

The mission of the Junior Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with young people, age 9-12 years, to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils and wildlife, and promote volunteer service in local communities.

www.indianamasternaturalist.org



Junior Indiana Master Naturalist

An Introductory Program of Nature Discovery and Service Learning for Youth
Ages 9-12

Welcome to the Junior Indiana Master Naturalist Program!

The Junior Indiana Master Naturalist (JIMN) Program can provide children with many hands-on opportunities to learn about our Hoosier natural resources. It also provides a way for them to discover, through volunteer service, the land trusts, soil and water conservation districts, state and local parks, or other natural resource and conservation agencies in Indiana. The purpose of IMN includes:

- Provide an introduction to Hoosier natural resources through the eyes of resource professionals and experts in the field
- Provide a fun and educational opportunity for individuals ages 9-12
- 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 **six hours** of service 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 for 9-12 year olds, please

What can I expect if my children attend a course?

All courses offer a minimum of eight two-hour sessions focusing on Indiana's natural resources in hands-on, age-appropriate ways. 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 are experienced in working with youth as well. They provide youth 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 Junior IMN course begins and ends with short participant survey to evaluate learning.

How much does it cost?

A fee is charged, but the dollar amount is set by the sponsors. Each course includes a \$5/person administrative fee that provides participants with IMN patches and other materials after certification.

How can I sign my children 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

Junior 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

402 W. Washington St., Room W298

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Phone: (317) 232-4143; Email: gmurphy@dnr.IN.gov

On the Web: indianamasternaturalist.org

resource, conservation and development district and let them know you'd be interested in a class for your children if they sponsored it.

What is expected of students?

- Participate in at least 80% of course sessions.
- Complete volunteer service with a local or state natural resources organization (Six total hours of service.)
- Complete a pre- and post-survey during the first and last course sessions.
- Pay registration fee required by sponsor.

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 Junior IMN Curriculum Guide and Host Manual. Workshop hosts are required to provide information regarding how they will handle safety issues for their participants. The recommended ratio of instructors to students is 1 to 10.

Junior IMN Workshops may be held in a variety of ways. Some may choose to host the Junior IMN program as the core part of a summer day camp. Some may offer it as an after school program. Others may plan a Saturday morning or afternoon schedule.

Check out the Junior IMN Curriculum Guide and Host Manual at www.indianamasternaturalist.org for details.

How many hours will my children need to volunteer?

To receive a certificate of completion, children must commit a **minimum of six hours of service**. 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. Some course sponsors may build this service learning into the course; others may choose to allow you to arrange the volunteer service for your youth. Be sure to check with your course sponsor for approval before starting volunteer service for your children. Plan to be flexible-the task the resource agency may need completed may not be exactly what you had in mind. Remember that you and your children are there to assist them in achieving their mission!

What are the benefits?

Of course, your children 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. And, maybe most important of all, your children will have a great time getting outdoors!

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

- a certificate of completion
- a Junior Indiana Master Naturalist patch

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>

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.

