

IMN Hosts FAQ

Current IMN state coordinator

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Q: How do I get an IMN class started?

A: First browse through the IMN website dnr.IN.gov/parklake/6321.htm. On the handouts page, download and read the host manual. This will give most of what you need to know. Next, line up speakers, then fill out workshop application and email it to the state coordinator. The application will be given to the IMN council for approval. The state coordinator will answer any questions after that. The state coordinator can give you a list of IMN hosts in your area so you can make connections and get information on resources available.

Q: How does this all work, budget-wise?

A: Your budget is just like any other program. You will need to have fee/person that will cover your cost. (Remember to budget \$10/person for the IMN administrative fee which will be invoiced to you after your class is over. That covers the cost of the pin, certificate, mailing, etc)

Q: How does the approval process work?

A: You will email or mail your IMN workshop application to the state coordinator. The IMN council then looks at it and approves it. This happens usually within in a couple days. However, please given the IMN council plenty of notice before start of workshop. If you have a good idea who is presenting but don't have the official confirmation from them, it is still okay to turn in the application. Just update the state coordinator with any last minute changes. The council is basically looking that you have the necessary class topics and the right time amounts.

Q: What do I need to get students?

A: Most classes the students are given a binder, paper and pencil. Some also budget for students to receive field guides that match up with certain sessions. Also, snacks are offered by many classes. As for best prices for supplies let the state coordinator know and you will be given a list of other IMN hosts in the area to contact to find out their sources.

Q: I am going to put together a binder of materials soon. Do you have any suggestions as to where I can find publications on each of the topics?

A: As for publications, you can ask that the speakers to bring any handouts. Lots of times they do. Contact your local Purdue Extensions for handouts. DNR wildlife brochures (brochures on snakes, wildflowers, etc.) can be downloaded at dnr.IN.gov/parklake/2390.htm
Wildlife fact sheets: dnr.IN.gov/fishwild/3357.htm

Info about how DNR manage wildlife and natural resource areas in state parks:
dnr.IN.gov/parklake/6288.htm

If interested, the state coordinator can mail some DNR wildlife brochures for each of your students. You can let the coordinator know how many are registered and once the workshop has started they will be mailed.

Q: Do you have a PowerPoint that can be used for orientation that covers the basics of the IMN program?

A: Yes. Email the state coordinator who will email you a PowerPoint IMN orientation presentation. This can be modified for your site.

Q: What happens if a speaker cancels last minute? Does the IMN council have help available for that?

A: Please be prepared for all kinds of situations. If this happens first look within your organization to see if anyone is comfortable presenting the topic. If the topic will be a challenge but a substitute presenter can speak on a different natural resource topic then that will be okay. Worst case that class session will have to be cancelled and rescheduled. It is a good idea to have an extra day in the schedule to have available for emergency situations. Let the state coordinator know about the change ASAP. The IMN council will make decisions on individual cases.

Q: Does the final exam need to be proctored? Or can I send it home with them to finish on their own?

A: Every class does it different. Take home exam is NOT recommended. Some hosts grade the exam that day in order to give it right back to the students. This way the class can discuss the questions and answers. Or the class can take the exam, turn them in and receive their grade over email. A grade of 70 percent or higher is required to pass for certification.

Q: How do I come up with the questions for the final?

A: Most classes ask the presenters of each session to give them up to five questions to give the students at the end. These questions can then be used to form the final. Some classes the host makes up the questions for the final.

Q: Can people get in their volunteer time WHILE they are going through the program? Or does it have to be upon completion of the course that they begin volunteering. What is the time limit to complete the volunteer hours?

A: Most definitely, people can start their volunteer hours after the first class. We need to capture their enthusiasm while it is hot. The IMN council strongly encourages this. The recommendation is every class hour equals a volunteer hour. So, if you host the minimum required topics of eight three-hour classes, that is 24 hours of instruction = 24 hours of volunteer time. There is NO time limit for completing the volunteer hours. Some students will have them done by the last day of class while others may take up to five years to complete the hours.

Q: Can students count driving time to and from a volunteer event?

A: To eliminate confusion, students working on volunteer hours can *choose* to count travel to and from a volunteer opportunity. This is for those long distance volunteer opportunities like working at the State Fair or the Hoosier Outdoor Experience in Indy. The master gardener program does allow students to count volunteer travel time and that is the program IMN uses as a guide. Please encourage your IMN students not to abuse this guideline.

