

West Virginia
Master Naturalist Program
Bylaws



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

Approved by WVMN Membership, August 21, 2021

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

Appointed Members with special expertise: The upkeep of the WVMN webpage (mnofwv.org) and the WVMN Manual require managers with special skill sets. The WVMNSAC will seek individuals to oversee these tasks from the general membership who have demonstrated ability to maintain these essential items of communication and education. The term of service for these MNSAC members is not limited, however, any member holding such a position should give the MNSAC significant notice (at least three months, preferably) of their resignation so that another manager can be found as a replacement.

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 ideally 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. From time to time, it may necessary to look outside of membership of the

MNSAC to fill this position. Therefore, general members may be called upon to hold this position if the expertise cannot be found within the committee. 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. The position of secretary requires a level of proficiency and experience taking and recording meeting notes and providing relative correspondence. From time to time, it may necessary to look outside of membership of the MNSAC to fill this position. Therefore, general members may be called upon to hold this position if the expertise cannot be found within the committee.

Treasurer: The treasurer will keep records of all financial transactions and work with the State Program Director to manage the finances. In addition, it is the responsibility of the treasurer to file annual reports and other-state-required documentation of the organization's tax exempt status. 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. From time to time, it may necessary to look outside of membership of the MNSAC to fill this position. Therefore, general members may be called upon to hold this position if the expertise cannot be found within the committee.

3. **Election of officers:** The Nominating Committee will be chaired by the Past MNSAC Chair and two MNSAC members, selected by the Chair. The Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of candidates to be voted on to fill executive officers positions that are vacant positions for officers, at large members, 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. Establishing New Chapters

The success of a chapter relies on the interest of the population in the area of the proposed new chapter. Once it has been determined that a group of people would be interested in pursuing certification through the Master Naturalist Program, the Chair of the MNSAC will work with interested community members to establish the structure of the chapter. A detailed checklist of necessary activities for new chapters is found in Appendix A.

D. 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 B) 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 C) 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. Class descriptions and outlines are available to all chapters and should be provided to all instructors to follow shared with instructors to follow to maintain consistency in class objectives and delivery of stated content. 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. Annual Financial Reviews** The Chapter's financials should have an annual financial review that is conducted by an outside source preferably. or by any chapter's officer at any time, but at least once a year. A public review of a chapter's financials may be requested by any chapter member. All of the chapters financials are subject to WVDNR review.
- D. Establishment of Non-Profit Status at the Chapter Level**

A chapter may wish to pursue non-profit status and tax exemption from the state and federal governments. As the rules and requirements of this process are subject to the legislatures of these two entities, the details of the process should not be outlined here as what is written may be out of date. Appendix D gives a general outline of the activities and government entities to contact to establish non-profit and tax-exempt status.

E. 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.

F. Commerce within the WVMN Program

The rules of the non-profit status of the WVMN precludes members from profiting from the organization. Any outside entity that wishes to vend at WVMN events must first be approved by the WVMNSAC. These activities include but are not limited to services and products including photography, catering, clothing, memorabilia, lectures, instructions and guided hikes.

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 C) 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.

APPENDIX A

Establishing a New Chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalists

I. Overview

- **Mission** - 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.
- **Governing**
 - ✓ **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.
 - ✓ **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.
 - ✓ **Chapter Governing Documents.** The chapter charter with the WVDNR which includes the Chapter Bylaws and the WV Master Naturalist Code of Ethics is the governing document for the chapter.

II. Establishing a New Chapter - The success of a chapter relies on the interest of the population in your area. Once you have determined that a group of people would be interested in pursuing certification through the Master Naturalist Program, you can begin to establish the structure of your chapter.

1. If you have not already, contact the chair of the WV Master Naturalist State Advisory Committee. (Go to www.mnofwv.org for contact information).
2. Read through the WVMN Bylaws including the WVMN Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.
3. Identify a chapter coordinator and other officers. You should at least have a treasurer, however, other officers to help with the running of the chapter will lessen the load on the coordinator.
4. Create Bylaws for your local chapter. You can adopt the State WVMN Bylaws as your own or use these as the scaffold for your chapter’s Bylaws.

