



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

THE MINNESOTA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Introduction

The Minnesota Master Naturalist Program (MMNP) is a volunteer program of the University of Minnesota Extension in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), that teaches adults about Minnesota's natural resources, empowers them to educate others, and provides opportunities to do conservation projects.

The mission of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is to promote awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Minnesota's natural environment by developing a corps of well-informed citizens dedicated to conservation education and service within their communities.

In order to accomplish this mission, MMNP has the following objectives:

- Train volunteers to become Master Naturalists
- Increase knowledge of Minnesota's natural and cultural history
- Develop a volunteer's ability to convey this knowledge in a variety of educational settings and to a variety of audiences
- Promote a volunteer's ability to serve as a steward of the land
- Help volunteers become more informed, concerned, and proactive about the natural environment
- Support a volunteer's growth as a life-long and self-directed learner

The MMNP offers a variety of benefits to the citizens of Minnesota by (i) supporting conservation efforts throughout Minnesota; (ii) providing a statewide network of volunteers trained in environmental education, interpretation, and service, (iii) supporting and assisting Master Naturalist volunteers, and (iv) providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. By volunteering in the MMNP, Master Naturalists will participate in locally-taught courses that correspond to Minnesota's three major ecosystems and experience the thrill of being a trend-setter in this new program.

MMNP Master Naturalists

Any adult who is curious and enjoys learning about the natural world, wishes to share that knowledge with others, and supports conservation can become a MMNP Master Naturalist. If you enjoy hiking, bird watching, following tracks, or identifying wildflowers, you'll love being a MMNP Master Naturalist. MMNP Master Naturalists are a motivated group of fun and interesting people: teachers, retired professionals, nature guides, hunters, eco-tour operators, farmers.

The MMNP Volunteer Training Course consists of 40 hours of in-classroom training. The classroom training includes a variety of teaching methods, lectures, hands-on activities, videos, and field trips that provide the participants with information on Minnesota's natural history. The

course is designed to be a general overview of Minnesota's three biomes. Each class series focuses on one of the three biomes: (i) *Big Woods, Big Rivers*; (ii) *Prairies and Potholes*; and (iii) *North Woods, Great Lakes*. Participants must complete 40 full hours of training to become certified MMNP Master Naturalist Volunteers. One make-up night is included in most courses but field trips cannot be missed or made up.

Following the completion of the training course, a MMNP Master Naturalist Volunteer is expected to complete 40 hours of volunteer service per year to be considered an active Master Naturalist in good standing. The four primary areas of service are:

- Stewardship Projects—these projects would involve natural resource management activities, such as invasive species removal, or restoration projects.
- Education/Interpretive Projects—these projects would be public presentations of natural resource information, educational materials development, or leading hikes.
- Citizen Science Projects—these projects would focus on volunteers gathering data and returning it to researchers to support the research projects. Examples would include: Monarch larval monitoring, plant or animal counts, or water quality monitoring.
- Program Support—these projects include working in a store or office of the Minnesota Master Naturalist or sponsor, or serving as a local chapter organizer.

Time spent preparing volunteer projects and traveling to and from volunteer sites may be counted toward the 40 hour requirement. To stay certified, a MMNP Master Naturalist Volunteer must complete 40 hours of volunteer work and 8 hours of advanced training annually. After 100, 500, and 1000 hours of service, Master Naturalist Volunteers will receive special recognition, in addition to being recognized for each year they are certified.

MMNP Chapters

As MMNP grows, we recognize that graduates of the MMNP will desire not only to volunteer as individuals but to share experiences with their program cohorts, enrich relationships with natural resource experts, cooperate in identifying local needs, and become more involved in environmental events and projects in their communities. These opportunities may be organized through the development of MMNP Regional Chapters under the facilitation of MMNP graduates with support from program staff and host organizations.

MMNP Chapters encompass groups of regionally-affiliated MMNP volunteers who agree to abide by MMNP standards and structures for operation. Chapters will hold periodic meetings to share their volunteer experiences, organize group volunteer projects, participate in educational field trips, or listen to invited guest speakers. Chapters will be encouraged to develop sponsored projects, such as restoring a local prairie, which will serve as foci for their efforts.

