

*Missouri
Master Naturalist*



State Program Manual



January 2022

Introduction

The **Missouri Master Naturalist State Program Manual** is a resource for conducting the Missouri Master Naturalist program. It contains the guidelines for the administration and operation of this volunteer program. Chapter Advisors, officers, board members, and volunteers should all be familiar with this manual.

The Manual provides an overview of the Program including the Master Naturalist mission and objectives. It details the requirements for certification, training, and volunteer service. Guidelines for Chapter organization, the use of the Program name and logo, and Program marketing are also included.

Copies of the Manual can be requested from the State Coordinators. It can also be downloaded from the resource section of the Missouri Master Naturalist website at

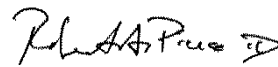
<http://extension.missouri.edu/masternaturalist/>.

We ask that you read this Manual carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise.

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Table of Contents

Master Naturalist Program Mission, Objectives and Overview	4
Local Partnerships.....	5
Membership Categories.....	6
Certification Requirements	7
Certification Pins and Name Badge	8
Initial Training	9
Requirements.....	9
Learning Objectives.....	11
Planning and Conducting Initial Training.....	13
Tips for a Successful Training Course.....	14
Advance Training	16
Criteria and Approval.....	16
Resources for Advance Training.....	17
Forms of Advance Training.....	18
Possible Advanced Training Topics.....	19
Earning Advanced Training Hours.....	22
Volunteer Service Requirements	23
Service Overview.....	23
Capstone Projects	24
Locating Service Opportunities.....	25
Counting Service Hours.....	25
Volunteer Project Approval Form.....	26
Keeping Track of Service Hours	27
Milestone Pins.....	27
Chapter Organization	28
Officers.....	28
Officer Elections.....	28
Officer Responsibilities.....	29
Committees.....	29
Standards of Conduct.....	30
Code of Ethics.....	31
Role of Chapter Advisors.....	32
Background Checks	33
University of Missouri Civil Rights and Title IX Office	33

Program Name and Logo Use	33
The Name of the Program.....	34
Using the Name.....	34
Program Logo.....	35
Graphic Design Guidelines.....	35
Logo Use.....	36
Identifying Sponsors and Donors.....	36
Program Marketing Guidelines	37
Working with the Media.....	37
Talking Points.....	39
Marketing in a Nutshell.....	40
Writing Strong Marketing Copy.....	40
Additional Information	41
Obtaining Insurance Coverage for Master Naturalist Activities.....	41
Master Naturalist Recognition Awards.....	41
Member Transfer.....	42
Membership in Multiple Chapters.....	42
Inactive Members.....	42
Procedures' for Disciplining and/or Removal of Members.....	42
Rescission of a Chapter.....	43

Master Naturalist Program 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, Missouri Naturalist 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 resources volunteer service and educational program designed for adult learners who are interested in supporting conservation. Upon completion of a 40-hour initial training course, participants go on to provide volunteer service within their community. Participants accepted into the Program are expected to complete the initial training course, eight hours of advanced training and provide 40 hours of volunteer service to become certified as a Missouri Master Naturalist.

The Missouri Master Naturalist started in 2004. The Program is designed as a “Chapter-based Program” and currently exists as a collection of 12 Chapters across the state that adhere to an established set of training and learning objectives, program guidelines and requirements. The Program is directed at the state level by two Program Coordinators who are employed by the sponsoring organizations, MDC and MU Extension through the School of Natural Resources (the academic home for this MU Extension “named” Program) at the University of Missouri.

Training is organized and conducted for volunteer participants at the local level by a team made up of Chapter Advisors that represent MU Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation 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 their training course. They are responsible for reviewing and approving applicants to be enrolled in the course.

Volunteers are trained and certified at the local level through their respective Chapter. Upon joining the Program Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers complete a minimum of 40 hours of initial training designed to provide them with a foundation of natural resource knowledge and a skill set for conservation volunteer service. To become certified, volunteers must complete the initial training, eight hours of advanced training, and 40 hours of approved volunteer service. Advanced training is in a subject of interest and approved by the local Chapter. Volunteer service is fulfilled through a variety of projects related to citizen science, environmental stewardship, natural resources education and interpretation, and program support. Each year following initial certification volunteers complete an additional eight hours of advance training and 40 hours of volunteer service to maintain their certification as a Missouri Master Naturalist. Master Naturalists are recognized as volunteers that represent MU Extension and the MDC within their respective community.

Chapters are self-sustaining organizations with elected officers and other 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 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 a Chapter committees. These committees may also include natural resources personnel, the 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. Local partner organizations can provide the Chapter with training and service opportunities as well as other resources to support the Program. In turn they benefit from association with the Master Naturalist program and from local service projects that the volunteers perform. It is important that the partner organizations also share a mission for natural resource-related outcomes in the community. Partnerships need to be mutually beneficial to both the Chapter and the partner organization. Chapters may have partners that come and go from the Program as their focus changes. 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 partnerships (*note: these are **local** organizations and chapters verses state or national*):

- Federal agency friends group (*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, Native Plant Society, etc.
- Non-profit organizations such as a watershed alliance

Requirements and services local partners should provide:

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

Membership Categories

Missouri Master Naturalist in Training: Participant of an official, initial training course from the first day of class to the end of the training period, continuing until the participant has completed the training course with a minimum of 40 hours of classroom and field training.

