


# Introduction: Maryland Master Naturalist Program Orientation

Wanda MacLachlan and Rondalyn Reeser  
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**Maryland Master Naturalist  
Program  
Orientation**

Wanda MacLachlan  
Rondalyn Reeser

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Welcome to the Maryland Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Program!

***The Maryland Master Naturalist Program is defined as:***

A science-based natural resource training program jointly sponsored statewide by University of Maryland Extension (UME), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other state and local agencies and organizations. Partnerships with state and local environmental organizations, agencies, and citizen groups support a network of locally directed Chapters around the state. Program Facilitators administer and coordinate volunteer training programs using the *Volunteer Training Manual*.

The statewide program was designed to:

- Train Program Facilitators associated with designated Host Sites
- Coordinate participant application, registration, payment and certification process
- Produce and distribute training manuals
- Manage statewide database listing of facilitators/instructors/volunteers
- Maintain an "Environmental Educators Database" as a resource for Program Facilitators to locate potential instructors

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## Points To Cover

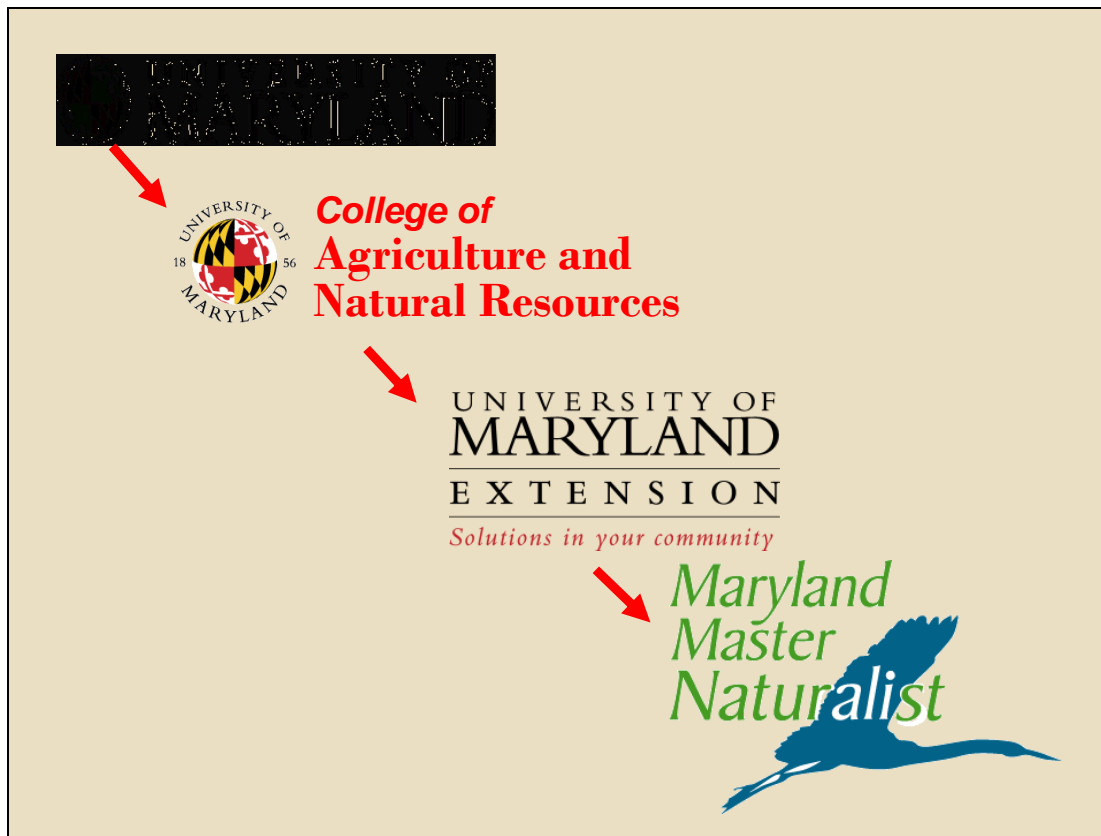
- What is Extension?
- Master Naturalist Programs in US
- MD Master Naturalist Program



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The University of Maryland at College Park is made up of many colleges.

The College of Agriculture & Natural Resources is one of those colleges.


Within the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources is  
University of Maryland Extension, an outreach branch of the university.

The Maryland Master Naturalist Program is a volunteer training program  
administered through University of Maryland Extension.

Extension is well known for some of its premier volunteer training programs  
such as Master Gardeners and 4-H volunteers.

