

Virginia Master Naturalist Program Project Proposal Form

Project proposals should be completed by partner organizations or chapter members and submitted to the chapter's Board of Directors for review. Projects will be evaluated for relevance to program mission and objectives. Projects and activities implemented without approval are not considered Master Naturalist activities, do not count towards required service hours, and do not carry the liability shield.

Project Name : *(For approval and recording purposes)*

Virginia Amphibian Monitoring Program

Submitted By:

Michelle Prysby

Phone or Email Contact:

mprysby@vt.edu

Project Purpose and Value: *(How will this project contribute to natural resource management, conservation, or education?)*

This project continues a long-running monitoring effort aimed at documenting diversity, distribution, and abundance of Virginia's frog species. Resulting data may be used by a wide array of partners to educate the public about the frog species occurring in their localities, to better understand trends in amphibian populations, and to engage in applicable natural resource management and conservation activities.

Project type: *(Is this project education/outreach, citizen science/monitoring, stewardship, or administrative?)*

Citizen science

Project Description: *(Describe what the project involves. What will participants actually do?)*

Participants will be assigned a road route with ten designated stops. They will drive the route during 3-4 designated survey windows of 2-4 weeks. At each designated stop, they will listen for 5 minutes and record a calling index for each frog species heard. They will also record basic environmental and site data such as air temperature, wind level, sky code, date, and time. They will record the data on paper in the field, and then enter it into an online database shortly after the survey.

Project Location: *(Where will this project take place?)*

Participants are assigned specific routes with 10 designated stops. These occur over much of Virginia. They are frequently in rural areas.

Time Frame: *(What, if any, is the time frame for this project? Be as specific as possible –What time does the volunteer need to be there and how late are they expected to stay? If it is seasonal, what are the approximate dates or appropriate weather conditions? Is this an on-going project or does it have a fixed end date? About how many hours can a volunteer expect to put into this project?)*

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It takes approximately 2-3 hours to complete a survey, depending on the specific route and the distance from the volunteer's home to the designated starting point. The survey windows vary each year and by region within the state, but generally occur from mid-February to mid-March, mid-April to mid-May, and June to July. Some volunteers may do a survey specifically for wood frogs earlier in the season, and some volunteer may do another survey in late summer. Within any given survey window, volunteers are asked to conduct the survey on a date that meets the weather requirements, which include minimum temperatures and wind speeds as well as maximum time since the last rainfall.

Partner Contact: *(If a partner is involved, who at that organization is the contact for this project?)*

Name:

This project is co-coordinated by Michelle Prysby and Travis Land. Michelle will be tracking volunteer enrollments, while Travis will be assigning routes.

Organization:

Michelle Prysby-Virginia Master Naturalist program director with Virginia Tech/Virginia Cooperative Extension
Travis Land-Herpetology curator at The Virginia Living Museum

Phone number:

Michelle Prysby – 434-872-4571
Travis Land – 757-595-1900 ext. 234

Email:

Michelle Prysby – mprysby@vt.edu
Travis Land – travis.land@thevlm.org

Project Chair: *(Who from the chapter is the contact person and organizer for this project?)*

What, if any, prior experience or expertise is required or preferred?

Volunteers must be able to drive at night on rural roads following a designated route. They must have a valid Virginia driver's license. They must have the ability to identify frog species accurately based on their calls. They must have the ability to record and report accurate data, have an interest in citizen science, and have the desire to contribute to our understanding of frog diversity and distribution in Virginia.

What training will be provided and by whom?

Volunteers will receive a training manual with the specifics on project protocols. They will also be referred to online sites for practice on identifying frog calls. An online quiz for frog call identification is in development. Once developed, volunteers will have to pass the quiz on an annual basis in order to qualify for route assignment.

Resources provided: *(What equipment or other resources will be provided for the volunteer(s)?)*

Access to the online system where they can download data sheets, project protocols, and other information.

Resources needed: *(What will the volunteer(s) or chapter need to provide and how will these resources be acquired?)*

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Thermometer for measuring air temperature, car and valid license, stopwatch or other timekeeping device, clipboard and writing utensil for recording data in the field, printed data sheets, flashlight

Safety hazards and protocols: *(What hazards might the volunteers encounter and what safety protocols should be followed?)*

Traffic and driving-related risks are the biggest hazard of this project. Volunteers should take care to park in safe areas off the road and to use their hazard lights when stopped. Volunteers should be able to conduct most of the survey from inside of their vehicles, but should they need to exit the vehicle, they should wear reflective clothing, carry a flashlight, and stay extremely alert for passing cars. If weather or road conditions make driving unsafe, volunteers should discontinue the survey. Volunteers should use insect repellent as conditions warrant it. Volunteers should wear close-toed shoes, long pants, and long sleeves, and carry rain gear. Volunteers should bring water and food appropriate for a 3 hour field trip.

Are minors involved?: *(If yes, then all volunteers must be trained in working with youth and the Above Suspicion policy.)*

No Yes No

How will the project be evaluated during implementation and after completion?:

Submitted data will be reviewed by the project coordinators and feedback given to the volunteers. We will also ask volunteers for their feedback on project coordination and protocols.

How will the Virginia Master Naturalist program be recognized?

The VMN program will be recognized as a co-coordinator of the project.

How will volunteers benefit from participation in the project?:

Volunteers will enhance their ability to identify frogs based on their calls. They will become more familiar with the frog species in their localities and with frog habitats that exist in their areas. They will be contributing in a positive way to enhancing our understanding of frog populations in Virginia.

For Chapter Board of Directors Only:

Project approved?

Date Approved: