Bylaws Of:
The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program

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BYLAWS OF
THE NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

ARTICLE I
NAME, PURPOSE, AND RESTRICTIONS

Section 1. Name: The name of the organization shall be the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.

Section 2. Mission: The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program educates a volunteer network dedicated to promoting the conservation of Nebraska’s natural resources.

Section 3. Goals:

A. Establish and maintain an active volunteer community that advances the conservation of Nebraska’s natural resources.

B. Equip citizens with the skills and knowledge to participate in conservation efforts.

C. Benefit organizations and agencies across the state by providing quality volunteers who supplement conservation efforts.

D. Be an integral part of the conservation community.

E. Establish and maintain a program that adapts to new challenges and information.

F. Establish and maintain a self-sustaining program.

Section 4. Objectives:

In five years:

A. Establish a volunteer network that provides support and increases retention.

B. Train and certify 500 people state-wide who will volunteer thousands of hours annually through education, conservation, citizen science, and ecotourism for Nebraska.

C. Establish at least 50 different volunteer opportunities with at least 15 organizations and agencies.

D. Establish sustainable funding sources.

Section 5. Advocacy prohibition: No part of the activities of the program shall be devoted to advocacy, lobbying, politically or privately promoting issues, agendas or businesses and personal endeavors, by propaganda or otherwise, using the program name or themselves as a program representative.
ARTICLE II
PARTNERS AND AFFILIATES
Nebraska Master Naturalist Membership

Membership in the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program is open to qualifying individuals regardless of race, age (must be 18 years of age or older), sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

Section 1: Members:
A. Program Members: The Program Members serve as guiding body for the program, incorporating representatives from registered programmatic partner agencies and organizations. Program members will contribute their perspectives and expertise to the development of the program. It is the role of the Program Member, as a representative of his/her organization, to actively engage and participate with Naturalist Members and staff of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program and to communicate his/her organizations priorities and recommendations. The Program Membership will demonstrate statewide representation and regional diversity.

B. Program Membership will be of two types: Active and Inactive:
   a. Active Program Members are those agencies and/or organizations that are actively participating in the organization and the development of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program including but not limited to providing their expertise, volunteer opportunities and/or other resources. Each Active Program Member will have voting privileges. The Program Member’s vote shall be cast by the person named as the Program Member representative to the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.

   b. Inactive Program Members are those Program Members that have indicated that they no longer wish participate and/or engage in activities of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program. Inactive Program Members will not have voting privileges. Inactive Program Members can return to active status by indicating they are ready to resume participation and engagement with the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program and are required to indicate their desire to resume active status to the State Program Coordinator.

C. Nebraska Master Naturalists are adult natural resource volunteers that are part of a network dedicated to promoting the conservation of Nebraska’s natural resources. Certified Nebraska Master Naturalists have successfully completed the primary training requirements and in their second year and beyond the calendar year volunteer service and continuing education requirements.

D. Master Naturalist Membership will be of three types: Nebraska Master Naturalist in Training, Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist and Inactive Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist.

   a. Nebraska Master Naturalist in Training. This Volunteer is a participant of the core training from the first day of class to the end of their training period. This status continues until the member has completed all core training requirements. It is a non-voting classification.
b. Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist Member. This is a volunteer who has successfully completed the core training requirements. This classification continues each year that the volunteer completes the calendar year volunteer service and continuing education minimum requirements. This is a voting classification.

c. Inactive Nebraska Naturalist Member. This is a volunteer who has not completed the required hours of volunteer service or continuing education requirements and / or has indicated that they wish to be removed from the list of active Nebraska Master Naturalist. This is a non-voting classification. Inactive Nebraska Naturalists may return to “Certified” Status by indicating his or her intention to the State Program Coordinator and completing the calendar year volunteer service and continuing education requirements.

E. Honorary Membership. An Honorary Nebraska Master Naturalist is a person who has made a substantial contribution to the furtherance of the activities of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program. Honorary Members shall be entitled to all of the privileges as a Nebraska Master Naturalist Member without payment of dues if required. Honorary Members will not have the right to vote. Honorary Members may be nominated by any member or staff of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program. Proposed Honorary Member(s) will be selected by an affirmative vote (simple majority) of the membership present at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2: Nebraska Master Naturalist Affiliates and Donors
An Affiliate/Donor to the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program is a person and/or an organization that shares the program philosophy, endorses the program’s goals and purposes, or helps promote and market the program.

Section 1. Program Partners: Program partners shall be of two types: programmatic and financial.
A. Programmatic Partners: as defined by membership in the Program Membership
   a. Program Membership: The Program Membership serves a guiding body for the program, incorporating representatives from registered programmatic partner agencies and organizations. Program members will contribute their perspectives and expertise to the development of the program. It is the role of the Program Membership, as a representative of his/her partner organization, to actively participate in bi-annual meetings and to communicate his/her agency or organization’s priorities and recommendations. The Program Membership will demonstrate statewide representation and regional diversity.
   b. Executive Board: see article III.

   c. Financial Partners: financially support the organization.