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## College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Has three parts:
  1. Academic Instruction (students)
  2. University of MD Extension (UME\*)
    - Offices in all 23 MD counties & Baltimore City;
    - 4 Research & Education Centers (Ellicott City)
  3. Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES)

\*UME has offices in all 23 Maryland counties and Baltimore City

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The most recognizable component of the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources is the academic program. Whenever you hear, “University of Maryland, College Park,” students on campus is what you think of.

However, there are two other components that are just as important. As depicted earlier, University of Maryland Extension is housed within the University of Maryland’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at College Park. To ensure that the science-based information is disseminated to ALL the citizens of Maryland, a local Extension office is located in every county. In addition, there are several research & education centers located throughout the state. Some Extension personnel are housed at these facilities, also.

Much of the university’s agricultural research goes on at one of the several agricultural experiment stations, located throughout the state.

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**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES** Academics | Extension | Research

About UME

University of Maryland Extension has 29 local offices across the state. Use the map to find one near you.

West Region  
East Region

Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Carroll, Harford, Cecil, Western Maryland Research & Education Ctr., Frederick, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Kent, Queen Anne's, Montgomery, Howard, Anne Arundel, Wye Research & Education Ctr., Prince George's, Calvert, Talbot, Caroline, Lower Eastern Shore Research & Education Ctr., Charles, St. Mary's, Dorchester, Worcester, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Somerset, Wilcomico

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search our college...

- About UME
- 4-H Youth Development
- Crops, Farm Animals & Nursery
- Lawn, Garden & Home
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- Family Life & Community
- Natural Resources & Water Quality
- Publications Catalog
- Local Offices

Last updated: 11/11/2009

**Kid's Science Challenge**  
WELCOME TO YEAR 2 OF THE KIDS' SCIENCE CHALLENGE! With the help of three new teams of scientists and engineers, there is a brand new set of challenges for kids in the 3rd to 6th grade to consider. - posted Nov 6, 2009

**Maryland Secretary of Agriculture**  
The SGA Speaker Series presents: Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Buddy Hance Tuesday, Nov. 10th. - posted Nov 6, 2009

**Good Luck and Congratulations Maryland State 4-H Animal Science Teams**  
Congratulations to each of the Maryland 4-H youth that were named to the 2009 Maryland State 4-H Judging, Bow, Hippology and related Teams! We have a large number of youth, staff, and volunteers who will be participating in national contests that will be held at the 2009 North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY, November 7-20. - posted Nov 6, 2009


More news...

rmg data from www.agr.umd.edu...

On the University of Maryland Extension website ([www.extension.umd.edu](http://www.extension.umd.edu)) you can click on the link for “Local Offices” and you’ll be able to see a map indicating all the Extension offices in Maryland. Using this interactive tool you can link to your local office and learn more about it.

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**Major UME Programs**

- Agriculture & Natural Resources
  - Production Ag/Commercial Horticulture
  - Home Horticulture (HGIC)
    - Maryland Master Gardener
  - Natural Resources & Water Quality
    - **Maryland Master Naturalist**
- Family & Consumer Science
  - Food, Nutrition & Health Education
  - Financial Education
- 4-H Youth Development

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Where Does the Master Naturalist Program Fit in Extension?

Each of the 24 Extension offices offers information and programs for you and your fellow county residents. Listed here are the topics they address. The Master Naturalist program is a volunteer training program administered under Extension's Agriculture and Natural Resources programs.

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### Master Naturalist Program History

- First program in the nation: Boulder, Colorado – in the '70's
- First statewide program in Texas – 1997
  - Well-established programs: Florida, Minnesota – same goal
- MN-type Programs – 40 states

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The first Master Naturalist Program in the nation was in Colorado in the 1970s. Texas was the first state in the nation to institute a statewide program. Other states with large, well established programs include Florida and Minnesota.

Each state's program is slightly different but the overarching goal – of educating citizens to teach others to become better stewards of our natural resources – is the same. A handful of other states conduct very similar programs but they are called by names like Watershed Stewards, Conservation Stewards, Coverts Project and Citizen Naturalist.

Currently there are 40 states with Master Naturalist-like programs.

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## History, continued

- 2005
  - Statewide survey of interest
- 2008
  - Program Assistant
  - Steering Committee
    - Develop Policies & Guidelines; program structure; curriculum

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The idea of starting a Master Naturalist Program in Maryland occurred in 2005. A survey was conducted to see if there was interest in having such a program in Maryland.