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.

- **Missouri Master Naturalist Intern:** Member who has completed the initial training, but has not yet certified.
- **Certified Missouri Master Naturalist:** Volunteer who has graduated from an initial training course and has successfully completed the initial training and service requirements. Also, a certified Missouri Master Naturalist that maintains their annual certification.

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

Certification Requirements

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

- The State Program approved initial core training with a *minimum* of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction.
- A *minimum* of eight contact hours of Chapter-approved advanced training.
- A *minimum* of 40 hours of Chapter-approved volunteer service.

Certification

Volunteers have a **maximum of fifteen consecutive months**, or less, from the start of the initial training course to complete the above requirements and become a certified Master Naturalist. Once certified, volunteers will receive a name badge, state awarded certificate, and dragonfly pin (Figure 1). If volunteers do not finish the above requirements in the fifteen month allotment, they will remain Master Naturalist interns for the next twelve month period, at which time they may complete the requirements and become certified. **If they do not complete the requirements in this timeframe they are no longer associated with the Program.** A Chapter may choose to allow volunteers to begin earning volunteer service hours toward certification before they complete their initial training.

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. If a volunteer completes an additional eight hours of approved advanced training and 40 hours of volunteer service in the same year they received their initial certification they are considered recertified and will receive that current years recertification pin (Figure 2).

Every year that volunteers successfully recertify, they receive a specially designed pin. These limited edition pins are designed by a MDC artist. They depict Missouri flora and fauna. Volunteers who are active but unable to recertify in a given 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 have the opportunity to recertify every year.

Figure 1: Official Master Naturalist Name Badge and Initial Certification Pin

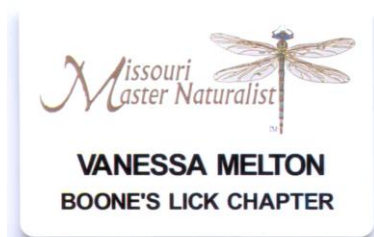
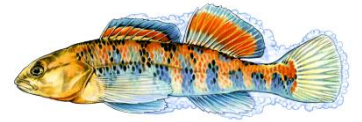
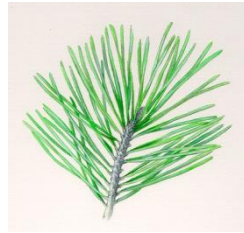


Figure 2. Master Naturalist Annual Certification Pins



- Spadefoot Toad - 2006 certification pin
- Dogwood Blossom - 2007 certification pin
- Great Blue Heron- 2008 certification pin
- Crayfish – 2009 certification pin
- Bobcat – 2010 certification pin
- Shortleaf Pine – 2011 certification pin
- Regal Fritillary – 2012 certification pin
- Orangethroat Darter – 2013 certification pin
- Black Bear – 2014 certification pin
- Prothonotary Warbler 2015 certification pin
- Collared Lizard – 2016 certification pin
- Bumble Bee – 2017 certification pin
- Mead’s Milkweed – 2018 certification pin
- Blanding’s Turtle – 2019 certification pin
- Northern Long-eared Bat – 2020 certification pin
- Western Meadowlark – 2021 certification pin
- Grass Pink – 2022 certification pin



Initial Training

Requirements

The *minimum* requirement for initial training includes 40 hours of combined classroom and field experiences. These educational sessions are designed to expose volunteers to a wide variety of natural resource disciplines, providing them with a high-quality learning experience. The sessions are designed to teach trainees about their local natural resources and techniques for their successful management. Each session provides volunteers with access to resources needed to teach this information to others.

Missouri has a diversity of ecological communities, wildlife populations, and natural communities that are unique to each area of the state. Chapters have the opportunity to customize training to focus on the local ecosystems. A **Training Coordination Committee** should be formed by the Chapter Advisors and members to plan the training schedule well in advance of conducting the training. This Committee should use expertise from the Department of Conservation, MU Extension, local universities, nature centers, and research centers, as well as local landowners and managers for organizing and instructing the training sessions. With oversight from the Chapter Advisors and Board, the Training Coordination Committee should plan and facilitate the training sessions so that class and field sessions adequately cover the established learning objectives (page 11).

