



Master Naturalist Program FAQs

What is the Master Naturalist Program?

The Master Naturalist Program is a high-quality, science-based training program designed to teach adults about New York's natural resources, empowering them to educate others and participate in on-the-ground conservation and monitoring projects.

Who can become a Master Naturalist?

The Master Naturalist is an adult education program designed for educators, land trust personnel, private landowners, land managers, natural resource professionals, and citizens with a passion for our natural environment. No prior experience or training is necessary.

Why become a Master Naturalist?

Have you always wanted to learn more about the ecosystems, habitats, plants, and animals of New York State, as well as important conservation issues facing our natural resources today? Would you like to gain skills needed to participate in management activities that contribute to natural resource conservation, or share your knowledge with others through outreach activities? The Master Naturalist program is designed to help people like you become more involved in hands-on activities that will make a difference in the conservation of our natural resources.

How do I become a Master Naturalist?

You can become a Master Naturalist by taking the 16-hour mandatory "Naturalist Trainee" course, supplemented by 14 hours of additional coursework and 30 hours of volunteer work tailored to your personal interests. The mandatory "Naturalist Trainee" course is held at Cornell's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest.

What types of activities will fulfill my 30-hr volunteer requirement?

Volunteer opportunities may include "hands-on" management, conservation or monitoring activities, or educational outreach. Examples of appropriate volunteer activities include working with a local land trust or nearby park to remove or monitor invasive species, collecting citizen science data for an ongoing program, inventorying wildflowers at a local park or preserve, participating in riparian buffer plantings or restoration, conducting wildlife surveys, contributing to water quality monitoring or research. Potential outreach activities may include leading a "woods walk", writing articles, giving presentations, or developing educational brochures. Each Master Naturalist can pursue volunteer activities tailored to her/his own interests and strengths. The possibilities are endless!