In 2008 University of Maryland Extension went forward with the Master Naturalist Program by hiring a part-time program assistant. One of the first things to do was to form a Steering Committee. It was composed of representatives from Maryland Department of Natural Resources, local Parks & Recreation departments, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Howard County Conservancy, Natural History Society of Maryland and University of Maryland Extension. Two years later Maryland Association for Environment & Outdoor Education (MAEOE) joined the group. This steering committee is still working to ensure a successful Maryland Master Naturalist Program.


**State Steering Committee:** Ensures the successful execution of the Maryland Master Naturalist mission. Members can act as a chairperson or a committee member. Members provide guidance in developing program policy, creating training guidelines, establishing curriculum, developing curriculum resources, sponsoring conferences and advanced training, designing a rewards program, overseeing marketing, fundraising and promotional efforts, assisting chapters in identifying qualified instructors and in locating needed resources. The committee includes at least one representative from each sponsoring/partnering agency and at least one Chapter Representative from each Maryland Region.



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## History, continued

- 2010 – Piedmont Region
  - Pilot Volunteer Training: Howard County Conservancy
    - 14 trainees graduated in April, 2011!
  - Pilot Program Facilitator Workshop – represented 10 organizations
- 2011 – Coastal Plain Region
  - Pilot Volunteer Training: Adkins Arboretum

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By the end of 2009, Maryland was just about ready to offer a Master Naturalist volunteer training class in the Piedmont section of the state. The pilot Master Naturalist Volunteer training commenced in March, 2010 at the Howard County Conservancy. One year later, in April 2011, 14 trainees went on to become Certified Master Naturalists!

With the successful execution of the Pilot Volunteer Training, a Program Facilitator Workshop was also offered in the Piedmont Region in June of 2010 to train organizations how to conduct their own Master Naturalist Volunteer training. Program Facilitators are required to hold a volunteer training within one year of completing the workshop.

In spring 2011, Adkins Arboretum conducted a pilot volunteer training in the coastal plain region.

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**History, continued**

2011 – Volunteer Trainings

Piedmont: Cylburn; Oregon  
Ridge/Cromwell Park; Audubon  
Naturalist Society; Oregon Ridge

Coastal Plain: Pilot Volunteer Training:  
Adkins Arboretum

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By the end of this year, we shall have conducted at least 5 volunteer trainings in addition to the one held in 2010. The locations are Cylburn Arboretum, Adkins Arboretum, Oregon Ridge, Cromwell Valley and Audubon Naturalist Society in Chevy Chase.

Sometime in 2012, these trainees should become Master Naturalist volunteers!

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## Master Naturalist Mission Statement

- The MD Master Naturalist Program engages citizens as stewards of Maryland's natural resources & ecosystems through science-based education & volunteer service in their communities



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The mission of the Maryland Master Naturalist Program is to engage citizens as stewards of Maryland's natural resources and to encourage them to share their enthusiasm and science-based knowledge with others.

We do this by training a corps of citizens who are interested in natural history and willing to share that knowledge with others.

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## Our Goals

- Promote **awareness** & **appreciation** of MD's resources
- Develop statewide **network of trained volunteers** assisting natural resource-related organizations & agencies
- Provide structured, science-based program to **educate & certify citizens**
- Engage citizens in environmentally focused **volunteer service** within their communities

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Master Naturalists are a valuable asset for natural resource-related organizations and agencies. The goals of the Maryland Master Naturalist Program are to:

