Impact Project Report

Master Naturalists Not Just Books Club

Issue

The Master Naturalist classes offer participants a chance to learn about local environmental issues as they prepare to volunteer for stewardship, advocacy, education, and citizen science projects with leading environmental organizations in the Triangle. Just as importantly, the classes offer this group of likeminded people a chance to create community, a place where people can network and learn from each other.

We saw a Master Naturalist Not Just Books Club as an opportunity to create a stronger naturalist community, to foster discussion and deeper learning about class subjects, and to encourage networking among Master Naturalist participants—all of which will broaden the reach of the Master Naturalist program.

Project

The book club meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month. Our goal was to create a regular schedule, one that was accessible for people working full or part-time. We also wanted to find a centrally-located meeting place with a comfortable atmosphere, as well as food and beverages.



After talking with people in class, we identified a list of materials to read. We chose a mix of books, podcasts and documentaries to be mindful of busy lives, and created a flexible schedule that runs through 2027. We plan to continue hosting book club discussions through November 2027, when we will hand things over to the next Master Naturalist class. Our hope is that they will build on our efforts and continue the book club, then hand it to the following Master Naturalist class, and so on.

Results

Our schedule with established meeting times and dates should make it straightforward for the next class to continue the book club, which will connect different Master Naturalist classes and extend opportunities for community learning and networking. Again, this serves to serves to increase breadth of the Master Naturalist program

Finally, there was a lot of interest in a book club in January, 2026. We believe due to the high amount of other reading in class, that additional materials may have been difficult to add. We will be interested to see any movement to our numbers once class ends. We do anticipate that participation will grow and plan to survey classmates to determine strategies for doing that. We will also be reviewing our Book/Podcast/Documentary formula going forward.

Students

This project is the work of Sidney Cruze, Cheri Bowers, and Beth Vollins

Highlight

Partner Organization

Master Naturalist program

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