



Indiana Master Naturalist

An Introductory Program of Nature
Discovery and Service Learning for Adults

The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils and wildlife and promote volunteer service in local communities.

www.indianamasternaturalist.org

Welcome to the Indiana Master Naturalist Program!

The Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) Program can provide you with many hands-on opportunities to learn about our Hoosier natural resources. It also provides a way for you to share that knowledge, along with your life experiences, through volunteer service to land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, state and local parks, or other natural resource and conservation agencies. The purpose of IMN includes:

- Provide an introduction to Hoosier natural resources through the eyes of resource professionals and experts in the field
- Provide an educational opportunity to individuals 18 years or older
- Provide an opportunity for course participants to establish a short or long-term partnership with a natural resources agency or local organization involved in natural resource management by volunteering as a part of the course
- Provide a financially self-supporting program

This brochure is designed to give you details of how the program works and how you can find a course near you. If you are part of a natural resources agency interested in sponsoring a class, please review the IMN Curriculum and Host Guide posted on the IMN website.

What can I expect if I attend a course?

All courses offer a minimum of 8 3-hour sessions focusing on Indiana's natural resources. The specific topics for each course vary, but in general each series includes sessions related to botany, zoology, geology/soils, water, people and natural resources, and others chosen by the course sponsor.

Instructors, who are selected by the course sponsor, are generally considered experts in their field and provide you with relevant content, hands-on learning, and lots of resources for use on your own. A session on spring wildflowers might include an explanation of the basic plant parts, how plants "work," identification tips, plant uses, and field experience in identifying the plants. Each master naturalist course series ends with an open book quiz that is required in order to receive your certificate of completion.

How much does it cost?

A fee is normally charged, but the dollar amount may vary with the number of sessions, the types of speakers, and the sponsors.

How can I sign up for a course?

The number and locations of courses vary across the state and depend on the time of year and the interest of local natural resources agencies in the program. For information about locations of a course near you, contact the state coordinator. You can also check the state Indiana Master Naturalist website at indianamasternaturalist.org.

If there are no classes scheduled near you, check in with your local soil and water conservation district, county extension office, state park, reservoir, or resource, conservation and development district and let them know you'd be interested in a class if they sponsored it.

Can I sponsor a course?

Course sponsors must be affiliated with a natural resources agency in Indiana. Sponsors have several responsibilities. The general responsibilities are listed on the back of this brochure. For a complete guide to sponsoring an IMN course, review a copy of the IMN Curriculum Guide and Host Manual.

IMN Sponsors:

Resource Conservation & Development Councils
Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Information:

Ginger Murphy, State Coordinator
Division of State Parks and Reservoirs
402 W. Washington Room W298
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: 317-232-4143 Email: gmurphy@dnr.IN.gov
On the Web: indianamasternaturalist.org

How many hours do I need to volunteer?

To receive your certificate of completion, you must commit a minimum of one hour of service per hour of coursework. Your service must be for a state or local park, natural resources agency, or approved local community organization to help with trails, programs, gardening, resource inventory, or other project that they might have available. Your course sponsor will provide a list of local agencies. You will need to check with your course sponsor for approval before starting your volunteer service.

Plan to be flexible----the task the resource agency may need completed may not be exactly what you had in mind.

Remember that you are there to assist them in achieving their mission! If your volunteer service involves public speaking or working with children, participating agencies may require additional training or background checks.

What are the benefits?

Of course, you gain new knowledge of Indiana's plants, wildlife, geology, and geography. You meet other Hoosiers with interests similar to yours. You gain personal satisfaction from "giving back" to your local community through service.

Those individuals who complete their service hours also receive the following:

- a certificate of completion
- an Indiana Master Naturalist pin
- a one year subscription to the Indiana Master Naturalist newsletter

Can I serve as a course instructor?

Instructors are well qualified through education or practical experience in the field. If you are interested in instructing, contact the state coordinator at 317-232-4143.

What is Expected of Students

- Participate in at least 80% of course sessions.
- Complete volunteer service with a local or state natural resources organization (One hour of service per hour of coursework.)
- Complete an open book quiz covering course content.
- Pay registration fee required by sponsor.

What is Expected of Course Sponsors

For a step-by-step guide to sponsoring a course, download the IMN Curriculum Guide and Host Manual. Here's a general overview:

- Natural resources agency or organization.
- Use standard program materials (applications, certificates, etc.).
- Submit application for sponsorship.
- Develop a course outline, with a minimum of 8 3-hour sessions focused on the core curriculum topics (1 Geology/Soils, 1 Water, 2 Botany, 2 Zoology, 1 People and Natural Resources and 1 Miscellaneous-suggested list provided).
- Select qualified instructors for each course.
- Provide name of local course coordinator.
- Provide local publicity for course.
- Collect course fees, including a \$10/person administrative fee for pins, materials, newsletter and other supplies.
- Assemble handouts and other resource materials for participants.
- Provide meeting site and audiovisual equipment.
- Provide course oversight and on-site host.
- Conduct a speaker and course evaluation.
- Return a review of the course to the state coordinator with \$10/person administrative fee.
- Maintain a local list of class participants.
- Provide suggested locations for volunteer service.
- Track volunteer hours and submit names, addresses, and other contact info of those who complete volunteer service to the state coordinator so pins, newsletters, etc. can be provided.
- Distribute certificates, pins, and other forms of recognition to graduates who complete service.

How can I find out about local resources for Indiana Master Naturalist courses?

- Resource, Conservation and Development Councils (RC&Ds): <http://www.IN.gov/oca/ilrc/rcd/>
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts(SWCDs): <http://www.iaswcd.org/>
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service Offices (CES): <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/>
- IDNR State Parks and Reservoirs: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/index.htm>

