



VMN Volunteer Info Sheet

Better Impact Volunteer Management System: Using Better Impact Features as a Volunteer

This Info Sheet is intended for Volunteers in the VMN Program.

Authored by Virginia Master Naturalist State Office

Overview

Volunteers using the new Better Impact Volunteer Management System (BI-VMS) have many ways in which to find and manage opportunities suited to their interests or available time more easily. Administrators and Project Leaders can use these features as well as a way to direct volunteers to particular projects and other activities based on what the volunteer adds to their profile.

To access all the following exciting and useful features, please log into Better Impact (myimpactpage.com). If you need help, click on the 'forgot your username or password?' there, or contact your chapter's VMS Administrator or Membership Chair. And for help on other BI-VMS topics, you can also use Better Impacts' informative help pages.

<https://www.betterimpact.com/siteguide/>

Tips

- The small green 'i' buttons next to text have good information in them. Click on to read.
- 'Shifts' in BI-VMS are dates/times that a particular activity is offered

Update Interests and Availability in your BI-VMS Profile

Volunteers can select and continuously update (in their profiles) their General Availability and Interests (i.e., Activity Classifications and General Interests). Once selections are made, opportunities can be searched on and presented that better match the volunteer's time or interests.

Note: Your choices here can be changed at any time and **will not** restrict you to which activities you see, only help you find activities that you are interested in.

Steps to update types of activities you are interested in and your general availability

Under the My Profile tab on your BI-VMS home page, click on Interests found in the dropdown menu there.

(www.myimpactpage.com) Here you can indicate the general kinds of volunteer activities you would like to do. It is especially important to fill in the **Activity Classifications** section. This will help leaders be able to match volunteers to specific opportunities.

Interests

Types of VMN Volunteer Service

☐ Select All

☐ Citizen Science **i**

☐ Education and Outreach **i**

☐ Stewardship **i**

☐ VMN Chapter Administration **i**

Classifications

ACTIVITY CLASSIFICATIONS

☐ Select All

☐ Cleanups of trash/litter/pollution

☒ Communications: social media, e-newsletters, blogs

☐ Computer-based work

☐ Creating/writing educational materials

☐ Demonstrating a food preparation technique

☐ Detail-oriented or organizational tasks

☐ Giving a demonstration or hands-on workshop

☐ Giving a presentation

☐ Horticulture therapy

☒ Inventories and monitoring of wildlife/plants/environment

☐ Leadership and program administration

☐ Leading a nature walk or field program

☐ Marketing and publicity

☐ On-site work day

☒ Planting, restoring, and maintaining gardens or habitat

☐ Public outreach - booths/tables at events

☐ Trail maintenance and improving access to nature

☐ Translating educational materials into different languages

☐ Youth programs

MY PROFILE

- Contact Information
- Additional Info
- Qualifications
- Training
- Badges
- Change Password
- Organizations
- Goals
- Interests
- Availability
- Timeclock QR Code
- Files
- Merge Profile

Figure 1 Interests section in Better Impact profile

Next, under the My Profile tab, go to Availability. Indicate your general availability for volunteering. By entering even your best guesstimates, it will help you find activities on those days, since this is what BI-VMS uses to run searches for you. You are not obligated to these times and can change them at any time.

Availability

When Can You Volunteer?

	■ MORNINGS	■ AFTERNOONS	■ EVENINGS	■ NIGHT
☐ Monday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Tuesday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Wednesday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Thursday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Friday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Saturday	☐	☒	☒	☐
☐ Sunday	☐	☒	☒	☐

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Figure 2 Availability section in Better Impact profile

Opportunity Searching by the Volunteer

Note that if you belong to more than one VCE master volunteer program and want to see only those items related to that program, you will need to choose it from the filter dropdown menu called Organization.

Hover over the **Opportunities** tab on your profile homepage and choose Opportunities List from the dropdown menu there. (The Opportunities List will show ALL active activities (scheduled and unscheduled) unless you filter it in a

different way. The Opportunities Calendar is a great tool as well but only shows those activities scheduled for specific dates.)

A volunteer can search for activities that they are 'generally available' for by checking that box in the filter section. These will include both scheduled and unscheduled activities.

