been identified and these are included and presented during the sessions that form the subject-matter covered during the 40 hours of instruction. Flexibility is given so that training organizers are able to conduct sessions that provide core subject-matter information as well as sessions that feature the conservation and management of ecosystems that are important in their area of the state.

MU Extension and MDC Chapter Advisors and selected Chapter leaders organize and conduct the initial core training at a frequency that is determined at the Chapter-level. **More details on organizing and conducting the Training can be found in the document entitled: Conducting a Core Training Course.**

Training Schedule and Requirements

On the first day of the Chapter's core training course, students are designated as a Missouri Master Naturalist in Training (Trainee). The minimum initial training requirements to earn the designation of Missouri Master

Naturalist Intern include 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences as described in the Conducting a Core training Course manual. In addition to a minimum of 40 hours of initial core training instruction, a Trainee must complete a capstone project and 40 hours of service to be designated as a Missouri Master Naturalist Intern.

Instruction Hours

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program requires Missouri Master Naturalists in Training to complete a minimum of 40 hours of instruction during the core training course, a capstone project, and 40 hours of service. Training hours are logged by the Chapter training committee which is used to verify completion of the initial training course. Training schedules should include hours above the minimum to adequately cover local issues and regional topics for supporting successful student graduation of the training.

Missed Classes

Missouri Master Naturalists in Training who do not complete the required minimum 40 hours during the training class sessions, must make up the hours to receive certificate of completion. The hours must be made up within 12 months of the class graduation. With approval, a student can take the same subject class presented during the next training cycle or attend the same subject session at a neighboring chapter, with adequate prior notification and availability of space. Until the class(es) are made up, a student cannot be designated an Intern or Certified Master Naturalist but may log/earn volunteer service hours or advanced training (AT) hours.

The Chapter can also allow advanced training (AT) session (s) to count as make-up. If AT is approved as make-up, then for that student, the hours do not count as AT requirement for certification but documented as hours for the core training course.

A Chapter may consider an exception to attendance rules in special circumstances, such as medical problems, family illness, accidents, etc.

Course Completion

Once the Missouri Master Naturalist in Training has successfully completed all the training class requirements and received a "Certificate of Completion", the next step of the training, is completion of a capstone project. Capstones are service projects that transition an intern from training to volunteer service. Time spent on capstone projects can be logged as service hours required for initial certification. To earn their Initial Certification, interns must perform a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service and complete eight (8) hours of AT.

Initial Certification Requirements

To become a Certified Missouri Master Naturalist, a member must be active and complete the following:

- Initial training with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction
- Completion of a capstone project
- Minimum of 40 hours volunteer service approved by the local Chapter, which may include service hours from the capstone project
- Minimum of 8 hours approved advanced training (AT)
- Members should complete the service and AT requirements for initial certification within 15 months of the start date of the core training course

Upon completion of the initial certification requirements, interns will receive an Initial Certification certificate, full color dragonfly pin, official Missouri Master Naturalist name badge, and the designation of Certified Missouri Master Naturalist. The initial certification materials are available through the MDC Volunteer Education Coordinator. To maintain the designation, members must recertify each calendar year (January-December).

More details on organizing and conducting the Training can be found in the document entitled: Conducting a Core Training Course.

Certification Requirements

To become a Certified Missouri Master Naturalist, a trainee must complete the following:

- State Program approved core training with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction during the training course
- Completion of a Capstone Project
- A minimum of eight contact hours of Chapter-approved advanced training
- A minimum of 40 hours of Chapter approved volunteer service

Certification

Volunteers (trainees and interns) have a maximum of 15 consecutive months (from the start of the core training course) to complete certification requirements and become a certified Master Naturalist. Once certified, volunteers will receive a name badge, state awarded certificate, and initial dragonfly pin. If Trainees and Interns do not complete the requirements in this 15-month time frame they are no longer associated with the Program. If interested in re-enrolling in the Program, they will need to complete the core training course again.

A Chapter may choose to allow a participant to begin earning volunteer service hours toward certification while they are still in the process of completing their core training. This may provide incentive for a volunteer to begin to gain their certification requirements.

Recertification

To retain the title of Certified Missouri Master Naturalist during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete a minimum of eight hours of approved advanced training and provide a minimum of 40 hours of approved volunteer service per calendar year (January to December). If a volunteer completes an additional eight hours of approved advanced training and an additional 40 hours of volunteer service in the same year that they received their initial certification they are considered recertified and are eligible to additionally receive that current year's recertification pin.

Each year that volunteers successfully recertify, they receive a specially designed certification pin. These limited-edition pins, developed each year, are designed by an MDC artist. They depict Missouri flora and fauna. Volunteers who are active but unable to recertify each year are still considered Master Naturalists, but they won't be considered certified or receive the limited-edition pin for that year. Once a Master Naturalist has completed their initial certification, they can recertify every year.

Examples of Chapter name badges, initial certification pin, milestone pins, and annual certification pins can be found on pages 25 & 26.

