

Master Naturalist Instructor Bios

Penny Miller

Penny began her zoo career at the Pittsburgh Zoo in 1971. She started at Oglebay while the Good Zoo was under construction in 1974. As general curator, she managed the animal collection and keeper staff, and the education department for 15 years. She became director of the Good Zoo in 1994. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wheeling Jesuit University with a concentration in biology and professional writing, and is currently working on her master's degree at Wheeling Jesuit University. She has authored numerous articles in magazines and professional journals. Penny lives on a 140-acre organic farm, where she has a special interest in Lepidoptera, pollinators in general, snapping turtles and box turtles. She has led zoo trips to Kenya and several countries across Southern Africa.

Joe Greathouse

Joe graduated with a B.A. in Biology from West Virginia University and an M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Management also from West Virginia University. He has worked at The Good Zoo at Oglebay for 8 years. He is currently curator of animals, and manages the animal collection and staff. Joe has interests in herpetology, mammalogy, ornithology, habitat management, conservation biology, and restoration ecology. Joe is currently conducting WV DNR grant-funded hellbender research in the waterways of West Virginia, and he organized and hosted a national conference on hellbender research in 2007. He has also studied wildlife in Kenya and Costa Rica.

Dr. Scott Shalaway

Dr. Scott Shalaway is one of the country's leading experts on backyard wildlife. His education includes a BS in entomology (University of Delaware), an MS in biology (Northern Arizona University), and a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology (Michigan State University). He has taught various biology and wildlife classes at Oklahoma State University, ornithology at the University of Oklahoma Biological Station, and now teaches a one-week summer class -- Ornithology for Teachers -- at Ohio State University's Stone Lab. Since 1986, he has written a weekly syndicated newspaper column on nature and hosts weekly radio shows in Wheeling and Pittsburgh focusing on nature.

Zac Loughman

Zac received a B.S. degree in Biology from West Liberty State College and a Masters degree in Biology from Marshall University. Zac's main interest is astacology; the study of freshwater crayfishes. He has added crayfish state records to multiple state lists and works on projects describing crayfish species, while still working on projects elucidating reptile and amphibian life histories in Appalachia. Zac has worked for Oglebay Institute as a Natural History Research Specialist. Zac is the Natural History Research Specialist for West Liberty University, where he instructs environmental and biological classes for the college.

Al Dague

Al Dague is a certified Master Naturalist. He has been involved with the Northern Panhandle Chapter since it began over 5 years ago. With a particular interest in Blue Birds and his carpentry skills, he has had logged hundreds of hours in constructing blue bird boxes as well as monitoring and recording data on nesting success. His boxes can be found throughout Oglebay and Wheeling Park.

Master Naturalist Class Descriptions for January- May 2011

Names, Identification and Classification (core class) – Penny Miller, Instructor

The student will gain a basic understanding of scientific names including their proper form, use, and pronunciation. The class includes an overview of the concept of classification, and the major taxonomic ranks. Students will practice techniques to identify plants and live animals using taxonomic keys, field guides, photographs and other tools. This class is worth 1 core class credit and 2 elective hours credit.

Birds (core class) – Dr. Scott Shalaway, Instructor

Students in this class will learn strategies and techniques of field identification of WV birds. Bird behavior and adaptations will be discussed. Students will also learn the basics of attracting and feeding birds to their yard, and how to participate in citizen-science avian research projects. Choosing binoculars and field guides will be addressed.

Mammals (core class) – Joe Greathouse, Instructor

Students will gain a basic understanding of the classification, status, and behavior of West Virginia's mammals. Using skulls, study skins, live mammals and field guides, students will gain an overview of the diversity and adaptations of mammals. The current status of coyotes and mountain lions will be discussed, as well as the methods scientists use to study mammals.

Terrestrial Habitats (core class) – Zac Loughman, Instructor

Learn about the major types of terrestrial habitats in West Virginia, their gross description and distribution in the state, their characteristic flora and fauna, the ecological processes that create and maintain them. We will discuss balds, glades, shale barrens, deciduous forests, evergreen forests, caves and the wildlife that has adapted to each habitat.

General Ecology (core class) – Zac Loughman, Instructor

This class will introduce the student to the principles of ecology, the branch of biological science that deals with the interrelationships between organisms and their environment. Students will gain a basic understanding of ecosystems including energy and nutrient cycles, types of habitats, physical and biological factors that affect populations, and the concept of biodiversity.

Learning Bird Songs (elective) – Bill Beatty, Instructor

What bird was that? This class will help you learn the songs of our local species and assist you in identifying birds by their sound.

Wildflowers and Weeds (core) – Bill Beatty, Instructor

Learn the major groups and important families of flowering plants. Discover basic terms for describing flowering plants as well as how to collect and preserve plant. Identifying flowering plants using field guides and keys and approaches to further study, including helpful references will also be covered.

Medicinal Plants (elective) – Bill Beatty, Instructor

Bill Beatty teaches this popular class which is a broad view of botanical medicine, including the *Doctrine of Signatures*. Other more specific remedies will be presented and discussed. The dandelion saved thousands of lives centuries ago but is now considered a lowly weed; comfrey and other plants are of great value medicinally, but are also very dangerous. Knowing the English equivalent to the Latin and Greek names can provide valuable insight into centuries-old medicinal practices that could be practical and important today. Part of this class will demonstrate a chronological history of plant-related medicines with a collection of boxed and bottled herbal remedies from the 1850s to more recent times.

Trees, Shrubs and Vines (core) – Bill Beatty, Instructor

In this class, students will learn some of the more common woody plants, what makes woody plants different, and clear up the confusion over deciduous, evergreen, and coniferous trees. Also discussed is how to collect and preserve woody plants, the importance of woody plants to humans and wildlife, and how to approach further study, including helpful references.

Blue Bird Box How-To (elective) – Al Dague, Instructor

Discover blue birds and blue bird nest boxes. Learn about proper nest box placement and how to successfully provide nesting sites for this beautiful species. This class includes a nest box that you will be able to construct, mount and monitor yourself!