For example:

You have Mondays off and want to see what activities are happening on a Monday. You can search for only those by using the filters in Better Impact on the Opportunities tab (provided you have marked Mondays when you filled in your Availability section of your profile.) Here, the Bluebird Box Monitoring activity fits that search.

NOTE

An 'unscheduled' activity, while it doesn't have actual dates, will also show up in your availability search **if that activity was set up in BI-VMS** for this display by your Chapter Admin.

The screenshot shows the 'Opportunities' page in the Better Impact system. At the top is a navigation bar with tabs: HOME, OPPORTUNITIES (selected), SCHEDULE, HOURS, REPORTS, CONTACT, and MY PROFILE. Below the navigation bar is a 'Filter Activities' section with a message: 'Looking to volunteer on a specific day? Try the new Opportunity Calendar! This new page lets you find opportunities on a calendar to easily find activities on the days you are available to help!'. The filters include: 'Only include activities that I am qualified for' (unchecked), 'Only include activities that have openings available' (unchecked), 'Include activities for which I am currently' (checked) with sub-options 'Generally Available' (checked), 'Signed Up' (unchecked), 'Scheduled' (unchecked), and 'On the backup list' (unchecked). The 'SORT' dropdown is set to 'Activity Name'. The 'DISPLAY' section has 'Group by category' (checked) and 'Collapse categories by default' (unchecked). A 'Filter Activities' button is at the bottom right of the filter section. Below the filters is a message: 'It looks like you have filters applied. If you don't see the item you are looking for, you can change your filters (above) and try again.' The main content area shows a category 'Bluebird Monitoring' with a description: 'This category includes all activities related to monitoring bluebird nestboxes with the Virginia Bluebird Society.' Below this is a table with columns: ACTIVITY, SHIFTS, START DATE, and END DATE. The first row shows 'Bluebird Box Monitoring (Virginia Bluebird Society)' with an info icon (i) next to the activity name and the number '1' in the SHIFTS column.

Figure 3 Searching for Opportunities in Better Impact profile

Even if you don't filter this way, you can also open the little 'i' (info icon) next to the activity name and see if there is a YES in the 'generally available' list. This lets you know that this activity matches the availability marked in your profile. Here you can also get a **quick look at a description** of the activity.

