



University of Illinois Extension  
**ILLINOIS**  
*Master Naturalist*

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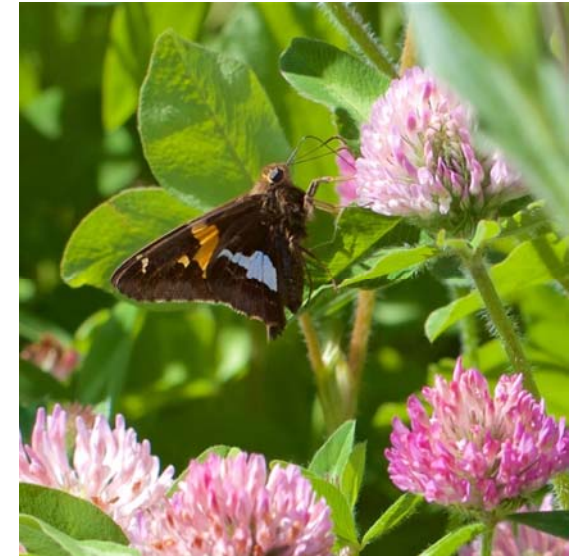
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If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please call 815.224.0889.

# **ILLINOIS EXTENSION MASTER NATURALIST**



**Learn how to become a  
Master Naturalist  
Volunteer in Bureau,  
LaSalle, Marshall and  
Putnam Counties!**

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## What is the Master Naturalist Program?

The mission of the University of Illinois Extension Master Naturalist Program is to provide science-based educational opportunities that connect people with nature and help them become engaged environmental stewards. The program educates and trains adult volunteers so they are better equipped to share natural resource information with others in their communities, and to assist with environmental conservation and restoration activities. We all have a responsibility to protect the natural resources in the places where we live in order to ensure our world is “fit for the future.” The University of Illinois Extension partners with local agencies to accomplish the Master Naturalist mission.

## Who Can Become A Master Naturalist?

An Illinois Master Naturalist is an adult who has a passion for the outdoors, is concerned about the quality and health of the natural environment, and enjoys providing both service and education to their local communities. Anyone 18 or older can become a Master Naturalist. It does not require a degree or any specific experience. You do, however, need to:

- successfully complete local training;
- have a sincere desire to learn and share natural resource information;
- be able to communicate effectively;
- be willing to devote time to volunteering and to continuing education each year to remain certified.

## What Is Required?

To become a Master Naturalist, you must submit an application to the University of Illinois Extension Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam Unit. Trainees who have been accepted into the program are required to complete background checks. Trainees must also complete a required Child Protection Course.

Once accepted, you can begin the training program. Training sessions are typically offered one day a week over a two-month period and are led by expert educators in the region. Training includes both classroom instruction and field study. 60 hours of volunteer work is required to complete the program and become certified. In order to remain a certified Master Naturalist, 30 hours of volunteer work and 10 hours of continuing education or advanced training are required each year.



## What Topics Are Covered?

During the program you will learn about many different facets of natural resources. A combination of lecture discussions, hands-on activities, and field trips will be used to present topics such as:

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Archaeology    | Birds             |
| Insects        | Reptiles and Fish |
| Mammals        | Plants            |
| Ecology        | Urban environment |
| Geology & Soil | Forests           |
| Prairies       | Wetlands          |

## What Will You Do as a Volunteer?

Your volunteer hours can be completed at a variety of locations in your area. Projects are pre-approved by your local University of Illinois Extension staff. Volunteer opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting in the management of local natural areas.
- Completing natural resource related office work with special interest groups or not-for-profit agencies.
- Teaching about natural areas to adults or children.
- Giving demonstrations and presentations to local groups.
- Serving as a liaison between natural resource agencies and the public.

Master Naturalists in Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, and Putnam Counties frequently volunteer at such places as Starved Rock, Dixon Waterfowl Refuge, Amboy Marsh, and for the Illinois Audubon Society, to name a few.

## Join Us!

If you are interested in the Master Naturalist Program, please contact Meg Overocker, Extension Program Coordinator, at [meo@illinois.edu](mailto:meo@illinois.edu), or call 815-433-0707. You may also put your name on the training waiting list by visiting our website at: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/blmp/> and click on “Master Naturalist Waiting List”.

