



Virginia Master Naturalist Program
Dept. of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation
Virginia Cooperative Extension
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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. In 2021, your continued dedication to adapting creatively and finding new ways to continue VMN volunteer efforts has truly paid off. We, and our program sponsors, are eager to know what you have been able to accomplish this year!

You guessed it! It is time to put together your chapter's Annual Report. We know that Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers 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. This is your chance to share with the state office what your chapter has been working on this year.

Many of you are familiar with this annual process but we have a few changes for 2021. Beginning with the 2020 end-of-year reports, we will be handling the Annual Report separately from the Recognition Items. This letter marks the start of the annual report process and includes everything you need to know. In December, we will send out the information and details about the process for requesting your end-of-year recognition items.

Included here, you will find more information on what is needed for your chapter's annual report and how to go about gathering those materials. We've included all of the details you might need so please read on for details, deadlines, and tips for getting started.

Between now and December 31, there are two things each chapter should be doing: 1) Reminding chapter members to update their profiles and enter all of their hours in Better Impact; and 2) Start deciding what projects your chapter would like to feature in your annual report, begin work on gathering impacts and dividing up tasks.

If you feel you need help, please note that we will be hosting a continuing education webinar on **'Navigating the Annual Reports Process' on December 8 at 11:00am**. Please [pre-register for the webinar](#). We will record this session and post it on our website.

Due date heads up: Your Chapter's 2021 Annual Report is due on **January 12, 2022**.

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,

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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VMN State Office Team:
Michelle Prysby, VMN Program Director
Tiffany Brown, VMN Project Assistant
Terri Keffert, VMN Volunteer Coordinator

Annual Reports

Necessary Documents

On the [VMN website](#), you will be able to find the following documents:

- **The 2021 Annual Report template (available now):** Please fill in this template with your chapter's information. Please do not use the 2020 template, as it has been revised for 2021. The template is a .docx file. If you are unable to open it, please let Tiffany know and she will provide you with a different version.
- **Getting Annual Report Data from Better Impact (available by December 8):** This document guides you through getting much of the quantitative data from Better Impact that is needed for the Annual Report.

If needed, you may request an emailed copy of your chapter's **2020 Annual Report** from Tiffany.

How We Use Your Report

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 Virginia Cooperative Extension, and communications with other program partners. We use information from your reports for reports to external grantors as well. We also use your annual reports to develop infographics 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. Your reports help demonstrate how the Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a cost-effective strategy for accomplishing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship. You also are helping us comply with state, federal, and grant requirements for documentation. And, you are helping us continually improve the program by helping us learn whether we are effectively accomplishing our mission.

When and Where to Send Your Report

Annual Reports are due to the State Office by JANUARY 12, 2022. 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. Please email reports to Tiffany Brown (tiffany.brown@vt.edu).

Tips for Completing Your Report

- **Make it a joint project.** The annual report should not be the sole responsibility of any one person. Our suggestion is to have multiple people, such as the Chapter Advisor, the Membership Chair, the Chapter President, and the Service Projects Chair work together. Other chapter members who are not on the board may contribute as well.
- **Complete all sections of the report thoroughly and accurately.** We need all of the information that we've requested, and we may have to send it back to you if there is missing or incorrect information.

- **Attach photos.** We ask that you choose a few photos to illustrate your chapter's work and impacts. Please attach these as separate files rather than embedding them in your annual report document. In your report, let us know any caption information and photo credits.
- **Ask for Help.** Please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance if you have any questions about filling out the report or how to get the data you need. We would rather work with you on the front end rather than having to make corrections after the deadline.
- **For Section 11, use the profile records for your chapter's members on Better Impact.** Do not use last year's Annual Report numbers, as these will not be correct for this year. As you know, it's important that we submit the most accurate data we can for our civil rights compliance requirements.