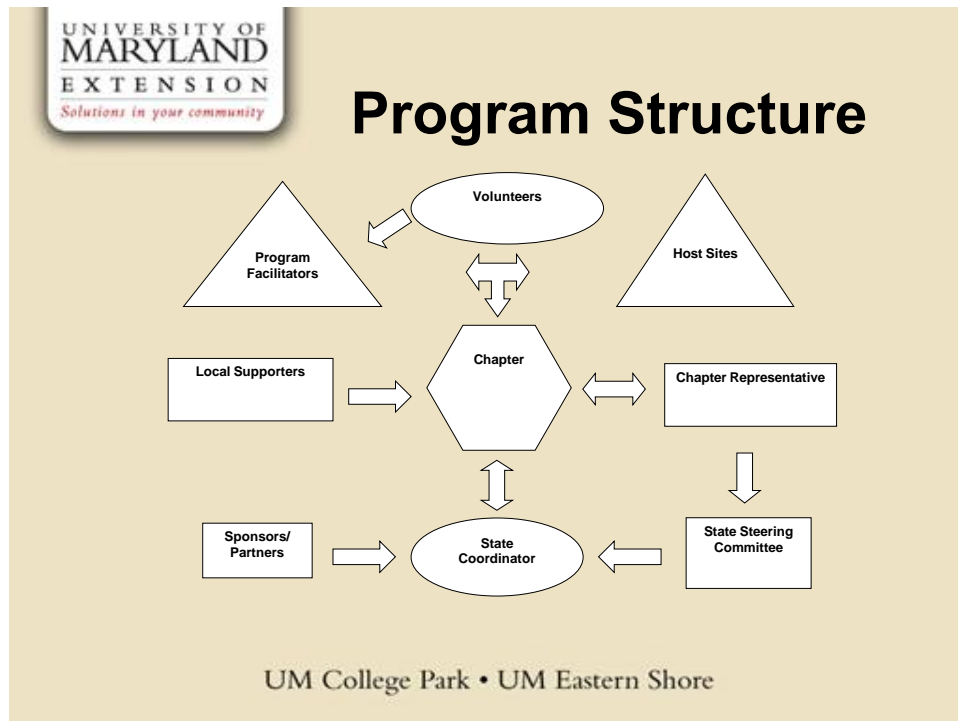
- Promote **awareness** and **appreciation** of Maryland's natural resources
- Develop a statewide **network of trained volunteers** that assist natural resource-related organizations & agencies
- Provide a structured, science-based program to educate and **certify citizens**
- Engage citizens in environmentally focused **volunteer service** within their communities

Some practical examples of how our Master Naturalists are sharing their talents:

- Developing a hands-on display on wetland management for middle school children
- Leading a guided walk on native trees and wildflowers
- Collecting data by participating in owl banding with DNR
- Writing a children's book about a host site
- Creating an invasive species removal plan for host site

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Here is how the Master Naturalist program is set up in Maryland.

A Volunteer Training is held at a **Host Site**.

Each Host Site has a **Program Facilitator**.

Program Facilitators train and are responsible for Master Naturalist **Volunteers**. Volunteers report to their facilitator.

If one Host Site joins with a neighboring Host Site, this would be an example of a Chapter being formed.

A **Chapter** is created when 2 or more Host Sites agree to share volunteers and instructors and host joint trainings. Currently there are no Chapters or **Chapter Representatives** in the MD Master Naturalist Program.

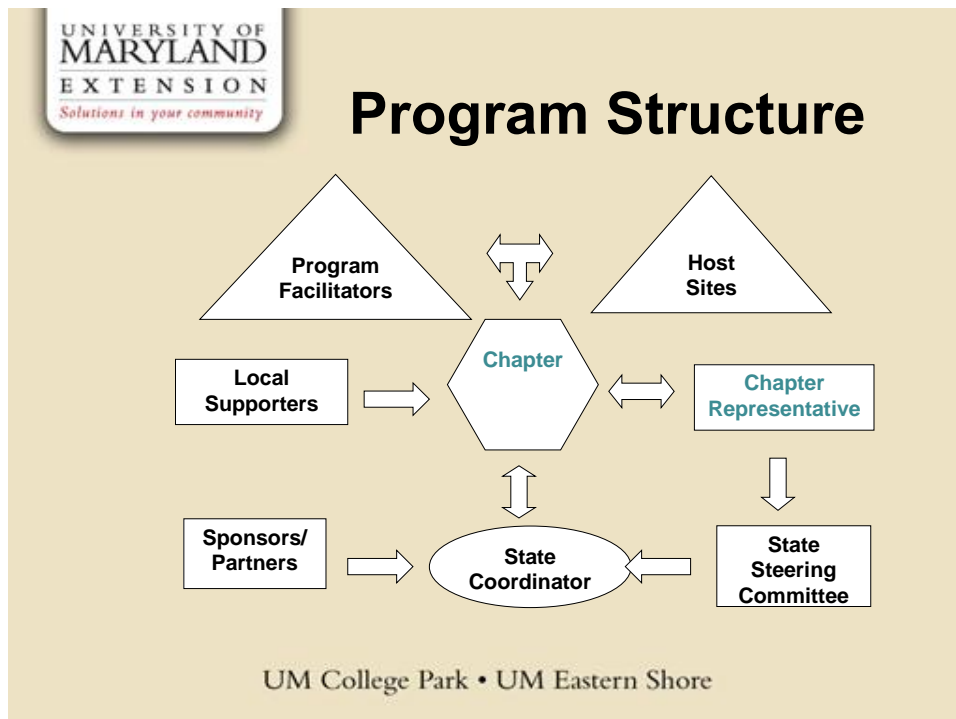
An example of a **Local Supporter** would be REI if they offer something to help support a Chapter or Host Site.