*Missouri
Master Naturalist*



TM

Volunteer Service Requirements

As part of the criteria for attaining initial certification, a Missouri Master Naturalist intern must complete a minimum of 40 volunteer service hours within 15 months of the beginning of the core training course. As part of the criteria for retaining certification, or recertifying each year, a volunteer must continue to complete 40 volunteer service hours annually.

Volunteer service hours are those direct contact hours spent on Missouri Master Naturalist projects approved by a Chapter Advisor and/or Volunteer Service Committee. Volunteer service projects should utilize the knowledge participant's gain during the training portions of the Program. Volunteer service provided by Master Naturalists fall into these four categories:

Stewardship Projects: These projects involve natural resource management activities such as trail development, invasive species removal, natural community restoration, tree planting, and native plant seed collection.

Education/Interpretive Projects: These projects include public or school presentations of natural resource information, educational materials development, leading interpretive hikes or exhibiting at special events.

Citizen Science Projects: These projects focus on volunteers gathering data and conducting research. Examples include flora and fauna surveys, species monitoring, water quality monitoring, bird banding, and fish tagging.

Program Support: This includes time spent conducting Chapter leadership and administration functions such as serving as an officer, conducting committee work, maintaining Chapter communication tools, and attending Chapter meetings.

Volunteers can choose to help with opportunities that are presented to the Chapter or may design their own project for approval.

An example of a Volunteer Project Approval Form can be found on page 24 and adapted for use as needed. Volunteers should be encouraged to design projects that are interesting to them, capitalize on their individual

talents and serve the needs and requirements identified by a local partner. All volunteer service projects must be vetted and/or pre-approved by the Chapter Advisors and the Volunteer Service Committee and must be dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the community. One of the purposes of pre-approving projects is to ensure that there is protection and defense provided should there be an injury while performing the volunteer service (refer to Protection and Defense section). When performing volunteer service, Master Naturalist members should wear their Master Naturalist name badge and ensure recognition for their service is given to their Chapter and the Program.

As a trained volunteer, no matter how little or how much volunteer service you provide within a given year, you are always considered a Missouri Master Naturalist member. Volunteers in any given year are either "certified" or working toward certification for that given year. Unanticipated situations, i.e., family illness, medical procedures, accidents, etc., that prevent a member from attaining the required 40 hours of volunteer service can be addressed in an appropriate manner by the Chapter's Board.

Capstone Projects

Chapter Advisors and the Training Coordinating Committee work together to develop a capstone project (s) to be completed after the volunteers (interns) finish their core training course. Capstone projects are service projects that serve as a transition from training to volunteer service, and count toward service hour requirements. Capstone projects are required for interns; however, Chapter Advisors and Training Coordinating Committee can review each intern appeal on an individual basis.

Capstone projects offer volunteers the opportunity to immediately apply their training. Capstone projects help new Master Naturalists become familiar with volunteer opportunities within the organization and can provide Chapter partners and community organizations the opportunity to become more familiar with the volunteers, their skills, and what the Master Naturalist Program can accomplish.

Volunteer Service Requirements continued

A capstone experience is a project with a definite end result that can be completed individually or by a group of volunteers in a relatively short time period. It can include an advanced training component. Examples include research and preparation of a program topic, development of plans for a restoration or native landscape, creation of wildlife habitat, etc. It is important to avoid long capstone projects, or those without an end point, such as “manage a prairie”. This helps foster a sense of accomplishment in the new volunteers.

Capstone projects may be done during or after the core training course. For this reason, it is helpful to have the capstones identified before the new volunteers begin training. As a Chapter grows, the capstone project may change to include a mentoring component with trainees working closely with existing Chapter members.

Volunteers should present their capstone project results to the rest of the Chapter members at a regularly scheduled Chapter meeting after training is concluded.

Locating Service Opportunities

Having good communication with local MDC and MU Extension staff as well as representatives of Chapter partner organizations is the easiest way to be informed of new opportunities for volunteering. Chapter Advisors have the contact information for MDC and MU Extension staff. Volunteers are not limited to projects offered by the local partners. They are encouraged to seek out new opportunities in the community and present them to the Volunteer Service Committee and/or Chapter Board.

Counting/Recording Volunteer Service Hours

Volunteers are required to log their service hours with the Chapter. Recorded hours are counted toward initial certification, annual recertification, and milestones. This information is also used by MDC and MU Extension for documenting statewide Program impacts and for continued support of the Program. It is important to the Chapter’s local partners that may rely on grant funding

and use volunteer hours as in-kind match for their funding. Citing volunteer hours has helped the Missouri Master Naturalist Program promote new partnerships with organizations across the state, as well as start new Chapters. The hours logged can be used to note the success of the Master Naturalist Program in serving your community and celebrate the positive impact your Chapter has on the local natural resources.

Volunteers should record their hours timely and at a minimum once a month. Forty-hours per year are the minimum number of volunteer service hours required to achieve and maintain certification. Volunteers are not limited to 40 hours per year; the more hours accumulated, the sooner they reach Master Naturalist milestone awards.

