Potomac Valley Master Naturalists (PVMN)

***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

**Basic Requirements for Certification**

*What are the basic requirements of the Master Naturalist program?*

To be certified as a Master Naturalist by the state of West Virginia, you must complete 62 class hours of instruction and 30 hours of volunteer service.

*How long do I have to complete the program, and will my fees, courses, and service hours carry over from year to year?*

You must complete the volunteer hours for initial Master Naturalist certification within two years of beginning the program, and the class hours of instruction within four years. If requirements have not been completed within these time frames but you communicate your intention to complete them and request an extension, such extension may be granted by consensus of the Coordinating Committee. All fees and courses will carry over to subsequent years until certification is complete.

*Who determines what core and elective classes are required?*

The number of core and elective classes, as well as the subject matter of core courses, is determined by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. All Master Naturalist programs in the state are bound to those requirements. The PVMN chapter offers all required core and elective classes each year.

*How do I keep track of my education hours?*

Make sure to sign in and out for all attended classes. Your attendance information will be automatically forwarded to the Data Coordinator.

*How do I keep track of my volunteer service hours?*

Volunteer service hours can be submitted at TrackItForward: https://www.trackitforward.com/site/potomac-valley-master-naturalists.

*Do I have to pass a test or complete any other assignment in order to become a Master Naturalist?*

No. However, new PVMN students are strongly encouraged to make a poster presentation on a topic of their choice at the end of the first year of classes, during the PVMN Annual Meeting. Presentations can be made singly or in pairs and should cover a natural history topic, either elaborating on a topic brought up in one of the core or elective courses or a new topic. Presentations will be on display during the entire Annual Meeting for participants to view, and ideally students will be present at the Annual Meeting to answer questions about their presentation. The presentation can take either of the following forms: a trifold tabletop poster or a slide program on a laptop.

**Attending/Missing Classes**

*Can I still receive credit for a class if I arrive late or leave early?*

No. In order to receive credit, you must be in class for the entire time period, including any work in the field or laboratory. Arriving late or leaving early will require you to make up the class.

*Do I have to attend an entire day of classes?*

No. If you are unable to attend class during part of the day, you may still attend the other classes held that day.

*Is it possible to replace core and elective courses with other courses?*

Core courses cannot be replaced by other courses. Although the program is scheduled to encourage you to take all of your elective courses with your cohorts through the annual PVMN program, it is possible in exceptional circumstances to substitute missed elective courses with PVAS adult programs, college and online courses, and other kinds of training. You must petition to do so by contacting the PVMN Chair.

*How can I make up missed core courses?*

There are two options for making up a missed core course. You can wait and take the course when PVMN offers it again the following year, or you can take the same core course with another West Virginia Master Naturalist chapter, subject to the permission of that chapter’s contact. You can find a schedule of courses for all West Virginia chapters, with contact information, at: http://mnofwv.org/local\_chapters/master\_naturalist\_class\_schedules.

*What documentation should I provide if I attend class at another Master Naturalist chapter?*

Before showing up for the class, make sure to get permission from the chapter contact. You must download the DNR Documentation of Attendance form from the West Virginia Master Naturalist website and obtain the signature of the instructor/coordinator of the class that you attend, and then submit that signed form to the Data Coordinator: http://mnofwv.org/yahoo\_site\_admin/assets/docs/Documentation\_of\_attendance.96143558.pdf.

*Do I need to contact anyone if I plan to miss class?*

If you must miss class, please inform the Coordinator of Operations/Logistics (the person who contacts you with logistical information before each class).

*Am I allowed to bring guests to class with me?*

No. Only current Master Naturalist candidates are allowed to attend the Master Naturalist courses.

*How can I get copies of PowerPoint presentations from class?*

If you are interested in obtaining a digital copy of PowerPoint presentations from class, please inform the Facilitator.

**Basic Requirements for Recertification**

*What are the basic requirements for recertification in the Master Naturalist program?*

To be recertified annually, you must complete a minimum of 8 class hours of instruction and 16 hours of volunteer service between January 1 and December 31.

*How can I meet the recertification coursework requirement?*

A variety of educational experiences can count toward the coursework requirement; please see the PVMN Policy Manual for detailed information: http://www.potomacaudubon.org/masternat. PVAS monthly programs and coursework advertised through PVAS as “eligible for PVMN recertification hours” automatically count; other coursework must be approved by the PVMN Chair.