The **State Steering Committee** was already described in slide #8 but to summarize, the main tasks of the Steering Committee are to develop and amend, as necessary, our Policies &

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Guidelines and the Master Naturalist curriculum. Our statewide curriculum is tailored to each of the three major physiographic regions: Mountain; Piedmont; Coastal Plain.



In Maryland, the Master Naturalist Program is coordinated by University of Maryland Extension. Wanda MacLachlan is the **State Coordinator** and Rondalyn Reeser is the Program Assistant. They are both housed at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center in Ellicott City.

A **Partner** or **Sponsor** is an agency or organization that contributes a major component to the Master Naturalist program, like instructional materials or instructors. Maryland's DNR has been a crucial Partner in bringing the program to fruition.


They provided several of the instructors for the pilot program and many of the writers for the volunteer manual. A few other partners are the MAEOE, Cornell's School of Ornithology's NestWatch, Sylvan Kauffman and Ned Tillman. A Partner can have a representative on the Steering Committee.

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## Our Curriculum

- Maryland Natural History
- Flora & Fauna
- Fundamentals of Ecology
- How Humans Have Affected the Landscape
- Teaching and Interpretation
- The Science of Science

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The volunteer training program is intended to provide a balanced, integrated, practical course in natural resource and ecosystem science. The standardized curriculum will include core topics.

A Maryland Master Naturalist is expected to know the following things:

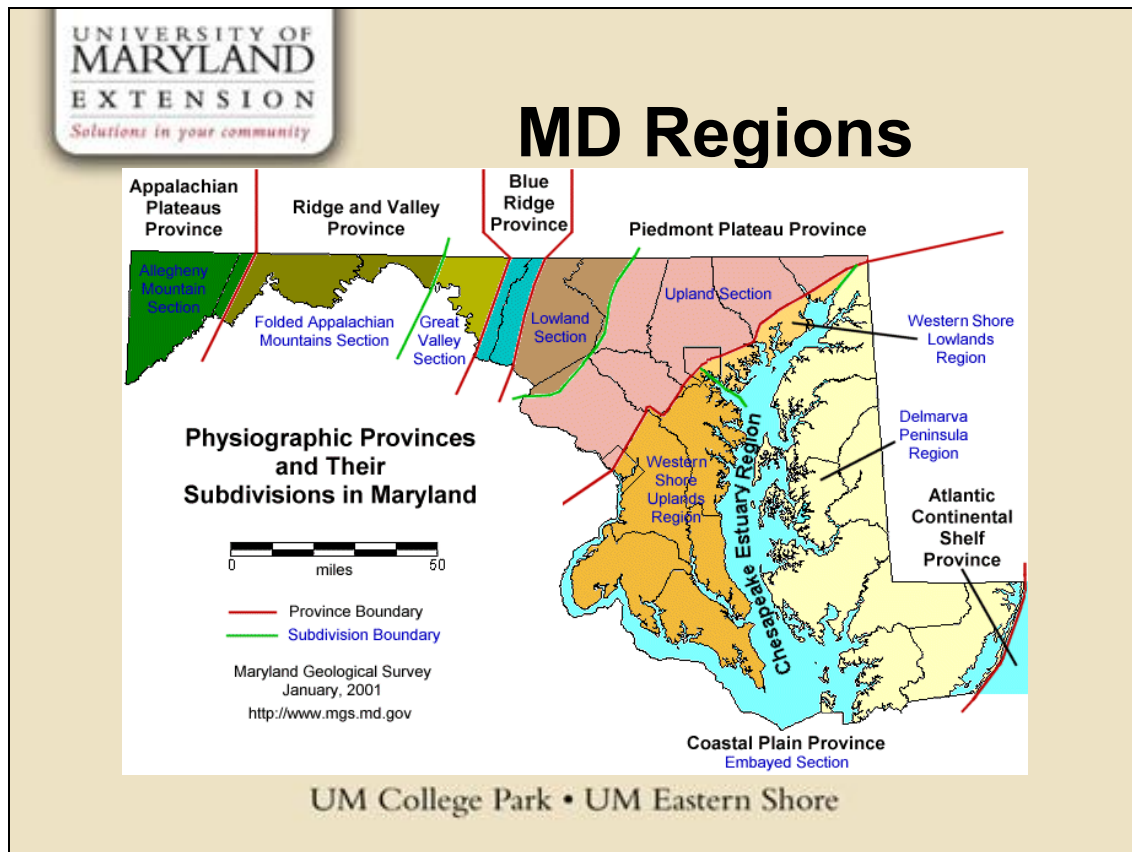
- Mission, goals, and guidelines of the program
- Significance of naturalists & natural history
- Some native flora and fauna in the region
- Ecology of Maryland (basic concepts)
- Humans & landscape
- Resource management (basic principles)
- Process of science
- Teaching and interpretation
- Roles of Maryland state agencies in the management and conservation of natural resources