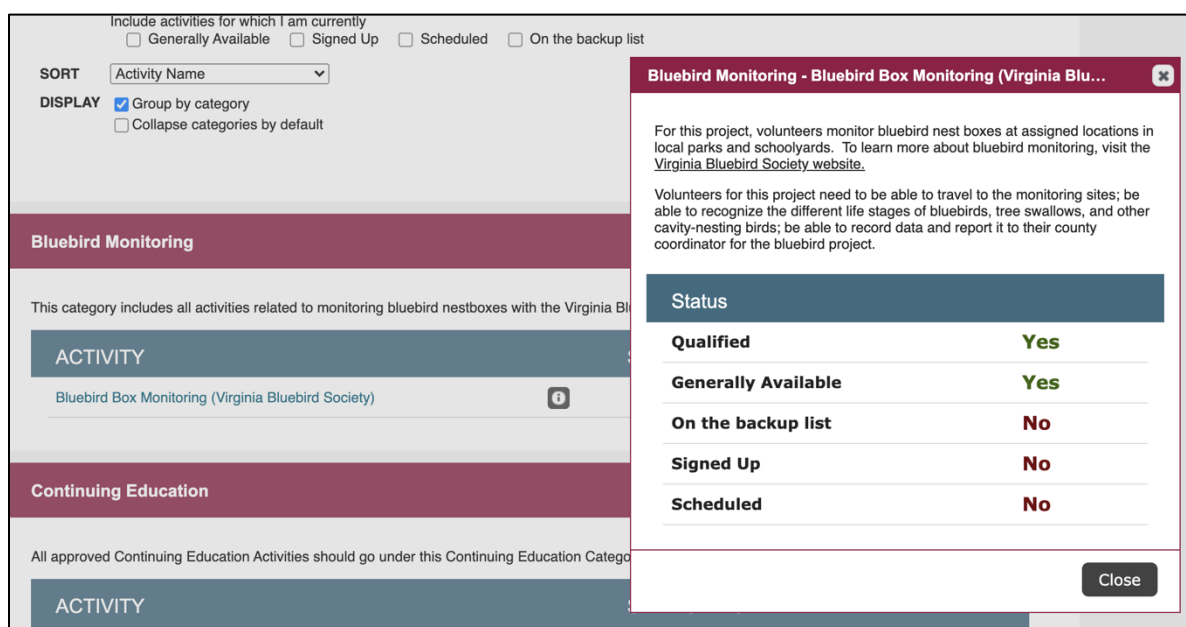


Figure 4 Type of info shown when clicking on the Info icon (little "i") in activity listings

Now click on the activity name that interests you. You will find its description and any important details, possibly a sign-up button, and a list of who has already signed up for that activity. (More on that later.)

Note: Whenever you find an activity that interests you, it's **very important that you have a look at its description**, either via the 'i' icon or by clicking on the title. There may be critical instructions (like information on registration) that you will need in order to participate.

Signing up for an Activity: Helpful Features a Volunteer Can Use Once They Sign Up

If the activity is one that volunteers can sign up for, doing so allows for the use of many other tools to help facilitate your involvement in activities.

- Go to an activity that you wish to participate in and read its description first! Many activities listed may be ones that are sponsored by an outside organization. They may require you to register with them to receive more details, confirmation, etc. These activities should have a note reflecting that (possibly with a link) in their descriptions on Better Impact. While you can still use the sign-up button for your activity reminders, etc. if it's available, remember that if you do not register with the outside organization, they will not know about your interest in their activity!
- If valid for Better Impact sign-up, click on the sign-up button for that activity. If the BI-VMS automatically approved you, or once the Chapter Admin has approved your sign-up (for those not set to auto-approve), you will be able to use additional features.

When a Volunteer Signs Up for an Activity on Better Impact

You will receive a notice on your Home page dashboard reminding you about these activities.

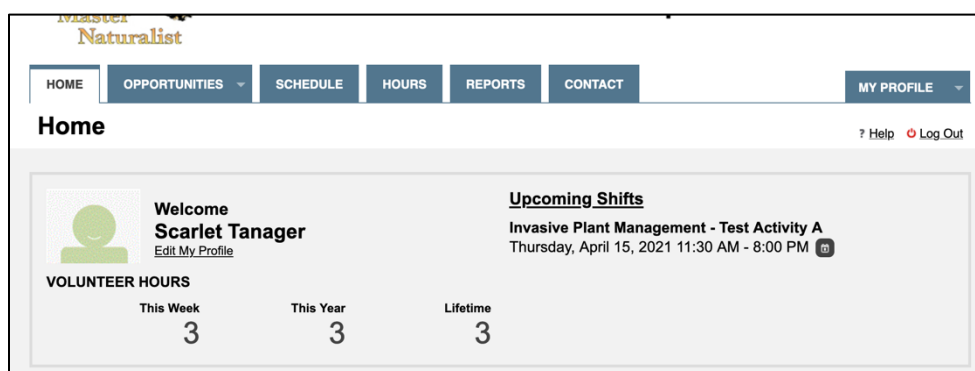


Figure 5 Volunteer home page dashboard reminders in Better Impact profile after signing up for activity

Now if you **look at your Schedule tab**, you will see the activities you've signed up for, not only in a list but also on a calendar if there is a date related to it. (Click View Calendar.) You can also download this as a PDF document.