Suggested categories of topics:

- **Roles, responsibilities, and benefits of being a Missouri Master Naturalist**
Trainees should understand the purpose and mission of the Program. They should understand this is a volunteer program and commit to participate as a volunteer. This information should be discussed during a **training course orientation**, six – eight weeks prior to the start of training, again during the first class meeting, and repeatedly throughout the training course. The mission of the Program and the missions of MDC and MUE (page 4) should be continually reinforced throughout subsequent training sessions. It is the responsibility of the Chapter training coordinators or other appropriate Chapter representatives to inform and enforce the Program **Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct** (pages 30-31) to the new Missouri Master Naturalist trainees of each class.
- **Historical perspectives of naturalists in Missouri and elsewhere**
Naturalists were frontiersmen, pioneers, observers, interpreters and teachers. They were important in the history of our state. Master Naturalist training should include programs designed to create an appreciation for the role that these early naturalists played in Missouri and the history of our country. Because many of the early naturalists kept accurate records of what they observed, this study can provide an interesting way for people to realize the changes in our landscapes over time. Furthermore, studying those early “master naturalists” creates a sense of appreciation that goes along with the title of Missouri Master Naturalist.
- **Traditional disciplines of a naturalist**
The original naturalists were botanists, entomologists, ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, paleontologists and geologists. Professionals within these disciplines are

available at universities, nature centers and research centers. These natural scientists are generally eager to share their disciplines and may be excellent teachers. An effective way to incorporate these disciplines into training sessions is in a field trip situation. Inviting natural scientists along as “Master Naturalist faculty” on field sessions is an effective way for Master Naturalists to be exposed to these disciplines first hand. Many of those enrolled in Master Naturalist training may also have some formal training in these disciplines.

- **Ecological concepts**

Ecological concepts may be discussed in a classroom situation – but when combined with case studies and/or field demonstrations, these concepts take on more relevant meaning. Missouri Master Naturalists should come away from their training sessions with an accurate baseline understanding of what is meant by some of the ecological concepts and ideas that need to be understood in order to manage natural resources. These include the functional definitions of *ecosystems, landscapes, communities, species assemblages, and populations*. They should be exposed to concepts of *biodiversity and species diversity*. Training sessions should expose the dynamics of natural systems – including *succession, natural and human disturbances, as well as recovery and restoration*.

- **Ecoregions of Missouri**

Missouri Master Naturalists should be trained to understand the basic differences among the various ecoregions of the state. In addition, they should be trained to understand the unique character and interactions among the *geology, climate, water, soils, flora, fauna and major land uses* in their local ecoregion.

- **Management of natural systems**

Master Naturalist trainees should be exposed to the management of natural systems, including *forest ecology and management, grassland ecology and management, wetland ecology and management, urban habitat ecology and management and aquatic ecology and management*. These applied fields are each represented by natural resource professionals with the qualifications to lead these sessions. Because not all parts of the state have land types suitable for these managed systems, training sessions should focus on those managed systems that are a dominant feature in the local area.

- **Interpretation and communications**

Missouri Master Naturalists are volunteers who represent the Program’s efforts to the public. Through their training, Master Naturalists should be given an opportunity to develop presentation skills and active learning techniques. The Missouri Master Naturalist Chapter should function as a reservoir of teaching resources and materials for use by Chapter members. The availability and effective use of these resources should be reviewed as part of the initial training.

Chapters are encouraged to discuss methods of training with training committees and Board members of other Chapters. Sample training course schedules are available from the State Program Coordinators. **All training course schedules must be approved by the State Coordinators and Chapter Advisors prior to promotion and implementation of training.**

Learning Objectives

These are the broad topics covered in the initial training course and constitute the “curriculum” for the course. Listed beneath each heading are the knowledge and skills trainees are expected to demonstrate as a result of their participation in the initial training course:

- An Introduction to Conservation
 - Explain the reasons for conservation: economic, political, aesthetic, scientific, and moral.
 - Compare and contrast preservation, restoration and management.
 - Be able to explain the missions of the sponsoring agencies (MDC, MUE) and how the Master Naturalist program supports these missions.

- The Role of Naturalists in Conservation
 - Identify several naturalists who have influenced our knowledge of Missouri resources.
 - Start a nature journal.
 - Describe characteristics of naturalists and the study of various naturalist disciplines.
 - Be able to use a dichotomous key for identification.

- Historical Overview of Resources and Use (emphasis on local stories)
 - Know that what they see on the landscape today is different than what it was 50, 150, 200 years ago.
 - Know how humans have changed natural processes that lead to changed ecosystems (fire, timber harvest, channelization, agriculture, urbanization).
 - Explain how we know what was here prior to settlement (Lewis and Clark, other early explorers, survey notes, Steyermark, etc.).
 - Explain how exploitation of resources led to conservation as it exists today.

- Ecological Concepts
 - Describe processes involved in ecological succession including water cycle and food webs.
 - Describe the concepts of limiting factors and carrying capacity and why they are important.
 - Be able to define succession.
 - Describe influences to biodiversity and why it is important.
 - Describe the difference between a habitat and a niche and why it is important.
 - Describe the differences between indigenous, exotic and invasive species and their impacts.

- Ecoregions Overview
 - Describe and locate their local ecoregions.
 - Describe in detail a land type association in their location.
 - Explain how slope and aspect influence natural communities.