Service hours

- The number of hours spent preparing for and doing volunteer service need to be recorded. Travel time related to service projects may also be counted. If you are preparing for a presentation, any time spent researching and preparing your presentation can be recorded, as well as time spent giving the presentation.
- Projects on private lands can be counted for service hours if the project has been pre-approved by the Chapter. If the land is owned by a Master Naturalist volunteer, that volunteer cannot record service hours for the project.
- When reporting service hours for individual certification, individual volunteer incentives, or to meet the requirements of a program, the hours should only be reported to one program. For example, Master Naturalist, Master Gardener, and MDC Nature Center volunteers all report service hours toward either individual certification, individual incentives, or program requirements. In these instances, the service hours should only be counted toward one entity. Individual volunteer service hours reported by Master Naturalists that also benefit program partners, where those programs do not require service hours for certification, individual incentives, or program requirements, can also be recorded for those programs. For example, Stream Teams, Forestkeepers, and friends groups are such programs.

Continued...

Chapter administration and meetings

- Any time that volunteers spend serving on committees, working on newsletters, assisting with training, etc. counts for service on a one-to-one basis. If volunteers spend two hours at a committee meeting, the volunteer may log two hours.

Volunteers may also count one hour of service for attending a Chapter meeting. Travel time related to Chapter administration and meetings may also be counted. These hours should all be recorded under Program support.

Advanced Training

Overview

A minimum of eight hours of advanced training are required annually to achieve and maintain certification. The eight hours can consist of one all-day course, two half-day courses, or several shorter courses. Hours are counted as one hour for each hour of advanced training completed. Travel time to and from training does not count toward training hours.

The purpose of advanced training is to provide Missouri Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus on specific topics of interest and to support local service projects. Annual advanced training promotes continued learning and development and provides the experienced Master Naturalist with tools to work in more advanced volunteer efforts. Although the Missouri Master Naturalist Program Coordinators may occasionally provide statewide or regional advanced training opportunities, it is usually the responsibility of the Chapter to ensure there are sufficient advanced training opportunities offered for members to attain their eight-hour annual minimum requirement. The Chapter should notify members of approved advanced training opportunities that occur at other locations.

Advanced Training Criteria and Approval

Advanced training courses may be made available directly through the local MU Extension or MDC offices, or may include any number of short courses provided by local partners, universities, nature centers, etc. Another way for volunteers to meet advanced training requirements is for the Chapter to sponsor advanced training sessions. This opportunity can be included as part of a regular meeting.

Advanced training opportunities need not be limited to programs sponsored by MU Extension, MDC, the State Program or Chapter partners. Any opportunity can be brought to the committee in charge of the Chapter's advanced training for evaluation and approval. This approval must be obtained through the Chapter's committee before volunteers can credit hours toward advanced training requirements. A record of advanced training opportunities should be kept by each Chapter.

Following is a list of requirements for advanced training:

- The Chapter's Training Coordinating Committee or other appropriate committee must pre-approve all opportunities before the volunteer attends to count as advanced training hours.
- Educational television shows are not a form of advanced training.
- Training must be detailed enough that volunteers are able to teach others or use new knowledge and/or skills in applicable areas of natural resource management.
- Training must meet the goals of the Master Naturalist Program.

Criteria for Approving Advanced Training Opportunities

Does the advanced training opportunity:

1. Promote continued learning and development of naturalist skills?
2. Provide Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts?

Continued...

Advanced Training continued

3. Provide Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics?
4. Build on the core curriculum provided in the initial training course?
5. Provide natural resource management issues and information applicable to Missouri?
6. Direct trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services?
7. Provide practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts?
8. Take advantage of local partnerships?

Advanced training opportunities must meet the first five criteria. It is recommended the remaining criteria also be a part of the opportunity.

Advanced Training Resources

Advanced training courses may be made available directly through MU Extension, MDC, or any number of short-courses provided by federal and government agencies, colleges and universities, technical specialists, or natural resource special interest organizations specific to Missouri.

Pre-approval must be obtained for an advanced training session that is outside the chapter boundaries. All advanced training must be approved prior to counting for training hours.

Forms of Advanced Training

Guest Speakers: Guest speakers are designed to provide information on specific topics in their area of professional expertise. There are a variety of sources and are primarily intended to be used in conjunction with the Master Naturalist meetings and are generally one hour or less.

Workshops: Workshops are designed to be hands-on opportunities and are generally short in duration (four hours or less). Workshops may be conducted at various locations.

Audio/Visual & Online Training: There are a variety of resources available and are primarily intended to be used in conjunction with the Master Naturalist meetings (one hour or less) or combined

with a workshop. These sessions must be guided by a resource specialist capable of responding to technical questions. Missouri-based online training opportunities delivered virtually that include an interactive, real-time, Q&A chat with a resource specialist can also be approved for advanced training. Programs conducted by other institutions on specific topics of importance for the management of Missouri's natural resources may also be approved by the State Coordinators on a case-by-case basis. Educational television shows are not a form of advanced training and therefore should not be approved as such.

Courses: There are numerous courses available either presented in a classroom setting or online. Prior approval of any digital content is required before counting the course for advanced training. Courses may be either general or topic-specific and may be of short duration or several days in length. They are not intended to be presented during the monthly Master Naturalist meetings. There may be fees associated with some courses.