5. Apply to DNR to be a chartered WVMN chapter.
6. Apply to the IRS for an employer identification number (E.I.N.) Go to www.irs.gov for directions (surprisingly easy)
7. Find a meeting place for your classroom. This could be the local college, high school, or a church fellowship hall.
8. Set up a bank account for your chapter. (You will need your E.I.N. to do this.)
Decide if you are going to charge a fee per class or a single registration fee. The State DNR charges \$40 per person for membership to the WVMN. This membership includes a copy of the WVMN Manual, a name badge and the certificate of completion. Your chapter is responsible for setting schedules, getting instructors, advertising collecting money, etc. In short, your chapter runs your program under the charter with DNR. Many chapters pay their instructors. DNR has instructors for many classes that will come for no charge.
9. You may want to seek a sponsor or partner to support your chapter. While this is not required, some chapters have sponsors and/or partners. If you would like further information about sponsor or partnership, please ask the WVMNSAC. Some chapters are part of another non-profit such as Potomac Valley Audubon Society and Friends of the 500th of the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Find the definitions of partner and sponsor in the WV Master Naturalist Bylaws. Sponsors/partners can often assist with meeting space, use of AV equipment and helping find volunteer activities.
10. Once chartered, your chapter coordinator is now part of the WVMNSAC and should plan to attend all meetings and conference calls with this committee. If the coordinator cannot make a meeting, a chapter member should be identified to the President of the WVMNSAC as the attendee.

Appendix B

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 C

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.

APPENDIX D

Establishing your Chapter as a Non-Profit Entity

(adapted from the West Virginia Non-Profit Association)

The West Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a non-profit entity under IRS code 501(c)3. While not required, pursuing non-profit status at the chapter level may be something you are interested in doing.

1. Reserve a name with your state's Secretary of State (Go to: <http://business4.wv.gov>)
2. Select individuals to serve on the board of directors and designate officers to serve on the board.
4. Develop a nonprofit operating plan, which is like a business plan for nonprofit organizations, and includes a description of the organization's location, staffing, activities, funding, fundraising plan and budget. You can follow the WVMN Bylaws for your operating plan, although you may want to expand your chapters' activities.
6. Create by-laws. You can adopt the WVMN Bylaws as your own or use these as the scaffold for your chapter's bylaws.
7. Your treasurer will need to create accounting records and financial reports. You may want to retain an accountant for annual audit and mandatory government filings. Understand that organizations with gross revenues greater than \$500,000 must undergo a financial audit by an independent CPA. If revenues are greater than \$200,000 but less than \$500,000 (excluding grants and monies from private foundations) you can file a financial review.
8. Incorporate or form a trust to protect its founders and principals from personal liability.
9. If you choose to incorporate or form a trust, you need to elect corporate directors and officers. You must file a corporate annual report every year on or before June 30th to avoid revocation.
10. Apply to IRS for an employer identification number (E.I.N.).
11. Apply to the IRS for tax-exempt status filing the 1023EZ form.
12. Apply to the West Virginia Tax Board for tax-exempt status.

West Virginia Master Naturalist Program

PETITION FOR CHARTER FOR A LOCAL MASTER NATURALIST CHAPTER

Instructions: Chapters are often named for their county or a geographic feature. The area to be served is usually one or more counties. The Chapter should have at least four officers, including a Coordinator, and a Treasurer. These people must be ready, willing and able to commit time. Primary contact information for the chapter will probably be that for the Coordinator. Partners, such as schools, local businesses, agencies or organizations, may provide meeting space, photocopying, equipment, money, etc. Mail this form to: Jessica Swecker, WVDNR, PO Box 67, Elkins WV 26241.

Proposed official name of the Chapter: _____

Counties be served: _____

Chapter Officers:

Chapter Coordinator/President: _____

Chapter Treasurer: _____

Other Officers

Title: _____ Name: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Primary mailing address for the chapter:

Contact information for Chapter Coordinator/President

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Chapter Sponsor (if any)

Name: _____

Function in Community: _____

Partner Organizations (if any)

Name: _____

Function in Community: _____

Name: _____

Function in Community: _____

We the undersigned agree to uphold the principles of the West Virginia Master Naturalists Program as established in the WVMN By Laws.

Specifically, we pledge to follow the **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.

Signed _____ This Day of _____
Chapter Coordinator/President

Signed _____ This Day of _____

Chapter Position _____

As the State Program Coordinator for the West Virginia Master Naturalists Program, I indicate my approval of this organization as a chapter of the West Virginia Master Naturalists Program.

Signed _____ This Day of _____
Scott Warner

As the Chair of the West Virginia Master Naturalists State Advisory Committee, I welcome this chapter into our organization.

Signed _____ This Day of _____

Please print full name



WEST VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS, INC.

Chapter Charter

Issued to:

Kanawha Valley Master Naturalists, Ltd.
167 Older Road
Charleston, WV 25312

The organization identified on this certificate is registered as a chapter of the
West Virginia Master Naturalists, Inc.

This certificate shall be permanent until cessation of the chapter or
until it is suspended, revoked, or cancelled by the
West Virginia Master Naturalist State Advisory Committee.

*A change in name or location shall require a refiling of the
"Petition for Charter of a Local Master Naturalist Chapter."*

Scott Warner, State Program Coordinator

Master Naturalist Conference Planning Guide

The following are items to consider when planning a WVMN Conference. By no means should the hosting chapter feel that all these items are required, however, we have indicated with an asterisk (*) those activities that we strongly encourage you to do. We hope this is a dynamic document that will have new suggestions added after each conference. WVMN State Advisory Committee will decide which chapter will host each year.

