



**Virginia Master
Naturalists**

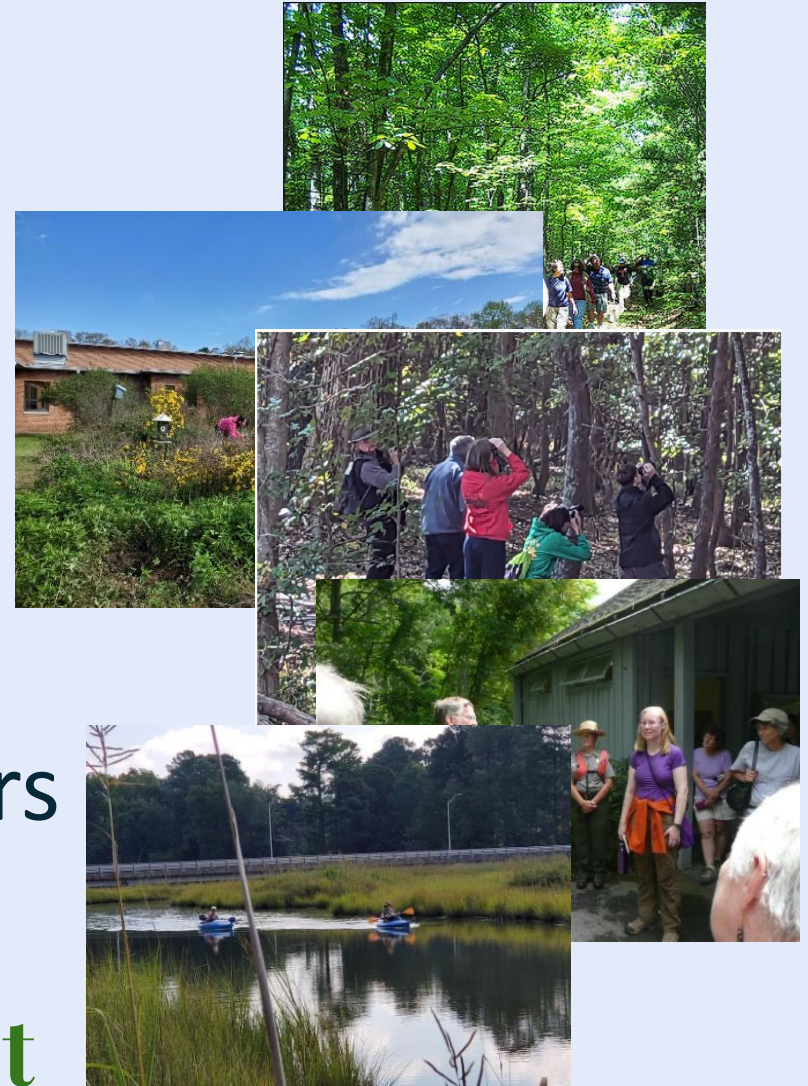
The Virginia Master Naturalist Program

Bryan Barmore
Virginia Master Naturalist
Langley Alumni Association, Oct 13, 2026

Do you like ...?

- Camping and hiking
- gardening
- wildlife viewing
- Sharing knowledge
- spending time outdoors

**Maybe you would enjoy
being a Master Naturalist**



Our Mission

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.



Tomoko Hamada

Focus on Natural Resources

- A program to benefit Virginia's wildlife, woods, waters, and other natural resources



Focus on Volunteerism

- A program to cultivate volunteers



Deborah Humphries

Cultivating Volunteers

From Training...

