

POTOMAC VALLEY MASTER NATURALISTS – POLICY MANUAL

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POTOMAC VALLEY MASTER NATURALISTS – POLICY MANUAL

POLICY MANUAL

I. History and Purpose

The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program (PVMN) is a volunteer education program sponsored by the Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS). It is an official local chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program. Its purpose is to help state agencies to maximize scarce resources and to reach out to new constituencies. The basic approach is to combine education with public service.

The West Virginia Master Naturalist Program (WVMN), developed in 2004, is one of the first in the nation. It is administered by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. The Potomac Valley Master Naturalist Program was established in autumn of 2006.

II. Affiliation

- A. **Documents:** The official documents for affiliation with the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program - *Petition for Chapter* and *Affiliation Agreement* – are on file with the WVMN Program. The Chair/Co-Chairs of the PVMN Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that these documents are current.
- B. **Coordination with State MN:** The Chair/Co-Chairs shall communicate regularly with the WVMN to keep abreast of any changes in the state program, requirements, or policy. They or their designated proxy shall represent the PVMN at State MN Coordinators' meetings.

III. Bylaws

The PVMN shall be governed by the *Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Chapter Bylaws*. In the event of a conflict between the Policies set forth in this Policy Manual and those of the *Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Chapter Bylaws*, the policies of the *Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Chapter Bylaws* shall govern.

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IV. Coordinating Committee

The list below includes position descriptions for all members of the Committee.

Chair or Co-Chairs: Responsible for

- The general operation of the chapter and organization of training classes, coordinating local volunteer work, financial records, and other activities.
- Presiding over and ensuring committee meetings and chapter meeting are held.
- Ensuring the annual chapter meeting is scheduled, planned, and includes election of new committee members and recognition activities.
- Working with the Recorder in securing committee meeting place and ensuring Coordinating Committee meetings are held regularly, preferably monthly. Ensuring the Recorder responsibilities are met, including agendas are sent in advance of, and minutes are taken at, each committee meeting and distributed prior to the next meeting.
- Ensuring the committee member roles and responsibilities are fulfilled.
- Keeping current the PVAS affiliation agreement and the two PVMN documents: *PVMN Chapter Bylaws* and *PVMN Policy Manual*.
- Ensuring that the Chapter is represented at the WVMNAC quarterly meetings and maintaining open communication with WV Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section Master Naturalist Administrator.
- Communicating any changes in the WVMN program requirements, or policy to the Coordinating Committee.
- Working with the committee to delegate duties as necessary.
- Educating members about the committee and finding candidates for election to the committee.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Student Coordinator: Responsible for

- Processing PVMN student applications, including acknowledging receipt of application.
- Processing PVMN student registrations, including determining which applicants to accept into the program.
- Creating a waiting list for future candidates when the class is full. Contacting those on the waitlist when accepting applications for the following year to see if they are still interested.
- Providing scholarship applications to interested students.
- Working with PVMN treasurer to verify student payments and other spending relating to the course.
- Securing WVMN manuals and name badges for current class and arranges for payment to WVDNR with the PVAS treasurer.

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- Securing supplies and extra materials provided to current class (loupes, lanyards, and other similar items).
- Securing volunteer agreement and photo waiver from new incoming class.
- Actual training day supervision, working with Facilitator and other committee members.
- Answering questions or concerns from students (emails, phone calls, etc.)
- Collaborating with other committee members regarding information on class facility to share with students (parking and unloading areas, bathrooms, eating facilities, and any special needs.)
- Sending emails to Facilitator and students announcing the next class with agenda for the day and any special instructions for the class.
- Communicating with students from prior cohorts regarding classes they still need to complete for initial certification.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Instruction and Training Coordinator: Responsible for

