March 15, 2018

Dear VMN Steering Committee, Executive Committee, and Chapter Advisor representatives from VIMS-CCRM,

Thank you for your continued support of the Virginia Master Naturalist program in 2017. I am excited to share with you some of our program outputs and impacts from the year. In 2017, VMN volunteers reported 335 service hours leading educational programs at VIMS and helping to maintain educational resources such as the teaching marsh and the aquarium. This figure represents more than double the service hours completed directly with VIMS in 2016. VMN volunteers also conducted another 4,942 hours of service on other projects related to Virginia’s coastal resources, including oyster restoration, seagrass restoration, living shoreline projects, water quality monitoring, and the Catch the King Tide event. In total, this volunteer service with VIMS and on other coastal resource projects equates to $142,268 in monetary value (IndependentSector.org).

In addition, we worked together with Karen Duhring to begin the process of developing a Virginia Master Naturalist chapter on the Middle Peninsula. We anticipate that this new chapter will become active on even more projects with VIMS.

In the attached infographic, you will find the program-wide 2017 statistics. These statistics reflect many more hours that were not directly with VIMS, but that align with your agency’s mission and programs. For example, VMN volunteers conduct beach and stream cleanups, install rain gardens, and provide educational programs about coastal natural resources for youth and adults.

With your monetary and in-kind 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.

On behalf of all our volunteers, I thank you for your 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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25 VMN volunteers from 3 chapters participated in the 2017 Catch the King Tide event, documenting tidal flooding in their communities and, in some cases, serving as Tide Captains to coordinate neighborhood groups. In total, VMNs contributed approximately 96 hours of service to this project in 2017. Photo by Rose Sullivan (VMN-Peninsula Chapter).
2017 Accomplishments

Chapter Administration
Trained and **graduated 415 new volunteers** from basic training courses

**Stewardship**
Provided stewardship at **350+ parks, natural areas, and other sites**

**Education**
Made **127,888+ contacts** through educational programs for youth and adults

**Citizen Science**
Contributed to **100+ studies** of water quality, wildlife populations, and other natural resources

Volunteer Time, in Hours

- **28214** hours
- **36516** hours
- **38843** hours
- **52420** hours

2017 Highlight: Habitat Enhancement, Education, and Monitoring

Volunteers contributed more than 4,000 hours managing invasive plants at dozens of local, state, and national parks. They also spread the word about invasives with presentations and publications.

Volunteers **educated property owners about conservation landscaping** through programs such as Audubon At Home, DGIF Habitat Partners©, and the Smith Mountain Lake Buffer Advisory Service Team.

Volunteers documented the effectiveness of habitat improvements through **butterfly and bird counts** that also contributed to larger citizen science studies.