Getting Started

- If it has not been determined, set the date. It will likely take about 18 months to plan the conference. *
- Select a Conference Chair as soon as possible. This person will work with the venue including signing a contract (if it has not been done already) and will form and work with committees. *
 - ✓ Form a planning committee of chapter members and DNR (someone of their choice and especially the DNR secretary who works with MN), each person having a different expertise – budget, program, food, housing, volunteers, technology, publicity/marketing, documenter of conference activities (photography/videography), pre-conference activities, assistant to chair
 - ✓ Call a meeting of your planning committee to meet (several times) and brainstorm*(early in the planning).
 - ✓ Begin planning the conference with the planning committee as an outline on paper including a vision and theme relating to the Master Naturalist mission and message.* Generally, mostly electives are offered at the state conference. The state conference is meant to be a continuing ed/elective opportunity and should include advanced level classes. If chapters are having difficulty finding an instructor for a core class, it may be offered at the state conference.
 - ✓ Decide if you will have vendors. Generally, we have not had people selling anything. If you want people who sell, bring this to the MNSAC for approval.
 - ✓ Set goals and a timetable to follow that are specific, measurable, realistic, achievable, timely, ethical, and reasonable. *
 - Talk to DNR about when they need the schedule. DNR will develop the registration form itself which and will give a link to the committee to put on the MNSAC website. The registrant will use the link and actually register on the DNR website which will automatically switch back to the MNSAC website when it is time to pay. The DNR will keep track of who registers for which classes and how much the person owes. The publicity person/web master of the planning committee puts the course schedule, course descriptions and bios on the MNSAC website which also has the PayPal button the registrant can use to pay. If the registrant prefers to mail a check, the info on who in the MN program to mail it to (usually the MNSAC Treasurer) should be on the website. It usually takes around 6 weeks for DNR to develop the schedule format and to send the chapter the link.
 - Keynotes and sometimes other speakers often need to be scheduled a year or more in advance. Schedules and registration forms that DNR developed (see below) should be on the MNSAC website at least 2 months in advance which means the info should be to DNR 3.5 months before the conference. Decide

on a date to start registration (usually 2 months in advance). We have been taking walk-in registration at the conference.

- Keep the chair of the MNSAC informed of progress.
- ✓ Discuss needs including internet access, sound systems, tables and chairs, coffee, water, snacks, etc. Many of these should be discussed with the facility personnel at your facility visit.
- ✓ Decide if you will video-tape the classes
- ✓ Decide who will do the post-conference survey
- ✓ Decide if you will you class evaluations during the conference
- ✓ Make a site visit with the committee. The chair and individual committee members may want to do more than one.
- Create a beginning budget and establish conference fees. (May want to consider alternate fees for spouses, non-members, single day registration, registration without meals, etc.)*
 - ✓ Facility may charge a flat fee for the conference, fee for large conference rooms and possibly smaller meeting rooms, refreshments during conference, use of technology (laptop, projector, carts, etc.), microphones, pavilions, meals, making bonfire, etc. You can ask for a cheaper rate.
 - ✓ Facility may offer free rooms based on number of rooms booked.
 - ✓ Also remember expenses such as travel for speakers, gifts for volunteers, and give-aways each registrant will receive (notepads, lanyards, pens, etc.).
 - ✓ Base income on 100 participants to help decide on registrations fees.

Organizing the conference

Committees begin work and committee chairs meet periodically with chair and planning committee as a larger group.

- Program Committee
 - ✓ Develop a possible schedule – may follow previous schedules
 - ✓ Brainstorm a list of possible classes and instructors related to the theme
 - ✓ Bring ideas to planning committee
 - ✓ After planning committee go ahead, contact possible instructors
 - Suggest that you use form developed by Penny Miller, past MNSAC President and past coordinator of the Ohio Valley chapter) to gather necessary information from instructors (form is at the end). It asks for a lot of important info including technology needed, costs, times, photography, bio, course description, room need, etc. (A good resource).
 - Best to have instructor sign form to show agreement
 - In the past, DNR/MNSAC has paid instructors (now you will be paying from registration fees) \$125 for one ½ day class, \$200 for an all-day class, \$325 for all day and half day class. DNR instructors do not charge (part of their job), keynotes often ask for more, but often they will give you a set rate and will teach one or many classes for that same flat rate. For instructor travel, we have paid the going federal government rate per mile. We pay for room meals for instructors while they are instructing (Ex. if teaching Friday evening, pay for Friday dinner, room for Friday night and breakfast Saturday morning. Usually, the facility will have the instructors sign their meal ticket and it is given to us at the end. All this is negotiable.
 - Determine rooms needed and plan transportation for field experiences
 - Determine number of volunteers needed. Give to volunteer coordinator.
 - Determine if and/or how many pre-conference activities to have

