

# Become a Minnesota Master Naturalist

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Liz Stanley

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# What is a Naturalist?

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- ✦ There are many definitions, but the most basic is that a naturalist is a person with an interest in learning about the natural world
- ✦ Anyone can be a naturalist
- ✦ There are many different areas of interest to focus on, from birding to native plants, geology, insects, cultural history, etc.

# About the Program

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- ✦ The Minnesota Master Naturalist program began in 2005
- ✦ Supported by a NSF grant, and modeled on the Florida Master Naturalist program
- ✦ Provides opportunities for adults to learn about the natural world and share their knowledge with the community

# About the Program

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- ✦ The Minnesota Master Naturalist program is administered and coordinated through the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota DNR
- ✦ Offers learning, networking and volunteer opportunities throughout the state and in many areas of interest
- ✦ Motto is “Explore, Teach, Conserve”

# Why Get Involved?

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✦ As a Minnesota Master Naturalist you will have opportunities to:

- ◆ Explore the natural world
  - Find new interests and discover new places
- ◆ Teach others
  - Share your knowledge and enthusiasm
- ◆ Conserve Minnesota's natural resources
  - Give something back to the community

# How to Participate

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- ✦ There are three steps to become certified as a Minnesota Master Naturalist:
  - ◆ Take one of the MN Master Naturalist volunteer training courses
  - ◆ Complete 40 hours of approved volunteer service before the end of the calendar year
  - ◆ Complete 8 hours of advanced training

# Training Courses

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- ✦ Courses are offered at various locations throughout the year
- ✦ Each course focuses on studying one of Minnesota's three biomes:
  - ◆ “Big Woods, Big Rivers”
  - ◆ “Prairies and Potholes”
  - ◆ “North Woods, Great Lakes”
- ✦ One course consists of 40 hours of training

# Training Courses

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- ✦ Course cost is \$200
- ✦ Includes all materials and supplies
- ✦ Also includes van transportation on field trips
- ✦ Scholarships are available if cost is a hardship
- ✦ Register and pay for class online

# Course Activities

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✦ A typical class session involves:

- ◆ Lectures and slide presentations related to the course topic
- ◆ Take walks outside around the class location for discussion and hands-on observation
- ◆ Show and tell items related to the class topic
- ◆ Quizzes on identification of flora and fauna
- ◆ Working with other students on a group project

# Volunteering

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- ✦ To become and remain certified, a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service must be performed each year
- ✦ The volunteer work must be through established organizations such as a nature center, state park, wildlife rehab center, etc.
- ✦ Must be Minnesota-related volunteer work

# Volunteer Categories

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## ✦ Stewardship

- ◆ Natural resource management

## ✦ Education/Interpretation

- ◆ Information development and delivery

## ✦ Citizen Science

- ◆ Data collection and reporting

## ✦ Program Support

- ◆ Assist with administration/operational tasks to keep programs running

# Stewardship

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## ✦ Example activities:

- ◆ Invasive species removal projects
- ◆ Native plant seed collection
- ◆ Habitat restoration
- ◆ Tree planting
- ◆ Establish a bluebird trail

# Education/Interpretation

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## ✦ Example activities:

- ◆ Guide a naturalist walk
- ◆ Give a presentation (like this one!)
- ◆ Develop a brochure for a nature center
- ◆ Work an information booth at the State Fair

# Citizen Science

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## ✦ Example activities:

- ◆ Christmas Bird Count
- ◆ Feeder Watch
- ◆ Monitor monarch butterflies
- ◆ Water quality monitoring
- ◆ Bird banding

# Program Support

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## ✦ Example activities:

- ◆ Enter computer data
- ◆ Help with a nature center newsletter
- ◆ Transport raptors
- ◆ Repair exhibits at a park visitor center
- ◆ Work in a nature center store

# Advanced Training

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- ✦ Must complete 8 hours of advanced training to remain certified
- ✦ Training can consist of any nature-related topic
- ✦ Must be a topic relevant to Minnesota
- ✦ Must be something taught/led by an instructor from an established organization

# Advanced Training

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## ✦ Examples of training:

