



**Volunteer Opportunities for Virginia Master Naturalists with Sponsoring Agencies:
Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Museum of Natural History, and Virginia
Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Game and Inland Fisheries, and Forestry**

There are many opportunities for Virginia Master Naturalists to volunteer with our state agencies doing service to benefit our state parks, state forests, and other state lands as well as to educate the public, including youth, about natural resource issues. Many of these opportunities are similar across the agencies, whether the service is at a State Forest, a Wildlife Management Area, or a Natural Area Preserve. The project needs range from activities requiring a lot of manual labor but less expertise to less labor-intensive projects that require strong naturalist skills. They also range from activities that include very little interaction with the public to activities focused on public education and outreach. Every site and agency is unique, so project needs will vary among locations. Chapters should contact sites, regional offices, or the contacts listed here to develop more specific project proposals.

Department of Conservation and Recreation

DCR manages State Parks as well as Natural Area Preserves. Volunteer opportunities include the following examples:

- Trail maintenance
- Digging fire line and assisting with prescribed burns
- Invasive species control
- Habitat enhancement: planting stream buffers, creating wildlife food plots
- Riparian work: stream enhancement, buffer planting
- Being a presence on the trails, reporting problems
- Developing and maintaining demonstrations of conservation practices, such as BayScapes
- Developing site-specific species lists for plants, birds, and other groups of organisms
- Developing interpretive trail guides and other interpretive materials
- Developing and/or delivering interpretive/educational programs on-site or in schools
- Creating or compiling educational materials for Nature Discovery Centers in parks
- Assistance with youth programs, such as the Junior Ranger program in state parks
- Organizing and co-hosting special events (bio-blitzes, birding events, etc.)
- Staffing a booth at a special event
- Monitoring populations of rare species (particularly plants)

To locate **State Parks**, visit <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks/>.

To locate **Natural Area Preserves**, visit <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dnh/preserve.htm>.

Department of Forestry

Volunteer opportunities in the state forests include the following examples:

- Trail maintenance
- Digging fire line and assisting with prescribed burns
- Invasive species control
- Habitat enhancement: planting stream buffers, creating wildlife food plots



- Riparian work: stream enhancement, buffer planting
- Being a presence on the trails, reporting problems
- Developing and maintaining demonstrations of conservation practices
- Developing site-specific species lists for plants, birds, and other groups of organisms
- Developing interpretive trail guides and other interpretive materials
- Developing and/or delivering interpretive/educational programs on-site or in schools
- Creating or compiling educational materials for Nature Discovery Centers in parks
- Assistance with outreach programs for local community and school groups
- Education/outreach work with forest landowners

*To learn more about volunteer opportunities at a **State Forest**, contact one of the Department of Forestry regional offices at <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/info/vdof-directory.shtml>.*

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

The state Wildlife Management Areas have volunteer needs similar to those listed for state forests, parks, and Natural Area Preserves.

In addition, DGIF's Wildlife Diversity division has volunteer opportunities such as the following examples:

- Collecting data for the WildlifeMapping program
- Educating the public about creating wildlife-friendly habitats (Habitat Partners)
- Interpretive programs associated with the Birding and Wildlife Trail
- Hosting a booth at birding festivals and other special events

*To find a **Department of Game and Inland Fisheries** office or **Wildlife Management Area**, visit <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/info/offices.html> and <http://www.dgif.state.va.us/hunting/wma/index.html>.*

To learn more volunteering with the Wildlife Mapping program, visit <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlifemapping/index.cfm> and contact Lou Verner at lou.verner@dgif.virginia.gov, 804-367-1779.

To learn more about volunteering with the Habitat Partners program, visit http://www.dgif.state.va.us/wildlife/habitat_partners/index.html and contact Carol Heiser at carol.heiser@dgif.virginia.gov, 804-367-6989.

For more information on possible volunteer projects associated with the Birding and Wildlife Trail, contact Jeff Trollinger at jeff.trollinger@dgif.virginia.gov.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Cooperative Extension has needs for volunteers to conduct natural resource-related programming, particularly for youth, but also potentially for adults. Examples include leading a 4H club or project, assisting with a field day, assisting with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences, assisting extension agents with school programs, staffing a booth at a special event, and conducting programs for scouts and other community groups. Some Master Gardener Help Desks may benefit from Master Naturalist involvement to help answer questions from the public about wildlife and other natural resources. There are also field work



opportunities such as setting up demonstration areas and trails at the Agricultural Research and Extension Centers to teach the public about natural resource management practices.

*To contact local **Virginia Cooperative Extension staff** about volunteer opportunities for Virginia Master Naturalists, visit <http://www.ext.vt.edu/> for a list of county offices, 4H Centers, and Agricultural Research and Extension Centers.*

Virginia Museum of Natural History

The Virginia Museum of Natural History is based in Martinsville and conducts outreach programming in a 10-12 county area around the museum as well as in the Charlottesville region. They have opportunities for volunteers to get involved in outreach programming, staffing booths at special events, and assisting the museum scientists. They can also use articles written by Virginia Master Naturalists in their newsletters and other publications.

To contact the Virginia Museum of Natural History about volunteer opportunities for Virginia Master Naturalists, contact Denny Casey, Director of Education and Public Programs, Virginia Museum of Natural History, 276-666-8600 ext. 220, dcasey@vmnh.net.