

Master Naturalist Program Requirements

Overview

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 management projects. If you would like to learn more about New York's natural environment and get involved with important conservation issues facing our natural resources today, this program is for you.

Course Requirements

You can become a Master Naturalist by taking the mandatory "Certified Naturalist" course (16 credits), supplemented by 14 hours of additional coursework and 30 hours of volunteer work tailored to your personal interests. The mandatory "Certified Naturalist" course is held at Cornell's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest. Additional courses may be taken through Cornell's Conservation Education Program at the Arnot Forest, via the internet through regularly held webcasts, or through programs offered by county extension offices and pre-approved by Master Naturalist faculty. A list of qualifying programs will be distributed quarterly to participants. Participants may also submit courses that they find on their own for approval. Courses must be science-based.

Course credits will be granted in 3 categories: ecosystems; conservation issues; and identifying organisms.

Credit requirements:

Ecosystems:	6 credits
Conservation Issues:	6 credits
Identifying Organisms	6 credits
Electives from any of the categories above based on individual interest:	<u>12 credits</u>
Total	30 credits

The "Certified Naturalist Course" fulfills the requirements for 16 of the total 30 credits.

Volunteer Requirements

Volunteer opportunities may include "hands-on" conservation management activities or educational outreach. Examples of possible management activities include working with a local land trust to remove invasive species, working at a local deer check station, inventorying wildflowers at a local park or preserve, or participating in a citizen science project. Potential outreach activities may include leading a "woods walk", writing articles, giving presentations, or developing educational brochures.

Prior to beginning volunteer work, each Master Naturalist will develop a "Volunteer Activity Plan" tailored to his/her own interests and strengths, which is to be submitted and approved by the Master Naturalist Program faculty. A "volunteer supervisor" from the participating entity needs to sign off on each activity completed.

Program Completion

Upon completion of all coursework and volunteer hours, participants should fill out and submit the "Volunteer Activity Form" as proof of completion of all credit and volunteer hour requirements.

Maintaining Master Naturalist Certification

To maintain certification, participants will complete eight hours of additional advanced training and contribute 20 hours of volunteer service annually.