



Virginia Master Naturalist Program
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Virginia Cooperative Extension
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November 15, 2023

Dear VMN Chapter Leaders and Chapter Advisors,

As always, we want to say **THANK YOU** for all that you and our other VMN volunteers do to benefit Virginia's natural resources. During 2023, your steadfast leadership and creative solutions to chapter needs has truly paid off. We, and our program sponsors, are eager to know what you have been able to accomplish this year!

It's that time! For chapters to put together their Annual Report. We know that Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers are making a huge impact 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.

This letter marks the start of the annual report process and includes everything you need to know. Many of you are familiar with this annual process but we always try to highlight any changes or new policies. For example, we want to remind everyone that there is a new version of the Volunteer Policy Handbook available and we encourage chapter leaders specifically to familiarize themselves with it.

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 info you might need so please read on for details, deadlines, and tips for getting started.

Between now and December 31, there are three things each chapter should be doing: 1) Reminding chapter members to enter all of their hours in Better Impact; 2) Start deciding what projects your chapter would like to feature in your annual report and begin work on gathering impacts and dividing up tasks; and 3) check to make sure that all your activities are set up correctly in Better Impact so that you can pull the necessary data from them.

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 11 at 12:00pm**. [Please pre-register for the webinar](#). We will record this session and post it on our website.

Due date heads up: Your Chapter's 2023 Annual Report is **due on January 12, 2024**.

Please contact Tiffany (tiffany.brown@vt.edu or 540-231-0790) 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.

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

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Cheers,

VMN State Office Team:
Michelle Prysby, VMN Program Director
Tiffany Brown, VMN Project Assistant

Annual Reports

Necessary Documents

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

- **The 2023 Annual Report template (available now):** Please fill in this template with your chapter's information. Please do not use the 2022 template, as it has been revised for 2023. 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:** 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 **2022 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, 2024. 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). Please send the report as a Word document, as that is easier for us to work with than a PDF.

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.
- **Include 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.