



17 February 2017

Dear VMN Steering Committee, Executive Committee, and Chapter Advisor representatives from VDEQ,

Thank you for your support of the Virginia Master Naturalist program in 2016! With your support, we continued to grow our program and make positive impacts for the Commonwealth’s natural resources. Your monetary contribution supports two part-time staff members, Tiffany Brown and Terri Keffert, who are vital for program and volunteer coordination. It also supports volunteer recognition items and other program supplies, program communications tools, staff travel to teach and meet with volunteers, training events, and other important functions of the statewide program. Your in-kind contribution of staff time for training volunteers, leading projects, advising chapters, and serving on our committees is also a critical part of our program.

In 2016, VMN volunteers reported 7,307 hours of service on projects pertaining to your agency, which is a 28% increase over 2015. This service included water quality monitoring of streams and lakes (4,370 hours), litter clean-up events (1,037 hours), watershed education such as Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (1,453 hours), and the “Plant Natives” campaigns of the Coastal Zone Management Program (447 hours). In total, this service equates to \$190,640 in service, using the value of a volunteer hour in Virginia for 2015 published by IndependentSector.org, the industry standard. (The 2016 value is not yet available, but is likely to be higher.) As you can see, you’ve made an excellent return on your investment in our program!

Below, I have included the program-wide 2016 statistics. These statistics reflect many more hours that were not directly with DEQ, but that align with your agency mission. For example, volunteers help improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay through oyster restoration and living shoreline projects.

Virginia Master Naturalist Program 2016 Statistics	
New VMN volunteers graduated from basic training	382
Active volunteers reporting service in 2016	1,743 (1,206 Certified VMN volunteers)
Continuing Education hours completed	24,190
Service hours contributed: Education	35,432
Service hours contributed: Citizen Science	43,517
Service hours contributed: Stewardship	29,852
Service hours contributed: Administration & Travel	37,195
Total service hours contributed	145,996 (21% increase over 2015!)
Monetary value of service	\$3,809,035 (source: IndependentSector.org)
Educational contacts made	106,460

Again, I thank you for both your monetary and in-kind support. Please let me know if you have any questions about this report or our volunteer activities, if you would like me to provide you with any other materials, or if you would like to discuss additional opportunities for collaboration.

Thank you,

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In October 2016, Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers in the Rivanna Chapter were conducting their regular stream monitoring with the Rivanna Conservation Alliance's Stream Watch program. They were surprised to find a distinct odor, brown-colored water, and several benthic species that indicate poor water quality. They walked upstream to investigate, and found a large sewer pipe that had broken and was spilling its contents into the stream. They alerted the local sewer authority, and the pipe was fixed that day. Without the vigilance of these volunteers, the break may not have been found for months or years, as it was in a heavily wooded area. Stories like this one illustrate why the stream monitoring that most of our VMN chapters do is so important.

