

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program Bylaws



West Virginia Master Naturalist Program
West Virginia Department of Natural Resources
324 Fourth Ave
South Charleston, WV 25303

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program BYLAWS

The mission of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program is to train interested people in the fundamentals of natural history and nature interpretation and teaching, and to instill in them an appreciation of the importance of responsible environmental stewardship. The program will also provide a corps of well-qualified volunteers to assist government agencies, schools, and non-government organizations concerned with research, outdoor recreation development, and environmental education and protection.

ARTICLE I. The Organization

A. Parent Organization. The parent organization is the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program™ or “State Program”. Sponsors for the statewide West Virginia Master Naturalist (MN) Program are the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources’ (WVDNR) Wildlife Resources Section and its partners: the West Virginia University Extension Service, WVDNR State Parks. The WVDNR Wildlife Resources Section will house the offices of the State Program Director and State Program Coordinator.

B. MN State Advisory Committee. The Master Naturalist State Advisory Committee (MNSAC) is comprised of certified West Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers and State Program Sponsor employees and/or their designees. The State Advisory Committee sets the minimum standards and curriculum requirements of the statewide program. The Committee also plans the state MN Conference; develops and publishes the manual and other printed materials; charters local chapters, maintains the state MN web site, maintains records and develops the educational curriculum. The committee will meet quarterly in person or by conference call.

- 1. Membership:** The membership of the MNSAC includes the coordinator (or appropriate designee) of each of the state’s chapters, representatives of the parent and sponsoring organizations (non-voting), two at-large Master Naturalist members, the manager of the web site and the manager of the digital MN manual Past MNSAC members are also welcome to attend meetings as observers.

At-Large Members: Members of the state chapters (statewide members) are welcome to be nominated as an at-large member of the MNSAC. One member is elected for a two-year term in consecutive years, i.e.: one year, one member is elected, the second year, another member is elected. Unlike the other officers, the At large members are limited to a maximum of two terms for their service in the MNSAC.

- 2. Officers:** The officers of the MNSAC will be drawn from the non-DNR MNSAC members and include a Chairperson, a Vice-chairperson, a Secretary and a treasurer. Service is a two-year term. Officers may serve more than two terms, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. The duties of these officers are as follows:

Chairperson: Coordinate meetings, advise chapter leaders, assist in planning the state conference and work with the State Program Director and State Program Coordinator to facilitate all aspects of the Program. Once the chair steps down, that person may continue attending for an additional term as an advisor to the group and a voting member.

Vice-chairperson: Assist the chairperson as needed; serves as the Chair of the Curriculum Committee and assist in the planning of the State MN conference.

Secretary: The secretary records and distributes the minutes of all meetings.

Treasurer: The treasurer will keep records of all financial transactions and work with the State Program Director to manage the finances. The treasurer shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes. When payment exceeds \$500.00, the check should be approved by the chairperson of the MNSAC.

3. **Election of officers:** The Nominating Committee, chaired by the Past-Chairperson with two additional statewide members, who are selected by the Chairperson shall submit a slate of candidates for officers and publish the slate to the chapter coordinators who will distribute it to their chapter membership in writing 15 days prior to the Annual Meeting at the MN State Conference. Nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor prior to the election at the Annual Meeting.

The election shall take place by secret ballot of the membership of the MN program at the Annual Meeting and winners determined by a simple majority. If only one candidate is nominated for an office, that candidate may be elected by voice vote. The new Officers shall assume their duties at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

C. Chapter Commitment to West Virginia Master Naturalist State Program.

In return for the general supervision, guidance, supplies, resources and cooperative helpfulness provided by the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program, a Chapter of the Master Naturalist Program, agrees to comply with all requirements, guidelines and standards and to produce and submit a “Chapter Annual Report” (appendix A) to State Program Director that conforms to the standards set forth.

ARTICLE II. Chapter Sponsors, Partners and Donors

- A. **Chapter Sponsors.** Chapter Sponsors for a Chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalist program are permanent and committed to a long-term relationship with the Chapter. Chapter Sponsors provide Advisors to the chapter. Local Chapter Sponsors have been identified through the Chapter’s Charter Application. While it is not required, a chapter is encouraged to seek sponsorship.
- B. **Partners.** Partners of a Chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program are the Chapter Sponsors described previously and other providers of resources in exchange for volunteer service. Partners of and the resources provided to a Chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program are outlined in the chapter’s annual report to the State Program Director and the State Advisory Committee. Partners of the Local Chapter may change on a regular basis depending on the project needs of the community and the resource needs of the Chapter.
- C. **Donors.** Donors of a Chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program are those businesses, organizations or persons giving, donating or presenting money, supplies or other resources for Chapter activities for no return compensation from the Chapter. Donors and their donations are reported through the “Chapter Annual Report” (appendix A) to the State Program Director and the State Advisory Committee.