- Identifying, contacting, and communicating with instructors. Finding instructors that are able and willing to present the classes (core and elective classes).
- Drafting the master schedule for next year's core and elective classes by determining locations where classes will be held and instructors for each class.
- Presenting the draft course schedule with classes, instructors, and locations to the Coordinating Committee for review and for final approval.
- Providing for and organizing opportunities, in conjunction with the PVAS Representative and specialized At-Large PVMN Coordinating Committee members, for advanced training, field trips, and natural history workshops needed for PVMN annual re-certification.
- Sending welcome letter to instructors including the subject and date of their class. Providing new instructors with the relevant *Class Description* and *Class Outline*.
- Contacting instructors each month prior to the next class to confirm schedule, location, time, set up and supply needs, directions to the site, etc. and providing instructors logistical information (e.g., lodging and travel directions).
- Securing and delivering training supplies from instructors for students, in conjunction with the Student Coordinator and Facilitator.
- Providing instructors' biographies and instructors' materials prior to class to the Facilitator and Student Coordinator.
- Arranging for back-up instructors as needed.
- Securing instructors' biographies and maintaining a file of these documents.
- Maintaining and updating a master list of instructors, their names, email addresses, mailing addresses, phone numbers, and subject taught.
- Providing template for participants' class/instructor evaluations.
- Reviewing and sharing participants' class/instructor evaluations with Coordinating Committee.
- Providing the attendee list to NCTC contact for NCTC Security, for all classes and natural history workshops held at NCTC.

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- Planning and organizing for next year's classes, incorporating feedback for continued improvement. Continuing to look for new instructors and elective course topics.
- Notifying the Student Coordinator of any specific instructor requirements for materials (such as sketch books, binoculars, etc.).
- Confirming arrangements with contact person at each class location.
- Writing letters of thanks to instructors following their presentations and submitting requests for honorarium payment to PVMN treasurer.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Treasurer: Responsible for

- Tracking all PVMN monies collected, including the annual silent auction.
- Producing monthly financial reports and sharing with the PVMN Coordinating Committee.
- Assisting Student Coordinator in tracking PVMN student payments.
- Issuing receipts for all fee payments directly paid to Treasurer.
- Ensuring that all PVMN donors receive thank you notes (including tax ID information).
- Overseeing the creation of an annual budget for the program.
- Authorizing expenses for purchases.
- Overseeing credit card use for MN purchases, including web-based subscriptions.
- Communicating with PVAS treasurer as needed regarding bank account access and other needs or requirements.
- Providing PVAS bookkeeper with monthly financial statements.
- Submitting PVMN student payment information (Name, Check Number, Payment Amount, Deposit Date) and scholarship award information (Name, Scholarship Amount) to the PVAS bookkeeper.
- Completing and submitting reimbursement forms and receipts to PVAS bookkeeper.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.
- Complying with the Financial Agreement with PVAS, as described in the PVMN Bylaws.
- Assisting with changes to bank account access as needed when a new treasurer is elected.

Facilitator: Responsible for:

- Performing or obtaining actual training day supervision.
- Working with the Instruction and Training Coordinator to obtain details of classes and field activities, and to obtain the MN equipment and supplies needed.
- Provide computer and audiovisual equipment and accessories to instructors, as needed.
- Distributing supplies for each class (brochures, books, and other handouts).
- Planning and purchasing snacks/refreshments and related items for each class (paper supplies, trash bags, and kitchen items).
- Setting-up and arranging chairs and tables for each class, including the snack and supply table.

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- Transporting and storing extra supplies between classes.
- Storing, transporting, and setting- up PVMN signs, posters, and easels for master classes
- Arranging for and collecting class sign-in sheets for each class and sending them to the Data Management Coordinator for retention in Google Drive. Providing general instruction and support at each training session which includes reading bios and introducing speakers, ensuring students sign in and out on the class sign-up sheets, and reminding students to complete class/instructor evaluations.
- Providing and maintaining templates for class sign-in to ensuring information needed for verification and recognition is included: Date, Class title, Instructor name, Location, Credit hours, Printed name of student, Line for student signatures, Lines for additional students to print names and signatures.
- Returning class/instructor evaluations to the Instruction and Training Coordinator.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Recorder: Responsible for:

- Recording minutes of all meetings, including date, location, and a list of attendees.
- Documenting election of new Treasurer officer and submitting election results to the bank so that the new treasurer can gain access to the bank account.
- Working with the Chair to determine the agenda if requested; distributing agendas prior to meetings.
- Distributing minutes to all Coordinating Committee members prior to the next meeting.
- Maintaining and providing access to files of minutes and records from Coordinating Committee meetings, chapter meetings, and other official proceedings.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Recognition Coordinator: Responsible for:

- Consulting with the Facilitator to obtain and verify the student records of candidates for PVMN recognition and certification.
- Maintaining and updating the PVMN certification badge design.
- Ordering PVMN certification badges from manufacturer.
- Ordering patches, course completion certificates, and final certificates from the state WVMN office.
- Making all arrangements for other graduation recognition items (knives, bags, wooden name tags) as directed by the Coordinating Committee.
- Planning and conducting the closing Recognition Event for the program year.
- Distributing certificates and pins to graduates who have completed the required training and volunteer hours.

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- Forwarding certification information (when requirements for certification are met) to the WVMN State Coordinator.
- Updating, printing and laminating of wallet cards for each member that qualifies for recertification.
- Reviewing recertification records once annually, prior to the annual meeting, to determine which members qualify for the 5-year and 10-year Service Award and the Century Award.
- Sending out the PVMN Lifetime Membership nomination form to PVMN members every year so that nominations can be submitted by Oct 15.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Data Management Coordinator: Responsible for:

- Working with the committee members to ensure all forms in use capture sufficient student and member information as needed for efficient data management.
- Receiving new student information from Student Coordinator and entering name and contact information for each new class member into the PVMN Member Data Spreadsheet.
- Creating a Track It Forward account for each new student, notifying student when set up, and sending each student instructions for recording volunteer service hours.
- Assisting students and certified Master Naturalists with Track It Forward account issues.
- Reviewing and approving all continuing education and service hour submissions to Track It Forward.
- Maintaining periodic backups of the Track It Forward PVMN database.
- Receiving completed class sign-in sheets from Facilitator and updating students' records in PVMN Member Data Spreadsheet.
- Producing reports from the Track It Forward system and the PVMN Member Data Spreadsheet and distributing reports to Coordinating Committee members.
- Producing year-end reports for selection of student completions and recertification of active Master Naturalists for the Recognition Coordinator.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Recruitment and Retention Coordinator: Responsible for:

- Maintaining recruitment brochures and ensuring their availability for recruitment events.
- Organizing open houses for recruitment.
- Reaching out (emailing or calling) students who have not completed initial certification or those who have not recertified.
- Assisting candidates and course graduates in finding suitable volunteer projects and opportunities.
- Notifying Inactive Master Naturalists of their inactive status.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

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At Large Members:

At Large committee members are named by the Coordinating Committee. All active members of the chapter, both students and those who have already completed certification, shall be eligible to be At Large committee members. At Large Members shall be active on one or more committees or other special projects.

PVAS Representative or Liaison to PVMN: Responsible for

- Providing and organizing opportunities for volunteer hours needed for PVMN annual re-certification.
- Providing for and organizing opportunities, in conjunction with the Instruction and Training Coordinator, for natural history workshops needed for PVMN annual re-certification
- Collecting and advertising information about volunteer opportunities, using PVAS web site, newsletter, and/or email communications.
- The PVAS Representative is not entitled to vote at meetings.
- Recruiting new PVMN students and PVMN Coordinating Committee members and training the new committee members.

Chair Emeritus:

Any past Committee Chair who has served the Coordinating Committee with distinction and excellence may be nominated for a Chair Emeritus position. There must be evidence of extraordinary and meritorious contributions to the fulfillment of the mission and programs of the PVMN. The candidate must have completed at least 12 years of service to the PVMN chapter, including at least 3 years as chair on the Coordinating Committee and an active participation in the state level West Virginia Master Naturalist Program. Nominations should be made in writing by a Coordinating Committee member or former or present PVAS member who knows of the candidate's contributions. The candidate will be accepted by a simple majority vote of the members of the Coordinating Committee.