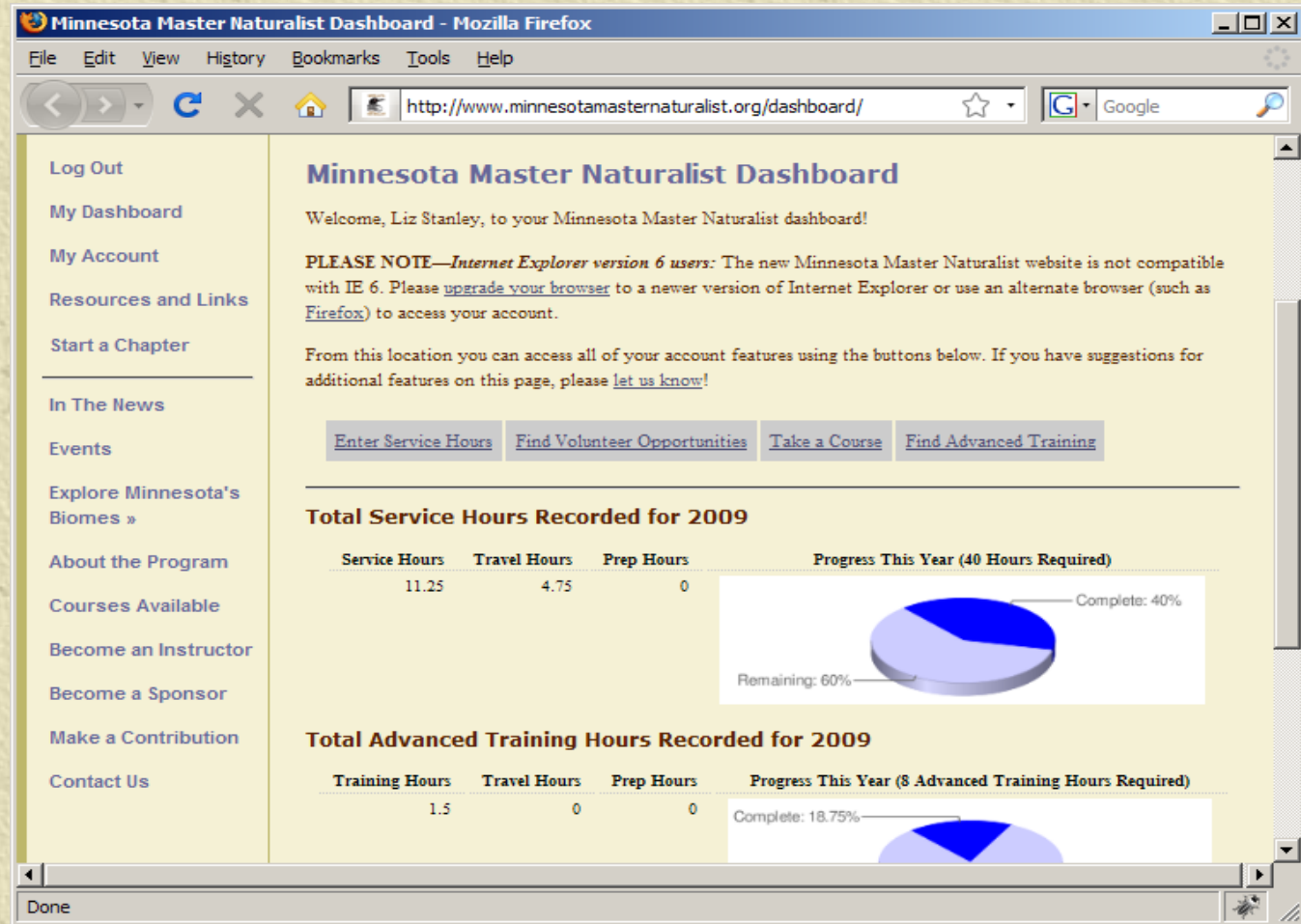
- ◆ Volunteer orientation/training for an organization
- ◆ Additional MN Master Naturalist courses
- ◆ Attend a seminar at a naturalist conference
- ◆ Any type of naturalist presentation at a state park, wildlife refuge, nature center, etc.