MMNP envisions that chapters will consist of at least eight (8) Master Naturalist Volunteers that meet monthly or bi-monthly. Meetings will take place at the site of a host organization. These meetings may include networking, sharing of service projects, updates on training and volunteer opportunities, discussion of group service projects and planning of field trips. Meetings will be convened and officiated by elected officers, and structured according to a set of governing

bylaws. Chapter members may also meet at field sites, such as museums or natural areas, to perform volunteer service, meet a guest speaker or tour exhibits. In these cases, members will collaborate in organizing these events and arrange their own travel to/from the site. Chapters will be self-funded. Members may take turns in bringing meeting refreshments, arrange potluck meals, and will pay their own entry into exhibits if Chapter funds are not available.

Expectations for MMNP Chapters:

- Chapters will be “officially” sanctioned through a MMNP process of application/review.
- Chapters must be affiliated with a host organization that provides meeting space.
- Chapters will adopt names reflective of the regions in which they are located. Names must be approved by MMNP.
- Chapters will be subject to MMNP program standards and structures for organization.
- Chapters will operate according to By-Laws in the form provided by MMNP.
- Chapters may collect dues or obtain sponsorships in order to buy refreshments for meetings, provide stipends for speakers, contribute toward entrance fees to field trip sites or to provide resources for completing service projects.
- Chapters may adopt and complete conservation service projects within their regional communities
- Chapters WILL NOT organize as separate legal entities.
- Chapters DO NOT manage volunteer hours for their members. Each MMNP Master Naturalist Volunteer is responsible for her/his own hours.

BYLAWS

North Metro Volunteer Naturalists Chapter

Article I State Program

- A. State-Wide Program.** The Regents of the University of Minnesota, through Extension and the College of Natural Resources (the “University”), in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”), is the creator and sponsor of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program (“MMNP”) in the state of Minnesota. The central office for the MMNP is located at WCROC 46352 State Highway 329 Morris, MN 56267.
- B. MMNP Chapter Requirements.** Regional chapters of MMNP will comply with all requirements, guidelines, and standards set forth by the MMNP.
- C. Compliance.** Failure by a regional chapter to comply with MMNP requirements, guidelines and standards may result in revocation of the chapter’s status, as well as revocation of the right to use the MMNP name, title and trademarks.

Article II Chapter Formation

- A. Chapter Name.** The name of this MMNP Chapter is **[Insert Chapter Name]** (the “Chapter”) and is located in the county of **[Insert County]** for the **[Insert Region]** region. The mailing address of the Chapter is: Carlos Avery Game Farm, 5463C W. Broadway Avenue, Forest Lake, MN 55025.
- B. Chapter Coordinating Committee.** The Chapter will assemble a minimum of five (5) people to form a Chapter Coordinating Committee (“CCC”). The CCC will include MMNP Volunteers and a University or DNR advisor, and may include member(s) of a sponsoring or hosting agency or organization. The task of the CCC is to guide the Chapter through its beginning stages. The responsibilities of the CCC are attached to these Bylaws as Attachment A. The CCC will be dissolved upon election of the officers of the Chapter.
- C. Chapter Sponsors.** The CCC may solicit sponsorships in the form of monetary donations or services from local organizations having an interest in the MMNP. All monetary donations must be to made payable to “University of Minnesota Foundation” and designate the name of the Chapter as the recipient of the donation. A sponsor may also be a host organization which provides a meeting place for the Chapter. A host organization and sponsors should be identified in the Chapter’s Chapter Application, a copy of which is attached as Attachment B. The Chapter and host organization will complete an agreement providing for the Chapter’s use of host organization’s space in the form attached as Attachment C.

Article III Purpose

A. Overall Purpose. A Chapter is not organized for profit, nor shall any of its net earnings inure in whole or in part to members, employees, or other individuals. The Chapter will be an educational volunteer organization dedicated to fulfilling MMNP's mission to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities in the State of Minnesota and having the following objectives:

- To provide, promote and fulfill volunteer service while recognizing and utilizing sound natural resource management, enhancement and conservation practices in accordance with the partners' and program's mission;
- To improve public understanding of natural resource ecology and management by developing a pool of local knowledge about natural resource ecology that can be used to enhance education efforts within local communities;
- To enhance existing natural resources education and outreach activities by providing natural resources training at the local level, thereby developing a supply of dedicated and informed volunteers; and

No part of the activities of the Chapter will be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas or businesses and personal endeavors, by propaganda or otherwise, using the Master Naturalist name or themselves as a MMNP Master Naturalist.

