



## Volunteer Service

- Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers are required to provide 40 hours of volunteer service and eight hours of advance training to maintain their active status in the program. For every year that they are an active volunteer, they earn an annual reward pin showcasing a native Minnesota plant or animal. Volunteer service includes the following four categories:
- Stewardship - natural resource management projects
- Program Support - support of nature-based center programming
- Citizen Science – engagement in natural science research programs
- Education/Interpretation - development and delivery of natural science or conservation information

Type	Total Hours	Year 1	Year 2
Stewardship	1624.10	889.55	734.35
Education/ Interpretation	2432.52	1258.87	1173.65
Citizen Science	2503.30	1571.50	931.80
Program Support	3994.40	1778.50	2215.90
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10,554.32</b>	<b>5498.42</b>	<b>5055.70</b>

### Volunteer Service Hours

The value of volunteer service according to Independent Sector.org is \$191,877.54. The number of acres affected is 57,181, and Minnesota Master Naturalists have provided educational programming to over 40,000 citizens.



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## Capstone Projects

The capstone project provides Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers with an opportunity to demonstrate the skills learned in class. Working singly or in groups, they conduct their first volunteer project with feedback and advice from their instructors, and share their work during their last class. This project is designed to facilitate the move from learning to action. Participants dedicate considerable time and effort to these projects, with impressive results. Capstone project examples:



Photo submitted by Suzanne Hansen

- Interpretive signs that showcase specific trees in Hok-si-la park in Lake City
- Trail notes for canoeing the Crow River
- A new geology curriculum for the MN Valley
- Prairie restoration projects, sometimes using native prairie seeds harvested by Master Naturalist Volunteers
- Water quality monitoring
- Frog and toad calling surveys
- Butterfly gardens for schools, parks and neighborhoods
- An oral history of the establishment of Frontenac State Park

*“The capstone project enabled us to practice and apply what we learned on paper in a real world setting, which increased my understanding of the applicable topics and increases the chances I will remember them for a longer period of time by reinforcing topics learned on paper.”*



Photo submitted by Ann Hutchinson

*“The capstone project allowed us to use methods and ideas in an actual, physical setting.”*

## In Their Words....

*“[This course] refreshed my enthusiasm in the outdoors, and made me realize that there is still a lot to learn....”*

*“Our classes stimulated our imaginations rather than just cram us full of facts and figures.”*

*“I feel I am better prepared for volunteer work now than I did before I took this class.”*

*“This class was a dream come true!”*

*“I am newly motivated and excited to get outdoors and see more natural areas and also to get outdoors with kids more. My neighbor girl (age 6) and I are coordinating a field trip to the St. Paul brickyards!”*

*“I feel like a re-fertilized and watered plant. I’ve been growing, but now I am ready for the next surge.”*

*“The people who taught and made up the class were very inspiring. I had a renewed focus for my love of nature and learned plenty of places and resources where I could learn more about and experience first hand the natural world.”*



Photo by John Geissler



Photo by John Geissler



Photo by Tom Chervenky



Photo by Sarah Gainey



Photo submitted by Ann Hutchinson



Photo submitted by Scott Romeheldt





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# 2007 YEAR END REPORT

The University of Minnesota and the DNR are equal opportunity educators and employers.



## 2007 Year End Program Summary

As we enter our second full year, the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program continues to gain momentum and strength. We've developed new partnerships with local nature centers and municipalities, state parks, and professional associations. Most importantly, we have a strong cadre of Master Naturalist volunteers helping to make Minnesota's natural environment strong.

## Master Naturalist Participants

Just who are Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers? What do they think of the program and what do they learn during their 40-hour class? A conservation Biology PhD student and an external evaluation team are using answers to these questions to help us to modify and improve the program as it grows. Here are a few of the things we've learned.



Photo submitted by Linda Radimecky

### **Motivation for Participation:**

Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers join the program for a variety of reasons. The most commonly cited of these include learning more about Minnesota's natural ecosystems, native plants and animals;

engaging in a personally enriching experience; and improving the skills and knowledge they need to promote environmental conservation.

**Participant Demographics:** Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteers are from all over the state, representing Greater Minnesota (33%), suburbs (42%), and Minneapolis and St. Paul (23%). We've even had a few participants from Wisconsin (2%). We're working hard to attract audiences that represent the ethnic and economic diversity of our state.

**Satisfaction:** Master Naturalist classes provide an enjoyable experience for participants, 75% of whom report satisfaction with the class, which they say either met or exceeded their expectations. Their love of the outdoors is represented in their ratings of class components; outside activities and field trips get consistently high marks in all classes.



Photo by John Geissler

**Instructor Ratings:** Master Naturalist classes are taught by experienced, professional naturalists, whose program delivery earns high marks from participants. They are consistently rated as top notch, gaining the strongest ratings for their enthusiasm and approachability. Our evaluation instruments show slightly more

variability in instructor knowledge level, clarity of presentation, preparation for class and organization, with a few classes having some "good" and "fair" ratings. We're working to provide better support to instructors, using participant and instructor feedback to make the program even better.

### **Knowledge Gain:**

Pre- and post-class tests allow us to assess what Master Naturalist participants learn during their classes. Participants join the class with a wide range of knowledge, with scores on the pre-test ranging from 15% to 95% correct. After taking the class, they answer an average of five more questions on the multiple-choice test correctly (out of 20).



Photo by Tom Cherveney

**Preparation to Volunteer:** Most class participants (over 80%) feel that the skills and ideas they learned in the class prepared them to volunteer in nature-related activities.



Minnesota Master Naturalist named one of the 75 things that make our state great!

<http://www.minnesotamonthly.com/media/Minnesota-Monthly/January-2007/MN-Favorites/>