- All VMN volunteers complete a basic training course with a local chapter.
- Learn basics of
 - Identification of plants, trees, animals
 - Ecology of Virginia ecosystems
 - Natural interpretation
 - Citizen/community science



VMN-Historic Rivers Chapter

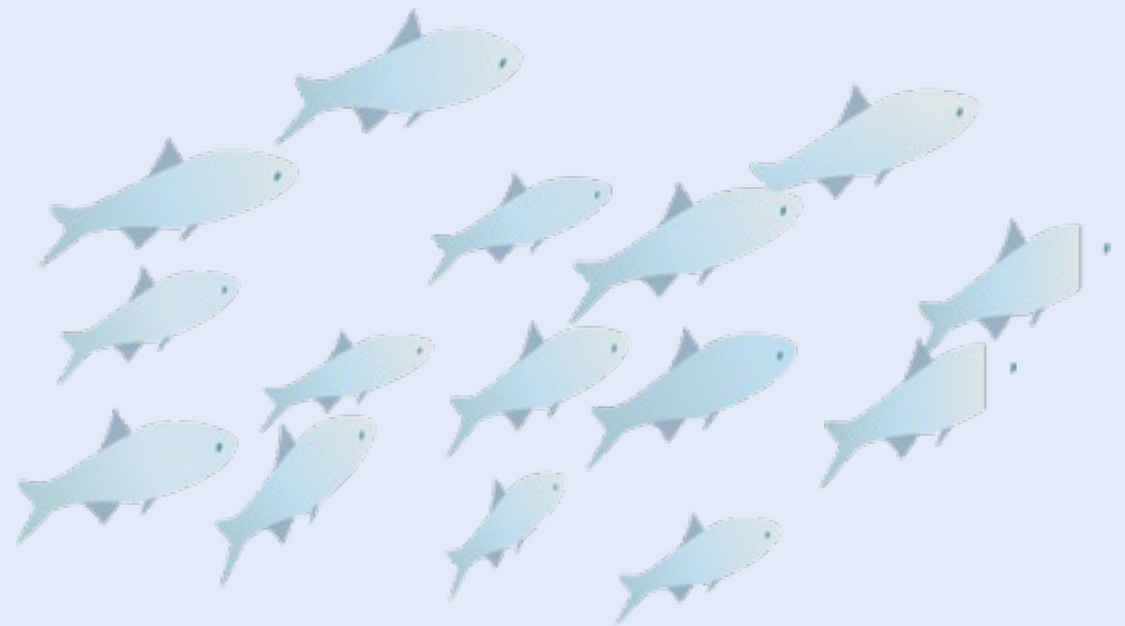
Cultivating Volunteers

...to Service

- All VMN volunteers are expected to do at least some approved service.



What does a Virginia Master Naturalist volunteer do, anyway?



Learning



Opportunity to Contribute



Social Connections



Connections to People



Connections to Places



John Stanley



Donna Finnegan



Rich Brager



Carol Hammer

Leadership Experience



Michelle Prysby



Jennifer Gagnon

Sense of Accomplishment



Focus on Community

- Chapter-based
- Partnerships
- Collaboration





Who do Master Naturalists support?

State-Sponsored Program

- A statewide Virginia Cooperative Extension program
- Sponsored by six additional state agencies



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Mission: Virginia Cooperative Extension helps lead the engagement mission of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, the commonwealth's land-grant universities. Building local relationships and collaborative partnerships, we help people put scientific knowledge to work through learning experiences that improve economic, environmental, and social well-being.

- Agriculture and Natural Resources
- 4-H youth development
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Community Viability

<http://www.ext.vt.edu>



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Mission: DCR enables and encourages people to enjoy and benefit from Virginia's natural and cultural resources

- State Parks
- Soil and Water Conservation
- Natural Heritage Program
- Dam safety and floodplain management
- Land conservation
- Recreation planning

<http://www.dcr.virginia.gov>



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Mission: DEQ protects and enhances Virginia's environment, and promotes the health and well being of the citizens of the Commonwealth

- Administers state and federal laws and regulations for air quality, water quality, water supply and waste management.
- DEQ issues permits, conducts inspections and monitoring, and enforces regulations and permits
- Organizes citizen water quality monitoring

<https://www.deq.virginia.gov>



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Department of Forestry

Mission: We protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

- Protects >16 million acres of forest land from fire, insects, and disease.
- Manages 26 State Forests and other state lands totaling >70,000 acres for timber, recreation, water, research, wildlife, and biodiversity.
- Provides technical advice to private forest landowners

<http://www.dof.virginia.gov>



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Mission:

- Conserve and manage wildlife populations and habitat for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Connect people to Virginia's outdoors through boating, education, fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and other wildlife-related activities.
- Protect people and property by promoting safe outdoor experiences and managing human-wildlife conflicts.