Field Trips: Field trips are designed to share knowledge and experiences of others who are engaged in or have ongoing activities and projects with a focus toward environmental protection, conservation, restoration, or wildlife management. Field trips may be of short duration, less than four hours, or extended duration, more than four hours, not including travel time to the site. Occasionally, an extended field trip (overnight) may be offered to allow for educational opportunities located in distant parts of the state. There may be a fee associated with an extended field trip.

Facilitated Engaged Discussions: Group "coffee shop" discussions on selected topics designed to expand general awareness of issues and topics in an informal open format. Format is designed to encourage open discussion by all attendees.

Program Name and Logo Use

From brand names to box office appeal, “identity” is simply about being known. Every organization wants people to recognize its name and to associate its products or services with that name. For the Missouri Master Naturalist Program, establishing and maintaining a strong identity are crucial for continued success with prospective volunteers and instructors, with funding agencies, and with potential consumers of the education and service we offer.

The fundamental principles of an effective identity program are clarity, consistency, and repetition. Clarity simply means that our identity is clear, memorable, and easy to understand without extra information or explanation. Consistency means that our name and identifying graphics are used the same way every time. Repetition means that our name and identifier are used as often as possible, in as many forms as possible.

The Name of the Program

The proper name of the Program is “Missouri Master Naturalist.” Using the proper name consistently is very important. Using an alternative name, like “Boone’s Lick Master Naturalist,” dilutes the potential impact of name repetition and obscures the relationship between a local Chapter organization and the Statewide Program.

In the Missouri Master Naturalist Program, local organizations are referred to as “Chapters.” They are correctly identified in this way:

- Missouri Master Naturalist, Chert Glades Chapter
- Confluence Chapter of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program

Use the Program name as often as possible, in correspondence, introducing volunteers or instructors, making a presentation, preparing promotional or informational publications, identifying a service project site, writing a media release – just to name a few.

- **Using the Name as a freestanding element.** Any time the name of the Program appears as a freestanding element (not in a sentence), the first letter of each word should be capitalized, and the word “the” should not be used. Examples of this kind of use include brochures, agendas, program covers, and signs.

Correct use:

Missouri Master Naturalist

Incorrect use:

The Missouri Master Naturalist

- **As part of a sentence.** When the name is used in a sentence, the word “the” can be used, but it should not be capitalized unless it occurs at the beginning of the sentence. The name may also be followed by the words “program,” “volunteers,” or “volunteer program,” but these should not be capitalized.

Example:

In Columbia, the Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers collect native prairie seed for use on Missouri Department of Conservation lands.

- **Second reference and abbreviation.** The first use of the name in text should always include the entire official name of the Program, and that of the local Chapter, as appropriate. Later references in the same document may use a shortened form of the name, such as “Master Naturalist”
- **Do not use initials or acronyms** (such as MMN) to identify the Program in any document used with outside audiences, such as prospective volunteers, donors, or consumers of services.

Avoiding Conflict of Interest

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program results from a partnership between the Program’s sponsors, MU Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC))and is conducted through a Chapter-based educational model. Missouri Master Naturalist Program Core-Training and volunteer service projects, organized with local partners within the community, must be conducted in a manner that represent the interests of MU Extension and MDC. Service activities or projects that compete with the private sector should be avoided. At no time should Missouri Master Naturalist Program activities, or a volunteer representing the Master Naturalist Program, be associated with political campaigns or promote a political or legislative activity or agenda or promote or be associated with commercial/business activities or products.

The title "Missouri Master Naturalist" and use of the

Program Name and Logo Use continued

associated Program logo are to be used exclusively by Master Naturalists trained and certified by MU Extension and MDC. Only those individuals certified in the Program after completing Core-Training and mandatory volunteer service and Advanced Training requirements may call themselves Missouri Master Naturalists. Active individuals are not to advertise themselves as Missouri Master Naturalists in their names or places of business, nor to be listed as such in business advertising. Association with commercial activities or products, or implying MU Extension or MDC endorsement of any product or place of business, is a violation of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program policies.

Missouri Master Naturalist Logo

The official logo consists of the Program name, and a drawing of a Cyrano darner dragonfly (*Nasiaeschna pentacantha*). All letters in the Program name are written in Albertus MT Standard italicized font, except for the capital M, which is written in Ex Ponto Pro regular font. Contact the State Coordinators for electronic files of the logo.



Graphic Design Guidelines

The visual appearance, or graphic design, of documents supporting the Program is just as important in establishing a strong identity as consistent use of the name.

- **Drawings.** In addition to the Cyrano darner dragonfly, other Program drawings are available. They consist of the drawings used for the annual certification pins. These drawings may be used with the official Program name on materials produced for a Chapter. These drawings are the only other graphics that should be used in identifying the Program or a local Chapter. Please do not create a logo using the official name and another drawing or a photograph. Contact the State Program Coordinators for files of these images.

Logo Use

Only Missouri Master Naturalist members, Certified Master Naturalists, board members, honorary members,

and staff of MU Extension and MDC who are in a direct supporting role of the Program may wear or display any part of the Missouri Master Naturalist logo.