- Ecosystems and Natural Communities
 - List some of the characteristics that define ecosystems.
 - Identify two or three characteristics of one ecosystem.
 - Describe a current human activity and how it impacts an ecosystem in your location.
 - Identify representative plants, animals and natural communities in an ecosystem in your location.

- Management Concepts
 - Describe some ways in which natural communities are renewable.
 - Describe the role of harvest in managing plant and animal populations.
 - Describe the processes of species and/or habitat manipulation as population and community management tools.
 - Explain how agencies strive to balance natural resource management and public recreation to the benefit of both.

- Natural Resource Education and Interpretation
 - Be able to apply principles of natural resource interpretation.
 - Understand that your role is to provide balanced information, as opposed to advocacy.
 - Know it is better to say “I don’t know” than communicate inaccurate or false information.
 - Know where to find information.

- Program Administration
 - Understand the expectations for your participation in the Master Naturalist program.
 - Know how to find out about advanced training and service opportunities and how to get them approved.
 - Be able to record your service hours on an online reporting system.

Planning and Conducting an Initial Training Course

The Chapter Training Coordinating Committee, with guidance and oversight from the Chapter Advisors, will organize training sessions and determine when and where the course will be offered. Training sessions are generally held once a week, plus a minimum of at least three Saturday field sessions, (more can be scheduled) for 11-14 weeks; this is variable based on what your Chapter has planned. Field training sessions will usually last longer than a class period, and for that reason are generally held on a weekend.

Planning Timeline

- A draft schedule and budget needs to be sent to the State Coordinators for review and approval at least **eight weeks** prior to the start of the course and before advertising the training.
- MDC and MU Extension have communication and media specialists that will assist in producing and distributing promotional materials and media releases advertising the training. This can be coordinated locally or through the State Program Coordinators.
- An orientation session to familiarize the expectations and requirements of the Program should be scheduled **six-eight weeks** prior to the start of the training course.
- Registration deadline should be set a minimum of **four weeks** prior to the start of the course to insure return of the required background checks and procurement of training course resource materials.

Setting Course Fees

This is a fee-based program. Participant fees help cover the program costs. MU Extension Advisors handle acceptance of course fees and pay any bills related to the course. Training course fees are set at \$110 statewide. After training course expenses are covered the remainder of the fee stays with the Chapter and can be used for Chapter activities.

1. The State Coordinator for MU Extension will receive \$63 per participant of the training fee for the state program. This covers transaction fees for online training course registration along with some of the program expenses, including:
 - file boxes and folders for the training resource materials
 - MDC books and resources
 - name badges
 - background check fees
 - other items as needed
2. The Chapter Advisors and Chapter Training Coordinating Committee should identify additional training expenses such as:
 - administrative costs for printing, mailing, copying, record keeping, etc.
 - presenter stipend or mileage
 - equipment rental (such as canoes for an aquatic study)
 - meeting space

Class Attendance

Each Chapter should set a standard for the maximum number of classes that may be missed during a given training cycle. Chapters are encouraged to keep this standard to a minimum. If a volunteer must miss more classes than the local standard allows, the Chapter may consider an exception to their rule in special circumstances, such as medical problems, family illness, accidents, etc. Trainees are required to make up missed classes by attending the appropriate classes within a year. “Appropriate” means the Chapter could allow an advanced training class with similar content to count as make-up, or require it be the same subject class presented during the next training cycle. If an advanced training class is used as make-up, then for that individual, it does not also count as advanced training. Classes must account for only one type of training – initial training or advanced training. Until these classes are made up, a volunteer cannot become a Certified Missouri Master Naturalist, but may earn volunteer service hours. A volunteer may also attend the same subject class in another Chapters training course given adequate prior notification, permission and space availability.

Educational Materials

The training materials received during the initial core training course are provided by the Missouri Department of Conservation and MU Extension, and paid for by course fees. The topics of these publications span the breadth of natural resources found in Missouri. Some of the materials are tailored to each specific Chapter in order to focus on the unique ecosystems in the local area.

Tips for a Successful Training Course

The following are suggestions for organizing training that will help sessions run smoothly and spread the responsibilities among members of the Training Coordinating Committee.

- Provide tent cards and/or name tags for participants, and name tags for speakers and Coordinating Committee members. Encourage trainees and Chapter members to wear their name tag each week.
- Shortly after training begins; gather a list of the names of the participants spelled how they would like it to appear on their Master Naturalist intern name badge. Send the list to the MDC State Coordinator, who will have them made and sent to you. Their intern name badge should be presented on graduation night.
- Contact Speakers well in advance
 - Once speakers have been contacted, send them a letter outlining the date and time for their presentation, the objectives you want them to cover, the audio/video equipment that will be available, directions to the meeting site, etc. Include a list of the materials on their topic the participants will receive, and the training schedule for the entire session so they can see who else is presenting.

