

IMN Volunteer acceptable activities hours guide

To become a certified IMN, a person must complete a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer time benefiting our natural resources. To be an Advanced IMN, a person must complete a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer time benefiting our natural resources.



To help IMN hosts and students understand what is acceptable and what it not, a list follows below to help guide people with questions. This is *not* a complete list. If there is ever a question, please ask the current IMN State Coordinator who will take the question to the IMN Council. Currently that is Jody Heaston, jheaston@dnr.in.gov

The main questions to ask when deciding if the activity is acceptable is “Does this volunteering task benefit Indiana’s natural resources and help an Indiana natural resources organization?” and does it line up with the IMN mission: *The Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of **Indiana’s plants, water, soils and wildlife**, and **promote natural resources volunteer service** within the State of Indiana.*

Acceptable Activities (to create, enhance, and/or maintain *public* areas)

- ❖ rain gardens
- ❖ butterfly/pollinator gardens
- ❖ native seed collection/swap
- ❖ invasive plant removal
- ❖ planting native trees for organization
- ❖ teaching about Indiana’s natural resources
- ❖ school nature labs
- ❖ promoting Indiana’s native plants and animals
- ❖ bird counting, nest monitoring, building birdhouses
- ❖ river/lake cleanups
- ❖ botanical gardens, if they promote natural environments
- ❖ Indiana citizen science projects like Hoosier Riverwatch, CoCoRaHS, bird counts, etc.
- ❖ being part of a nonprofit natural resources affiliated group
- ❖ Boy and Girl Scout projects related to Indiana’s natural resources.
- ❖ helping in national, state, county and city parks, wildlife refuges, and public trails.
Possible tasks include but are not limited to landscape maintenance, wood-splitting, teaching, litter pick up, manning visitor centers, answering phones, etc.-- whatever is needed to enhance the staffs’ effectiveness.
- ❖ Citizen science activities: IMN participation is encouraged in international, national, regional, and local citizen science activities. However, considering the substantial amount of time that can be involved in doing many of these, an IMN intern may submit no more than 8 hours of citizen science activities toward their initial 24 required hours. The remaining 16 hours must come from other volunteer sources. Advanced IMNs may submit no more than 10 hours of citizen science

activities toward their 30 required hours. (Exceptions may be made for those IMNs with physical disabilities.)

Special circumstances

- Master Gardeners: The hours need to have something to do with native plants, pollinators, etc. Hours are not accepted dealing with annual flowerbed care, vegetable gardening, manning a MG booth at an event, etc.
- Zoo volunteering: Hours working with or interpretation of Indiana's native species or Indiana's natural resources will count.
- Recognized Wildlife Rehabs: Hours spent cleaning, care and interpretation of Indiana native species at recognized wildlife rehabs.
- Wildlife Rehab fostering: Up to two hours/day can count for cleaning and care of Indiana native species being fostered at your home under the supervision of a recognized wildlife rehab.

Not acceptable

- Animal Shelters
- Feral Cat organizations
- Food pantry
- Mowing church lawns
- Exotic animal sanctuaries
- Recycling centers
- Campground hosting (Camp Hosts are already receiving free camping for their service)
- Forest bathing/mediation/therapy
- Your personal yard care and gardening

Note: Out of state natural resources volunteer hours are acceptable, but a minimum of 12 hours in Indiana is needed for the IMN student and 15 for AIMNs. The IMN Council is aware of people living just across the state border and those that travel south for the winter.

*This list is to serve as a guide. It is a very short list of **many things IMN's can do.***

Please report your hours annually!

As a first year IMN, report to your local host. For Advanced IMN status, report them to the state coordinator, although your local host may also want them for local publicity purposes.



The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils and wildlife, and promote natural resource volunteer service within the State of Indiana.