



Virginia Master  
**Naturalists**

# Introducing the Rivanna Master Naturalists Program







# What is the purpose of the Master Naturalist program?

---

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



# Why Become a Master Naturalist?



## VOICES FROM THE LAND



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





# Master Naturalists are trained to

---

- Use field guides
- Use keys or apps to identify organisms or plants
- Teach, guide and 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, guidebooks, apps, or other reliable sources

*Pssst! Applicants do not have to be educated in science or biology, or 'experts' in any aspect of the natural sciences! You just need to be curious about nature.*



# This MN 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 (February to May, 1x week + 5 field trips)
- ✓ If you are interested in being part of a local team with others who care about natural resources and nature's beauties

# This MN program is probably not for you

- If you are more interested in getting training than volunteering
- If classroom-style learning is not *really* 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 Main Goal: Volunteer Service

How do we do it? *Many ways.*  
As an MN volunteer, you can...

---



- Do a one-time, one day task
- Make a long-term commitment to a single project
- Work independently, on your own
- Work as part of a regular team
- Become part of an existing project
- Contribute to a new project developed by an RMN volunteer or member or classmate
- Initiate and organize your own project



CITIZEN SCIENCE  
EDUCATION  
STEWARDSHIP  
ADMINISTRATION

# Volunteer Service: Examples of Citizen Science



- Record data for VA Wildlife Mapping
- Participate in a bird or butterfly count
- Monitor water quality
- Help biologists collect information in the field
- Tag, count, observe (monarchs, hawks, tree buds, rainfall, BioBlitz surveys)





CITIZEN SCIENCE  
EDUCATION  
STEWARDSHIP  
ADMINISTRATION

# Volunteer Service: Examples of Education



- Lead Nature Programs for kids and/or adults as
  - ❖ Walk Leaders ❖ Nature Guides v Docents ❖ Instructors
  - ❖ School Tour Guides ❖ Public Program Speakers ❖
  - ❖ Junior Naturalist Leaders ❖ Interpretive Guides ❖
- Develop an interpretive trail or brochure
- Be a guest presenter on a nature-related topic in a classroom, a community meeting, any group
- Partner with schools or groups, like Girls and Boys Clubs, to present programming or teach



CITIZEN SCIENCE  
EDUCATION  
STEWARDSHIP  
ADMINISTRATION

# Volunteer Service: Examples of Stewardship



- Maintain trails at a state or local park as trail monitor
- Pull invasive plants and/or planting native plants in a public park or on a trail
- Plant a riparian tree buffer
- Design/install a pollinators' garden in a public park
- Clean up the Rivanna River, the James, or the Chesapeake Bay watershed



CITIZEN SCIENCE  
EDUCATION  
STEWARDSHIP  
ADMINISTRATION

# Volunteer Service: Examples of Administrative Help



- Do PR, organize training class, oversee hospitality at events, find new projects, engage speakers
- Write a chapter newsletter, public article or website newsletter article
- Help run the annual VMN conference, a VMN leadership day event, or a workshop
- Join a committee that needs your strengths in organization, communication, socializing, teaching

*\* Every year, **30 to 50 chapter members** help with RMN administrative tasks behind the scenes!*



# Step One: Basic Training

## at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Building



- 40 hours of classroom talks and field trips (can miss 2 classes)
- From first week of February to last week of May
- Even years (ex. 2024): **Wednesday mornings**, 9:30am to 12pm  
Odd years (ex. 2025): **Tuesday nights**, 6:30pm to 9:30pm
- Field trips, mostly on Saturday mornings (minimum of 5)
- Focuses on regional natural history, conservation and management, teaching, and field research skills
- Instructors are local specialists, experts, and professors



## Step Two:

After graduating from  
Basic Training Class

**One Year to get  
First Certification**

Training Class + 8 + 40



## Graduation from Basic Training

Good attendance for 13 to 15 classes  
+ 5 of 8 possible field trips  
+ 3 hours volunteering

+

## 8 hours of Continuing Education (CE)

8 hours – can be done concurrently with basic training  
Specialized topics that build on basic training