- Two weeks before the session at which they will speak, contact speakers to provide any last minute information, make sure they have the equipment they need, identify hand out needs, and provide directions to the meeting space.
 - Ask participants to evaluate each session and provide that feedback to the speakers.
 - Follow-up with a thank you.
- Assign a host for each week of the training. This will help all of the training committee stay involved. Responsibilities include:
 - Greet speakers the night of class and help them set up
 - Introduce speakers
 - Moderate the session
 - Lead discussion on how content of the session connects to other course sessions
 - Review resource material for the following weeks session
 - Remind participants who have signed up for food
- Assign a field trip coordinator for each field training session. Responsibilities include:
 - Provide map and driving directions
 - Contact the location contacts two weeks ahead of time to confirm times, etc.
 - Arrange to have water, bug spray, a first aid kit, etc.
 - Discuss arrangements with the class during the meeting before the trip. Include what they need to bring, appropriate attire, where to meet, get a list of participants and who's driving, and provide maps and driving directions.
 - If the field trip will last all day, make sure participants know to bring a sack lunch or make arrangements to provide lunch.
- Include social time in your training each week. Consider an informal snack time before or during each meeting.
 - Provide snacks the first night, and then ask participants to sign up to bring snacks for future meetings.
 - If your training is in the evening, make the snack as substantial as a light supper. This will be appreciated by busy participants, many of whom will be coming to training from work.
- Make graduation fun and memorable.
 - Graduation is the time in which the Master Naturalist trainees become Master Naturalist Interns and receive their Master Naturalist Intern name badge.
 - Invite a representative from each partner organization to speak briefly.
 - Invite presenters who have been involved with the training.
 - Have participants invite friends and family members.
 - Have a cake decorated with the Master Naturalist logo.
 - During the graduation ceremony, provide participants an opportunity to share some of their thoughts and experiences about the training and the Program. Make this event a celebration of accomplishments!

Advanced Training

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 as training hours.

The purpose of advanced training is to provide Missouri Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus on specific topics that interest them and allow them to better 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 generally 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 also be a clearinghouse for notifying members of approved advanced training opportunities that exist at other locations.

Advanced Training Criteria and Approval

Advanced training courses may be made available directly through the local MUE 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 the 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 MUE, 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 advance training requirements.** A record of advance 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 in order 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:

- Promote continued learning and development of naturalist skills?
- Provide Master Naturalists with knowledge and skills to work in volunteer efforts?
- Provide Master Naturalists an opportunity to focus their interests in one or a few specific topics?
- Build on the core curriculum provided in the initial training course?
- Provide natural resource management issues and information applicable to Missouri?
- Direct trained volunteers toward specific programs in need of their services?
- Provide practical information and training for application in volunteer efforts?
- 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.*

The following list provides some sources for advanced training. The list is not all-inclusive and Chapter members are encouraged to provide additional ideas and suggestions.

Advanced Training Resources

Federal and Government Agencies

- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service

Colleges and Universities:

- University of Missouri
- Local Colleges and Universities

Technical Specialists

- Ecologists
- Biologists
- Botanists
- Foresters
- Wildlife Managers
- Environmental Professionals
- Conservationists
- Geologists

- Earth Scientists
- Meteorologists

Other Specialists

- Human Resources
- Educators
- Disability
- Special Needs

Special Interest Organizations / Clubs

- Missouri Audubon Society
- Conservation Federation of Missouri
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wilderness Society
- Conservation Clubs

Local / Regional Resource-Based Businesses

- Natural Landscapers
- Hunting / Fishing Services (Guides and Preserves)
- Taxidermists
- Native Species Nurseries
- Timber Industry Professionals (logging, chip mills)
- Mineral Industry Professionals (sand / gravel, lead)

Master Naturalist members with areas of natural resource expertise

Forms of Advanced Training

Various types of training forums exist to help meet the needs of the membership. These forums include guest speakers, workshops, video training, courses, field trips/tours, and engaged discussions. All advance training must be approved prior to counting for training hours.

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 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.

Courses: There are numerous courses available either presented in a classroom setting or on-line. 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.

Possible Advanced Training Topics

The list of topics is not all-inclusive: Chapter members are encouraged to provide ideas and suggestions for other potential topics that may be of interest.

1. Life Sciences:
 - A. Improved Understanding of Ecological Concepts, Ecological Communities/Regions and Habitat Types
 1. Lakes
 2. Rivers
 3. Streams
 4. Wetlands
 5. Woodlands
 6. Forests
 7. Prairies
 8. Savannas
 - B. Ecology and Management of Wildlife and Fisheries
 1. Terrestrial wildlife (i.e., mammals, avian, reptiles)
 2. Aquatic wildlife (amphibians, reptiles, fish)
 3. Herbivores, Omnivores, Carnivores
 4. Insects and pollinators (aquatic, terrestrial)
 5. Life cycles of species
 6. Invasive Species
 7. Threatened and Endangered Species
 8. Missouri species of concern

- C. Plant Communities
 - 1. Ecological plant succession
 - 2. Early successional communities (i.e., grasslands, prairies)
 - 3. Late succession plant communities (woodlands and forests)
 - 4. Aquatic plants
 - 5. Invasive species
 - 6. Threatened and endangered plant species
 - 7. Missouri plant species of concern.

