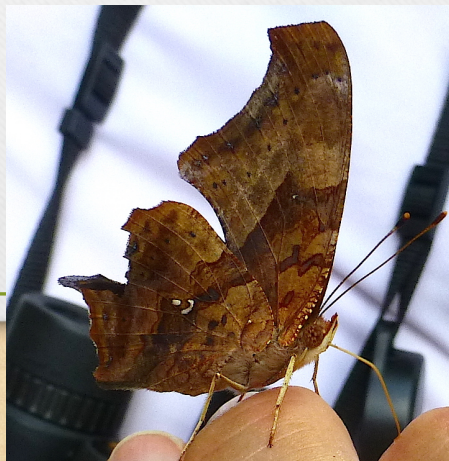


Virginia
Master
Naturalist



Introducing the
Rivanna Master
Naturalists Program





A COVID-19 Caveat UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Our training classes usually meet in person at Ivy Creek, but until the state and our sponsors (including Cooperative Extension and V-Tech) give us permission, we will be meeting virtually on Zoom.

Even as a virtual program, we promise that you will still receive the quality training that past trainees have enjoyed, and you will still become more attuned to the amazing local and regional wonders of our Virginia environment.



What is the purpose of the Master Naturalist program?



To train and oversee a statewide group of dedicated **volunteers** who provide education, outreach, and service that benefits the management of natural resources and natural areas within our community.

Why Become a Master Naturalist?



- ❖ To experience the satisfaction of preserving our natural heritage
- ❖ To join a vibrant network of other naturalists
- ❖ To receive excellent training about our local natural environment
- ❖ To experience enriching, fun trainings, field trips, continuing education, and social outings
- ❖ To keep learning about nature!

This program is for you

-
- ❖ If you want to be actively involved in managing, conserving, and educating others about Virginia's natural resources
 - ❖ If you enjoy volunteering
 - ❖ If you like learning about nature
 - ❖ If you enjoy the outdoors
 - ❖ If you have time to complete the training
 - ❖ If you are interested in being part of a local team with others who care about natural resources

This program is probably not for you

- ❖ If you are more interested in getting training than volunteering
- ❖ if classroom-style learning is not your thing
- ❖ If you want the certification for your job
- ❖ If you hope to use the certification for environmental advocacy
- ❖ If you want to be a Master Gardener
- ❖ If you hope that your Master Naturalist service will count towards Master Gardener service hours

Our goal: Volunteer Service

How do we do it?



- ❖ One day tasks
- ❖ Long-term commitments to a single project
- ❖ Independent, solo service
- ❖ Team work
- ❖ Being part of an existing partner project
- ❖ Aiding a new project developed by an RMN volunteer or member or training classmate, or initiating a project

Master Naturalists receive training to



- ❖ Use field guides
- ❖ Use keys to identify organisms or plants
- ❖ Share knowledge with others
- ❖ Make and record accurate observations in nature
- ❖ Recognize *when we do not know* the answer to a question but know where to look for answers from people, books, or reliable sources

EDUCATION

CITIZEN SCIENCE

STEWARDSHIP

ADMINISTRATION

Volunteer Service: Education



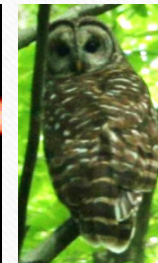
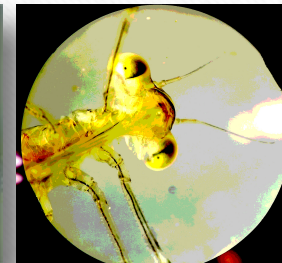
- ❖ Leading Nature Programs as guides
 - ❖ Walk Leaders
 - ❖ Nature Guides
 - ❖ Docents
 - ❖ School Tour Guides
 - ❖ Public Program Speakers
 - ❖ Junior Naturalist Instructors
- ❖ Developing an interpretive trail or brochure
- ❖ Being a guest presenter on a nature-related topic in a classroom or museum
- ❖ Partnering with schools or groups, like Girls and Boys Clubs, to present programming

EDUCATION
CITIZEN SCIENCE
STEWARDSHIP
ADMINISTRATION

Volunteer Service: Citizen Science



- ❖ Recording data for VA Wildlife Mapping
- ❖ Participating in a bird or butterfly count
- ❖ Monitoring water quality
- ❖ Helping biologists collect information
- ❖ Tagging monarchs



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ADMINISTRATION

Volunteer Service: Stewardship



- ❖ Maintaining trails at a state or local park as trail monitor
- ❖ Pulling out invasive plants and/or planting native plants in a public park
- ❖ Planting a riparian tree buffer
- ❖ Designing and installing a pollinators' garden
- ❖ Cleaning up the Rivanna River and the Chesapeake Bay watershed

