

Frequently Asked Questions

1: Will the Ontario Master Naturalist Program be repeated?

Based on the enthusiastic response to this first offering, it seems likely that the program will be offered again. Stay tuned for more information.

2: Where do I need to go to obtain the 30 volunteer hours required for completing the program?

In general, any not-for-profit organization involved in stewardship of the natural environment and willing to host a volunteer, would be appropriate. It need not be an organization in the Simcoe County area. A list of example organizations will be provided to program participants.

3: Do I need to complete all the volunteer hours before obtaining my certificate?

Yes. We hope registrants will be able to complete their 30 hours within a year of the end of the program, and if that is a problem, participants are invited to contact the program coordinator for assistance. Participants must show evidence of having completed these hours before obtaining their certificates.

4: What kind of certification do I receive upon completion of the program?

Participants who complete all six modules and 30 hours of community service will receive a certificate acknowledging the time they have spent learning and practicing to be a naturalist, and naming the different modules in which they have participated. The Ontario Master Naturalist Program (OMNP) certificate is not a university degree or college diploma, and it does not qualify certificate holders to act as an expert in a professional capacity. The name “Master Naturalist” is used, as it is in a majority of states in the U.S.A., in a manner similar to the “Master Gardener” designation. The Ontario Master Naturalist Program is a community-based education program that introduces participants to the role of a naturalist and helps participants to build experience and knowledge.

5: What would a typical session be like, from a time point of view?

While all sessions will be slightly different (with schedules determined by access to different wildlife, weather, etc.) a typical session will begin with one or two hours in the classroom, where the topic is introduced. Following this, participants will travel to the field location. Lunch will most often take place at the field location and the rest of session (which may be two or three hours, depending on driving time) will take place in the field.

6: What do I need to bring?

As mentioned above, lunch is not provided, so participants will need to bring their own (be prepared to carry any garbage with you). Participants should also bring clothing appropriate for walking long distances outdoors (including sturdy walking shoes that are ideally waterproof or at least water resistant and that provide protection from insects and contact with plants such as poison ivy). Participants should bring sunblock and insect repellent if desired, and should be aware that other participants may be using such products. Information regarding any other recommended supplies will be sent to all program participants.

7: How difficult will the hikes at field sites be?

Participants should expect walking at field locations to be of an easy to moderate intensity (according to generally accepted guidelines for trails). No climbing will be involved, but sturdy, waterproof footwear should be worn as terrain may be uneven and unstable in areas.

8: Is there a test or exam participants need to pass to complete the modules?

There is no exam participants must pass to complete the program, but modules may include completion of worksheets that will allow instructors to assess the progress of participants.