<http://www.dwr.virginia.gov>



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Center for Coastal Resources Management

Mission: CCRM supports informed decision-making on resource management at all levels of government, including private and corporate citizens.

- Undertakes research
- Provides advisory service in wetlands management
- Conducts outreach education

ccrm.vims.edu



VMN Sponsoring Agency

Virginia Museum of Natural History

Mission: VMNH interprets Virginia's natural heritage within a global context in ways that are relevant to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

- Maintains a state museum to provide a repository of the state's natural heritage
- Investigates natural history of Virginia and the world
- Conducts educational programs at the museum and across the state

<http://www.vmnh.net>



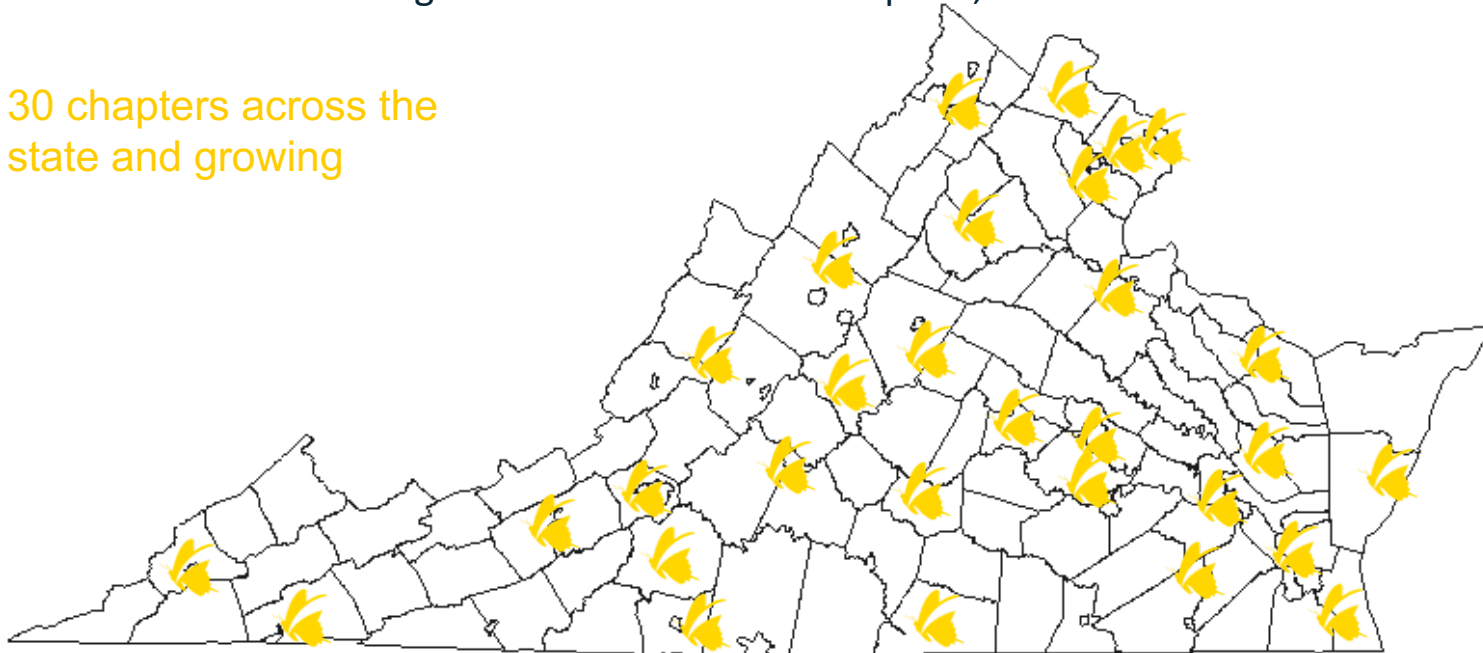
VMN Collaborators



Local Chapters Deliver the Program

Central Locations for Virginia Master Naturalist Chapters, 2025

30 chapters across the
state and growing



Local Chapters

Historic Rivers - Williamsburg, James City
County, Upper York

Historic Southside - Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Surry

Middle Peninsula - Gloucester, Mathews, ...

Peninsula - Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson

Tidewater - Norfolk, Virginia Beach,
Chesapeake, Portsmouth

Volunteer Service

Service Types

- Education/outreach