Section 2. Program Affiliates: Program affiliates shall be those organizations or individuals that share the program philosophy, endorse the program’s goals and purpose, or help promote and market the program and its partner programs.
ARTICLE III
EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Executive Board role: The executive board will serve as a body of elected members responsible for providing guidance on overall strategic direction. They are elected out of the steering committee. The board will give direction to the program supervisor(s) regarding the program staff. The board members will serve set staggered terms of office. The board is comprised of a chair, vice chair, secretary, and four board representatives. The board will act on behalf of the program’s full assembly, and will be representative of the interests of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program and the steering committee.

A. Non-voting members: The program supervisor and program staff will take an active role, serving on the board as non-voting members.

Section 2. Terms: Members of the board will serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Terms are set at two years.

Section 3. Resignation: Any board member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the executive board; unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4. Meetings:

A. Meetings: Meetings of the executive board are to be held four times annually, or more often as needed. The meetings are to include input from the steering committee and the program stakeholders.

B. Notice: The agenda for the meeting and meeting minutes will be sent to the executive board and steering committee. The agenda and minutes will be distributed within 10 days of the meeting or vote.

C. Special Meetings: Special meetings of the executive board may be called by the chair or vice chair.

D. Format: Meetings may be held in person or by teleconference or other remote electronic means, so long as the electronic medium permits the democratic participation of all board members.

E. Voting: Voting issue will be communicated with the steering committee and program coordinator. Online votes are due within 7 days or the vote is forfeited.

Section 5. Board Elections:

A. Electorate: The board shall be elected by the members of the steering committee.

B. Nominations: The elections committee shall be responsible for nominating a slate of prospective board members that is representative of the program’s diverse constituency. In addition, any program member can nominate a candidate to the slate of nominees. Nominees must be individuals from partner programs.

C. Voting: Ballots shall be cast by mail and electronically such that all member programs are able to complete the voting process. Board members will be elected by a simple majority of votes. Voting will occur annually.
Section 6. Vacancies: When a vacancy on the board exists, nominations for new members may be received from present steering committee members by the elections committee at least two weeks in advance of a vote. These nominations shall be sent out to steering committee members with a vote to be determined by the elections committee.

Section 7. Resignation, Absences, and Removal:

A. Resignation: In the case of resignation, an election can be held to fill the open position following a period for nominations.

B. Absence: A board member shall be dropped for excess absences if he/she has more than two unexcused absences from board meetings in a year.

C. Removal: Any board member may be removed, with or without cause, by a three-fourths vote of the remaining board members.
ARTICLE IV
OFFICERS

Section 1. Number and Election: The executive board is comprised of a chair, vice chair, secretary, and four board representatives. All officers shall be elected by the steering committee. Nominations and elections are to be held annually in November prior to the beginning of the term of office beginning January 1 of the year immediately following the election.

Section 2. Chair: The chair is an elected member of the executive board, and will provide leadership to the rest of the board and steering committee, guiding and communicating board actions in accordance with the program’s policies and objectives.

Section 3. Vice Chair: The vice chair is an elected member of the executive board, and will assist the chair in achieving the goals of the board membership. The vice chair assumes the responsibilities of chair when the chair is incapacitated.

Section 4. Secretary: The secretary is an elected member of the executive board, and will assist the chair and vice chair in organizing and maintaining a current record of the board’s activities. The secretary will collect minutes from the board meetings and will disseminate the information to the executive board and steering committee.

Section 5. Board Members: Executive board members are responsible for ensuring that the board meets all of its responsibilities in compliance with the policies and procedures under which the program was formed. Board members will provide vision and insight into the development of the program, and move the program towards meeting future goals.
ARTICLE V
COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committee Formation: The executive board shall create and disband committees as needed following a review of existing committees. The board will provide an annual review of existing committees. All committees will work in conjunction with the program coordinator.

Section 2. Committee Chairs: The committee chair is a representative of the steering committee. Committee chairs will report directly to the executive board and provide a quarterly report of activities to the program coordinator.

Section 3. Standing Committees:

A. Elections Committee: The elections committee is responsible for soliciting new executive board candidates and enforcing a geographic diversity as well as balance of representation of member programs. The elections committee shall also prepare, print, supervise, count ballots, and announce election winners.

B. Marketing Committee: The marketing committee is responsible for developing the marketing strategy.

C. Evaluation Committee: The evaluation committee is responsible for identifying evaluation priorities which coincide with the priorities of University Extension and program partners.

D. Sustainability Committee: The sustainability committee is responsible for the identification and pursuit of further support and funding opportunities for the program.

E. Membership Committee: The membership committee shall develop strategies that support the interests of program membership, including recruitment of new partners and resources and the volunteer membership.

F. Educational Program and Curriculum Committee: The program and curriculum committee is responsible for developing program strategies and curriculum content.