Before each class, the student is asked to read the “pre-reading material,” which covers the basics about the subject, so that when they come to class, the instructors can cover more in-depth and specific information about the topic as it relates to the specific region.



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Maryland is divided into physiographic regions. We have divided our curriculum training modules into similar regions. The big difference is that we've combined the Appalachian Plateau, Ridge and Valley, Blue Ridge Provinces into one region calling it the Mountain region.

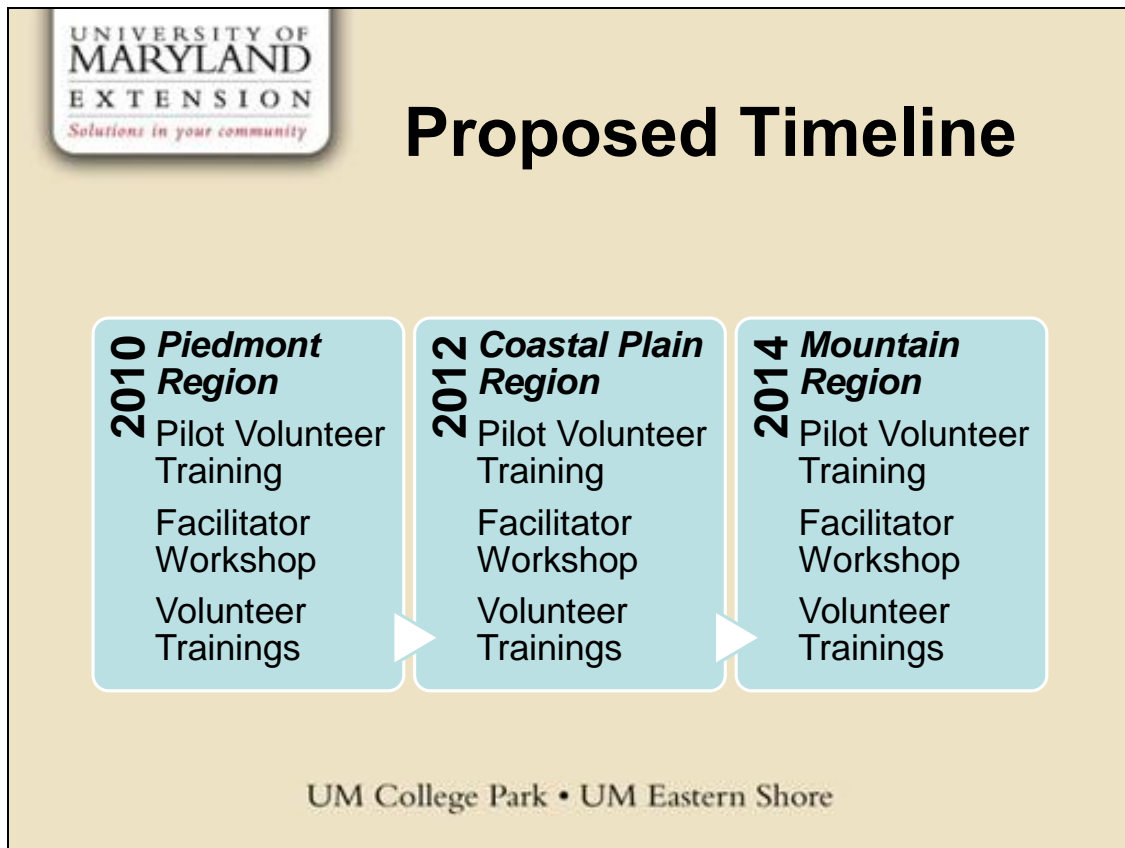
- **Mountain:** Garrett, Allegany, Washington, western Frederick
- **Piedmont:** Carroll, Harford, eastern Frederick, Baltimore, Montgomery, western Cecil, northern Baltimore City, Howard Counties
- **Coastal Plain:** southeastern portions of Cecil, Harford, Baltimore and Baltimore City; Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline, Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset and most of Worcester

Volunteer Trainings, coordinated by trained Program Facilitators at designated Host Sites, are held in each region.