- ✓ MN has portable voice amplifiers and Video cameras. Check with last conference chair to locate them if you want to use them (amplifiers often used for field work). Facility probably has indoor microphones.
- ✓ Plan a variety of classroom and field activities.
- ✓ Give write up of schedule, class descriptions and biographies to planning committee who will approve it and forward it to the publicity person.
- ✓ Determine if you need to send a 990 form to the presenter to report income.
- Housing Committee (may be one or two people)
 - ✓ Reserve a block of housing (should have been done as contract is signed) and find release date for the rooms.
 - ✓ Reserve rooms for instructors.
 - ✓ Write up information for the website giving instructions on how to register. Give to website manager.
 - ✓ Normally, participants register themselves and should be given a reduced rate if they identify as part of the conference. Participants pay the facility for the room.
- Publicity/marketing Committee (may be one or two people)
 - ✓ Write up a description of the classes, biographies and events offered at the conference in a usable format for the website. Send this to the webmaster in the form to be posted*
 - ✓ Include biography of instructor
 - ✓ Description of class should include a paragraph describing the class activity, the number of credit hours that class will provide and whether it will count as an elective or core class.
 - ✓ Make the conference flyers, brochures for newspapers, websites and conference program. May want a conference logo.
 - ✓ Since the annual conference is open to the public other media might be used to advertise including email, social media, postal mail. In the past, we have first opened the registration to only MN at an early registration rate, then close to conference open it to the public who would pay the full registration rate.
- Food Committee (may be one or two people)
 - ✓ Determine which meals will be included in registration fee. Most facilities have restrictions for bringing in your own food.
 - ✓ Determine menu. Include vegetarian and gluten free.
 - ✓ Determine snacks, water, etc.
 - ✓ If box lunches, determine how they will be distributed
 - ✓ Give costs to budget committee
 - ✓ Write up information and give to the publicity person and the webmaster to put on website.
- Volunteer coordinator
 - ✓ Work with program, food, publicity, photography committee to determine number of volunteers needed. Also have a set up, take down committee.
 - ✓ Recruit volunteers from your chapter and assign volunteers to needed areas. Have several extras to go where needed.
 - ✓ Determine symbol to make volunteers visible.
- Technology
 - ✓ Find out if instructors plan to bring their own equipment (laptop, projector, microscopes, etc). This info should be on the instructor form. Find out if instructors need any other equipment or copies made, etc.
 - ✓ Arrange for needed technology – microphones, screens, laptops, projectors, and amplifiers. Possibly work with the DNR tech person to get the schedule made on the DNR site.

- ✓ Have extra power cords for equipment, extension cords, back up machines, cords to connect laptop to projector in all formats (HTML, RCA cables, etc.).
- ✓ Liaison with facility to have/get needed equipment, assistance, etc.
- ✓ Have people assigned at the conference who will help as needed (setting up equipment, giving amplifiers to instructors for field activities, etc).
- Documenter of conference activities
 - ✓ Acquire needed equipment – camera, video-cameras
 - ✓ Identify people to assist with the documentation of the conference – people to take photos, set up and run video equipment, etc.
 - ✓ After conference compile information and put in a format to give to the publicity person and the webmaster.
- Pre-conference activity planner
 - ✓ Decide how many activities to plan and time frame for each
 - ✓ Find instructors and fill out instructor form
 - ✓ Determine if additional fees are needed for classes
 - ✓ Determine transportation needs for classes
 - ✓ Determine meal needs for classes. If conference rooms are not used for lunch on Fridays, may be OK to have less-expensive lunches (possibly Subway) than facility box lunches.
 - ✓ Arrange for documentation (photography of activity)
 - ✓ Determine if voice amplifiers are needed (see above)
- Budget
 - ✓ Work with all committees to find budget needs and income potential-likely will need to attend several different committee meetings.
 - ✓ Develop a spreadsheet showing all expenses.
 - ✓ Collect receipts
 - ✓ Give a list of bills that need to be paid to the MNSAC Treasurer
- Assistant to chair:
 - ✓ Someone who will assist you in keeping things on track, someone who is good at managing data and keeping up to date on registrations and financial timelines such as cut-offs for releasing/adding rooms. *
 - ✓ Someone to know the whole picture if needed.

Post-conference

- Collect and/or get copies of receipts (Budget person) to give to Treasurer of MNSAC
- Arrange for evaluation/survey on Survey Monkey to be sent to participants.
- If decide to use video cameras, arrange to post them on the YouTube channel
- Send thank yous to instructors
- Do a final report with financial info, participant numbers, class numbers, evaluation results and comments.
- Update this packet