Article IV Membership

A. Membership Requirements.

1. Minimum Statewide Requirements. Membership in the Chapter will be subject to these Bylaws and any other requirements established by the MMNP from time to time.

2. Member Categories.

a. **Voting Members.** Certified MMNP Master Naturalist volunteers in good standing will be voting members of the Chapter. Good standing is defined as (i) paying required dues, if any, (ii) having completed and maintained, as applicable, all certification requirements and (iii) being in compliance with Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

b. **Non-Voting Members.** There are two categories of non-voting members:

(1) **Master Naturalist in Training**--a volunteer participant of an official class from the first day of class to the end of the training period, continuing until

the volunteer has completed the Chapter training requirements and been certified;
and

(2) Honorary MMNP Master Naturalist--a person who has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of the activities of the Chapter. Honorary members may be proposed from time to time by the President, subject to the approval of members present at the Annual Meeting by an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote.

Non-voting members of the Chapter will not be required to pay dues (if any) and will be entitled to all of the privileges of a Certified MMNP Master Naturalist Member except that they will not have the right to vote on Chapter matters.

3. Disciplinary Action or Termination.

a. A member who wishes to terminate membership in the MMNP or the Chapter should communicate that decision in writing to the Chapter and the state office of the MMNP.

b. A MMNP Master Naturalist volunteer will be removed from membership in the Chapter if she/he fails to complete the necessary certification hours or follow any policies or rules of the MMNP state or Chapter guidelines.

c. Multiple Chapter Membership. Membership in more than one regional chapter is not permitted.

Article V Officers

A. Officers. All Chapter officers must be voting members of the Chapter. The officers of the Chapter shall be the President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer.

1. Duties of Officers. The officers shall conduct the business of the Chapter as defined in these Bylaws or approved by the Membership. Chapter officers will serve without compensation, except for reimbursable expenses approved by the Chapter.

a. Responsibilities of the President include the following:

- (1) presiding over meetings;
- (2) acting as liaison with Chapter Advisor;
- (3) serving as or designating another officer or member as Chapter Representative to MMNP;
- (4) creating committees or work-groups or assigning tasks appropriate to provide for the efficient and effective operation of the Chapter.

b. Responsibilities of the Vice President include the following:

- (1) assisting the President as needed;
- (2) acting in the President's absence;
- (3) recruiting and maintaining membership records;
- (4) organizing the Chapter annual meeting.

c. Responsibilities of the Secretary/Treasurer include the following:

- (1) maintaining all records of the Chapter, including meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and financial records;
- (2) ensuring compliance with financial guidelines;
- (3) preparing required reviews and reports.

2. Election of Officers. The only elected positions are those of the officers. The Chapter will elect officers not less frequently than once per year, at the annual meeting, in accordance with the process described below.

3. Election Process.

- a. Nominations for officers will be accepted in writing from voting members prior to the annual meeting or from the floor at the annual meeting.
- b. The election shall take place by secret ballot, unless there is only one candidate for an office, in which case a voice vote shall be permitted. Winners shall be determined by a simple majority.
- d. The new Chapter officers shall assume their duties at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

4. Terms and Limits. All officers shall serve terms of two (2) years and are eligible for re-election or re-appointment. Terms shall be staggered so that not all the officers are selected at the same time after the initial officers are seated. Initial terms may be other than two years to accommodate the need to stagger terms.

5. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring amongst the Chapter officers shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining officers and Chapter Advisor for the remaining unexpired term.

6. Removal of Officers.

- a. Any Chapter officer absent from three consecutive meetings shall be subject to removal by a simple majority vote of the remaining officers and Chapter Advisor.
- b. Any Chapter officer in serious malfeasance of their responsibilities or behavior inconsistent with the principles of the MMNP may be removed from office by a simple majority vote of the remaining officers and Chapter Advisor.