*Image from Maryland Geological Survey's website:  
<http://www.mgs.md.gov/coastal/maps/gif/mdgeogr.gif>*

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The plan to introduce the Maryland Master Naturalist program throughout the state over the course of four years allows time to develop curriculum materials and identify instructors.

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## How To Become A Master Naturalist

- Acceptance into program
- Sign an Appointment Agreement & Photo Release Form
- 60 hour certification program
- Minimum 40 hours service
- Submit documentation (activity log)

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The journey to become a certified Maryland Master Naturalist takes time and effort. First, one must be accepted into program. Facilitators are looking for people who are willing to learn more about natural history and relate that information to others so we can all do a better job of protecting Maryland's natural resources.

Upon acceptance, one must successfully complete the Master Naturalist volunteer training program (approx. 60 hours).

During the first year after completing the training, one must provide minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service to the Host Site (where training was held). More on this later . . .

The Master Naturalist volunteer must submit documentation to their Program Facilitator of their volunteer hours each year. This documentation is submitted on the Master Naturalist Activity Log.

Prior to attending the volunteer training, one must sign and submit an Appointment Agreement & Photo Release. The appointment agreement is similar to a worker's contract, but specifically designed for volunteers. The photo release states that permission is given for the facilitator and/or the state program office to use photos taken during Master Naturalist activities.

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**Benefits Of Being A  
Master Naturalist**

- Learn ecologically principles
- Be involved with environmental issues
- Develop leadership skills
- Opportunities for continuing education and advanced training
- Recognition and support for your efforts
- FUN!

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Volunteering in a natural setting and spending time working with others is very rewarding. The Master Naturalist Program is new to Maryland. It is exciting to be one of the first to participate in the volunteer training program.

Some of the top environmental professionals in the state will be instructing classes. One of the goals of the Master Naturalist Program is to provide students with a well rounded, scientific-based education about the natural resources of Maryland. Once certified as a Maryland Master Naturalist, the hope is that the student will continue to expand their lifelong learning through advanced training opportunities and continue volunteering with the program.

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## Levels of MN Volunteers

- Trainee
- Intern
- Certified (active)
- Alumnus
- Inactive Status/Leave of Absence
- Terminated
- Mentor
- Transfers from out of state

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There are different levels of being a Master Naturalist volunteer. These levels are explained in the Policies & Guidelines document in your manual.

### Levels of Master Naturalist

**Master Naturalist Trainee:** a program participant from the time he/she is accepted into the program through completion of classroom training and required field trips.

**Master Naturalist Intern:** a program participant from the time he/she completes the 60 hours of Master Naturalist training and successfully passes the exam (it's a take home test) through the completion of 40 hours of volunteer service. This internship is normally completed within 12 months from the end of classroom training. However, interns may take 2 years to complete their internship upon agreement of the State Program Coordinator. Anyone who fails to complete the volunteer service requirement does not become a Maryland Master Naturalist.

**Certified (Active) Master Naturalist:** a Master Naturalist Intern who has completed the initial 40 hour volunteer service requirement. To maintain certified status requires a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training annually. These hours of commitment are recorded by the Program Facilitator and reported to the Program Coordinator in an annual report.

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A Certified Master Naturalist must have a current, signed “Volunteer Agreement Form” on file with the Program Facilitator. Certified Master Naturalists are encouraged to mentor Master Naturalist trainees and interns, helping to guide newcomers through a successful volunteer experience. Such mentoring qualifies as volunteer service.

**Alumnus:** a formerly Certified Maryland Master Naturalist who no longer maintains their annual active volunteer service and/or advanced training requirements. Return to active status after more than 2 years as a Master Naturalist alumnus may require additional training at the discretion of the State Program Coordinator.

**Inactive Status / Leave of Absence:** a formerly certified Maryland Master Naturalist or intern who is temporarily unable to fulfill Certified Maryland Master Naturalist requirements. Participants may remain on leave of absence for 1 or 2 years at a time upon the approval of the local Program Facilitator. A letter confirming the inactive status is placed in the volunteer’s file. Return to active status after more than 2 years as an inactive Maryland Master Naturalist may require additional training at the discretion of the State Program Coordinator.

**Terminated:** a Master Naturalist who is no longer part of the program.

**Mentor:** a volunteer who has maintained their certification status for a period of 2 years and is in good standing with the program and the State Program Coordinator. This individual will act as a resource for knowledge and skills in assisting other volunteers as assigned by their Program Facilitator.