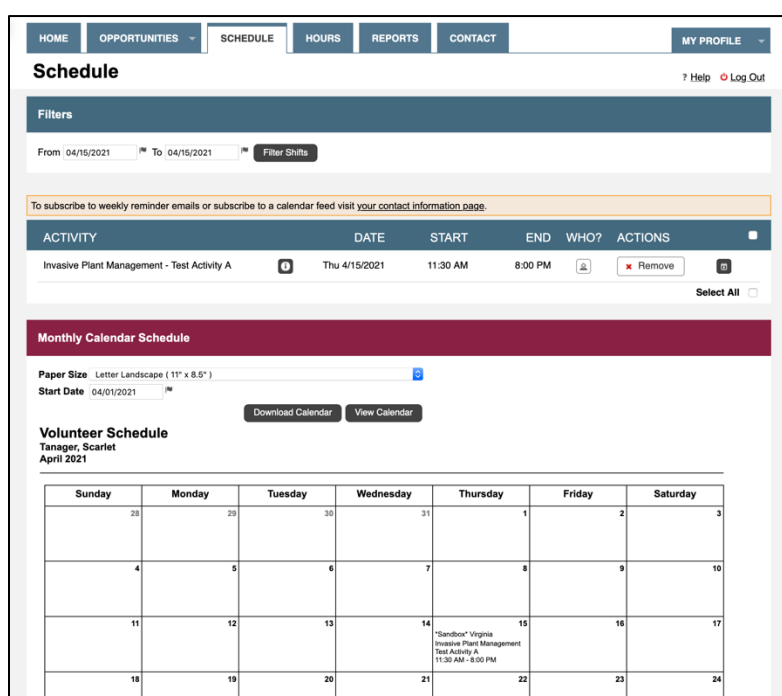


Figure 6 Calendar reminder in Better Impact after signing up for activity

And now, having signed up for an activity, if you click on the little info 'i' next to its name, you will now also see any **additional post sign-up notes** that may include important logistical details about the activity, as seen below.

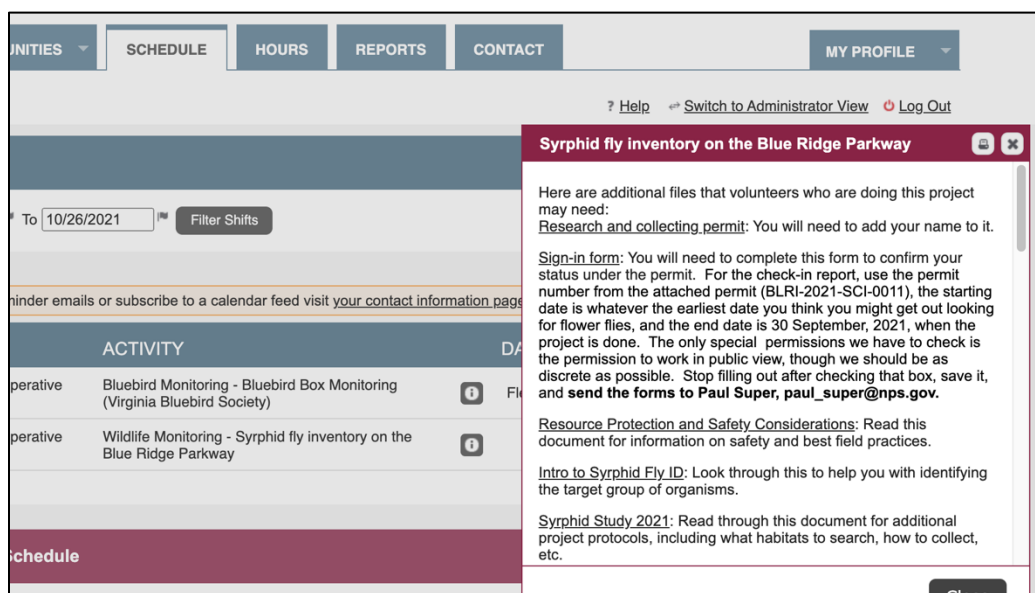


Figure 7 Example of additional activity details found when clicking on Info icon (little "i") after signing up for an activity

Note: If you have signed up and see a little text box pop up that says "*Thank you for signing up. You have not been scheduled yet but will be contacted later regarding your assigned shift(s)*", these activities will not show up in the following sections until the Project Leader has assigned (i.e., approved) your request. Until then, your sign-up is still pending.

A volunteer also can subscribe to a weekly reminder email or calendar feed to be reminded of all the activities they signed up for.

When in your profile, click on the My Profile tab, then choose Contact Info from the dropdown menu. Here, you will see a Subscription box for both items mentioned.