B. MMNP Chapter Advisors. Each chapter will have an assigned advisor from the MMNP who is an employee of the University or the DNR (“MMNP Chapter Advisor”). The MMNP Chapter Advisor will communicate as often as required but at least semi-annually with the Chapter Representative, defined below, to assist the Chapter in upholding the missions, goals, objectives, operational framework and activities of their Chapter and the MMNP state-wide program.

C. Chapter Representative. Each Chapter will designate a representative to the MMNP state-wide program (“Chapter Representative”). The Chapter Representative will be appointed by the President of the Chapter and may or may not be a chapter officer. The Chapter Representative will represent the Chapter in State-Wide MMNP matters and attend any meeting of Chapter Representatives. The Chapter Representative will communicate as often as required but at least semi-annually with the MMNP Chapter Advisor to assist the Chapter in upholding the Missions, goals, objectives, operational framework and activities of their Chapter and the MMNP state-wide program.

Article VI Meetings

A. Meetings of Officers.

1. Frequency. Officers may meet as often as required but shall meet at least quarterly at a time and location designated by the officers.
2. Open meeting. Officer meetings shall be open to the public, as well as Chapter members who will be notified of officer meetings at least 10 days prior to a meeting.
3. Quorum. A majority of the Chapter officers shall constitute a quorum.

B. Chapter Meetings.

1. Frequency. Chapter meetings or other Chapter-sponsored activities will be held as often as required but shall meet at least quarterly at a time and location designated by the officers.
2. Notification. Notification of each meeting shall be sent in writing by conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to all members at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
3. Quorum. Those voting members present at each duly called and convened meeting shall constitute a quorum and the acts of the majority of the voting members shall be the acts of the Chapter membership.

C. Annual Meeting.

1. Scheduling. The annual meeting shall be held in the month of **[Insert Month]**.

2. Election of Officers. Elections will be held at the annual meeting.

3. Quorum. Those voting members present at a duly called and convened annual meeting shall constitute a quorum.

D. Special Meetings of the Chapter.

1. Calling a Special Meeting. A special meeting may be called at the discretion of the President.

2. Notification. Special meetings shall be announced to members by phone, mail, e-mail or other equivalent means at least two (2) days before the meeting date.

3. Quorum. A quorum at a special meeting is 25% of the voting members.

E. Action without a Meeting. Action may be taken by phone or e-mail by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the voting members of the Chapter. Such action must be reported to the entire Chapter membership within one (1) day of taking the action.

**ARTICLE VII
Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct**

A. Compliance. All members of the chapter will adhere to the Code of Ethics established by the MMNP and attached to these Bylaws as Attachment D.

B. Violation. Violation of the Code of Ethics is a serious matter that may reflect unfavorably on the entire Chapter and the MMNP. A formal process to investigate a charge of misconduct against anyone who is in training or certified, as well as disciplinary actions for those found in violation of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct has been established by the MMNP and will be used to deal with these violations.

**Article VIII
Financial Guidelines**

A. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year shall be from October 1 through September 30.

B. Chapter Finances. Chapters shall adhere to the Chapter Financial Procedures attached to these Bylaws as Attachment E.

1. Signature Authority. The Treasurer or President shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of less than \$500.00 of the Chapter. The Treasurer or President and one other officer shall sign all checks, drafts or other instruments for payment of money or notes of \$500.00 or greater of the Chapter.

2. Expenditure Limits. Any expenditure of more than two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) must be approved by a resolution of the Chapter officers. Expenditures of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or greater must be approved by the MMNP Chapter Advisor.

C. Review and Report. The Chapter will conduct an annual review of the financial records of the Chapter prior to the annual meeting. The Secretary/Treasurer will present the annual review report to the Chapter officers and MMNP Chapter Advisor (via the Chapter Representative). Results of the review will be reported at the annual meeting. Financial reports are subject to auditing by Extension at its request.

D. Gifts and donations.

1. Authority. All contributions and donations for the benefit of the Chapter from any and all sources will be made to the University of Minnesota Foundation.