A Chapter can provide shirts, other wearable items, stickers, etc. for their program participants with the requirement that at least a Missouri Master Naturalist logo and the “Missouri Master Naturalist” text with the Trademark (™) symbol be included. The volunteer’s name and Chapter identifier text should be similar to the “Missouri Master Naturalist” text. The text should be in an Albertus serif font. If this is not available another serif font such as Palatino or Times New Roman may be used. **No wearable items, stickers, etc. that display the dragonfly logo or the full Program logo may be sold or given out to the public.**

Identifying Sponsors and Donors

Acknowledging the contributions of supporting agencies, organizations, and individuals is a very important part of marketing the Program. Publicly thanking donors shows appreciation, and it can add to the public relations effort of the funding organization. Include mention of donors whenever possible, such as in an event program, in a media packet, or during a radio or television interview.

- **Statewide Sponsors.** The statewide Program sponsors of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program are the Missouri Department of Conservation and University of Missouri Extension. These are the only agencies to be recognized as sponsors of the Program. Example:

Statewide Sponsors

Missouri Department of Conservation University of Missouri Extension



Include identification of the statewide sponsors whenever possible, including their logos. These agencies should be identified with the great work that Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers accomplish. Identifying Master Naturalist as a Program of these two agencies adds credibility by linking the program with two premier sources of expertise, information, and service.

- **Statewide Funding Partners.** Agencies, organizations, and individuals who make financial donations to the Statewide Program are designated as “Statewide Funding Partners.” These partners are identified and approved by the State Program Coordinators.
- **Local Partners.** Local or regional chapters of organizations, local or regional offices of state and/or federal agencies, local state parks, friends groups and local businesses are examples of “local partners.” Their support may be training and service opportunities, financial, or it may be contributions of meeting space, materials, transportation, advertising space or airtime, anything that helps the Chapter achieve its goals and objectives.

Credit Owners of the Marks

Please credit owners of the Master Naturalist marks when using the marks in content-type documents such as annual reports, curriculum and widely distributed promotional brochures. It is requested that owners of the marks are credited in the following manner:

“The Master Naturalist name and dragonfly logo are trademarks of Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, used with permission for the Missouri Master Naturalist Program.”

Program Marketing Guidelines

Working with the Media

The local media can be invaluable in helping you tell the “Missouri Master Naturalist story” to potential volunteers and others in the community. Building and maintaining good relationships with media professionals can benefit your Chapter and the Statewide Program for years to come.

Both MDC and MU Extension have communication specialists who can assist you with program promotion and marketing. Chapter media activities should also be coordinated with your Chapter Advisors.

MDC Media Contacts for Chapters:

Boone’s Lick, Lake of the Ozarks, Mississippi Hills, North Star:

Maddie Fennewald - Maddie.Fennewald@mdc.mo.gov

Chert Glades & Springfield Plateau:

Sara Karnes - Sara.Karnes@mdc.mo.gov

Confluence, Great Rivers, Miramigoua:

Dan Zarlenga - Dan.Zarlenga@mdc.mo.gov

Hi Lonesome:

Maddie Fennewald & Erin

WoodielMaddie.Fennewald@mdc.mo.gov

Erin.Woodiel@mdc.mo.gov

Meramec Hills:

Maddie Fennewald & Sara Karnes

Maddie.Fennewald@mdc.mo.gov

Sara.Karnes@mdc.mo.gov

Loess Hills and Osage Trails:

Erin Woodiel - Erin.Woodiel@mdc.mo.gov

- Whenever you can, meet face to face with reporters, editors, and producers.
- Bring a written article, news release, or fact sheet you can leave behind as a reference. Be sure to include dates, times, places, and phone numbers in writing to minimize the chance of mistakes.
- If a reporter calls, return their call as soon as possible. Their deadlines are usually very short.
- Prepare thoroughly for an interview. Keep your important points in mind and write them on note cards if necessary. Practice simple, direct, easy-to-understand statements that get your points across.
- If a story on the Missouri Master Naturalist Program is used, follow up with a thank-you note.

Continued...

Program Marketing Guidelines continued

Following are a few types of media you can use, as well as suggestions of ways you can work with them to get the Missouri Master Naturalist Program out in the public eye.

Newspapers

News Section - Offer to provide a representative (Extension personnel, someone from a partnering organization) for interviews by local reporters.

Lifestyle Section - Pitch a story about an individual or family who has experienced positive benefits as volunteers or consumers of the Missouri Master Naturalist program.

Social Media and Websites

Community Calendar - Make sure your class schedule or registration deadline and contact information are listed.

Extension News Column - Feature the Missouri Master Naturalist Program in your news column and ask your coworkers to mention it in theirs as well.

Non-Cable Television

Local News

- Invite local stations to cover your field trips, plus any highly visual service projects the volunteers are doing.
- Work with the local station to provide nightly or weekly tips on environmental topics.
- If a training course is coming up, make sure your registration deadline and contact information are mentioned.

News Interviews

Offer to provide representatives (volunteers, MU Extension or MDC personnel, someone from a partnering organization) for interviews by local reporters.