To set up a Calendar Subscription, click that and follow the instructions it gives you. This will give you a link that can be used in a personal calendar (outside of BI-VMS), such as Google Calendar. Only the activities listed in BI-VMS as scheduled for specific dates will export to your personal calendar. (You can find out more on the BI-VMS help pages <https://www.betterimpact.com/siteguide/subscribe-to-calendar-feed/>)

Update Calendar Subscription

Use the "Generate New Calendar Feed" to create a new calendar feed. If you no longer wish to have a calendar feed generated please click the "Remove Calendar Feed" button.

Clicking either of these buttons will invalidate any existing calendar subscriptions you may have.

For more information on how to use the calendar subscription feature please visit the [calendar subscription help article](#).

Please note: While the calendar feed is updated every 15 minutes, certain calendar programs (most notably Google Calendar) may take up to several hours to reflect the changes in this feed.

Current Calendar Feed Url

Figure 8 Instructions given when signing up for calendar subscription in Better Impact profile

You can also sign up for a Weekly Schedule Reminder to be emailed to you for any scheduled (i.e., those with a date or time) activities you have signed up for. Repeat as above. (To see this info box as shown here, click on the 'i' next to Email.)

What is this?

Every weekend you will receive a two week summary of your upcoming shifts with reminders to confirm new assignments.

You will only receive these emails if you have upcoming assignments.

Figure 9 Description found in Better Impact profile regarding email subscription

Seeing Who Has Signed Up for an Activity

When you open to view an activity, you and others will be able to see who else has already signed up for it by name, and/or photo, or as anonymous. (Remember, this doesn't reflect those who intend to come but haven't actually signed up in BI-VMS for it.) Then, depending on what you have allowed for in your Privacy Settings, that list will reflect your choices when you sign up. (See below for more info.)

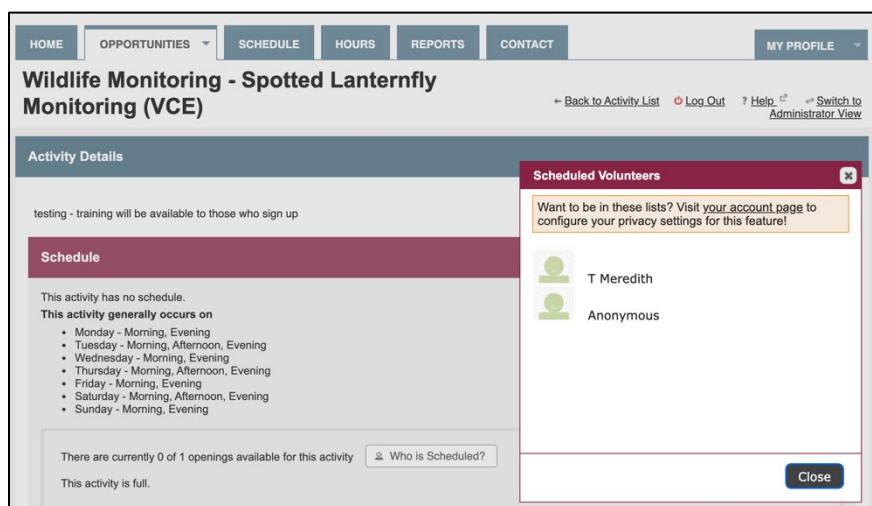


Figure 10 Example of volunteer list for those who signed up for an activity in Better Impact profile

To Set Your Privacy Settings

When in your profile, click on the My Profile tab, then choose Contact Info from the dropdown menu. There, you will see a Privacy Settings box.

Here you can choose from several options regarding activities you are scheduled for. By default, your name is hidden from others, instead being listed as Anonymous to the rest of the volunteers when you sign up for a particular activity. (The project leader will be able to see your name and contact information).

- The idea behind this feature is that, as volunteers get to know each other more, there is a greater sense of being part of a team.
- It also encourages and facilitates the creation of carpools with others volunteering for that same project/activity.

Privacy Settings

Privacy Settings for the Schedule

☐ I want other volunteers to be able to see my name in the list of scheduled volunteers.

☐ I want my last name included.
 ☐ I want my photo included.

Save

Figure 11 Privacy Setting box in Better Impact profile

Visit Virginia Master Naturalist: virginiamasternaturalist.org

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: ext.vt.edu

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