*Required annually to maintain certification—RMN provides opportunities*

+

## 40 hours of Volunteer Service

Can begin 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  $\overline{=}$  Master Naturalist



# Getting Certified After Graduation = **40** + 8

## **40** Hours of Volunteer Service Recorded First Year

---



- Minimum of 40 hours annual volunteer service to maintain certification
- Minimum of 8 hours in lectures or advanced trainings offered by RMN and other groups
- Must be dedicated to the beneficial management of the natural resources within the local community
- Must be for public benefit, not personal gain or on private property

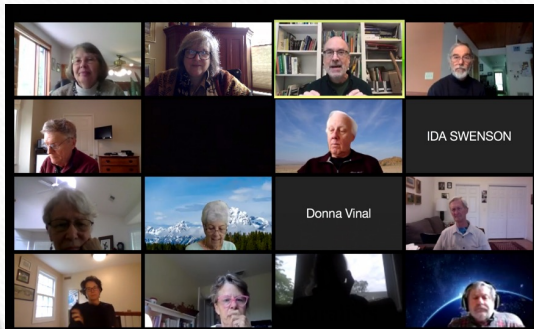


# Renewing Certification Annually = 40 + 8 8 Hours Continuing Education (CE) or Advanced Training

*May include:*



- Short courses, workshops, trainings, or webcasts offered by state or local partners on specialized topics (such as invasive plant management, animal control, stream monitoring)
- Specific training for planned service projects, such as Wildlife Mapping, Living with Bears
- Public lectures and walks on natural history topics that pertain to local natural resources, offered by the RMN and other groups
- RMN monthly CE speakers' series





# Tips on how to apply: 1 Form & 3 References

**APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE** at <http://bttr.im/rg92z>

**REFERENCE FORMS ARE POSTED** at [www.vmn-rivanna.org/training](http://www.vmn-rivanna.org/training) or you can request them and ask any application related questions at [rivannamnapplications@gmail.com](mailto:rivannamnapplications@gmail.com)

*We prefer emailed submissions to limit paper waste, but do not want to hinder anyone's involvement or interest. Please ask us for help if you cannot access online services at 540.252.8628 (Carol).*

**Step 1. Find and fill in VMN Volunteer Enrollment Agreement online** at <http://bttr.im/rg92z>

**Step 2. Find Reference Forms posted on our website** at [www.vmn-rivanna.org/training](http://www.vmn-rivanna.org/training).

Send form to **3** references you have listed on your application. This is not a character reference. Select 3 references for yourself who will support your willingness and ability to be a volunteer. (No nature-related expertise or education on your part.) It is your responsibility to get the forms to your recommenders, and their responsibility to get them to RMN. The form instructs your recommenders that they need to return the form no later than January 5<sup>th</sup> to [rivannamnapplications@gmail.com](mailto:rivannamnapplications@gmail.com).





Virginia Master  
**Naturalists**



**Class of 2022**



**Class of 2023**

# Application Deadlines & Class Dates

Q&A SESSIONS: ON ZOOM AND IN PERSON

**MID-NOVEMBER, MID-DECEMBER (SEE WEBSITE)**

ONLINE APPLICATIONS AND 3 REFERENCES DUE:

**JANUARY 5<sup>th</sup> firm**

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE:

**3<sup>rd</sup> WEEK of JANUARY BY EMAIL**

FIRST DAY OF CLASS:

**FIRST WEEK FEBRUARY**

LAST DAY OF CLASS:

**MID TO LATE MAY**





**Virginia Master  
Naturalists**

## Things to know if you are accepted

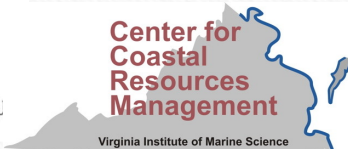
- If you are accepted, a class fee of **\$175** covers guidebooks and valuable resources, payable after acceptance. **Scholarships are available: please ask for them if need be.**
- Classes are limited to 24 trainees, so entry can be competitive if many apply.
- You must commit to attend 13 out of 15 classes and 5 of 8 planned Saturday field trips. *(But we also realize, life happens, and will work with you.)*
- To graduate, you must complete and report 3 hours of volunteer service. We'll help you.
- You must pass a gentle, open-book, take-home test and a gentle practical test in May.
- **If internet or email connections are not easy for you**, we will try to work out how to help.
- **After graduation**, you will have **one year to complete 40 hours of volunteering** and **8 hours of continuing education (CE)** to become certified MNs. RMN announces volunteer opportunities and organizes speakers' series, field trips, and events with other groups to help you gain these CE hours.