*Must I recertify annually? What if I miss a year?*

If you are a certified Master Naturalist who has not completed requirements for re-certification during any calendar year but desire to remain in good standing as a chapter member and intend to complete requirements, you may request a time extension. Such an extension may be granted by consensus of the Coordinating Committee but will not exceed three years. All coursework and volunteer hours must be completed in the same calendar year and cannot be carried over. Until the course work and volunteer hours required for annual re-certification have been completed, you will be considered inactive.

*How do I keep track of my education hours?*

Volunteer service and education hours can be submitted at TrackItForward: https://www.trackitforward.com/site/potomac-valley-master-naturalists.

**Volunteer Service Hours**

*Must I complete my coursework before beginning to volunteer?*

No, you may complete your volunteer hours while you are completing coursework.

*What counts as approved volunteer service hours?*

Volunteer projects must take place in West Virginia and support the advancement of conservation, resource management and protection. Opportunities are offered frequently through PVAS and announced in e-mails, including trail maintenance or tree planting work at nature preserves, assistance with PVAS activities and camps, and similar kinds of activities. In addition, volunteer work in support of the PVMN program counts, including course support, clerical work such as taking minutes, coordinating tours and trips that will enhance the PVMN participant’s knowledge about a natural history subject, and participation on the PVMN Coordinating Committee. You can also meet the volunteer service requirements through projects outside of what PVAS/PVMN offers. Volunteer service opportunities advertised through PVAS and taking place in West Virginia automatically count; all other volunteer hours must be approved by the PVMN Chair.

*How do I keep track of my volunteer service hours?*

Volunteer service and education hours can be submitted at TrackItForward: https://www.trackitforward.com/site/potomac-valley-master-naturalists.

**Miscellaneous**

*How can I find out more about the requirements and rules for the Master Naturalist program?*

You can find out more about the West Virginia program at: http://mnofwv.org/home. For the PVMN chapter specifically, you can access the PVMN Policy Manual on the PVAS website: http://www.potomacaudubon.org/masternat.

*What should I do if I have a complaint or other feedback about the program?*

You may contact any of the PVMN Coordinating Committee members at the contact information listed at the end of this document. If you would like to take your feedback to the West Virginia DNR directly, there is a contact form on its website: http://mnofwv.org/contact\_us.

*How can I join the PVMN Coordinating Committee?*

Elections for the coordinating committee are held each year at the annual meeting in October, where you can nominate yourself or ask someone to nominate you for a position. You can find out more about the various positions in the Policy Manual or contact any current member of the Coordinating Committee.

*Am I required to attend the PVMN Annual Meeting or the WV Master Naturalist State Conference in the summer?*

No, but attendance is recommended. Attendance at the PVMN annual meeting is a great place to learn about the chapter’s goals, celebrate accomplishments, and enjoy a luncheon with your fellow Master Naturalists. The WV Master Naturalist State Conference provides a valuable opportunity to complete all of your recertification coursework for the year and meet Master Naturalists from all over the state.

*What is the relationship of the Potomac Valley Master Naturalist program to the Potomac Valley Audubon Society?*

The PVMN program is hosted by PVAS, and all active Master Naturalists have an automatic membership in PVAS (including those who are still completing initial certification requirements). PVAS provides a number of opportunities for Master Naturalists to complete recertification education hours and volunteer service hours.

*What contact information should I give to anyone who might want to verify my participation in the program?*

Participation can be confirmed by the Data Coordinator.

*Is there a code of ethics for Master Naturalists?*

Yes. Please see the PVMN policy manual.

*How can I contact members of the PVMN Coordinating Committee?*

Chair Kelly Wolf (k2kellywolf@outlook.com)

Coordinator of Instructor & Training Programs Dr. Pamela Ellis (dr.pamelaellis@gmail.com)

Coordinator of Operations & Logistics Carol Winckler (cjwinck@frontiernet.net)

Coordinator of Volunteers Flo Wilbik (flowilbik@gmail.com)

Facilitator Mary Lynn Robinson (mlrobinson90@gmail.com)

Treasurer/Registrar Cathy Purchis (catpur@value.net)

Recorder Charlotte Fremaux (cmfremaux@gmail.com)

Recognition Coordinator Karlin Sink (karlin40@comcast.net)

Data Management Coordinator Paul Breitenbach (pjbreitenbach@gmail.com)

Chair Emeritus Clark Dixon (DixonConsultants@aol.com)

At-Large Member Lynne Wiseman (lewiseman@aol.com)