**Transfers** from out of state: must present proof of prior Master Naturalist training and certification. Transfers will be assigned to a local Program Facilitator who will evaluate their training needs. They must successfully pass the volunteer training final exam as a take home test and submit all necessary forms and fees.

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A trainee takes the Master Naturalist Volunteer training at a designated Host Site under the direction of a University of Maryland Extension-trained Program Facilitator. The trainee's volunteer service hours will be conducted at the training Host Site under the direction of the Facilitator until they become certified (usually within one year).

After certification, volunteer service can be conducted at other locations with the approved of the Facilitator. The 8 hours of advanced training that is required each year must also be approved by the Facilitator.

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## Volunteer Service Guidelines



- At host site or location approved by facilitator
- Public benefit, not personal gain
- Keep record of hours in Volunteer Log
  - Turned in each year to facilitator

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There are a few guidelines associated with volunteer service. A minimum of 40 hours of service is required each year to maintain certification. Service should be conducted to benefit the host site. If not conducted at the host site, prior approval of service must be made by the facilitator or volunteer hours may not be accepted.

Individuals must be dedicated to the beneficial management of the natural resources within their local community. All volunteer service performed must be for public benefit and not for personal gain. In other words, one cannot wear the Maryland Master Naturalist badge while working at a paying job.

Hours of service must be recorded in the Volunteer Log and submitted to the Facilitator periodically so they can submit a final report to the state office at the end of each calendar year. (leading a bird ID group)



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## Education

*For volunteers who enjoy public speaking or working with youth!*

**EXAMPLES:**

- Volunteer interpreter at a park
- Developing an interpretive trail
- Be a guest presenter on a natural resource topic in a classroom



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There are many ways Master Naturalists can volunteer. One way is through educating the public. Master Naturalist volunteers are encouraged to broaden their interests by choosing volunteer opportunities that challenge them. It is rewarding to step out of one's comfort zone and learn a new skill that can be used to teach others. (describing different animal furs)

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## Stewardship

*For volunteers who just want to get their hands dirty!*

### EXAMPLES:

- Maintaining trails at a state park
- Weed Warrior: removing invasive plants
- Plant natives at a nature center
- Hands-on with wildlife



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Volunteer opportunities should be exciting and fun! Stewardship activities may be perfect for those that enjoy targeted projects. (banding pelicans on an island in the Chesapeake Bay)

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## Citizen Science

*For volunteers who enjoy helping with scientific research!*

**EXAMPLES:**

- Recording data for DNR's invasive species mapping program
- Participating in a local bird count
- Conducting water quality monitoring
- Organizing biodiversity inventory of a local park



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Science is fun it's not that difficult, once you learn some basics! Join other dedicated citizen scientists to measure and collect data that is used to enhance our local natural resources. For example, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is always looking for individuals interested in helping to collect and record data on their many plant and wildlife field trials. Visit their website at <http://dnr.maryland.gov/volunteer.asp> to learn about the many volunteer opportunities they offer. (tagging Monarch butterflies at a local nature center)

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## Administrative

*For volunteers who enjoy administrative tasks!*

**EXAMPLES:**

- Plan training classes
- Serving as a Steering Committee member
  - Volunteer liaison
- Work on newsletter
- Develop training materials - photos
- Update the website



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Sometimes, volunteer service is needed in unexpected ways. Because there is not much overhead in the Master Naturalist program, administrative assistance is cherished. There are many ways to help behind the scenes to make the program grow. Host Sites are a great place to volunteer! Check with the Program Facilitator about possible volunteer opportunities.

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## HAVE FUN!!

**Requirements:**

- 40 hours of volunteer service each calendar year
- 8 hours approved advanced training/yr
- Submit documentation (activity log)
- Renew Appointment Agreement every 3 yrs

**Yes I want to remain an active volunteer!**



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For an individual to maintain their Master Naturalist Certification they are required to provide at least 40 hours of volunteer service each calendar year; complete at least 8 hours of approved advanced training; submit documentation (activity log) of volunteer and advanced training hours and have a current signed volunteer appointment agreement on file with the University of Maryland Extension.

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# Questions?



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Thank you for becoming a Master Naturalist Trainee!

On the first day of your volunteer training we will review the major points of the Master Naturalist Program discussed in this presentation and address any questions you may have. See you then!

Photo: *Chelone glabra*, Turtlehead, the host plant of the Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly.

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## MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

### **Program Coordinator**

Wanda MacLachlan

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### **Program Assistant**

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