News Spot

Discuss having the Missouri Master Naturalist Program as a regular television spot. Include a volunteer or representative from a partnering organization, too.

Radio

- Ask a local deejay (especially the morning drive-time deejays) to participate in the Missouri Master Naturalist Program. Chances are they will mention it frequently on the air.
- Offer to provide guests (volunteers, MU Extension or MDC personnel, a local partner) for morning and evening drive time.

Talking Points

The Mission

To engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and community service.

The Program

- The Missouri Master Naturalist Program is a Chapter-based Program. Chapters are organized locally by MU Extension, MDC and organizations that have an interest in supporting the goals and objectives of the Program.
- Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers receive in-depth training in natural resource management, customized to focus on their local ecosystems. In return, volunteers provide service in the form of stewardship and citizen sciences projects, and outreach and education in their local communities. Volunteers also while pursue advanced training in areas of special interest.
- Missouri Master Naturalist training is provided by educators and specialists from agencies, universities, nature centers, museums, and other organizations who donate their services.
- The Missouri Master Naturalist training resources are developed by experts and provide a standardized base of knowledge and skills for all volunteers across the state.

The Benefits

- The Missouri Master Naturalist Program increases volunteer capacity and leadership in local communities, while enhancing public awareness of local ecosystems and natural resources.

Continued...

- Missouri Master Naturalist Chapters located in urban areas provide Missouri's rapidly growing urban populations with increased understanding of conservation and enhancement of natural resources in and near their urban environment. Chapters in more rural areas of the state work with landowners to learn about and manage their resources.
- Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers work to increase educational opportunities for local residents of all ages, through educational programs, exhibits, demonstration projects, and other means.
- The Missouri Master Naturalist Program focuses the considerable resources of MDC, MU Extension, and other state and local agencies and organizations to create a high-quality educational program directed towards building a self-sufficient volunteer network within the community.

Marketing in a Nutshell

When you create a marketing message – whether it is a brochure, a fund-raising letter, a radio Public Service Announcement, a training course announcement, or a year-end report– your work should begin and end with your audience.

- Who are you speaking to? Make sure you understand exactly who they are and what about the Missouri Master Naturalist program interests them.
- What do they care about? What is the value, or benefit, that the Missouri Master Naturalist Program offers them? For a potential volunteer, that value may be the opportunity to learn more about the environment, or a chance to give back to the community. For a potential donor, the value may be that the volunteers provide community education, that they work with kids, or that the Program itself increases volunteerism in the community.
- Many values are true of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program – you just have to choose the ones that will really grab your audience's attention, that plug into the interests and goals he or she already has. When you do this, you are targeting your message to your audience.

Remember any marketing message should focus on the benefits to the audience not features of the Program.

Your marketing materials should be a mirror in which the audience can see him or herself and his or her interests, not a portrait of yourself.

Writing Strong Marketing Copy

Words

- Write simply, using familiar, commonly used words.
- Write personally, using “you” rather than “they” or “one.”
- Use active, dynamic verbs.

Sentences

- Use simple sentence structure when possible.
- Avoid long introductory and embedded phrases and clauses.
- Vary sentence length but avoid sentences over fifteen words long.

Paragraphs

- Vary paragraph length but avoid paragraphs over five sentences long.
- Use short headings to introduce paragraphs.

Style

- Write in the active rather than the passive voice.
- Use graphics that are logically linked to the text.
- Use upper- and lower- case letters rather than all capitals.
- Balance the use of text with white space. Leave ample margins.
- Use an unjustified right margin.

Ideas

- Avoid excessive information.
- Use concrete rather than abstract words or give concrete examples of abstract ideas.
- Apply the content being presented to the reader's personal and cultural experiences.
- Write your message from the reader's point of view, focusing on the reader's interests. Think, “What does the reader want to know?” not “What do I want to say?”

Additional Information

Chapters Hosting Events on MDC Conservation Areas

If a Chapter wants to host an outreach event or training class field session on an outside MDC Conservation Area, the Chapter must make this request this via a Special Use Permit. However, if the Chapter is working closely with MDC staff and it's an MDC sponsored/ promoted event, no permit is needed. Please contact your MDC Chapter Advisor or State Coordinator, however, to check with the site manager/district supervisor.

If a Chapter wants to host an outreach event or training class session in an MDC building and has not used the facility previously, the MDC "Use of Department Meeting Facilities by Non-Department Groups Policy" must be followed. Please reach out to your MDC Chapter Advisor or State Coordinator, for the "Application for Use of Missouri Department of Conservation Meeting Facility by a Non-Department Group" form and to ask any questions.

MDC Forms and When to Use Them

Form 2a. CONSERVATION SERVICE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT (INDIVIDUALS)

- If a Master Naturalist volunteer is doing an individual project on a conservation area

Form 2b. CONSERVATION SERVICE VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT (GROUP)

- If Master Naturalist Chapter is doing a volunteer project on a conservation area (filled out by Master Naturalist event coordinator)

Form 2c. GROUP SERVICE VOLUNTEER LOG SHEET

- If a Master Naturalist chapter is doing a volunteer project on a conservation area – filled out for each day on a conservation area (daily sign-in sheet) – must go with form 2c

Form 2d. PARENTAL APPROVAL FORM – Form 2d

- This form is required for all persons under the age of 18 that wish to participate in service volunteer activities at any Missouri Department of Conservation property.