- 2. Physical Sciences:
 - A. Earth Science
 - 1. Meteorology and Climate (basics, historical, trends)
 - 2. Minerals / Rocks
 - 3. Earth Processes
 - 4. Hydrologic Cycle
 - 5. Land formation
 - a. Impacts of weathering (i.e., wind, water, glaciations, warming and other geological events such as earthquakes, floods etc....)
 - b. Soil formation
 - c. Topography (slope, aspect, Karst)
 - 6. Missouri Geology (general, local, regional)
 - B. Astronomy
 - 1. Earth – Sun relationships
 - 2. Common constellations (by season)

- 3. Missouri's Natural Resources:
 - A. Economic Value to Missouri
 - 1. Renewable natural resources (i.e., timber, wildlife, fisheries)
 - 2. Non-renewable (minerals, petroleum)
 - B. Recreational Value to Missouri
 - 1. Water – based (lakes, rivers, springs)
 - 2. Land – based (forests, prairies, caves, cultural)
 - 3. Fisheries and Wildlife values (from hunting and fishing or from non-consumptive use from tourism and bird watching etc...)

- 4. Management Practices:
 - A. Fisheries and Wildlife Habitat
 - 1. Hunting / Fishing
 - 2. Habitat enhancement techniques (i.e., prescribed fire, timber stand improvement practices, edge feathering etc.

- B. Overview of Incentive and Cost-Share Programs
 - 1. Missouri Department of Conservation programs
 - 2. USDA NRCS cost-share programs

- 5. Basic Outdoor Skills:
 - A. Location / Direction (compass, Global Positioning System (GPS))
 - B. Map skills (reading, making, basic and advanced, GIS)
 - C. Orienteering
 - D. Safety and first aid
 - E. Consumptive outdoor skills (hunting, trapping, fishing, and related skills)

- 6. Environmental and Natural Resource Laws and Regulations (Federal and Missouri):
 - A. Impact Assessment
 - B. Water Quality
 - C. Air Quality
 - D. Waste Management
 - E. Species Protection and Management (Endangered Species, Wildlife Codes)
 - F. Cultural Resources (prehistoric and historic)

- 7. Volunteer Support and Skills:
 - A. Presentations (preparing and presenting)
 - B. Public interaction and speaking tips
 - C. Computer support skills (Power Point, Internet)
 - D. Documenting (photography, sketching, journaling)
 - E. Grant writing
 - F. Getting Started: planning, implementing, wrap-up
 - 1. Group Actions: identify roles and responsibilities
 - 2. Individual Actions

- 8. Special Topics:
 - A. Encroachment
 - B. Environmental Politics
 - C. Human dimensions in resource management
 - D. Risk Assessment and ethics
 - E. Media relations (as it pertains to conservation issues)
 - F. Sustainability
 - G. Nuisance wildlife
 - H. Endangered Species
 - I. Agricultural practices
 - J. Climate Change
 - K. Pollution
 - 1. Water (surface / ground)

- 2. Land (Littering, etc.)
- 3. Visual (clear-cutting, billboards etc.)
- L. Waste Management (incinerators, landfills, recycling, litter control etc.)
- M. Balancing Preservationist approach / sustainable approach

9. Special Needs Naturalist:

- A. Creating an environment for all naturalists
- B. Children and their special needs
- C. Elderly and their special needs
- D. Challenged and their special needs

10. Equipment and Tools:

- A. Types and their application
- B. Safety
 - 1. Procedures
 - 2. Equipment use (i.e., motorized, chain saw, drip torch for conducting timber management and prescribed burns etc....)

11. Proper Use of Pesticides:

- A. Certified Pesticide Applicator Program
- B. Herbicides
- C. Insecticides
- D. Fungicides
- E. Rodenticides

12. Conservation Education

- A. Discover Nature Fishing (MDC)
- B. Discover Nature Schools (MDC)
- C. Leopold Education Project
- D. Project Learning Tree
- E. Project WET
- F. Project WILD

Earning Advanced Training Hours

Advanced training hours can be accrued when the participant is still attending the initial core training course. The participant must still have the opportunity approved by the appropriate committee.

Programs at monthly meetings should not count toward advanced training unless specified ahead of time. If a monthly meeting program is designated as advanced training, you may record the

number of hours as advanced training in addition to the one hour of service you record for meeting attendance.

Often service projects may have training associated with them. There is no hard and fast rule about whether to count that time as advanced training or service. In general, if the training is done onsite as part of the service, it will count as service. If the training is a course that must be completed before service, it will count as advanced training.

