

UPDATES

1. New Trail Assessment Criteria

- a. **Every trail is eligible for addition to Birdability's map and there are no disqualifying features.** Continue using the comments sections to provide details, and uploading photos with each submission.
- b. For sites with multiple trails, Ms. Fribley recommends starting with those which have the fewest accessibility challenges, e.g. flat, stable substrate, no obstacles, labeled as "ADA" or "Easy" on maps, etc. Once they have been reviewed, you can work on the remaining trails.
- c. If you have already submitted the original DWR Site Review Submission Form for a site, you do not have to return to review the other trails unless you want to.

2. Redesigned DWR Site Review Submission Form

- a. We've made some changes to the DWR submission form to make this more streamlined and better clarify some sticking points that folks were getting hung up on.
- b. Submit 1 form *per* site, not per trail. This is intended to streamline the data submission process for you.
- c. If you've already submitted the original DWR form for a site, you do not need to fill out the new form for it unless you want to.

3. Updated Training Materials

- a. New videos and documents will be available on the VBWT section of the VMN website in the near future. I will also send out an email with links to the files so you have them handy.
- b. We *highly* recommend watching the updated training video and reading the updated project guide when they become available, but neither is mandatory for current volunteers since you're already familiar with the site review process.

4. New Birdability Map Issues Form

- a. At the suggestion of Ms. Fribley, we have created a form you can fill out if you find an error on The Map, such as a duplicate entry or incorrect information, or to request changes to your submission. We will send these issues to Birdability monthly and they will make the changes as their time allows.
- b. If you find a site on The Map with outdated information, Birdability wants you to submit a new Birdability Site Review instead of filling out the map issues form. For example, if a site has undergone major upgrades or has new infrastructure not mentioned in the original submission, please submit a new Birdability Site Review and the redesigned DWR Site Review Submission Form.

- c. If there are temporary changes, like a washed out trail or buildings closed for renovations, please use the comment section on the site's Birdability webpage to describe them instead of submitting the map issues form.
- 5. Choosing Additional Sites
 - a. Once you complete your first Birdability Site Review and submit the DWR Site Review Submission Form, we'll check your submission for errors. If none are found, we'll let you know that you are able to sign up for more sites, up to 3 at a time (a "set") by submitting a new Volunteer VBWT Site Submission Form with your choices. Once you complete that set, you can submit a new form with a new set, and so on.
- 6. Preferred Method of Communication
 - a. Email is the preferred method of communication for this project. Having a searchable record of conversations for future reference and time to research answers to your questions is important to us because we want everyone to receive consistent information.
 - b. If you're working with a group and need to email us, please include all members of your group so everyone gets the same message.

CLARIFICATIONS

1. Assess the site/trail in its **current condition**, not by what it would be like if it were perfectly maintained, so potential visitors will know what to expect when they arrive.
2. You do not have to contact the site representative prior to adding public properties to Birdability's map.
3. Working with a Group
 - a. You can work with a group provided at least one member is a VMN who has watched the mandatory DWR training webinar and read the project guide. Of course, we encourage all VMNs to take the training because there are nearly 500 sites left to review and many hands make light work.
 - b. People in your group who haven't had the training can assist by taking measurements or photos, scouting trails, and completing other administrative tasks for you on site. They **cannot** submit the Volunteer VBWT Site Selection Form, add sites to the Birdability Map, or submit the DWR Site Review Submission Form.
 - c. One group member should submit the Volunteer VBWT Site Selection Form and the DWR Site Review Submission Form for the group.

REMINDERS

1. The Birdability Project is not a replacement for Adopt-a-Trail (AAT) or the Site Visits Project.
 - a. AAT was retired in June 2023 and the Site Visits Project has different requirements and activities. The Birdability Project is a brand new way for VMNs to help DWR improve the VBWT.
 - b. Once a chapter has approved the project and listed it correctly in Better Impact, individuals can sign up for sites anywhere in Virginia, whereas the other projects require(d) chapters to adopt an entire local loop.
 - c. This project doesn't require volunteers to return to sites on a regular basis; update site representative contact info; recommend sites for removal; or add observations to iNaturalist or eBird (that is encouraged, though!).
2. Birdability wants photos of site features, like trail surfaces, bathrooms, parking areas, obstacles, etc., instead of landscapes or wildlife. Remember, you are potential visitors' "eyes" and your photos help them make informed decisions.
3. The URL for your site/trail on Birdability's map will start with <https://experience.arcgis.com>, for example https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/2cb13564928f4f01b113bfe38289265b/page/Page-2-Scrolling-Mobile/#data_s=id%3AdataSource_1-18090cbbfcc-layer-1%3A1846
4. **Before** adding your site/trail to Birdability's map, make sure you have written everything you want to write, and that there are no errors in what you have written. It may be helpful to write your observations in a Word or Google document or on paper first, because **there is a 1000-character limit for each comment section**. (I was unaware of this until a volunteer shared that with me.)