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ADMINISTRATION

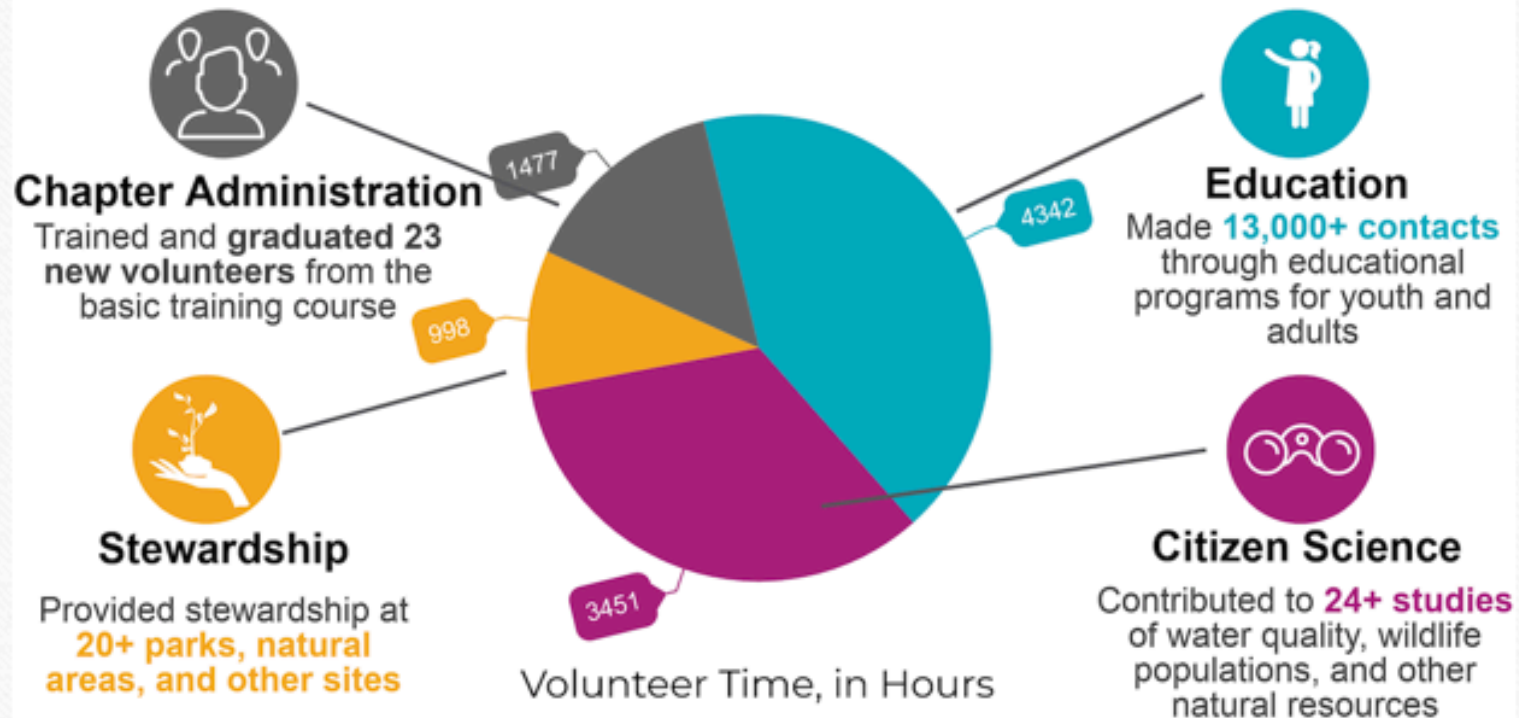
Volunteer Service: Administration



- ❖ Planning and supervising VMN-approved training classes
- ❖ Serving as a board or committee member in PR, booking speakers, organizing the training class*
- ❖ Contributing to the monthly newsletter or website articles
- ❖ Helping run the annual VMN conference

**At least 30 members keep our programs running behind the scenes!*

Every Hour Counts: A Year in the Life of the RMN



First Step: Basic Training

[usually] at Ivy Creek Education Building—now Zoom



- ❖ 40 hours of classroom talks
[on Zoom during COVID]
- ❖ 2021 Class on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 to 9:30pm
(morning classes in 2022 on Wednesdays)
- ❖ Field trips (self-guided during COVID); some small groups, often on Saturdays from February to May
- ❖ Focus on regional natural history, conservation, land management, teaching, and research skills
- ❖ Taught by local experts, specialists, and professors

First Year Initial Certification:

Training + 40 +8

Graduation from Basic Training

Good attendance for 13 to 15 classes
+ 5 to 8 field trips [10 to 15 hours]
+ 3 hours volunteering

+

8 hours of Continuing Education

8 hours – can be done concurrently with basic training
Specialized topics that build on basic training
Required annually to maintain certification

+

40 hours of Volunteer Service

Can be done during Basic Training on approved projects in education, citizen science, stewardship, or administration.
There are currently 91 approved projects in motion.
Required annually to maintain certification

=

Certified Virginia Master Naturalist

Virginia
Master
Naturalist



Things to know if you're considering applying

- ❖ A class fee of **\$150** covers materials, payable after acceptance.
- ❖ Scholarships are available upon request (up to \$75).
- ❖ Classes are limited to ensure the optimal learning experience.
- ❖ You must attend 13 out of 15 classes and participate in at least 5 of 8 Saturday field trips.
- ❖ To graduate, you must complete and report 3 hours of volunteer service.
- ❖ To graduate, you must pass an open-book, take-home test and a practical test. (*No one has ever failed either!*) These are redesigned in response to COVID.
- ❖ After graduation from the training class, graduates have **one year** to complete 40 hours of training and 8 hours of continuing or advanced education to become certified MN members.



Tips on how to apply: 3 Forms & 3 References

Find three application forms and instructions from RMN Training Page at

www.vmn-rivanna.org/training

Download and Save as WORD docs. Fill in. Email to rivannamnapplications@gmail.com

#1. RMN Applicant Questionnaire: fill out and email to us.

#2. VMN Volunteer Enrollment Agreement: this has to be signed, so print it out, sign it, and scan or photograph it with your phone and send. *We prefer email submissions to save paper*

#3. Volunteer Reference Form [x3]: send as email attachment to your **THREE references**, who must then return them by the deadline, by email or mail. *References should support for your willingness to be a volunteer—you do not have to have nature-related expertise!*

After Class: Renewing Certification = 40 + 8 40 Hours* of Volunteer Service Recorded Every Year



- ❖ Minimum of 40 hours annual volunteer service to maintain certification
- ❖ Must be dedicated to the beneficial management of the natural resources within the local community
- ❖ Must be for public benefit, not personal gain

**Note: COVID adjustments affect our usual guidelines; fewer volunteer hours are currently required.*

Renewing Certification Each Year = 40 + 8

8 Continuing Education or Advanced Training Hours Annually



- ❖ Short courses, workshops or webcasts offered by state or local partners on specialized topics such as invasive plant management or stream monitoring
- ❖ Training specific to a planned service project, such as Wildlife Mapping
- ❖ Public lectures and walks on natural history topics that pertain to local natural resources
- ❖ Monthly chapter Continuing Education Master Class series and book club



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A Few Facts & Figures about the Rivanna (RMN) Chapter

- ❖ Rivanna Master Naturalists trained since 2006 > **345**
- ❖ ACTIVE volunteers recorded in 2019 > **151**
- ❖ Contacts reached through Outreach in 2019 > **15,500±**
- ❖ Total RMN volunteer hours recorded in 2019 > **11,051±**
- ❖ Estimated volunteer hours in \$\$ given by **RMN** in 2019 > **\$303,000±**



State and National Impact: Part of a Larger MN Picture

IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA (2019)

