

MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Note that, since the future is uncertain, this policy may be reviewed/revised throughout the year. Considering the impact of COVID-19 precautions in 2020 and in anticipation of that impact continuing into 2021, a survey of Host Site Program Facilitators was conducted. Based on the results of that survey, the following revision to the volunteer service hours requirement for achieving or maintaining Certified Maryland Master Naturalist status was proposed and adopted:

NEW HOURS REQUIREMENT POLICY FOR 2021

Volunteer Service:

For calendar year 2021, the Maryland Master Naturalist Program will REDUCE the annual 40 hour volunteer service requirement for Certification by half, in consideration of COVID-19 precautions and personal safety. Therefore, 20 hours of volunteer service performed any time during the calendar year will be sufficient to achieve or maintain Certified Maryland Master Naturalist status.

NOTE that Master Naturalists are not discouraged from completing the traditional 40 hours of volunteer service per year (or more), they simply will not be required to complete this many hours this year. As always, Maryland Master Naturalists should track and report volunteer service hours to their Host Site Program Facilitator for validation and compilation. The Program Facilitator will then submit an annual volunteer service hours report to the state office for tabulation.

Advanced Training:

The Maryland Master Naturalist Program will MAINTAIN the current 8 hour Advanced Training annual requirement. As we did in 2020, for 2021 we encourage Host Site Program Facilitators to accept virtual learning as a satisfactory form of Maryland Master Naturalist Advanced Training.

Note that Online learning opportunities are circulated via the statewide Maryland Master Naturalist Program Listserv and may be found on the Maryland Master Naturalist Program's website under Advanced Training on the Resources tab and will be updated periodically:

<https://extension.umd.edu/masternaturalist/become-master-naturalist/master-naturalist-advanced-training>

POLICY DISSEMINATION

This change is being circulated via the statewide Maryland Master Naturalist Program Google Group Listserv and posted as a resource on the Maryland Master Naturalist Program website:

<https://extension.umd.edu/masternaturalist/resources/formspaperwork-trainees-interns-and-certified-master-naturalists>

Additionally, each Host Site Program Facilitator will contact each of his/her Maryland Master Naturalists to share this information as well. To the extent possible, Host Sites can continue to share and recognize no-contact volunteer opportunities as they deem acceptable/appropriate, and share, encourage, and accept online learning for advanced training.