The Emeritus is not:

1. Subject to any attendance policy
2. Entitled to hold office or title (other than Emeritus)
3. Entitled to vote at meetings

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Ex-Officio:

The immediate past Chair is encouraged to attend Coordinating Committee meetings during the first quarter of the new year to serve as a resource and assist with the transition to the new Chair.

The Ex-Officio is not entitled to vote at meetings.

V. Certification/Recertification Requirements

A. Requirements: To be certified as a Master Naturalist by the state of West Virginia a candidate must complete 62 class hours of instruction and 30 hours of volunteer service. To be re-certified annually a candidate must complete a minimum of 8 class hours of instruction and 16 hours of volunteer service between January 1 and December 31.

B. Certification Timing and Extensions: Normally a candidate for Master Naturalist certification is expected to complete the initial coursework and volunteer requirements within a one-or-two-year period. If requirements have not been completed by the end of the second year but the candidate communicates his/her intention to complete and requests an extension, such extension may be granted by consensus of the Coordinating Committee. The extension will not exceed one year.

A *certified* Master Naturalist who has not completed requirements for re-certification during any calendar year but who desires to remain in good standing as a chapter member and intends to complete requirements may request a time extension. Such an extension may be granted by consensus of the Coordinating Committee but will not exceed three years. All course work and volunteer hours must be completed in the same calendar year and cannot be carried over. A certified Master Naturalist will be considered inactive if the 8 hours of advanced training and 16 hours of volunteer service re-certification requirements have not been met in a calendar year, and an extension has not been sought and granted. An Inactive Member will continue to be considered inactive until the course work and hours of service required for re-certification have been completed within a calendar year. An Inactive Member is a non-voting member of the organization.

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VI. Membership Categories

West Virginia Master Naturalist Candidate: A member who has not yet completed initial certification requirements for education hours and/or volunteer hours. A student member is welcome to attend the Annual General Membership Meeting, attend the WVMN Conference, and participate on the Coordinating Committee, but is a non-voting member of the organization. If a student does not achieve certification within 3 years from when their cohort started, they will become an Inactive Member.

Certified West Virginia Master Naturalist: A member who has completed their initial requisite training and volunteer service to become a certified Master Naturalist. This also includes a certified Master Naturalist who is working on meeting the annual recertification requirements of 8 hours of advanced training and 16 hours of volunteer service in a single calendar year. A Certified Member may serve as an office holder on the Coordinating Committee, attend the Annual General Membership Meeting, attend the WVMN Conference, and is a voting member of the organization.

Honorary Member: Any person who (1) lives or works within the PVAS/PVMN membership area, and (2) meets the qualifications for Honorary Membership as described in the By-Laws may be nominated for such membership by any PVMN member in good standing. The nomination must be submitted to the Coordinating Committee for approval by majority vote. If approved, the nomination will then be submitted for a vote by the general PVMN membership at its annual meeting. Action may also be taken by phone or electronic-mail (e-mail) by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the chapter members. Such action must be reported to the full Coordinating Committee within three days of taking the action and must be recorded in the minutes for the following Coordinating Committee meeting.

Lifetime Member: A Lifetime Member has served with distinction and excellence, evidenced by extraordinary and meritorious contributions to the fulfillment of the mission and programs of the PVMN organization. Lifetime Members do not need to recertify each year. Lifetime Members shall be voting and entitled to all the privileges due a West Virginia Master Naturalist of the Chapter without payment dues, if applicable. A current certified Master Naturalist may become a Lifetime Member in one of two ways:

- (1) after recertifying a total of 15 years, a current certified Master Naturalist will automatically become a lifetime member. The 15 years of recertification do not need to be consecutive.
- (2) a current certified Master Naturalist may be nominated by a PVMN member in good standing by using the PVMN Lifetime Membership Nomination Form. The nomination must be submitted to the PVMN Recognition Coordinator by October 15. Candidates will be evaluated by their total number of volunteer hours, their impact on the community, and contributions to the PVMN mission. Any individual nominated but not selected may be re-nominated in subsequent years.

