The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, and other regional environmental organizations are offering a program to train New Jersey Volunteer Master Naturalists (VMN’s). The 40 hour certificate program is based on a national model, currently offered in over 20 states, to develop volunteer citizen stewards of natural resources through science-based conservation, education and service programs.

The program, with both classroom and field-based learning components, will offer a broad range of natural resource and wildlife topics, delivered by field experts in environmental education. It will also provide trained volunteer opportunities for conservation services, interpretation activities and outreach at the Refuge and at other environmental organizations within local communities, focusing especially on the habitats of the southern New Jersey coastal region, Great Bay and Barnegat Bay and other local tidal areas and on coastal plains and forests in Atlantic, Ocean and Monmouth Counties.
Other organizations participating in this program include:

- NJ Department of Environmental Protection
- Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program
- Ocean County Parks and Recreation
- Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Forest Resource Education Center
- Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center
- The American Littoral Society

The VMN certificate program will take place primarily at the Oceanville (Atlantic County) site of the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge and also includes a full day field experience at and around the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center, located in Barnegat Bay.

To receive the VMN certificate, participants must also complete, during the subsequent 12 months, 40 hours of approved environmental service, either at the Refuge or another environmental/wildlife site, and complete an additional eight hours of advanced environmental training. The 40-hour service and eight-hour advanced training component must be completed each year to maintain one’s Volunteer Master Naturalist status.

The VMN certificate program is open to staff of environmental organizations, teachers, retired persons and any adult interested in the environment. For more information and to register, contact Stockton College Continuing Studies at NJVMN@stockton.edu or call us at 609.652.4227.

**Tuition for the VMN program**

Volunteer Master Naturalist Certificate program: $249*, includes 40 contact hours of training (classroom and field experience) and all participant materials.

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey Division of Continuing Studies is an approved professional development provider by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ Dept of Education Approved Provider - #6500)

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* Osprey photo by David Carr, 2007

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