Q: Could you list some examples of what could count as “volunteer hours?”

A: Volunteer time at a preserve or sanctuary (trail maintenance, program assistants, etc.);

volunteering at a natural resource organization program; any sort of clean up/maintenance/trail work/invasive species removal a natural resource organization; any volunteer teaching opportunity that has to do with natural/cultural history would qualify; helping a school outdoor lab; building birdhouses for a nature study area for a local school, nursing home, nature center, etc.; there are several kinds of citizen science projects.

If you have questions, please ask state coordinator.

Q: Can people do their volunteer hours in other states?

A: That is fine. We understand that some of the workshops are on the state borders. Helping a natural resource organization is what master naturalist do even if it is not in Indiana. However, it is always nice to have some of the volunteer time done in Indiana but not necessary. Advance IMN volunteer hours can also be done in other states.

Q: What do I do when a student completes their hours before the final exam?

A: Let the state coordinator know his/her name. Maybe the certificate and pin can be mailed to you in time for you to present them to him/her in front of the class *after* the student completes and passes the final exam. That is great inspiration for the other students.

Q: I know that it states that participants must attend 80 percent of the classes. We have 11 sessions planned (but the first night is orientation and the last night the test) so there are nine natural history classes planned. Is it 80 percent of the 11 or 9?

A: The nine natural history classes.

Q: I finally got my IMN class roster filled out. Do you want me to send that to you now?

A: No, you can wait until the class is over just in case one drops out. A copy can be emailed (preferred) or mailed to the state coordinator.

Q: What end of the workshop paperwork should I be completing?

A: On the IMN website dnr.IN.gov/parklake/6329.htm you can download some of the end of the workshop paperwork, student workshop evaluation form (for you to keep to help with the next workshop planning), overall workshop evaluation form (state coordinator would like a copy of that and the original can stay with your IMN file) and the workshop roster form (state coordinator would like a copy of too). The volunteer hours sheet is on that site too if the students still need their hours done. Once they have all the hours done, have them notify you and then you can scan and email the hours sheet to the state coordinator or just email their *name, address and email* saying they completed their hours to state coordinator. The state coordinator will then get the certificate and pin in the mail.

Q: I have copies of the IMN Creed for participants to sign. Are they to keep these in their binders or do I have to send you them with the participant list?

A: The students keep their signed Creed as a reminder of the IMN program's expectations of students.

Q: I saved the evaluations as a pdf to send them to the workshop participants. Can I have students send them back to me first so I can review the evaluations and then send them on to you? Same with the overall workshop evaluation?

A: Yes, please only mail or email me copies. Retain originals at the site for future reference. The instructor evaluations stay with you. The state coordinator doesn't need to see them, unless there are complaints. The only evaluation the state coordinator wants to see is the overall workshop evaluation.

Many hosts copy them and mail the copies to the state coordinator. They keep the originals to help in the development of next year's class

Q: How do I get invoiced?

A: After your last day, let the state coordinator know how many students finished. This is the number of students that passed the final exam. This is the number you will be invoiced.

Q: After the Master Naturalist certification and the hours are completed, is anything needed to recertify after the fact? (For example, you complete a CPR class, it is only good for two years.)

A: No, once they are certified as IMN they are always an IMN. Now they can strive to be an Advanced IMN. See the IMN graduates website dnr.IN.gov/parklake/6328.htm for more details on this opportunity. Let your students know about this program by printing off the FAQ from the website.

Q: Are there any scholarships available for an IMN course? If so, how does it work?

A: The State IMN does not at this time have a scholarship fund. However, the IMN council will consider these cases on an individual bases. If you feel this is one of those let the state coordinator know. (You could also see if your program committee could work with this individual.)

Q: Is there a way IMN students can stay connected with other IMN students throughout the state while they are working on their volunteer hours?

A: Yes, they are welcome to like the "Indiana Master Naturalist" facebook page. This is a great social media outlet. The quarterly newsletter is available on the IMN graduates page for anyone to read. It is nice to print and distribute the latest newsletter to your students during your workshop. The annual IMN gathering information is also posted on the IMN graduates page. Any IMN student certified or not as well as IMN hosts can attend. Please inform your students of this opportunity during your workshop. Many IMN hosts maintain local IMN email list. This keeps IMN interns and graduates updated on local volunteer opportunities. Many are maintained by a local IMN volunteer.