

VERMONT MASTER NATURALIST — WINOOSKI HEADWATERS CHAPTER

Advancing conservation, building community, and connecting Vermonters to the wild heart of place



WHAT: Specific, place-based natural history training across the earth, life and social sciences.

VMN participants learn from regional experts to interpret the layers of the local landscape, then apply that integrated training to long-term stewardship and ambassadorship of local natural areas. Master Naturalists become important resources for environmental conservation in our communities and schools.



WHO: Twelve residents of the Winooski Headwaters towns with a sustained interest and background in at least one natural history discipline.

Participants are chosen by application process. VMN coordinators work with local conservation organizations and municipalities to build a base of local support and sponsorship for programs, projects, and the participants. Trainings are developed and instructed by NBNC and other visiting experts. Participants must reside in Montpelier, Middlesex, Worcester, Calais, East Montpelier, Marshfield, or Plainfield.



HOW: A five-session core training program exploring the processes, events, and characters shaping the Montpelier region.

Candidates will investigate and integrate layers of the physical, environmental, and cultural landscape such as: **geology, soils, botany, natural communities, wildlife, human land use history, and natural processes like wind, fire, and succession.** Each VMN candidate will also select an extracurricular practice chosen to deepen his or her naturalist skills, including wilderness awareness, sketching, photography, etc. The trainings will explore conservation history and management issues related to each site.



STEWARDSHIP: Following the core training, candidates are matched with partnering conservation organizations to undertake stewardship and engagement projects of at least 20 hours per person. Upon completion, certified Vermont Master Naturalists will continue to support the local community, while receiving continued mentorship in their future naturalist endeavors.

WHEN: Five Sundays in 2019 from 9 am - 3 pm, plus additional project service hours.

COST AND APPLICATIONS: One-time enrollment fee of \$450 due upon acceptance in the program. Applications solicited Jan 1.

FOR MORE INFO AND TO APPLY:
northbranchnaturecenter.org/VMN

About the Vermont Master Naturalist Program

Unlike Master Naturalist programs found elsewhere, the Vermont Master Naturalist Program emphasizes deep investigation at the local level, and training naturalists to serve as environmental ambassadors. VMN emerged in Burlington in 2016, where it is currently instructing its third cohort of master naturalists. Alicia Daniel, VMN Executive Director, is a lead faculty member of UVM's distinguished Field Naturalist program, and has adapted the graduate-level Field Naturalist approach for Vermont communities. In 2018, VMN expanded to Richmond, Williston, South Hero, South Burlington, and the Bristol 5-town area.

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FIELD SESSION SYLLABUS

All sessions 9 am - 3 pm

Field locations selected from natural areas in the Winooski Headwaters towns



SESSION 1: Winter Ecology and Mammal Tracking (3/10)

How does winter wildlife use the local landscape?

- ◆ Wildlife signs and tracks.
- ◆ Snow science primer and subnivean ecology.
- ◆ Winter survival strategies in mammals and birds.
- ◆ Winter tree identification.

SESSION 2: Geology and Topography (4/28)

What forces shaped the local geological landscape?

- ◆ Vermont's geological formation.
- ◆ Bedrock geology of Montpelier.
- ◆ Relationships between geology and topography.
- ◆ Glacial history of the Winooski headwaters.



SESSION 3: Surficial Geology, Soils, Signs of Spring (5/12)

What grows where? Why?

- ◆ Soil types, soil formation, and soil quality.
- ◆ Relationships between landform, soils, and plant communities.
- ◆ Spring botany and birdlife.
- ◆ Upland natural communities.



SESSION 4: Watersheds and Wetlands (7/7)

How does water shape the landscape?

- ◆ Wetland botany and natural communities.
- ◆ Vernal pools and amphibians ecology.
- ◆ Hydrology and watershed science.



SESSION 5: Human Land Use History and Forest Forensics (9/22)

What historic disturbances shaped the forests today?

- ◆ Interpreting stone walls and other agricultural artifacts.
- ◆ Settlement history and its impact on the forested landscape.
- ◆ Uncovering disturbance clues like storms, logging, and tilling.



STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

Following the five-part training program, time is dedicated to community stewardship and engagement projects designed in collaboration between sponsoring conservation organizations, VMN candidates, and NBNC.