G. External Review Committee: The external review committee shall consist of an affiliate outside of the steering committee and a member of the University Business Center. The goal of this committee is to provide independent verification that the funds have been dispersed in an appropriate fashion and that the program has maintained appropriate financial records.
ARTICLE VI
FRIENDS OF NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST

Section 1. The Friends of Nebraska Master Naturalist will serve as an independent 501(c)(3) body of community leaders with the purpose of building the success and long-term stability of the program. Friends of Nebraska Master Naturalist members will play a role in fundraising, public relations, and provide the staff and committees with a fresh perspective on programmatic issues.
ARTICLE VII
PERSONNEL

Section 1. Program Supervisor: The program supervisor supervises and reviews the actions of the program
coordinator to ensure that the objectives and decisions of the executive board are met. The supervisor will be
determined by a decision of the executive board.

Section 2. Program Coordinator: The coordinator is supervised by the program supervisor(s). The coordinator has
day-to-day responsibilities for the program, including carrying out the program's goals and policies. The
coordinator will attend all board meetings, report on the progress of the program, answer questions of the
board and carry out all duties in the job description.

The program coordinator will serve as the liaison between all committees and executive board. This includes
assisting in the function of all committees.

Section 3. Program Assistant Coordinator: The assistant coordinator is supervised by the program coordinator and
will assist in the day-to-day responsibilities of the program and carry out all duties in the job description.

Section 4. Additional Staff: Additional full-time or part-time staff positions may be created as needed.

Section 5. Advisors: Advisors to the executive board may be identified by the program supervisor, program
coordinator, or executive board as needed.

Section 6. Hiring and Selection: A committee will be developed by the executive board under the rules of the entity
housing the program.
ARTICLE VIII
GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Section 1. Gifts and Donations:

A. Authority: The program is authorized to accept and receive contributions, donations, and grants from any and all sources in accordance with the housing entities policies, unless intended for political, lobbying, or advocacy purposes deemed not in accord with the program advocacy prohibition.

B. Endorsement: Acceptance of any grant or gift does not imply any form of endorsement by the program for the source, services, products, or policies. Nor does it imply any past, present, or future benefit to be granted by the program.

C. Right of Refusal: The program retains the right to refuse any gift where, in the judgment of the executive board, the reputation or perceived image of the grantor may be deemed injurious to the program.
ARTICLE IX
CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Section 1. Compliance: All members of the program, partners, and executive board will adhere to the Code of Ethics, found in Appendix A., and the Standards of Conduct, found in Appendix B., as established by the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.

Section 2. Violation: Violation of either the Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct is a serious matter that reflects unfavorably on the entire program. A charge of misconduct against anyone who is in training or certified, or a program partner or affiliate, will be reviewed by the executive board and appropriate action taken.
ARTICLE X
REPORTS, BOOKS, AND RECORDS

Section 1. Annual Report: The executive board shall ensure that a report of the activities of the program is prepared annually and sent to program partners, funding entities, and any such persons as the board shall determine.

Section 2. Books and Records: The program shall keep an original or duplicate record of the following: the proceedings of the board; its bylaws, including all amendments thereto to date. The program shall also keep appropriate, complete, and accurate records of account that shall be reviewed on an annual basis. The records provided for herein shall be kept either at the registered office of the program, or at its principal place of business, wherever situated. All records, with the exception of personnel, are considered public record.
ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

Section 1. Amendments: Any amendments to bylaws must be approved by a three quarters vote of the executive board.
Article II. Amended: Voted and approved

Date adopted by executive board:

______________________________
Chair, Executive Board of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program

Date filed in the program records:

January 3rd, 2014

Matthew Jones
Nebraska Master Naturalist
Interim Program Coordinator
510 Hardin Hall
3310 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68583-0995
APPENDIX A.
CODE OF ETHICS

Each member, in striving to meet the mission, goals and objectives of the Master Naturalist program, pledges to:

1. Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct.
2. Promote and support the statewide and local Master Naturalist program.
3. Respect the state sponsors of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and their roles and expectations.
4. Disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of our natural resources.
5. Strive to increase knowledge and skills to advance as a Master Naturalist volunteer.
6. Promote competence as a Master Naturalist volunteer by supporting high standards of education, service and performance.
7. Encourage the use of sound biological information in education and outreach and in management decisions.
9. Know and follow established program guidelines and policies.
10. Avoid use of the Master Naturalist title, logos and trademarks for personal endeavors and/or profit.
11. Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
12. Never inappropriately disturb or harass wildlife, never inappropriately remove anything from its natural state or area.
APPENDIX B.
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Master Naturalist program volunteers shall at all times:

1. Uphold the agreement made to the program and the required volunteer and continuing education hours required by the program.
2. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the Master Naturalist program. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
3. Conduct themselves appropriately to context and setting at all times.
4. Be considerate and respect other’s points of view.
5. Keep accurate records of volunteer service, training and research, and regularly notify your Program Coordinator of these records.
6. Avoid performing service when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or detrimental to the well-being of the program and its sponsors.
7. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client and/or volunteer project.
8. Be mindful of their responsibility to society and the program.
9. Avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of program authority, certification, or membership for personal benefit.
10. Cooperate fully with professionals and other Master Naturalist volunteers in the best interest of our natural resources.
11. Avoid all use of alcohol and controlled substances while on duty as a Master Naturalist volunteer. Reporting for service while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in termination from volunteer service.
12. Accept responsibility for decisions made and actions taken based on these decisions.