2. Endorsement. Acceptance of any gift - restricted or unrestricted - does not imply any form of endorsement by the Chapter or the MMNP for the source or its services, products, or policies. Nor does it imply any benefit - past, present, or future - to be granted by the Chapter. Acceptance of any contract will not imply any endorsement, benefit or product beyond the deliverable services and products expressly contained in the contract.

3. Right of Refusal. It will be the general policy of the Chapter to accept contributions from any source. However, the Chapter retains the right to refuse any gift for any reason.

**Article IX
Amendment of Bylaws**

A. MMNP State Program Amendments. The state MMNP program reserves the right to amend these Bylaws without prior notice to the officers or membership. Amendments shall be presented in written form by conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to members at the MMNP Annual Conference or the Annual Meeting of the Chapter.

B. Approval before Vote. In order to ensure consistency, continuity and adherence of statewide guidelines, all other proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be approved by the MMNP program director before being submitted to the Chapter's general membership for a vote.

C. Notification. Following written approval by the MMNP program director, notice of all proposed amendments to the Bylaws with the date, time and place of consideration shall be presented in written form by conventional mail, email or other equivalent means to members at least thirty (30) days prior to consideration by the membership.

D. Membership Vote. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members constituting a quorum after the proposed amendment has been approved by the MMNP.

ARTICLE X
Dissolution

A. Dissolution Procedures. The Chapter may be dissolved by either the Chapter or the MMNP.

1. Dissolution By the Chapter.

a. A proposal for dissolution of the Chapter, which will be subject to the approval of the MMNP Chapter Advisor, may be presented at a regular or special meeting of the Chapter with 30 days prior notice to the membership.

b. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Chapter members present at the regular or special meeting is required for member approval of a proposal for dissolution.

c. A letter must be submitted to the MMNP Chapter Advisor stating the reason for dissolution and the results of the vote. The MMNP Chapter Advisor shall determine whether or not the Chapter will be dissolved. A chapter whose members have approved dissolution may be placed on inactive status by the MMNP Chapter Advisor.

2. Dissolution by MMNP.

a. This action shall be taken for reasons of gross malfeasance or serious violation of the ethics and standards of conduct by the Chapter officers, or there are irreconcilable differences within the Chapter, or the Chapter is no longer a viable entity as demonstrated by an extended lack of meetings, reports, activities, or communications.

b. MMNP will follow the procedures defined in the Chapter Management Guidelines.

c. The MMNP program director will give notice of this action to the Chapter officers.

B. Distribution of Remaining Assets. Upon the dissolution of the Chapter, its net remaining assets shall be distributed by the MMNP program director to continue support and resources for other chapters and the MMNP or to non-profit or charitable organizations involved in the Master Naturalist program activities as approved by the Chapter Advisor and the MMNP Board of Directors.

ATTACHMENT A

Chapter Coordinating Committee Responsibilities

1. Identify MMNP Chapter Advisor(s).
2. Identify and approval potential local sponsors and host organization.
3. Recruit Chapter members.
4. Plan and organize volunteer training courses.
5. Plan and organize service opportunities.
6. Maintain records of participation and activities.

ATTACHMENT B

**Minnesota Master Naturalist Program
Chapter Application**

See completed Chapter Application on file

1. Name of Chapter:

[The name of the chapter may be geographical, natural history-based or descriptive of the community in which the Chapter is based. should remain appropriate over time, regardless of whether new chapters are formed in nearby communities.]

2. Chapter Meeting Location:

3. Chapter Coordinating Committee [each must be in-training or certified as Master Naturalist]:

- (1) Name
- (2) Name
- (3) Name
- (4) Name
- (5) Name

3. MMNP Chapter Advisor:

[Name]
[Address]
[phone] [email]

4. Host Organization/Sponsor:

[Name of Organization]
[Contact Person]
[Address]
[phone] [email]

5. The following required forms are attached to this Application:

[List of forms to be completed]

The undersigned, on behalf of the initial members identified above, submits this Application to the State MMNP Coordinator for acceptance as an MMNP Chapter.