- Citizen and Community Science
- Stewardship
- Chapter Leadership



Volunteer Service

Education and Outreach

- Giving presentations
- Leading nature walks for the public
- Educating at booth at an event
- Developing educational materials
- ...and more!



Kate Guenther

Volunteer Service

Science

- Water quality monitoring
- Catch the King tide
- Bird and butterfly counts
- Wildlife monitoring with DWR and other groups
- Weather and precipitation monitoring
- ...and more!



David Forrer

Volunteer Service

Stewardship

- Restoring habitats
- Building and maintaining public trails
- Cleaning up streams and waterways
- Managing invasive plants in parks
- ...and more!



Sandy Greene

Volunteer Service

Chapter Leadership

- Serving on committees and in board positions
- Assisting with chapter communication efforts
- Coordinating basic training course
- Organizing chapter events
- ...and more!



2025 Year-in-Review Peninsula Master Naturalists



The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of trained volunteers providing education, science, and stewardship to benefit natural resource conservation in their communities.

2025 Project Highlight



Photo by Meera Rao

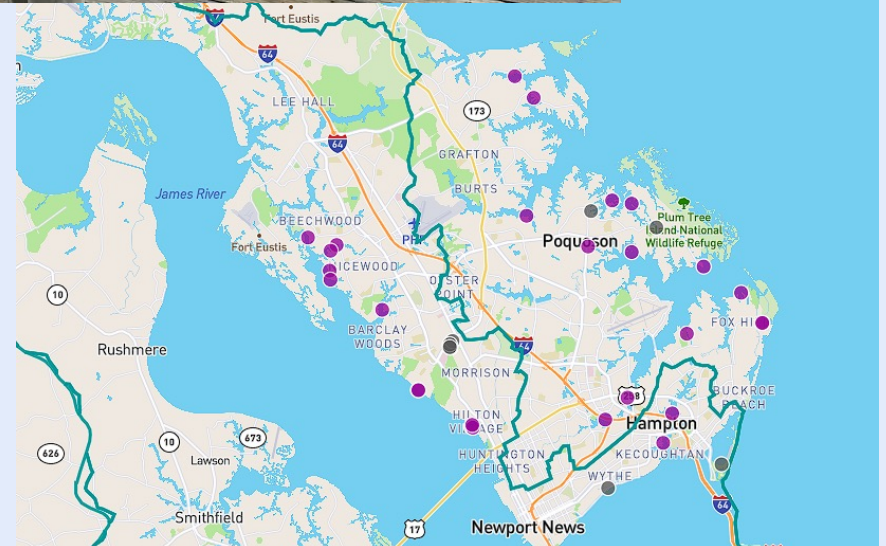
Peninsula Master Naturalist volunteers organized their annual Pawpaw festival, educating visitors about pawpaw trees and their value, including as hosts for insects like the zebra swallowtail butterfly.