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Inactive Member – A member who is unable or no longer wishes to participate with the organization. A Master Naturalist candidate will be considered inactive if the required course work and the 30 hours of volunteer service have not been completed within three years of the start of the cohort, and a time extension has not been sought or granted. A certified Master Naturalist will be considered inactive if the 8 hours of advanced training and 16 hours of volunteer service re-certification requirements have not been met in a calendar year and an extension has not been sought and granted. The Recruitment and Retention Coordinator will notify inactive members of their status. An Inactive Member will continue to be considered inactive until the course work and the volunteer hours of service required for certification have been completed within a calendar year. An Inactive Member is a non-voting member of the organization. For archival purposes, a list of Inactive Members is maintained.

VII. Training/Instructional Program

A. Description: In compliance with the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program requirements, the initial training program of PVMN consists of a total of 62 class hours. Forty-six class hours include the following required core courses and hours: General Ecology (3); Aquatic Habitats (3); Wetland Habitats (3); Terrestrial Habitats (3); Nature Interpretation (3); Habitat Improvement (3); Names, Identification, and Classification (1); Recording, Preserving, and Sharing (3); Amphibians and Reptiles (3); Birds (3); Insects and Other Invertebrates (3); Mammals (3); Trees and Woody Plants (3); Wildflowers and Weeds (3); Geology (3); Fish (3). The remaining 16 hours of instruction consist of any electives chosen by the Instruction and Training Coordinator and approved by the Coordinating Committee.

B. Cohort and Class size: Each year, a new cohort of candidates is accepted into the program. Cohort size normally is limited to 20 applicants. Exceptions to the cohort size limit may be proposed by the Student Coordinator and decided by the Coordinating Committee, in its sole discretion, to accommodate a larger number of applicants in a specific year. This may be done to allow family units, such as a parent/child or two spouses, to attend classes together. Class size for all core courses and electives is normally limited to 20 students and therefore attendance shall be limited strictly to PVMN certification candidates only. The Student Coordinator may also consider requests from certification candidates in other state MN chapters to attend specific make-up classes; however, such class attendance will always be on a space-available basis. Exceptions to the class size limit may be done to allow attendance by candidates from prior cohorts that need to make up a specific class. Requests for class attendance by other than a certification candidate will not be considered.

C. Eligibility: The PVMN program is open to individuals who are age 16 and older. It is also open to certification candidates from other West Virginia MN chapters who need to make up specific classes.

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D. Application Process and Payment of Fees: When a PVMN training program is to be offered, appropriate advertising, application information, and application forms are released to the public via the PVMN website (www.pvmn.org), PVAS newsletter and website, and through the local media, with a stated deadline for application. The Student Coordinator also will contact any applicant on the waitlist from the prior year to give them preferential enrollment into the current cohort. After the deadline date has passed, applications are reviewed by the Student Coordinator and/or additional committee members if necessary. If applicants fall within the age range and have completed all application requirements satisfactorily, the applications will be accepted in order of the date received until the cohort has reached a maximum level of 20 participants. As stated previously, exceptions to the cohort size limit may be proposed by the Student Coordinator and decided by the Coordinating Committee (e.g., to allow family units, such as a parent/child or two spouses, to attend classes together). Applicants who would have been accepted, but their applications were received after the cohort was full, will be put on a waitlist of the following year and notified of this outcome. When an applicant is accepted into the program, they are informed by the Student Coordinator and may either decline the offer or accept and pay the program tuition. All fees are expected to be paid in full before the first class of the program year. An applicant is officially enrolled only after the program fee is received. A letter is sent to inform those who are not accepted.