ARTICLE III. Purpose of Chapter

- A. Overall Purpose.** A Chapter is not organized for profit, nor shall any of its net earnings inure in whole or in part to members, employees, or other individuals. In support of the West Virginia Wildlife Resources Section and its partners, this Chapter shall be an educational, non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to fulfilling the State Program’s mission to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of West Virginia with the following objectives:
- 1. Natural Resource Service.** To provide, promote and fulfill volunteer service while recognizing and utilizing sound natural resource management, enhancement and conservation practices in accordance with the Partners’ and Program’s mission.
 - 2. Public Understanding.** To improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance education efforts within local communities.
 - 3. Enhance Education and Outreach.** To enhance existing natural resources education and outreach activities the chapter provides natural resources training at the local and state level, thereby developing a supply of dedicated and informed volunteers.
 - 4. Volunteer Network.** To develop a West Virginia Master Naturalist volunteer network that can be utilized to provide naturalist volunteers to organizations in the local communities.
- B. Advocacy Prohibition.** No part of the activities of the Chapter shall be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas or businesses and personal endeavors, by propaganda or otherwise using the Master Naturalist name or themselves as a West Virginia Master Naturalist.

ARTICLE IV. Membership

A. Membership Requirements

- 1. Statement of Diversity.** Membership in the Chapter is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or national origin.
- 2. Age.** The age limit of membership is at the discretion of the individual chapters.
- 3. Ethics.** All members of the Chapter will adhere to the “Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct” (Appendix B) as established by the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program
- 4. Multiple Memberships.** Membership in multiple chapters is not permitted.
- 5. Transfer of Membership.** A member may transfer to another chapter.
- 6. Advocacy Prohibition.** A member is free to advocate, lobby, politically or privately promote issues, agendas to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas or businesses and personal endeavors, however they must not use the Master Naturalist name in their advocacy.

B. Member Categories

- 1. West Virginia Master Naturalist Candidate.** Volunteer Participant in an official class from the first day of class to the end of the training period (1-4 years) continuing until the member has completed all Certification requirements including completion of initial volunteer hours.

2. **Certified West Virginia Master Naturalist.** Volunteer of a completed class or previous Certified West Virginia Master Naturalist who has completed the full training class, any advanced training required and volunteer service hours for the current calendar year.
3. **Honorary Membership.** An Honorary West Virginia Master Naturalist is a person who has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of the activities of the chapter. Honorary Members shall be entitled to all the privileges as a West Virginia Master Naturalist Member of the Chapter without payment of dues, including right to vote. Honorary members shall be selected by the governing body of the chapter.

ARTICLE V. Chapter Management

- A. **Size.** Chapters vary greatly in size and composition. It is not reasonable to construct a set of rules for individual chapter management. Rather, the chapter coordinator with an advisory board made up of active members is in the best position to determine management procedures for an individual chapter.
- B. **Officers.** In addition to the Coordinator, the chapter, at a minimum, should have a Treasurer, a Record Keeper and a Secretary.
- C. **Curriculum.** The state directed core curriculum must be followed. Elective classes should be chosen based on local resources and available instructors. Students should be allowed to have classes taken at other West Virginia chapters count towards their certification. Credit for classes taken at Master Naturalist chapters in other states will be determined by the chapter coordinator.

ARTICLE VI Financial Controls

- A. **Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31.
- B. **Chapter Funds**
 1. **Bank Account.** Each chapter will maintain its own bank account for chapter business.
 2. **Signature Authority.** The Treasurer or Chapter Coordinator shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money when dealing with Chapter business.
 3. All donations from the chapter and any outside expenditure other than necessary for the operation of the chapter shall be approved by the chapter's advisory committee.
- C. **Audits.** The Chapter's financials may be audited by any chapter officer at any time, but at least once a year. A public audit of the chapter's financials may be requested by any chapter member. All of the chapter's financials are subject to WVDNR review.
- D. **Gifts and donations.**
 1. **Authority.** The Chapter is authorized to accept and receive contributions, donations, and grants from all sources.
 2. **Endorsement.** Acceptance of any grant or gift, restricted or unrestricted, does not imply any form of endorsement by the Chapter for the source, services, products, or policies. Nor does it imply any benefit, past, present, or future, to be granted by the Chapter. Acceptance of any contract will not imply any endorsement, benefit or product beyond the deliverable services and products expressly contained in the contract.