For example:

- Advanced training
 - Project Learning Tree educator training
 - Water quality monitoring courses
 - Birding 101
- Service
 - learning to use a seed cleaner
 - learning to identify butterflies in preparation for a monitoring project
 - learning to identify plants for seed collecting

Volunteer Service Requirements

Service Overview

As part of the criteria for attaining certification, a Missouri Master Naturalist intern must complete a minimum of 40 volunteer service hours **within 15 months** of the beginning of the initial 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 they may see a need and design their own project. Volunteers should be encouraged to design projects that are interesting to them and capitalize on their individual talents. All volunteer service must be pre-approved by the Chapter Advisors or a Volunteer Service Committee, and must be dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within your community. One of the purposes of pre-approving the project is to allow the volunteer to be covered by MU Extension liability insurance while performing the activity. When performing volunteer service, Master Naturalist members should wear their Master Naturalist name badge and insure 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 towards certification for that given year. Unanticipated situations, i.e. family illness, medical procedures, accidents, etc., that will 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

The Chapter Advisors and Training Coordinating Committee work together to develop a capstone project(s) to be completed after the new trainees finish their initial 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 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.

A capstone experience is a project with a definite end result that can be completed 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 initial 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 Chapters Partners 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. An *example* of a volunteer project approval form that can be used or modified for your Chapter can be found on page 28.

Counting Volunteer Service Hours

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 Gardner and MDC Nature Center volunteers all report service hours towards 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.

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 you spend two hours at a committee meeting, you 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.

Volunteer Project Approval Form

1. Master Naturalist Requesting Approval: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

2. Project Name: _____

3. Beneficiary: _____

How will the Master Naturalist program be identified? _____

4. Location: _____

5. Time involved:

One-time project? _____ Date: _____

On-going project? _____ Dates: _____

6. Description: _____

7. Resources needed: _____

8. Anticipated source(s) of resources: _____

9. What knowledge can the volunteers expect to gain through this project? _____

10. What new skill(s) can the volunteers expect to learn?

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

Date request received: _____

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Disapproved: _____ Date: _____

Status confirmed with MN: _____(date) Status confirmed with chapter: _____

Service Code: _____

Approval Committee notes:

Keeping Track of Service Hours

Volunteers are **required** to log their service hours with the Chapter. Recorded hours are counted towards initial certification, annual recertification, and milestones. This information is also used by MDC and MUE for continued support of the Program. It is also 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 at least 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.

Milestone Pins

The Master Naturalist program offers a series of pins commemorating different milestone achievements. Milestone pins honor volunteers who have given 250, 500, 1,000, 2,500, and 5,000, and 7,500 hours of service and are maintaining annual certification. These hours are cumulative. Volunteers may reach a milestone within one year or over the course of several years.



Figure 3. Milestone pins. Left to right, top to bottom: Initial Certification; 250 hours (bronze); 500 hours (pewter); 1,000 hours (gold); 2,500 hours (silver); 5,000 hours (polished gold with diamond rhinestone); 7,500 hours (polished silver with blue rhinestone)

Chapter Organization

Master Naturalist Chapters are self-administrating groups. Following completion of the first initial core training course MDC and MUE Chapter Advisors work closely with members to identify the organizational needs of the Chapter. Most Chapters have an elected board of officers and several working committees. The program by-laws require officer elections to take place 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. Listed below are suggestions for setting up officers and committees. Additional information can be found in the program by-laws.

Officers

Your 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 in mid-December), serve as the point of contact with the state Master Naturalist Program Coordinators, and transfer information from the state Program Coordinators to Chapter members

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, insures accurate and up-to-date record of members' volunteer and training hours are kept

Treasurer- regularly requests financial account statements from the local MUE office, collects and disburses funds as needed, provides financial reports to the Chapter

Officers or Board Members 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 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, should be allowed to vote. Honorary Master Naturalists may vote if the Chapter chooses. Master Naturalists in Training are not allowed to vote. Refer to the program by-laws for more details on the suggested election process.

Officer Responsibilities

Participants of the Missouri Master Naturalist program represent the sponsoring organizations (MUE 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 the MDC and MUE.

Chapter Advisors, Officers, and Board Members are responsible for ensuring every member of the Chapter has an understanding of these missions (page 4). All activities performed by members of Chapter members should support these missions and adhere to the Program's Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics (pages 32 and 33).

Committees

At a Chapter meeting the Board of Officers, Chapter Advisors, and members should discuss the main tasks that need to be done 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 initial core training courses for new classes.

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.

Standards of Conduct

Missouri Master Naturalist program volunteers shall at all times:

1. Uphold the commitment made to the program and the required volunteer and advanced training hours required by the program.
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 and 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. Avoid advocacy, lobbying or promoting political issues.
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.

MU Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

MU Extension has a volunteer code of conduct policy for all their volunteer programs, including the Master Naturalist program. All currently active volunteers must agree to these standards of conduct by signing an MU Extension agreement form annually. The MU Extension Master Naturalist Chapter Advisor will provide 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 A PDF of the policy can be found at [MU Extension Volunteer Code of Conduct \(PDF, revised 1/31/18\)](#)

To learn more about volunteer conduct, watch the MU Extension Volunteer Policy explained video at <http://extension.missouri.edu/hr/volunteers.aspx>

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.

