

MASTER NATURALIST VOLUNTEERS

INDICATORS: Number of master naturalist volunteers trained in program; hours of volunteer work completed

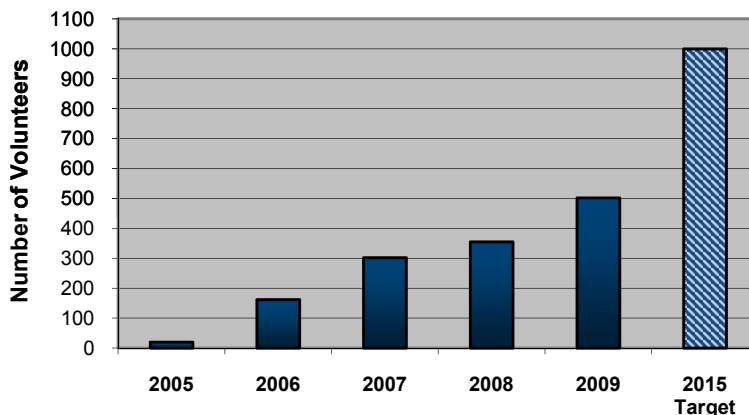
WHY IS THIS INDICATOR IMPORTANT?

With over 33,000 volunteers, DNR volunteer programs are an important part of helping us get our work done. The Master Naturalist Program is one of our newer volunteer programs that began with support from a National Science Foundation grant. It trains interested adults about natural resources, teaches how to educate others, and provides opportunities to do conservation projects. Master naturalist volunteers make up a network of skilled volunteers who engage in outreach and increase Minnesotans' understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Volunteers also make it possible to run low-cost programs and save taxpayer dollars.

WHAT IS DNR DOING?

DNR is working with the University of Minnesota Extension to develop and conduct the Master Naturalist Program. The program offers courses that correspond to Minnesota's three major biomes—the deciduous forest, prairie, and coniferous forest. To be certified as a master naturalist, volunteers must initially complete 40 hours of training and 40 hours of volunteer service on a supervised project. To maintain certification, they must complete eight hours of advanced training and 40 hours of volunteer service annually. Following training, these conservationists will assist DNR, the Extension Service, and other partners with public outreach and management of the state's natural resources.

Cumulative Number of Master Naturalist Volunteers



Master naturalist volunteers complete a 40-hour hands-on course. They study natural history, environmental interpretation, and conservation stewardship. This program is open to any adult who enjoys the outdoors.

TARGET: Train more than 1,000 master naturalist volunteers that provide 20,000 hours of service annually by 2015. To achieve this target, DNR and the University of Minnesota Extension will develop and conduct two main components: courses and curriculum for volunteer certification, and instructor training for resource professionals and professional naturalists to teach volunteer courses. The first course, Big Woods, Big Rivers, began in fall 2005. Prairies and Potholes began in 2006, and North Woods, Great Lakes started in 2009.

LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- Becoming a master naturalist volunteer at: www.minnesotamasternaturalist.org
- Other DNR natural resources education programs at: www.mndnr.gov/education