[signature]

[Print Name]

[Date]

ATTACHMENT C

**Minnesota Master Naturalist Program
Annual Chapter Host Agreement**

See completed Annual Chapter Host Agreement on file

The _____ Chapter of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program (“_____ Chapter”), operating under authority received from the Regents of the University of Minnesota, through Minnesota Extension and the College of Natural Resources in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (“Minnesota MNP”) desires to enter into this Chapter Host Agreement with _____ (the "Host Organization") for use of certain facilities of Host Organization for monthly [bi-monthly] meetings of the _____ Chapter.

1. Meeting Location: _____ (the “Facility”).
2. Description of Meeting Date(s) and Time(s): _____
3. Host Organization is not aware of any condition in, on or about the Facility that would be a hazard to the safety of any occupant or that is a violation of any law or ordinance. Host Organization will provide all services reasonably required for _____ Chapter’s use of the Facility, including heat, electricity and restrooms.
4. _____ Chapter will be responsible for clean-up of the Facility following each use and for any damage caused by its use of the Facility.

Host Organization:

**Chapter
Minnesota Master Naturalist Program**

By _____

Its _____

Dated: _____

By _____

Its _____

Dated: _____

ATTACHMENT D

Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Code of Ethics

The mission of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is to promote awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Minnesota's natural environment by developing a corps of well-informed citizens dedicated to conservation education and service within their communities.

Certified Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers promote responsible stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources. They look for opportunities to educate Minnesotans in an appreciation of how natural systems work and how we all depend on these natural systems. They recognize that one person cannot be an expert in every field. Master Naturalists are resource people. If they do not have answers, they know where to find them.

When deciding whether an action is right or wrong, they should follow the guidance offered by Aldo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac.

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Minnesota Master Naturalist volunteers will subscribe to the following standards when representing the program:

- Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, service, and performance.
- Know and follow established program guidelines and policies.
- Be courteous and respectful of others and their views.
- Promote a spirit of cooperation in all activities.
- Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
- Encourage the use of current and sound scientific information in education and in management decisions.
- Avoid use of the Minnesota Master Naturalist title or logo for personal profit.
- Promote and support the Minnesota Master Naturalist program.

If you have questions or concerns about how to represent the program or to report violations of this code, please contact the program director at (888) 241-4532 or info@minnesotamasternaturalist.org.

Special thanks to the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program for permission to draw from their Standards of Conduct and Ethics.

Minnesota Master Naturalist is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources with the support of the National Science Foundation.

ATTACHMENT E

Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Chapter Financial Procedures

Basic Principles: Financial Policies and Practices

The principles governing the following Financial Policies and Practices are grounded on the presumption that the individual experiences of Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Volunteers will be enriched through sharing experiences with their program cohorts, developing relationships with natural resource experts, cooperating in identifying local needs, and becoming more involved in environmental events and projects in their communities. Financial policies and practices should support these activities in a *convenient* and *responsible* manner.

The guidelines outlined in this document are recommended financial management procedures for MMNP chapters. For assistance, contact your MMNP Chapter Advisor.

The MMNP Financial Policies and Practices cover four broad areas of financial management:

- Receiving money
- Holding money
- Disbursing money
- Accounting for money

Receiving Money

1. Receiving money by a MMNP chapter, whether by cash or check, should be documented with a receipt. Receipts should document the source of the money (e.g. registration fee for a class), the date, the amount, and, where appropriate, the name of the registrant/purchaser. Receipts should be numbered for tracking purposes. When payment is made by check, a copy of the check should be made prior to deposit. Receipts are back-up documentation for any bank deposit.
2. If possible, there should be a separation of duties for receiving money and accounting for money. For example, one person should receive the money and issue a receipt, and another person should total the money received and verify the total matches the amount receipted. A third person should prepare the bank deposit. This provides a system of check points, protects individuals from mistakes, and helps to avoid errors.

If the MMNP chapter does not have enough members so that one person must receive and count money, verify receipts and prepare bank deposits, the MMNP Chapter Advisor should review all receipts and bank deposits on a quarterly basis.

3. Checks received should be endorsed for deposit upon receipt and promptly deposited. Use a stamp or written endorsement stating “For deposit only Minnesota Master Naturalist Program [*name of chapter*] Chapter.”

