

Virginia Master Naturalists Course Information for Applicants

Merrimac Farm Chapter – Fall 2021



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) with the Merrimac Farm 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. Initial certification, as well as annual recertification, requires 8 hours of approved continuing education and 40 hours of approved volunteer service within a year following completion of your basic training course. You can complete your volunteer service in any of four key areas: citizen science, stewardship, education and outreach, and chapter administration.

Basic Training Course details are provided below:

- Classes run mid-August to mid-January
- Most lectures are held on Thursdays, **one** is held on a Tuesday and is a mandatory course. **Six** field trips will be held on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons and **four** on Sunday afternoons during the course.
- Attendance at the lectures and field studies accumulating to over 40 hours for graduation and VMN membership is required to graduate. Our chapter includes additional classes which prepares our members for volunteer opportunities in our area.
- 3 lectures and 3 field studies may be missed. *However*, these are to be made up within 12 months of completion of basic training in one of the following ways: during the next training cycle if yearly, with another VMN chapter, or by making special arrangements with approval from the Training Committee Chair. If more classes are missed, accommodations can be made for events beyond your control, and you may graduate later.
- 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. Google Docs and Zoom meetings are the methods of communication for our course.
- Program is targeted toward adults, 18 or older. Youth, age 14-17, may apply under specific conditions.
- Class size is limited to 20 trainees.
- Course fee of \$200 covers basic training and course materials and chapter membership. Unlike other chapters, we do not collect dues. This is a one-time membership fee.
- Trainees must complete an exam/quizzes(s), an elevator speech and a 10-minute presentation to complete the course.
- Trainees must wear a mask, if not vaccinated, according to Virginia State Guidelines, for all in person sessions. This is subject to change due to updates from our state office.

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