

Northeast Arkansas Master Naturalist Chapter

Alternative Certification Program

The Northeast Arkansas Master Naturalist chapter will endeavor to provide an opportunity for novice training at any time that a formal class cannot be convened (less than 15 applicants).

Levels in the Master Naturalist Program:

- Naturalist-in-training (Novice) - a person currently taking the 40 hours of required naturalist training.
- Master Naturalist – a person who has completed the required training and is current with the annual dues.
- Certified Master Naturalist – a person who has performed 40 hours of volunteer work, acquires 8 hours of advanced training each year, and is current with the annual dues.

Naturalists-in-Training Program:

- The NEAMN chapter will enable individual members to become certified through a variety of methods. Instruction may take the form of classroom lectures and practical application of newly acquired skills or it may be completed through independent study. Consideration may also be given to prior education and employment experience.
- The subject matter covered will vary but will focus on our natural world, archeological assets, and historical sites. Training will focus on Arkansas animals, plants, geology, and conservation. Areas that will be covered include ecology, native plants and animals, geology, botany, meteorology, astronomy, public land use, interpretation, trail design and maintenance, history, insects, archeology, aquatic systems, and stream quality evaluation and testing. In addition, as volunteers that will serve in our state parks, it is important to be familiar with each park and its mission as well as become acquainted with park personnel.
- Each naturalist-in-training must complete 40 hours of training. The 40 hours of training will be monitored by a mentor assigned to assist the novice with selecting and completing the appropriate training.
- The initial cost to enter the training program is \$100.00. \$70 will help offset the cost of literature and materials, a t-shirt, and a nametag. The remaining \$30 will cover the annual dues for the first year. When two members of the same family apply for training, the second family member's fee will be reduced to \$65.
- With approval, the training fee may be paid in installments.
- The training must be completed in one year. An extension may be granted if the novice needs additional time. The extension must be approved by the mentor.

Process for completing the novice level of membership:

- The novice will be assigned a mentor who is a current member of NEAMN.
- The mentor will provide guidance in selecting the proper training method and materials. The mentor must approve the course of study for each area noted in advance.
- The mentor and novice will document the completion of all hours of training. The novice must provide verification of each hour of training for the mentor.
- The novice must complete a minimum of 2 hours and a maximum of 6 hours in each of the following components. (Some possible guidelines are included, but the mentor and novice may select other areas of study for any component.)

The training may be completed in the following manner:

- independent study
- as part of the monthly meetings and training sessions
- college coursework
- on-line classes or training
- other AMN training classes or BioBlitz
- special trainings or presentations at any park, nature center, or natural area
- participation or leadership in special activities
- reading or DVD reports
- research of a specific topic
- park tours or activities with individual park interpreters
- use of web links for training provided on AMN website
- consideration of prior education or employment experience
- experience gained through working with other master naturalists on special projects