Tax deductible donations

The Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is a program of the University of Minnesota, through Extension and the College of Natural Resources. The University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF) is a 501(c)(3) organization authorized to receive tax deductible gifts for the benefit of the MMNP and issue receipts for such gifts. Therefore, donors should make their donations to UMF, which will disburse funds to MMNP in accordance with established procedures. MMNP will work with chapters to assure that gift funds are handled appropriately.

Fundraising

All MMNP chapters must observe the following guidelines when planning or conducting fundraising activities:

- All fundraising activities **MUST** be reviewed and approved by the MMNP Chapter Advisor **before** the event.
- Monetary donations should be made payable to “University of Minnesota Foundation” and designate MMNP as the recipient of the donation.
- All money raised using the MMNP name and logo must be used only for appropriate MMNP chapter activities, including refreshments for meetings, stipends for speakers, contributing toward entrance fees for chapter-sanctioned field trips and resources for completing chapter-sanctioned service projects.

Use of the name, logo and/or statements of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program for fundraising purposes is permitted in accordance with provisions of Attachment F.

Holding Money

Money generated through sales of goods or services, fees for classes, registrations, etc. to support the local MMNP chapter should be held in independent bank accounts managed by the local MMNP chapter.

MMNP chapters must open an independent bank account at a financial institution and these guidelines should be practiced:

1. To open a checking or savings account an IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN) is required. An EIN number can be obtained online. An MMNP chapter is permitted to obtain this number given its status as an informal nonprofit educational program. See instructions attached as Appendix 1.
2. In **NO** case, should a MMNP chapter open a chapter bank account using an individual member’s social security number.
3. The address for the MMNP chapter bank account should be the Host Facility address.
4. Monthly statements from the financial institution should come to the Host Facility. A copy of the statement should be sent to the designated MMNP chapter officer and a copy retained at the Host Facility. No University of Minnesota or County Extension staff will be responsible for reconciling or managing the account, or signing checks. The Extension staff person responsible for coordinating/managing the MMNP Chapter will have “read-only” access rights to MMNP chapter accounts. **NO** Extension staff should be responsible for managing MMNP chapter accounts or for signing or co-signing checks.

5. The designated MMNP chapter officer is responsible for reconciling account statements on a monthly basis and reporting account information at each MMNP chapter meeting.

Disbursing MMNP Program Funds

Paying from a checking account:

1. All financial transactions should be made by check rather than cash to ensure accountability.
2. To help maintain accountability, duplicate check systems are recommended.
3. Accounts should be set up so that all checks require two authorized signatures. In many cases this is the treasurer and one other officer of the MMNP chapter. The authorizing signatures will need to be changed at the financial institution whenever there is a leadership change.
4. All payments from the MMNP chapter account must be in response to a written bill or invoice that clearly states what was billed. The check number and date should be written on the invoice. A copy of the bill or invoice should be kept for accounting purposes.

Paying by Petty Cash:

The best practice is not to have a petty cash fund; however there may be times when it is appropriate to do so. In these cases:

1. Keep petty cash in a locked or secured location.
2. Set up the petty cash fund by writing a check from the MMNP chapter account and track it as petty cash.
3. Limit the maximum amount in the petty cash fund to \$25. If the fund becomes greater than \$25, deposit the excess in the MMNP chapter account.
4. All funds used from and accepted into the petty cash fund must be recorded on a petty cash fund ledger. The petty cash fund transactions and balances should be reported as part of the MMNP chapter financial reports.
5. Periodic auditing of the petty cash fund by a person who does not have access to the petty cash fund is recommended.

Paying by other methods:

MMNP chapters may NOT obtain credit/debit cards in compliance with University of Minnesota policy. While the best practice for disbursing funds from MMNP chapter accounts is by a check, these additional options may be appropriate:

1. Arrange for the business to bill the MMNP chapter directly and pay from the invoice.
2. Purchase a gift card from a business where you will do purchasing. Limit the amount of the gift card to \$100 or less. Maintain receipts of purchases for documentation. Gift card transactions should be included in MMNP chapter financial reports.
3. Purchase a pre-paid major credit card from your financial institution. Limit the credit line to \$. Maintain receipts for documentation and include pre-paid major credit card transactions in MMNP chapter financial reports.
4. If a County Extension office allows an MMNP chapter to use a county credit card for MMNP chapter purchases, the county assumes liability for payment and invoices and receipts presented to the MMNP chapter must be promptly paid to the county for MMNP chapter expenditures made on that designated card.

