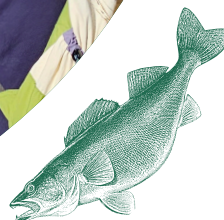


Illinois Master Naturalist Annual Report



Illinois
Master
Naturalist



Growing each year

\$2,667,554

Volunteer Value

77,794

Hours Volunteered



What is an Illinois Extension Master Naturalist?

Across the state, Master Naturalist volunteers share their knowledge and talents by putting research into action to help sustain and support the prairie state's natural resources. Master Naturalist hold expertise in local natural resources, geology, and ecology.

go.illinois.edu/MNimpact

Where Service Meets Impact

Stewarding our Natural Resources



32,137
Hours Earned

Project: Wet-Mesic Prairie Restoration in Kendall County

Master Naturalists, including Alyssa Theodor and her mother, Mary Theodor, have been key volunteers in helping the Oswegoland Park District and Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves restore the Yorkville Prairie, adjacent to Saw Wee Kee Park, which is a wet-mesic prairie home to plants adapted to wet conditions.

Educating the Public



12,114
Hours Earned

Project: Fall Tree Crawl in Piatt County

A Fall Tree Crawl at the Forest Preserve Park in Monticello gave volunteers the opportunity to connect with the public on the many species of trees located here and also introduce them to the Tree ID Project in the park. Permanent signage provides information about the native trees and links to additional resources online.



261
Volunteers Trained

Putting Knowledge into Practice

[I'm] now able to identify considerably more plants when performing stewardship activities at local forest preserves. [I] may now be in a position to make a significant contribution to a potential wetland restoration project.

Master Naturalist Volunteer,
after taking the training



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Advancing Scientific Knowledge

Project: Snake Road Sentinels in Union County



5,616
Hours Earned

The only road in the world that closes biannually for snake migration is in Union County, within the Shawnee National Forest. Every spring and fall, the U.S. Forest Service closes the road to vehicle traffic to protect migrating snakes and allow visitors to observe them. Beginning in 2022, Illinois Extension partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to develop the Snake Road Sentinels program, a community science program. Master Naturalists receive training and then walk the road, collecting social science data from visitors as well as recording data on the snakes they encounter.



A group of Master Naturalist present for the Snake Road Sentinels community science program.

Collaborating with Communities

Project: Tree assessments in Adams County

After completing the Illinois Extension Mastering Tree Health and Identification course, a group of Master Naturalists put their new knowledge to work by conducting a 200-acre street tree inventory for downtown Quincy. In the fall of 2024, these passionate volunteers dedicated nearly 200 hours to training, cataloging tree species, assessing tree health, and identifying potential maintenance and removal needs, which helped reduce city expenses. Their work provided data that will inform the city's tree care plans and future plantings, ensuring a thriving urban forest for generations to come.



A group of Master Naturalists conducting a tree inventory in Adams County.