**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)*: VDOF acorn/seed collection

**Submitted By:** Ellen Powell, VDOF **Phone or Email Contact:** ellen.powell@dof.virginia.gov

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

The Virginia Department of Forestry hardwood nursery needs help collecting local seeds, in order to produce seedlings for Virginia landowners. Virginia-grown seed generally produces trees that will grow well in our state. Seed collection also allows volunteers to learn more about trees.

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

Stewardship

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

Volunteers will collect seed in September and October according to species and protocol identified by VDOF (see <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/seedling-nurseries/acorn-and-nut-collection/>). Volunteers will deliver seed to their nearest VDOF office, or to the VDOF nursery at Crimora.

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

Seed collection may be done on the volunteer’s land, or on other lands with permission. Collection should generally be done under trees in open-grown settings, rather than in a forest, where seeds tend to be mixed.

**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?)*:

This project is needed every fall, with September and October being the best collection months. Time will vary depending on the volunteer and location of seed trees, but a good guess might be 2 to 4 hours.

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

**Name:** Local forester – please see VDOF directory **Organization:** VDOF

**Phone number and Email:** See directory at <https://dof.virginia.gov/forest-management-health/landowner-assistance/find-a-forester/find-a-vdof-forester/>.

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

The chapter should choose one, depending on an individual’s interest in the project.

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

Volunteers should follow the protocol referenced in the web site above, making sure to collect only one type of acorn/other seed per bag. Basic tree ID skills are helpful to avoid collecting species that are not being grown. If unsure of ID, volunteers can place a leafy twig from the tree in the top of the bag of seed.

**What training will be provided and by whom?**

Reading the collecting guidelines from the web site should be sufficient for this project.

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

NA; no special equipment is needed.

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

Volunteers will provide paper bags (used paper grocery bags are fine) and their own transportation to the collection site and to the closest DOF office.

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

Volunteers should get permission before collecting on any property that does not belong to them. Watch out for normal outdoor hazards (hanging dead limbs, uneven footing, critters, etc.).

**Are minors involved?** *(If yes, then all volunteers must be trained in working with youth and the Above Suspicion policy.)* **YES X NO (**Not necessarily, but this project can be organized as a community or school collection program with minors involved)

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

If the nursery gets enough viable seed for the coming season, VDOF considers that a success!

**How will the Virginia Master Naturalist program be recognized?**

There is not an official recognition program at this time, but VDOF news articles will mention major collection efforts by groups.

**How will volunteers benefit from participation in the project?**

Collection is a key step in production of Virginia-grown trees that are planted all over the state, thus increasing the canopy cover, aesthetic appeal, wildlife habitat, and other ecosystem services provided by trees.

*For Chapter Board of Directors Only: Project approved? YES NO Date of approval:*