# Tracking Hours

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- ✦ Log hours for service and training on the MN Master Naturalist website
- ✦ Award pin given for initial 40 hours of yearly service
- ✦ Special milestone pins for increments of 100/250/500/1000 service hours
- ✦ Prep and travel time counts toward hours

# Tracking Hours



**Minnesota Master Naturalist Dashboard - Mozilla Firefox**

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/dashboard/

Google

**Minnesota Master Naturalist Dashboard**

Welcome, Liz Stanley, to your Minnesota Master Naturalist dashboard!

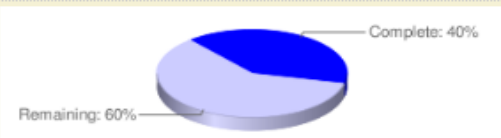
**PLEASE NOTE—Internet Explorer version 6 users:** The new Minnesota Master Naturalist website is not compatible with IE 6. Please [upgrade your browser](#) to a newer version of Internet Explorer or use an alternate browser (such as [Firefox](#)) to access your account.

From this location you can access all of your account features using the buttons below. If you have suggestions for additional features on this page, please [let us know!](#)


[Enter Service Hours](#) [Find Volunteer Opportunities](#) [Take a Course](#) [Find Advanced Training](#)

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**Total Service Hours Recorded for 2009**

Service Hours	Travel Hours	Prep Hours	Progress This Year (40 Hours Required)
11.25	4.75	0	

**Total Advanced Training Hours Recorded for 2009**

Training Hours	Travel Hours	Prep Hours	Progress This Year (8 Advanced Training Hours Required)
1.5	0	0	

Done

# Ongoing Support/Networking

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- ✦ Keep track of volunteer and advanced training opportunities, and other events on the MN Master Naturalist website
- ✦ Join a local MN Master Naturalist chapter
- ✦ Attend the annual Minnesota Master Naturalist State Conference

# My Experience with the Program

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- ✦ Took the Prairies and Potholes course at Ft. Snelling State Park in August-September
  - ◆ Class taught by naturalists from Ft. Snelling and MN Valley NWR
  - ◆ About 20 students were enrolled
  - ◆ Course ran 5 Thursdays from 6-9 pm
  - ◆ Three Saturday field trips
  - ◆ A final team project presentation

# My Experience with the Program

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- ✦ Enjoyed meeting and working with people from different backgrounds who had common interests
- ✦ Course was very well organized
- ✦ Instructors were enthusiastic and knowledgeable
- ✦ Other students friendly and supportive
- ✦ Field trips were informative and fun

# What am I doing now?

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## ✦ Volunteer for the Raptor Center

- ◆ Transport crew – on call every other Friday A.M.

## ✦ Volunteer for Richardson Nature Center

- ◆ Raptor care - two Sundays a month, involves a few months of training

## ✦ Participate in Christmas Bird Counts

## ✦ Plan next year to volunteer at Hawk Ridge and participate in the Western Great Lakes Owl Monitoring project

# Photo – Volunteer Work

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## ✦ Raptor transport

- ◆ Had to rescue this barred owl from tree
- ◆ Each call is usually 2-3 hours of volunteer service
- ◆ Also involves some interaction with the public, and education about raptors



# Photo - Advanced Training

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- ✦ Attended a bird banding seminar at Hawk Ridge in Duluth
- ✦ Learned how songbirds are banded, and got to help release some of the birds

# Photo - Class Field Trip

✠ Wild River State Park prairie restoration



# Photo - Class Field Trip

✦ Interstate State Park geology



# Graduation Night!

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# Resources

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## ✧ MN Master Naturalist Site

◆ <http://www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org/>

## ✧ MN Master Naturalist Blog:

◆ <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/lothe013/mnats>

## ✧ Twin Cities Naturalist Blog:

◆ <http://tcnaturalist.blogspot.com/>

## ✧ SEEK:

◆ <http://www.seek.state.mn.us/index.cfm>

# Questions?

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