E. Refunds: A full refund of tuition payment will be given, upon request from an enrollee, up to the beginning date of the first class of the program year. If it is necessary for a student to withdraw during the program year, a pro-rated refund will be given up to the date when half the program year is complete, that is, 32 class hours. After that time, no refunds will be given.

F. Scholarships: Normally PVMN provides one full-tuition scholarship annually, which may be disbursed to one or more students. Additional scholarships may be offered as funding allows. A simple announcement of the availability of scholarships will be made when the MN program is advertised for the year. The Student Coordinator will provide scholarship applications to interested persons. The completed scholarship applications will be reviewed, evaluated, and awarded by the Student Coordinator. The Scholarship Application form will spell out any stipulations that cover a no-show or drop-out situation.

G. Training manuals and other supplies: Each enrolled student receives the following, provided by the state MN office, and paid for by the program fee which is sent by PVMN to the state office: West Virginia Master Naturalist Program Manual, name tag/pin, and any natural history brochures and booklets provided by the state Department of Natural Resources. In addition, each student receives certain supplies chosen by the Coordinating Committee such as WVMN lanyard, loupe magnifier, “Rite In The Rain” note pad, magnifying box, plastic magnifier, field guides or similar items. Individual class instructors may provide additional course supplies at their own discretion.

H. Class Attendance: For each class offered enrolled students are expected to remain in attendance during all scheduled hours, including labs and field exercises. Students leaving a core class early shall be deemed to have missed the class entirely and be required to retake the class. Students leaving elective classes will only be given credit for actual hours of attendance. Actual

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hours of attendance shall be tracked by requiring students to sign in at the beginning of each class session and sign out at the end of each class session. It is the responsibility of the student to sign in and sign out for each class and field session.

I. Missed Classes: Each PVMN candidate will keep a personal record of classes completed and any classes missed in the initial training program, in addition to the official records kept on file by the Student Coordinator and the Data Management Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the candidate to enroll in a make-up class for any missed class, either in a subsequent program year offered by PVMN or at a class offered by another WVMN chapter. If the candidate completes such a make-up class, they must inform the Student Coordinator so that records can be updated.

If a candidate has paid the full course tuition for the initial training program but has missed one or more of those classes, then that person may take make-up classes in the subsequent PVMN program year at no additional charge. Classes taken with other WVMN chapters are subject to the other chapter's fees.

VIII. Instructors

A. Qualifications: Instructors for the PVMN initial training program and advanced training classes are generally fully qualified in terms of degree, teaching certification, teaching experience, and/or recognized local expertise. Certified Master Naturalists are eligible to teach PVMN classes. The Instruction and Training Coordinator will keep files of all instructors, including biographical information, for any PVMN classes taught.

B. Honorarium: A fifty-dollar (\$50) honorarium is offered to each instructor of a PVMN class or workshop. The amount will be the same for each instructor regardless of the class length. After completion of a class the honorarium will be sent to the instructor (s) for that class, accompanied by a thank you letter signed by the Instruction and Training Coordinator.

C. Evaluations of Classes and Instructors: Each class participant will complete a class/instructor evaluation form at the end of each class. Copies of these evaluation forms are kept on file by the Instruction and Training Coordinator for one year and are available to instructors for review.

IX. Volunteer Opportunities and Guidelines

A. Purpose: In addition to training, certification as a West Virginia Master Naturalist requires 30 hours of approved volunteer work. Maintaining certification in subsequent years requires 16 additional hours of volunteer work as well as 8 hours of advanced training.

The purpose of volunteer work is to provide a service to the community with regard to natural resources, and to help the volunteer gain knowledge and experience. Volunteer Projects must either involve educating the public or enhancing the natural resources of our state.

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B. Guidelines for volunteer projects: All ideas for Volunteer Projects must be approved in advance by the Coordinating Committee. If the Coordinating Committee has difficulty deciding whether a Volunteer Project is appropriate for credit as volunteer hours, the Coordinating Committee will consult with the State Advisory Committee for guidance.

