

## WVMN Class Description

- Title:** RECORDING, SHARING, AND PRESERVING WHAT YOU LEARN
- Objectives:** Encourage students to collect data in the form of notes, photos, and specimens, and insure that this information is permanently preserved and made available for use by others.
- Class type:** Core curriculum
- Time:** 3 hours
- Optimal season:** Spring, summer, fall
- Materials:** For demonstration: pencils, technical pen, crow quill pen, India ink, disposable technical pen, "Rite in the Rain" pen and notebooks, field notebook in use, various field data forms, various specimen labels. For field exercise: Field data form for each student, field guides, topographic maps and compass.
- Expected outcomes:** The student will gain a basic understanding of
1. the value of his/her observations, collections, and data.
  2. the importance of accurate, detailed, complete notes and specimen labels, and high-quality specimens.
  3. the fact that his sketches are for information, not art.
  4. the systematic description of habitats.
  5. possible methods of sharing/preserving what they learn through publications, databases, archived Internet discussions, public collections, etc.

### WVMN Class Outline

1. Value to science of the amateur naturalist's work
  - a. It's a big world, many organisms, few observers
  - b. Professional/amateur collaborations (e.g., Cornell "citizen science", North American Mycological Association, Nature Mapping, Plantwatch)
  - c. Contributions of amateurs in recent history
2. Field notes
  - a. Archival materials
  - b. What to record: species lists, habitat descriptions, organism descriptions, observations of ecology/behavior, etc.
  - c. Field data forms
  - d. Sketching as note-taking
3. Collecting
  - a. Purposeful collecting
  - b. When is collecting harmful?
  - c. Adequate specimens
  - d. Adequate or better labels
  - e. Collections are forever and for everyone
4. Preserving and sharing
  - a. Disposition of field notes and specimens
  - b. Dissemination of data
    - Publication (self, newsletters, magazines and journals)
    - Public databases and citizen science project

### Field exercise (2 hours):

Select a site with an uncommon and easily recognized plant that can be designated "rare". Make copies of the topographic map that includes the site and copies of a field data form (either actual or created for the purpose), one per student. Have several floras or field guides (not all the same) that describe/illustrate the "rare" species.

Working in teams of 2 or 3, have students fill out data sheets, recording observers, time, weather, location, habitat data, and (after locating the "rare" plants) population and phenological data, etc.