## Virginia Master Naturalists

# Our Virginia MN Partners make it work!



- Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Department of Forestry (DOF)
- Department of Wildlife Resources (formerly DGIF)
- Virginia Museum of Natural History
- VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management
- Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)
- Virginia State University
- Virginia Tech





# Virginia Master Naturalists

[www.VirginiaMasterNaturalist.org](http://www.VirginiaMasterNaturalist.org)  
[www.vmn-rivannamn.org](http://www.vmn-rivannamn.org)  
or contact [rivannamn.info@gmail.com](mailto:rivannamn.info@gmail.com)



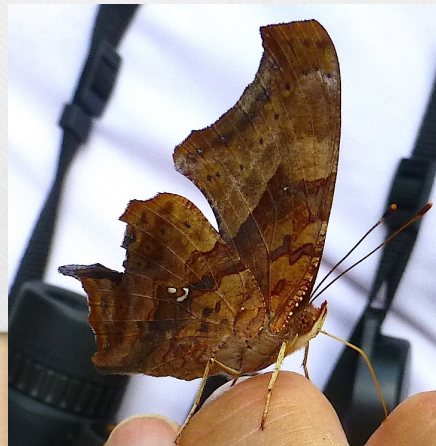




**Virginia Master  
Naturalists**

# Extra Info and Fun Factoids about Master Naturalists

---





A map of the United States showing state abbreviations. The map uses a color scheme where most states are blue, while a specific set of states is highlighted in light green. The highlighted states include Washington (WA), Oregon (OR), Idaho (ID), Montana (MT), North Dakota (ND), South Dakota (SD), Minnesota (MN), Wisconsin (WI), Michigan (MI), New York (NY), Vermont (VT), New Hampshire (NH), Massachusetts (MA), Connecticut (CT), Rhode Island (RI), Iowa (IA), Illinois (IL), Indiana (IN), Ohio (OH), Pennsylvania (PA), West Virginia (WV), Virginia (VA), North Carolina (NC), South Carolina (SC), Georgia (GA), Alabama (AL), Mississippi (MS), Arkansas (AR), Missouri (MO), Kansas (KS), Nebraska (NE), Colorado (CO), Utah (UT), Nevada (NV), California (CA), Arizona (AZ), New Mexico (NM), Texas (TX), Oklahoma (OK), Kentucky (KY), Tennessee (TN), Louisiana (LA), Mississippi (MS), Alabama (AL), Georgia (GA), South Carolina (SC), North Carolina (NC), Virginia (VA), West Virginia (WV), Pennsylvania (PA), New York (NY), Connecticut (CT), Massachusetts (MA), New Hampshire (NH), Vermont (VT), Maine (ME), Rhode Island (RI), Delaware (DE), Maryland (MD), and the District of Columbia (DC). The non-highlighted states include Alaska (AK), Hawaii (HI), and several others in the central and eastern regions.



# FYI: Facts & Figures

## about the RMN (Rivanna Chapter) and 30 Chapters of Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN)

---

	<u>RMN</u>	<u>VMN statewide</u>
▪ Enrolled volunteers in 2022	256	3,366
▪ Direct contacts made through outreach in 2022	13,880	288,473
▪ Total RMN volunteer hours <u>recorded</u> in 2022	12,149	210,967
▪ Monetary equivalent of volunteer hours in 2022	\$374,000	\$6,497,773

**420** RMNs trained since 2006

**157** ACTIVE RMNs recording hours in 2022







# Virginia Master Naturalists

[www.VirginiaMasterNaturalist.org](http://www.VirginiaMasterNaturalist.org)  
[www.vmn-rivannamn.org](http://www.vmn-rivannamn.org)  
or contact [rivannamn.info@gmail.com](mailto:rivannamn.info@gmail.com)