Accounting for Money

Budget

An MMNP chapter must prepare an annual budget for each fiscal year which will be approved by MMNP Chapter Advisor as required for good financial stewardship. The annual budget should be based on MMNP chapter goals and project needs. When the annual budget is approved by the MMNP chapter members, it not necessary to seek membership approval for each expenditure if already listed in the annual budget. If a proposed expenditure is not listed in the annual budget, each proposed expenditure must be presented to the MMNP chapter members for approval before payment. This ensures that all expenditures of the MMNP chapter are made with the full approval of the chapter.

Reports and Review/Audits

1. The designated officer or the MMNP chapter treasurer maintains financial records of money received and disbursed. Transactions must be backed up by receipts and invoices.
2. The designated officer or treasurer should regularly report to the MMNP chapter (e.g., monthly or quarterly meetings). The report should include income, expenditures, outstanding bills and balances. A specific list of revenue sources and expenditures for each reporting period keeps the chapter financial accounts transparent, regardless of whether or not each expenditure requires approval by the chapter.
3. An Annual MMNP Chapter Financial Report summing up financial activities for the year should be presented at the annual meeting. Income and expenditures may be grouped by budget categories.
4. MMNP chapters that collect or distribute money should conduct an annual review/audit of all financials. A review/audit prevents misunderstandings, identifies/corrects errors, and protects an outgoing and incoming treasurer.
5. The reviewers/auditors should not be directly involved with managing the MMNP chapter finances. Creating a small review/audit committee is an excellent method of conducting the annual review/audit of finances.

Appendix 1

**Instructions for Completing IRS Form SS-4
Application for Employer Identification Number**

Obtaining an EIN number can be done easily online in 5-10 minutes, by phone (1-800-829-4933) or by completing IRS Form SS-4 and submitting by mail.

To obtain and/or complete the form on-line, go to www.irs.gov . Click on Form is located in menu column on the left. Also, you can find forms and instructions under the "Apply Online" menu section.

Follow the directions below to complete the form. On directions from an IRS agent, the items listed below are the only lines of the SS-4 form you need to complete.:

#1 Type Group Name – example: “[chapter name] Minnesota Master Naturalist Chapter”

#3 Type your name using c/o (in care of) – example: c/o Joanne Doe

#4 Mailing Address - Use Host Office or state Master Naturalist Program address

#6 Enter County Name in which the Master Naturalist chapter meets

#9 Type of Entity – Check "Other Non Profit Organization" then specify: informal non-profit educational program

#10 Reason for applying – Check "Banking Purpose" then specify: checking

18 Complete only if changing a number

Name and Title -- "Your Name, chapter position (e.g. treasurer, secretary, president)"

Telephone Number—Use Host Office Number or state Master Naturalist Program Number (area code) xxx-xxxx

Sign and Date

ATTACHMENT F

Minnesota Master Naturalist Program Procedures for Name, Logo and Program Statements

When monies are raised in the name of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program or activities are otherwise promoted, chapters are responsible for protecting the integrity of the program and associated logos and statements. All promotional or fundraising matters should adhere to the following prescriptions for using the MMNP name the MMNP Chapter name, collaboration and EEO statements, and logo:

Name. The proper format for naming a chapter is “**Minnesota Master Naturalist Program [Official Name of Regional Chapter] Chapter.**” The MMNP name and the MMNP Chapter name must be used only for appropriate MMNP Chapter activities and fundraising efforts, including promoting chapter activities and accomplishments or soliciting funds for speaker stipends, entrance fees for Chapter-sanctioned field trips and resources for completing Chapter-sanctioned service projects.

Program Partnership and EEO Statement. All promotion and fundraising materials should clearly include the following statement: “The Minnesota Master Naturalist Program is a program of the University of Minnesota Extension in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The program is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.”

Logo. Append MMNP Logo use instructions.