3. **Right of Refusal.** It will be the general policy of the Chapter to accept contributions from any source. However, the Chapter retains the right to refuse any gift where, in the judgement of the Board of Directors, the reputation or perceived image of the grantor may be deemed injurious to the Chapter.

ARTICLE VII Dissolution of a Chapter

A. Dissolution Procedures. A chapter may be dissolved by either of the following procedures:

1. By the Membership of the Chapter.

- a. Prior to a vote on dissolution, the State Program Director must approve the proposed dissolution.
- b. The proposal for dissolution must be presented at a regular or special meeting of the Chapter with 30 days prior notice.
- c. A vote of 2/3 of the certified members of the chapter present at the regular or special meeting is required for dissolution.
- d. A letter must be submitted to the MNSAC stating the results of the vote and why the chapter chose to dissolve.

2. By the MNSAC.

- a. This action shall be taken for reasons of gross malfeasance or serious violation of the “Ethics and Standards of Conduct (appendix B) of the MN Program by the Chapter and the belief that the situation is endemic and irreconcilable within the Chapter.
- b. The Program Coordinator and Advisory Committee will follow the procedures defined in the Chapter Management Guidelines.
- c. The Program Coordinator will give notice of this action to the Chapter President and Board of Directors.

B. Distribution of Remaining Assets. Upon the dissolution of the Chapter, its net remaining assets shall be distributed to the State Program Coordinator to continue support and resources for the Chapters and Statewide Program or to other non-profit or charitable organizations involved in our Master Naturalist Program activities as approved by the MNSAC.

ARTICLE VIII. Amendment of Bylaws

A. Amendment Proposals. Any member of the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program may propose an amendment to this document. Proposed changes must be accompanied by a brief explanation detailing why the amendment is being proposed and what the amendment is intended to accomplish. Proposed changes will be made in the form of text and may propose new verbiage or revisions of sections of the Bylaws, noting new language and striking out old language. Proposed amendments should be sent to the Chairperson of the MNSAC.

B. Approval before Vote. To ensure consistency, continuity and adherence of statewide guidelines, all proposed amendments to these bylaws must be approved by the State Program Director before submission to the general membership for a vote to determine if legal review necessary. Once the

State Program Director approves the amendments, the MNSAC can submit amendments to the statewide membership for a vote.

C. Notification to the statewide MN Membership. Notice of all proposed amendments to the bylaws with the date, time and place of consideration shall be presented in written form and delivered by conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to members at least 30 days prior to consideration by the membership.

D. Statewide MN Membership Vote. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members constituting a quorum after the proposed amendment has been approved by the MNSAC.

Approved by the WV MN Advisory Committee

October 19, 2017

Ellen E Hrabovsky

State chairperson

Appendix A

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program

Chapter Annual Report

Reporting Period: _____

Due to the State Office no later than March 1 of the following year.

Email to: scott.a.warner@wv.gov

This report is a critical summary of the state program and results for the year. It is crucial that we represent the activities of the chapters to federal, state and local program sponsors, partners and potential donors.

Chapter Name	Kanawha Valley
Current Membership of Chapter	
New Members enrolled during reporting Period	

Volunteer Events

Event Name and Description	# of Members Participating	Total Hours

Total volunteer hours: _____

Statistics

Classes	
Distinct Students	
Distinct Instructors	
Core Class	
Elective Class hours presented during reporting period	
Members certified during reporting period	
Members recertified during reporting period	

Narratives

1. Describe your recruiting efforts. How did you advertise the program? Were there events where you presented the program to potential new members?
2. Describe the locations of your classes. What classroom environments are you using? What natural environments are you accessing?

APPENDIX B

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

- Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, service and performance.
- Know and follow established program guidelines and policies.
- Be courteous and respectful of others and their views.
- Promote a spirit of cooperation in all activities.
- Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
- Encourage the use of sound biological information in education and in management decisions.
- Avoid use of the West Virginia Master Naturalist title or logo for personal profit.