

Better Impact Volunteer Management System: Initial Instructions for Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteers

Thank you for adapting to a new system for VMN volunteers to find projects, track their hours, and more! Our new system is called Better Impact, and we think it will serve our needs well. It will, however, require some getting used to new terminology and new ways of doing things. Please give it a try, and we will all learn together.

Chapter leaders and VMN leaders have put a great deal of time into getting the system set up, but it is still a work in progress! Don't be surprised if things change a bit over time, as we continue building it out.

For Help

We have multiple ways for you to get assistance.

- **Video:** First, please make sure you've viewed the Better Impact Training for VCE Volunteers. It's only 30 minutes long and will help orient you to the new system: https://video.vt.edu/media/Better+Impact+Volunteer+Management+System+training+video+for+Virginia+Cooperative+Extension+Master+Volunteers/1_nv1o3maq
- **Better Impact Site Guide:** When logged in to Better Impact, click on the "Help" link at the top right on any page. That will bring up a site guide where you can find instructions for most basic tasks. This is a great place to start when you have a question, especially if it doesn't relate to your VMN chapter specifically, but more to the technical aspects of Better Impact.
- **Your Chapter Leaders:** If you have questions as you move through the new system, please contact your chapter's local Better Impact administrator or another local person as indicated by your chapter's board. You can email a representative of your chapter by using the "Contact" tab on your Better Impact volunteer page.
- **Other Help Resources:** This document provides much of the basic information you need, and your chapter may provide you with additional documents, emailed instructions, and training presentations.

Logging in to Better Impact

Before you can do anything else in Better Impact, you'll need to log on. You will not be able to do that until after you have received an email from Stephanie Collins at Virginia Tech.

- Go to <http://MyImpactPage.com>
- If this is your first time logging in, enter the username and password that you received via email from Stephanie Collins at Virginia Tech.
- You will be prompted to change your password immediately.
- You may opt to change your username to something that is easier for you to remember. It does not need to be your email address, though it can be. You would make this change on the Contact Information page (see below.)
- For all future times that you log in, go to <http://MyImpactPage.com> and enter your new username (if you changed it) and your new password that you created.

Where to Start in Better Impact

We have ten simple steps that should cover everything you need to do as a volunteer using Better Impact in the near future. Please complete Steps 1 and 2 the very first time you log in. Steps 3-10 are things you can do each time you log in. We encourage all active VMN volunteers to log in regularly to check for news, look at available activities, and enter your hours. Don't wait until the end of the year to try to enter all your hours! Keep up with them as the year goes along.

1. **On Your First Login: Update Your Contact Information and Preferences:** Go to the "My Profile" menu and choose the first sub-tab, "Contact Information". Check to make sure all of your contact information is filled out correctly. You can also change your username on this page. Correct any errors and fill in any missing information. Fields with flags are required. Be sure to hit "Save" at the bottom of the page.
2. **On Your First Login: Update Your Additional Info:** Go to the "My Profile" menu and choose the second sub-tab, "Additional Info". Please complete all of the fields there, which will include demographic information, emergency contact information, and some agreements and acknowledgements.
3. **Read the News:** Go to the "Home" tab and read any news that is provided by your chapter or by the state organization. It's a good habit to log on regularly to look for new news!
4. **View Available Opportunities:** Opportunities are volunteer activities that are approved in your chapter (like Projects in our old VMS.) Activities are organized into broader Categories. Go to the "Opportunities" menu and view the volunteer opportunities in list or calendar format. The list view will be more comprehensive, because the calendar will only show volunteer activities that are happening on specific dates. Click on the names of Categories and Activities to get more information about them.
5. **Sign up for Activities:** You can click on the title of any Activity to bring up more information and to indicate your interest in that Activity by clicking the "Sign Up" button. Be aware that if the Activity is organized by an outside group, you may need to register for that event or activity in another way. For example, signing up on Better Impact for a webinar or a nature walk that is being put on by a local nature center does not register you for that event. Signing up in Better Impact does help your chapter leaders to know who is interested in different activities and planning to participate in different projects, and it allows them to communicate more directly with people who are interested in specific things.
6. **View Your Schedule:** Go to the "Schedule" tab to see a list of Activities that you have signed up for. Again, the calendar view will only contain those Activities that are scheduled for a specific date and time.
7. **Enter Your 2021 Service Hours:** Go to the "Hours" tab and choose an organization to log hours for (if you belong to more than one.) Make sure to click to view all Active activities (not just Recent ones.)
 - a. In the dropdown menu under Activities, choose the appropriate Activity for reporting those hours. The list may have changed considerably compared to the

old system, so consult with the Projects Chair or another leader of your chapter if you are unsure.

- b. Enter the date you volunteered and the number of hours and minutes you volunteered.
 - c. Depending on the Activity, you may be asked to fill out additional “Feedback”, such as a description of what you did, the number of educational contacts you made, or where you did the activity. Fields that are flagged are required, and others are optional. If something seems missing (for example, if you gave a presentation, but you did not see anywhere to report educational contacts), please let one of your local chapter leaders know.
 - d. Please note that, when reporting educational contacts, you now only need to provide a total number of direct contacts and/or a total number of indirect contacts. You do not need to report demographic data of educational contacts. You can find reminders of what Direct Contacts and Indirect Contacts are by clicking the information buttons next to those fields.
8. **Enter Your 2021 Continuing Education Hours:** In this new system, you report CE hours in the same way as service hours, but it is *very* important that you report them to the correct Category and Activity so that we can separate them later!
- a. Go to the “Hours” tag and choose an organization to log CE hours for (if you belong to more than one.) Make sure to click to view all Active activities (not just recent ones.)
 - b. If you are entering CE hours, **make sure to only put them in one or more Activities listed under the Continuing Education category.** Do not log CE hours on Activities listed under any Category other than Continuing Education. Your chapter may have you report all your CE hours to one Activity, or they may have several choices, but all CE Activities will be under the CE Category.
9. **Double-check your Hours Entries:** After you enter hours, you only have 24 hours to fix mistakes. Immediately after you enter hours, it is a good habit to scroll down the page to where it shows “Most Recent Entries”. If something looks incorrect, use the “Delete” button to remove it, and then you can re-enter those hours correctly. After 24 hours have passed, you will need to ask your local chapter Better Impact administrator to edit your hours for you.
10. **Review Your Volunteer Contributions:** Go to the “Reports” tab to see all your hours. Please note that the totals at the top of reports page and the home page will reflect both CE and Service hours added together! To distinguish the two, scroll down and use the Hours and Feedback report. This report will break your hours down by Category, so you will be able to see how many hours were in the CE Category and how many were in all the other Categories.

If you like to explore, you may find other menus and things you can do in Better Impact. Some of these features are not yet ready for your use. Others are available to use, but they are not important right now. What we have described here are the most basic functions that we think you’ll need in the short term.