

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



School of Agriculture
Virginia State University

Albemarle/Charlottesville Office
460 Stagecoach Road
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902
434-872-4580 FAX: 434-872-4578

Dear supporters of natural resource education and conservation,

I am pleased to announce that the Virginia Master Naturalist Program Coordinator and Steering Committee are accepting applications for new chapters to develop in 2008. While the program already exists in 21 communities in Virginia, it is not yet available for all parts of the state. By adding new chapters, we hope to bring the program to communities with demonstrated need and interest. We do, however, need to manage the program within our available time and resources, so we likely will add only 4-6 new chapters at this time.

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a statewide volunteer training program that benefits natural resource education and conservation across Virginia. The program's mission is to develop and support a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

At the state level, the Virginia Master Naturalist program is sponsored jointly by *Virginia Cooperative Extension*, the *Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries*, the *Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation*, the *Virginia Department of Forestry*, and the *Virginia Museum of Natural History*. Partnerships at the local level are a cornerstone of the program and include many other public and private organizations.

The program consists of a network of Virginia Master Naturalist chapters across the state. Each chapter is responsible for recruiting and training volunteers and for working with partners to create and coordinate volunteer service opportunities. The training consists of a minimum of 40 hours classroom and field time covering a core set of curriculum objectives. The objectives focus on ecology, natural resource management, basic natural history of the animals and plants of Virginia, and skills for teaching and field research. To become a certified Virginia Master Naturalist, each volunteer must also complete 40 hours of service. This service can be in the form of education, citizen science, or stewardship.

If you are interested in developing a Master Naturalist chapter, please review the attached documents and contact the Program Coordinator for assistance with the application process. The Chapter Chartering Guidelines document outlines the application process and expectations. Applications for new chapters are due February 25, 2008. Application instructions and materials are also available online at http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapter_chartering.html.

Sincerely,

Michelle Prysby
Virginia Master Naturalist Program Coordinator
Virginia Tech Department of Forestry/Virginia Cooperative Extension
Email: masternaturalist@vt.edu Web: www.virginiamasternaturalist.org

Attachments:

(1) Chapter Chartering Guidelines (PDF), (2) Volunteer Enrollment Form (in MS Word and PDF), (3) New Chapter Coordinators' Training Announcement (PDF), (4) New Chapter Coordinators' Training Registration Form (MS Word and PDF), (5) 2007 Chapter Information (PDF)

www.ext.vt.edu

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