In keeping with the State MN guidelines outlining what constitutes an approved Volunteer Project, a Volunteer Project must take place in the state of WV. Therefore, to receive credit for volunteer hours completed, including those performed in service of PVAS, a Volunteer Project must have taken place in WV. The only exceptions are those events scheduled by the PVAS which have been pre-approved by the PVAS as providing volunteer hours for PVMN. The ability to obtain volunteer hours at these PVAS-sponsored events which occur out-of-state will be explicitly stated in the PVAS announcement for that scheduled event.

Volunteer Projects taking place in WV and supporting the advancement of conservation, resource management and protection, fundraising for camp scholarships, MN course support, clerical work such as taking minutes, coordinating tours and trips that will enhance the MN participant's knowledge about a natural history subject, etc., including participation on the PVMN Coordinating Committee, will be accepted for volunteer credit.

Travel time in excess of 30 minutes may be counted towards volunteer hours for MN instructors or presenters.

Advocacy work may not be counted as volunteer time nor is time spent on committees formed for other specific projects (such as watershed groups, land trusts, or similar groups).

C. Volunteer Agreement: Every certified Master Naturalist and candidate for certification will complete and submit a WVDNR and/or a PVAS Volunteer Agreement, to be kept on file at the PVAS office.

D. Student Volunteer Service Record: When applying for certification or re-certification, the candidate will submit their records electronically. These records will be kept on file by the Data Management Coordinator.

X. Re-certification process, advanced training classes, field trips, and workshops

Annual advanced training of at least 8 hours in a minimum of 2 separate subject areas is required to maintain certification (i.e., to re-certify annually). Classes, field trips and workshops that qualify as advanced training may also be used by students in the initial training courses as electives. Advanced training should not repeat the same basic information on a subject that has already been covered in the initial training program. However, an advanced training opportunity that covers the subject in more depth or from a different perspective could qualify.

Advanced training may be provided by PVMN, other MN chapters in West Virginia, recognized environmental groups (e.g., Cape May Bird Observatory, Smithsonian Institute, NCTC) as well

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as other organizations. MNs will enter the information about advanced training in the PVMN electronic tracking system, which is reviewed by the Data Management Coordinator. If the class, field trip or workshop does not qualify as advanced training, the Data Management Coordinator will reject the hours included in the PVMN electronic tracking system and provide an explanation to the MN. MNs are encouraged to contact the Data Management Coordinator prior to taking the class, field trip or workshop if they are unsure if it will qualify as advanced training. The Data Management Coordinator will consult with the rest of PVMN Coordinating Committee as necessary.

In general, educational TV programs, movies, or videos on a natural history subject do not count as advanced training except when viewed as part of an approved lecture or workshop. Travel time to an advanced training event will not count toward hours.

The PVMN Coordinating Committee, in cooperation with the PVAS, is responsible for offering and coordinating field trips and natural history workshops designed to assist PVMN with recertification hours. The Committee is also responsible for coordinating the Annual Recognition Event.

The Data Management Coordinator maintains records of advanced training completed by all candidates for PVMN re-certification.

Elective credits will be granted on an hour-for-hour basis. College or university classes, either undergraduate or graduate, will be limited to the number of credit hours.

XI. Forms and other documents

Potomac Valley Master Naturalists Chapter Bylaws, this PVMN Policy Manual, and the PVMN Guidance and Implementation document.

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program Advisory Committee (WVMNAC) Bylaws

XII. Adoption and Amendment of Policy Manual

The PVMN Policy Manual and any future additions or amendments to this document shall be approved and adopted by majority vote at any meeting of the Coordinating Committee where a quorum is present. If a quorum is not present, voting on the proposed amendment and/or addition shall be pended forward until the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee. The Policy Manual and/or any amendments may also be circulated to the general membership for information and unofficial comment.

This Policy Manual was originally approved by PVMN Coordinating Committee in December 2008. This document has been revised March 2023 September 2019, October 2014, and May 2010.