- For youth who are approved to participate in the initial core training, this form needs to be completed prior to the first field session.
- The form is valid through the 12-14 week training. The form does not need to be completed for every field trip session. The form should be kept on file and updated at least annually, if needed.

Master Naturalist Recognition Awards

A Chapter may honor a person who has made a substantial contribution to the Chapter. This person is deemed an honorary member of the Missouri Master Naturalist program and is given a copper dragonfly pin that is similar to the milestone pins. If the Chapter chooses, the Honorary Master Naturalist may be entitled to all the privileges of a member, and may submit service and advanced training hours if they have previously completed requirements of initial certification. Honorary members shall be selected by the affirmative two-thirds vote of the membership present when elections are held.

A Chapter may also choose to establish local awards. An example of such an award might include "the most hours served" or "outstanding member of the year". These awards are completely up to the Chapter to create and award, but they are a fun way to recognize exemplary volunteers.

Fundraising

Fundraising is a necessity for many volunteer programs, and the Master Naturalist Program is no exception. Master Naturalist Chapters can organize events to raise funds and accept donations for various programming needs, such as for special events, to provide scholarships for the core training course, and to work with schools and other organizations to promote conservation and natural resource management in the community. Donations can be tax-deductible and more information on this can be accessed through MU Extension and the Chapter Advisor.

Although fundraising might be a necessity, it is not part of the Missouri Master Naturalist mission. Thus, time spent fundraising should not be included as a part of a volunteer service effort. In addition, discretion should be used relative to the scope of fundraising activities and the transparency with which the money raised is used to benefit the community or for the benefit of a successful educational or community service project.

Member Transfer

When a member moves to a different part of the state or wishes to become active in another Chapter, that member may join the nearest Chapter of choice. The transfer can be made under the following conditions:

1. The transferee brings a letter from their former Chapter certifying that the transferee is a member in good standing. In addition, the letter should include the transferee's core training dates, date of initial certification, subsequent annual certifications, accumulated number of volunteer service hours and advanced training hours,
2. It is strongly recommended that a transferee complete additional training that is specific to the new area and/or ecoregion during the new Chapter's next class training period.
3. The transferee must agree to adhere to all the guidelines and practices of the new Chapter.
4. The new Chapter should accept all volunteer service and advanced training hours certified in the transfer letter.

Membership in Multiple Chapters

Master Naturalist volunteers may not carry membership in multiple Chapters. Master Naturalist Chapters that are within a similar ecoregion are encouraged to work together and offer the same benefits to a volunteer who may be seeking membership other than the one in which they were initially trained. State Program Coordinators should be informed of all membership transfers.

Inactive Members

Members who have obtained initial certification can choose to go inactive at any time, as well as become active again at any time and resume their recertification efforts. If a member stops attending meetings, efforts should be made to contact them and make sure that they know they are welcome to return at any time. In many cases, their absence can be attributed to something as simple as Chapter emails getting caught in their junk folder.

Each Chapter should define what they identify as "inactive". It could entail not recording service or training

hours in a calendar year or set number of months, not attending a minimum number of Chapter meetings each year, not maintaining certification for more than two years, etc.

As long as a volunteer has completed initial certification, they may go inactive and then reinstate their activity at a later time. However, if a Chapter member is on inactive status, they should not receive Chapter benefits and are not qualified to attend statewide advanced training events.

Procedures for Disciplining and/or Removal of Members

In all efforts, the Missouri Master Naturalist Program must remain fair, objective, accurate, and comprehensive. When it becomes obvious that an individual or group of individuals participating in any capacity of the Program is misrepresenting the program and its written objectives, then that individual or group of individuals may be asked to step down from positions of leadership and/or participation in the Program. The Missouri Master Naturalist Program could revoke participation, certification, and/or Chapter charter in such a case.

It is important to review the founding principles of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program before addressing inappropriate behavior. The mission statement, the standards of conduct and the code of ethics contain the primary tenets of the Program.

Chapter Advisors and officers are responsible for making members aware of these key elements and their own bylaws, guidelines, and practices. Chapters shall be vigilant in and responsible for ensuring that members and affiliates are following program guidelines. All volunteers and Program participants are subject to the same level of conduct.

Any participant who suspects an individual (volunteer, Advisor, etc.) is acting in a contrary manor to the Program's tenets or guidelines should contact their Chapter Advisor or the State Program Coordinators. Certain disqualifying convictions or knowledge of pending criminal charges may lead to suspension or removal from the program. Procedures have been

Continued...

Additional Information continued

developed to address the occasion of disciplining an/ or dismissing an applicable member of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program. A case may be brought to the attention of the Chapter Advisors or State Program Coordinators by:

- General public, non-affiliates of the Missouri Master Naturalist Program
- Partnering organizations of the Chapter
- Member(s) of the Chapter
- Chapter Officers and/or Executive Board

MU Extension has developed a “Volunteer Constructive Coaching Guide” that provides a consistent framework and details the constructive coaching process for the MU Extension Chapter Advisor to use for helping to redirect volunteers back into compliance.