Volunteer Service

Water Quality Testing

- Support James River Association, local governments and Hampton Roads Sanitation District
- Monthly testing of water quality

<https://thejamesriver.org/james-river-watch/>



Volunteer Service

Virginia Living Museum & Mariner's Museum

- Volunteer for a wide range of roles at Virginia Living Museum
 - Outreach / docent
 - gardens and plant sales
 - butterfly house
- Native plant gardens at Mariner's Museum



Volunteer Service

Bird Counts

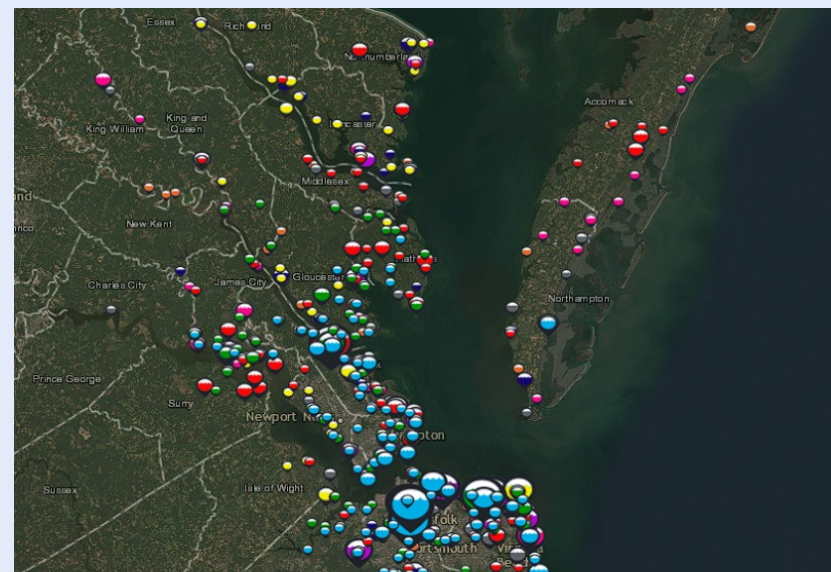
- Monitor bird populations and seasonal migration
- Organized and individual counts
 - Audubon Christmas Bird Count
 - Cornell NestWatch and FeederWatch
 - Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas
 - eBird Big Days
 - Hawk watches
- Maintain local bluebird trails



Volunteer Service

Catch the King Tide

- Support data collection through tide-mapping season
- Collect critical water intrusion data for use by city government and VIMS researchers



Catch the King By The Numbers

GPS Data Points



Created with Datawrapper

Volunteers Collecting Data



Wetland Watch

Volunteer Service

Endview Plantation and paw paw festival

- Maintain nature trail
- Helped establish and staff annual paw paw festival
 - grown from 145 people in 2020 to over 2000
- Lead grape wreath decorating during holiday season



Join Us

Applications Open **October 9
2027 Master Naturalists Volunteer Training**

**Lectures by Experts, Interesting Field Trips
Classes Feb 24 - June 9, 2027
Wednesday evenings with
field trips on some weekends**

For more information go to:

[HTTPS://VMNPENINSULA.WEEBLY.COM/BASIC-TRAINING.HTML](https://vmnpenninsula.weebly.com/basic-training.html)



Virginia Master Naturalists

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<https://theheronfiles.blogspot.com/>



Links

Historic Rivers - Williamsburg, James City County, Upper York

<https://www.historicrivers.org/> [Sept 2027]

Historic Southside - Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Surry

<https://www.vmnhistoricsouthside.org/> [Jan 2027 ?]

Middle Peninsula - Gloucester, Mathews, ...

<https://middlepeninsulamasternaturalists.com/> [?]

Peninsula - Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson

<https://vmnpeninsula.weebly.com/about-us.html> [Feb 2027]

Tidewater - Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth

<https://tidewatermn.org/> [Spring 2027]

State Office - <https://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/>