2,197 active volunteers out of 3,369 members

191,203 hours donated in 2019

\$5.2 million dollars = total estimated hours given in monetary equivalent

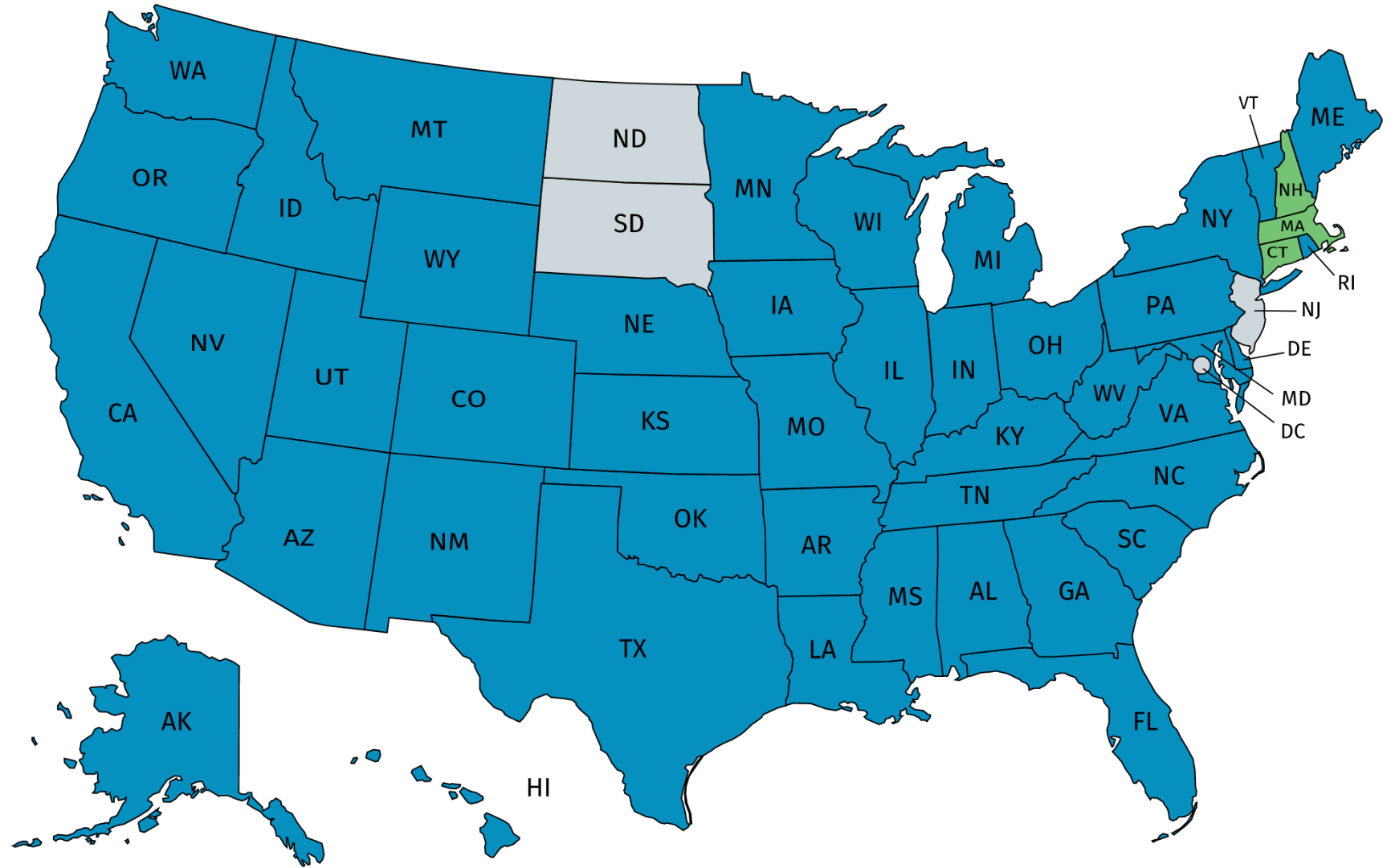
NATIONAL GUESSTIMATE (2018)

25,264± volunteers giving nationwide

898,960± hours annually in the USA

Total guesstimated hours given nationally = **\$23 to \$31 million dollars**

FYI:
Master
Naturalist
or MN-like
Programs





Application Deadlines & Class Dates

ONLINE APPLICATIONS AND 3 REFERENCES DUE:

1st WEEK JANUARY

SNAIL MAIL APPLICATIONS NO LONGER ACCEPTED

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE:

BY EMAIL AROUND MID JANUARY

FIRST DAY OF CLASS:

FIRST WEEK FEBRUARY

LAST DAY OF CLASS:

MID to LATE MAY

>>See firm dates on www.vmn-rivanna.org website<<



Thanks to our Virginia MN sponsors who make it all work!



- ❖ Virginia Cooperative Extension
- ❖ Department of Conservation and Recreation
- ❖ Department of Environmental Quality
- ❖ Department of Forestry
- ❖ Department of Wildlife Resources (*formerly* DGIF)
- ❖ Virginia Museum of Natural History
- ❖ VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management
- ❖ Virginia State University
- ❖ Virginia Tech

The COVID-19 Caveat

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

- ❖ Classes that usually meet at Ivy Creek will be conducted on ZOOM—the quality of instruction will be just as excellent as it would be in the classroom setting. If vaccines arrive and restrictions are lifted, we might decide whether to revert to in-person instruction, when public meetings are deemed safe.
- ❖ Field trips will be set up as solo events or as socially distanced, outdoor events in numbers stipulated by the VCE, V-Tech, and state guidelines. While some camaraderie and field experience will be diminished, the training is still solid thanks to our excellent instructors and guides.
- ❖ Applications to the class, and the pass/fail testing at the end of the class, will be conducted online and in self-directed exercises. PS. *No one* has ever failed!

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www.VirginiaMasterNaturalist.org
www.vmn-rivannamn.org