Role of Chapter Advisors

The MDC and MUE Chapter Advisors provide leadership, oversight, and approval for Chapter activities. They also function as liaisons to the State Program Coordinators. Chapter Advisors are volunteer's first point of contact in matters related to State Program guidelines. Advisors roles are to:

1. Ensure the Master Naturalist program is conducted according to the guidelines established by the MDC and MUE.
2. Be Chapter supporters. Provides oversight, give advice, make recommendations, and inform Chapter members of appropriate business in a timely manner.
3. Provide guidance for the initial training course, service hour and advanced training approval process.
4. Know and communicate the goals, activities and mission of the program.
5. Provide guidance to the officers of the Chapter the expectations for their 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 Chapter's to keep accurate records of volunteer and training hours, as well as active and inactive status of members.

Background Checks

The Missouri Master Naturalist program conducts a background check on all applicants. Applicants will be expected to sign a waiver that allows for the background screening process to be conducted. The screening process checks for a criminal record as well as child abuse and neglect, and has been implemented to ensure the safety of both children and adults. **All applicants must submit to the background check prior to be accepted into the Master Naturalist program.** All information gathered in the screening process is considered confidential. Details on the background check process will be provided to potential applicants at the training course orientation or during their application process.

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. 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 MUE. 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 Universities 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 at <http://titleix.missouri.edu/>

Program Name and Logo Use

(Adapted from the Texas Master Naturalist Marketing and Identity Guide prepared by Elizabeth Gregory, Extension Communications Specialist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.)

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 “Blue Valley Master Naturalist,” dilutes the potential impact of name repetition and obscures the relationship between the local 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, doing a radio show, 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 a 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.

Only members of the Program may use any of the following titles associated with the Program: Master Naturalist, Missouri Master Naturalist or Certified Master Naturalist. Administrators of the Program and members of MU Extension and MDC who are in a direct supporting role, but are not trained, in training or certified may not promote themselves as having any of these titles unless they have completed their training and all certification requirements.

The Missouri Master Naturalist title may not be identified with any particular political viewpoint and may not be used by groups or individuals as they participate in political advocacy. The title is to be used only when doing unpaid volunteer work associated with and approved by the Program.

Violation of the guidelines concerning the use of the title of Missouri Master Naturalist is grounds for removing the certification of a member or possible grounds for revoking the charter of a Chapter.

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 Pronto Pro regular font. Contact the State Coordinators for electronic files of the logo.



Figure 4. Missouri Master Naturalist Official Program 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 (page 8). 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 MUE 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 Trade mark (™) 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 air time, anything that helps the Chapter achieve its goals objectives (see page 5).

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 MUE have communication specialist that can assist you with communication and marketing. Chapter media activities should also be coordinated with your Chapter Advisors.

Here is a list of MDC Media Specialists.

Robert Hemmelgarn, Columbia	Rober.hemmelgarn@mdc.mo.gov
Dan Zarlenga, St. Louis	Dan.zarlenga@mdc.mo.gov
Francis Skalicky, Springfield	Francis.skalicky@mdc.mo.gov
Bill Graham, Kansas City	Bill.graham@mdc.mo.gov
Kevin Badgley, Joplin	Kevin.badgley@mdc.mo.gov
Josh Hartwig, Cape Girardeau	Josh.hartwig@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, and minutes count.
- 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.

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, 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, 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**
 - 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 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 Missouri Master Naturalist program is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri University Extension and supported by a variety of local organizations.
- **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.
 - 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 the MDC, MUE, 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.

The main point to remember is that **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 imbedded 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.
- Use paper in a color that contrasts in intensity with your ink.
- 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

Obtaining Insurance Coverage for Master Naturalist Activities

When conducting or participating in volunteer service activities, Master Naturalists are serving as volunteers on behalf of MU Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation. When planning group educational activities and other events, it is possible for the Chapter to apply for insurance that covers accidents or illnesses that may occur. MU Extension routinely uses the American Income Life Insurance Companies coverage specifically for 4-H youth, volunteer leaders, and adults that are participating in activities that are sponsored by the University (issued under Master Policy No. 717). You are encouraged to apply for coverage for specific activities by completing an application form, which is available at the local MU Extension Service Center. The cost for coverage per participant is very minimal (about 15 cents per day per person). It is the Chapter's responsibility to budget for these expenses.

Master Naturalist Recognition Awards

A Chapter may honor a non-member 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 (Figure 6) that is similar to the milestone pins. If the Chapter chooses, the Honorary Master Naturalist may be entitled to all of the privileges of a member. Honorary members shall be selected by the affirmative two-thirds vote of the membership present when elections are held.

Figure 6: Honorary Master Naturalist Pin, Copper Dragonfly



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.

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 initial 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 (page 4), the standards of conduct and the code of ethics (pages 30-31) 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. Procedures have been developed to address the occasion of disciplining and/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

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.
- B. 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.