

# Virginia Master Naturalists Course Information for Applicants

## Historic Southside Chapter



**Thank you for your interest in becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) with the Historic Southside Chapter.** The VMN training class prepares you to become a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist volunteer. The VMN Program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

***Please note:*** VMN is a volunteer training and service-based program. If you do not intend to be an active volunteer and help to support our local natural resources through your volunteer service, then this class and organization are not for you.

The basic training course covers the background knowledge and skills to prepare you for service as a VMN volunteer. This includes a wide range of topics in many areas relating to the natural sciences. Once Basic Training is successfully completed, initial certification requires 8 hours of approved continuing education and 40 hours of approved volunteer service within one year following completion of your basic training course. Annual re-certification also requires completion of 8 hours of approved continuing education and 40 hours of approved volunteer service each calendar year. You can complete your volunteer service in any of four key areas: citizen science, stewardship, education and outreach, and chapter administration, with at least 20 hours in the service areas citizen science, stewardship or education and outreach.

To become a Certified Master Naturalist a trainees must:

- 1) Complete 40 hour basic training;
- 2) Pass post training assessment;
- 3) Complete a minimum of eight hours advanced training approved by the Chapter; and
- 4) Complete 40 hours of service approved by the Historic Chapter.

Upon graduation from the basic training program, volunteers become members of the Historic Southside Chapter. Each volunteer has until 12 months from their Basic Training graduation date to complete all the requirements to become a certified Master Naturalist. To maintain certification, volunteers must annually complete an additional eight hours of advanced training and forty hours of service.

### Typical Basic Training Course Details:

- Classes typically run on alternate Tuesdays from late January through early May.
- Classes meet at VA Extension Office behind the IOW County Courthouse (17100 Monument Circle, Suite B, Isle of Wight, Virginia).
- Four field trips will be held on selected Saturdays during the course, usually from 9:30 AM through 12:30 PM.
- There will be an end of the course assessment activity, typically held on a Saturday.

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- Trainees may not miss more than two class sessions and missed sessions must be made up by attending approved classes within 3 three months of the end of the basic training program. Only one field trip can be missed and it must be made up.
- Snow day policy: If IOW County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, then class is cancelled and will be rescheduled. Check local TV news, radio or the IWCS website: <http://www.iwcs.k12.va.us/>.
- It is highly recommended that trainees have an email address and internet access, since program communications and volunteer hour reporting are usually done in this manner.
- The Program is targeted toward adults, 18 or older. Youth, age 14-17, may participate provided they are accompanied at training, field trips and volunteer service events by a parent or other adult who is directly responsible for them and is enrolled in the basic training program as well.
- Class size is typically limited to twenty trainees.
- The course fees are listed on the Historic Southside Chapter Better Impact landing page where you access the online application. The course fee covers basic training and course materials including an allocation for a selection of various nature books and field guides that will become the property of the individual trainee.

Applications are accepted via an online application form. Applicants will be notified once their application has been reviewed and accepted.

*Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process should notify the Chapter Advisor, Livvy Preisser at 757 365-6262 or (TDD number 1-800-828-1120) by the application deadline.*