<https://extension.missouri.edu/media/wysiwyg/Extensiondata/ExtensionWay/Docs/hr-VolunteerConstructiveCoachingGuide-for-MUProfessionals-2024.pdf>

Rescission of a Chapter

There are several scenarios under which a Chapter can be dissolved or revoked. Possible scenarios include (1) a Chapter loses the interest of its members or (2) none or only a few members are meeting the annual requirements. This type of Chapter is not meeting the goals and objectives of the Missouri Master Naturalist program. At the other end of the spectrum is a Chapter that does not comply with the State Program guidelines. For the overall integrity of the Program, these issues must be addressed and resolved.

A Chapter can be dissolved or revoked under the following conditions:

- A Chapter may self-dissolve by a 2/3 vote of its legitimate active members present and voting at a regular Chapter meeting or special meeting where all members have been appropriately notified. A letter must be submitted to the State Coordinators stating the results of the vote and why the Chapter chooses to dissolve.

- If a Chapter fails to comply with State Program guidelines, then a letter of warning will be issued by the State Program Coordinators. The Chapter Will have six months from the date of the Warning letter to amend its actions and begin complying with guidelines. If the Chapter does not conform at the end of the six-month probation period, its charter shall be revoked.
- If a Chapter overtly contravenes the Program’s guidelines, it should immediately have its charter revoked.

When a Chapter is dissolved, its records will be transferred to the State Coordinators. After covering all Program related expenses, any remaining Chapter assets shall be distributed to the state Master Naturalist Program to continue support and resources for the statewide program or to other non-profit or charitable organizations involved in Master Naturalist Program activities as approved by the chapter’s advisors and the State Program Coordinators.

Program Website

The Missouri Master Naturalist Program website can be accessed at <https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/missouri-master-naturalist>

There are numerous links on this website that provides additional information including a “Frequently Asked Questions” page, a map depicting the locations of existing Chapters and contact information, as well as many other details that provides information about the Program for those with an interest.

Statewide Leadership Coordination Website

The Master Naturalist Statewide Leadership Coordination website provides a central location for advisors, chapter officers, and chairs to access links and order forms to help manage their chapters. This site can be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/view/missourimasternaturalist/home>. With the exception of the Osage Trails Chapter, chapter leadership also has access to these links and order forms through the members page of their respective chapters’ website.

Volunteer Service and Project Approval Form



Please return completed form to your Chapter Advisors and President.

Master Naturalist Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Project Name: _____

Beneficiary/Partner Organization: _____

How will the Master Naturalist program be identified? _____

Location of the project? _____

Time Involved: One-time project: Yes No Date: _____

On-going project: Yes No Dates: _____

Description of the project: _____

Resources needed: _____

Anticipated source(s) of resources: _____

What knowledge will volunteers gain through this project? _____

What new skill(s) will volunteers expect to learn? _____

What impact(s) do you expect the project to have in the community? _____

FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY

Date request received: _____ Approved Service Code: _____ Denied

Status confirmed with MN: Yes Date _____

Status confirmed with Chapter: Yes Date _____

Notes:

Annual Certification Pins



2006: Spadefoot Toad



2007: Dogwood Blossom



2008: Great Blue Heron



2009: Crayfish



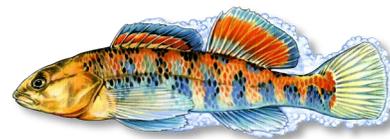
2010: Bobcat



2011: Shortleaf Pine



2012: Regal Fritillary



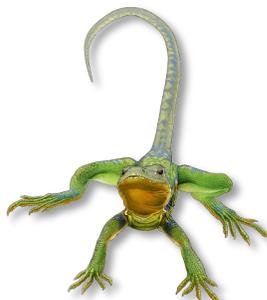
2013: Orangethroat Darter



2014: Black Bear



2015: Prothonotary Warbler



2016: Collared Lizard



2017: Bumble Bee



2018: Mead's Milkweed



2019: Blanding's Turtle



2020: Northern Long-eared Bat



2021: Eastern Meadowlark



2022: Grass Pink



2023: American Burying Beetle



2024: Barred Owl



2025: Brown Headed Nuthatch



2026: Cave Salamander

Missouri Master Naturalist



TM

Milestone Pins & Badges

Missouri
Master Naturalist



Initial Certification



250 hours (Bronze)



500 hours (Pewter)



1,000 hours (Gold)



2,500 hours (Silver)



5,000 hours (Polished Gold
w/ Clear Rhinestone)



7,500 hours (Polished Silver
w/ Blue Rhinestone)



10,000 hours (Black Nickel
w/ Green Rhinestone)



Honorary Master
Naturalist (Copper)



Intern Name Badge



Official Name Badge

Missouri Master Naturalist



TM

The University of Missouri does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, or status as a protected veteran.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, 573-751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to Chief, Public Civil Rights, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240

