



November 13, 2018

Dear VMN Chapter Board Members and Chapter Advisors,

First, we want to say thank you for all that you and our other VMN volunteers do to benefit Virginia's natural resources. We and our program sponsors can thank you even more effectively if we know what you have accomplished! Yes, it is time to put together your chapter's Annual Report and to request recognition items. We know that Virginia Master Naturalists are making a huge difference for Virginia's natural resources and the annual reports are an opportunity to gather real data from you to support this claim.

As most of you are aware, there are two documents that each chapter needs to submit to the State Office annually. These items are your Chapter's Annual Report and your Chapter's Certification Spreadsheet. The Annual Report is a chance for us to learn about everything your chapter has been working on this year and the Certification Spreadsheet is how you let us know who should receive a certificate, a re-certification pin, or a milestone award.

Below, you will find two sections. In the first, we have outlined procedures on how to go about putting together your Chapter's Annual Report. In the second section, we have described the *current process* for submitting your Certification Spreadsheet.

Please note that we will be hosting a continuing education webinar on 'Navigating the Annual Reports Process' on November 29 at 12:00 noon. The link for the webinar will be <https://viriniatech.zoom.us/j/266856366>, and we will send a reminder via email about one week prior.

Section 1: Annual Reports

Annual Reports are due to the State Office by JANUARY 9, 2019. We *must* have your Annual Reports by this date in order to include them in required reporting to federal and state agencies. This deadline only gives us a few days to compile the data before it is due, so it is very important that you get it in on time.

Our strong suggestion for completing your Annual Report is for you to *make it a joint project* rather than the responsibility of one person. A committee made up of the Chapter Advisor, the Record Keeper or Membership Chair, the Chapter President, and the Service Projects Chair might work well. Perhaps other chapter members would also be willing to help even if they do not currently serve on your chapter's Board.

One section of the Annual Report requires an accounting of volunteer membership and hours, and another section requires more detailed and qualitative descriptions of the impacts your projects have had in your communities. We recognize that reporting and accounting for volunteer hours is not the most fun aspect of the program, but it is a critical piece that allows us to show the impacts of the program across the state.

Invent the Future

Your reports help demonstrate how the Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a cost-effective strategy for accomplishing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship. Your chapter Annual Reports will be compiled into an Annual Report for the entire program and used in reports to every Sponsoring Agency, federal reports required for Cooperative Extension, and communications with other program partners. We also use your annual reports to develop infographics for each chapter that you can use for marketing and share with your local partners. By giving all parts of the report your *best* effort, you are helping us keep the program funded and supported throughout the Commonwealth.

Please email reports to Tiffany Brown (tiffany.brown@vt.edu). If you need to send a paper copy, the mailing address is at the end of this letter.

On the [VMN website](#), you can find the *annual report package* that includes links to the items listed below.

- (1) **The 2018 Annual Report template:** Please fill in this template with your chapter's information. Please do not use the 2017 template, as it has been revised for 2018.
- (2) **Getting Annual Report Data from the VMN-VMS:** If you are on the VMN-VMS, our online system, this document guides you through getting much of the quantitative data needed for the Annual Report.
- (3) **VMN Smugmug instructions:** As part of the annual reporting process, chapters are encouraged to post pictures of chapter training and service activities from 2018. We use these images in reports, presentations, and program communications. For security reasons, the posted version of the instructions does not include the password. Please email us directly if you need that.

NOTE 1: If desired, you may request your chapter's 2017 Annual Report from Tiffany in the State Office and it will be emailed to you.

NOTE 2: The Annual Report template is a .docx file. If you are unable to convert it on your computer, please let Tiffany know and she will provide you with a different version.

Section 2: Certification Spreadsheet and Requesting Recognition Items

Although we need the Annual Reports from each chapter so that we can fill out our state reports on time to meet federal and state deadlines, the Certification Spreadsheet is all about recognizing volunteers for the contributions they have made to the program over the previous year. We send recognition items only twice a year – in February and August. If you miss the January deadline, it is unlikely that we can provide you with the recognition items until the July deadline.

Certification Spreadsheets will be due to the State Office twice annually. Here is the schedule for 2019:

- **DUE DATE 1: JANUARY 31, 2019** (reporting on certificates, re-certifications and milestones through December 31, 2018)
 - Tiffany will send the most recent copy of your chapter's Certification Spreadsheet to your current Membership Chair, President, VMS Administrator and Chapter Advisor by December 10, 2018.
 - You may send in your updated Certification Spreadsheet any time between January 1 and January 31, 2019. However, none will be accepted after January 31, 2019.
 - Certification Spreadsheets will be reviewed and approved as they come in.

- *Packages will be put together and mailed out in February 2019.*
- **DUE DATE 2: July 31, 2019** (reporting on certificates, re-certifications (if any were missed previously) and milestones through June 30, 2019)
 - Tiffany will send the most recent copy of your chapter's Certification Spreadsheet to your current Membership Chair, President, VMS Administrator and Chapter Advisor by June 10, 2019.
 - You may send in your updated Certification Spreadsheet any time between July 1 and July 31, 2019. However, none will be accepted after July 31, 2019.
 - Certification Spreadsheets will be reviewed and approved as they come in.
 - *Packages will be put together and mailed out in August 2019.*

Reminder - Items due back to Tiffany:

- (1) **January 9:** Your Chapter's 2018 Annual Report (and any requested appendices)
- (2) **January 31:** Updated Chapter Certification Spreadsheet

Please contact Tiffany with any additional questions you may have. Thank you so much for all you do! We are very appreciative, and we know all our sponsors, partners, and volunteers appreciate your leadership as well.

Cheers,



Michelle Prysby
Virginia Master Naturalist Program Director
Assistant



Tiffany Brown
Virginia Master Naturalist Project



Terri Keffert
Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer Coordinator

Address for hard copy submission:

Tiffany Brown
242 Cheatham Hall (MC0324)
310 West Campus Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24061

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