

## 2023 Annual Volunteer Report

### Description of volunteering in each DNR division

Division	Volunteer Position	Number of Volunteers	Number of Hours	Conservation Impacts
<b>Ecological and Water Resources</b>	Bird by Bird Program	12	45	Interacted with 200 students and 8 teachers, 10 young adult leaders, and 100 community members connecting them to nature and nourishing a love of birds and wildlife
	Fish Habitat Sampling	1	28	Completed fish habitat surveys on two sites on the Zumbro River
	Frog and Toad Calling Survey Program	65	320	Collected data on frog and toads heard calling in addition to reporting other environmental conditions
	Invasive Species Program	3	104	Removed invasive species to improve habitat for Dakota Skipper; conducted biological surveys
	Lake Level Monitoring	627	5,643	Provided information used for decision making on 642 unique lakes and waters monitored
	MN County Biological Survey	13	1,586	Surveyed tens of thousands of acres and over 16 miles of river for uncommon, rare and invasive plants; digitized and archived field data, specimens and documents
	MN Loon Monitoring Program	283	2,643	Provided data on changes in the adult and juvenile population of loons counted on 574 lakes; this data records the reproductive success of the state's common loons
	MN PlantWatch	19	553	65 rare plant records brought up-to-date with current surveys; 6 new rare plant records reported

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<b>Ecological and Water Resources</b>	Nongame Wildlife Program	2	250	Common tern monitoring and management for one breeding season; wood turtle surveys on one river and data compilation
	Rainfall Monitoring	1,659	19,908	Provided guidance on Minnesota's changing climate by monitoring and reporting Minnesota's rain, hail, and snowfall conditions
	Rare Plant Conservation	23	410	Monitored over 49 plots for rare plant habitat
	Scientific and Natural Areas	371	1,880	Improved acres of habitat by removal of invasive species, site observations, and biological surveys; took photos and assisted with iNaturalist BioBlitz to document plant species
	State Climatology Office	4	241	Assisted with reporting Lake Ice In/Out data creating web products
	State Fair Volunteers	14	69	Assisted in educating thousands of fairgoers on invasive species
	Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey	151	1,978	Conducted over 2,000 surveys of Common Loons on 148 lakes across the state
	Watercraft Inspection Program	2	46	Answered questions about aquatic invasive species at public access sites
	<b>Eco/Waters Resources Subtotal</b>	<b>3,255</b>	<b>35,749</b>	
<b>Enforcement</b>	BWCAW Enforcement Trip	1	50	Covered over 40 miles in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area assisting Conservation Officer with paddling a canoe, camping and checking BWCAW anglers and users
	Advanced and Bow Hunter Education Instructors	9	342	Educated and certified approximately 600 students to hunt using a bow.
	ATV Safety Instructors	1,001	6,006	Educated and certified nearly 6,000 students to operate All-Terrain Vehicles.
	Firearms Safety Instructors	3,663	73,260	Educated and certified almost 26,000 students to hunt using firearms.

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<b>Enforcement</b>	Snowmobile safety instructors	1,323	15,876	Educated and certified nearly 10,000 students to operate snowmobiles.
	Trail Ambassadors	203	4,493	Monitored 14,344 miles of trails and reported on conditions observed, as well as educated adults and/or youth on trail etiquette.
	Training Academy Actors	26	800	Provided real-life, hands-on scenarios for 16 cadets training to be Conservation Officers to prepare them for working with the public
	<b>Enforcement Subtotal</b>	<b>6,226</b>	<b>100,827</b>	
<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife - Fisheries</b>	Aquatic Management Areas	102	291	Improved 4 acres of habitat established to protect, develop, and manage lakes, rivers, streams, and adjacent wetlands and lands that are critical for fish and other aquatic life, for water quality, public fishing and other recreational uses
	Fish Hatchery	2	40	
	Harvesting Rearing Ponds	30	175	Raised and harvested about 3,000 fingerling muskellunge from rearing ponds to stock lakes
	Sampling and Tagging Fish	65	487	Completed more than 32 fish population surveys; sampled 6 lakes for catfish at 23 stations; and tagged approximately 850 walleyes and Muskellunge fingerlings prior to stocking to help gather data to study them
	Sampling Water Quality	6	34	Completed 5 water sample surveys
	State Fair (fishpond)	12	60	Interacted with over 100 adults and youth regarding fishing and Fisheries activities.
	Walleye Spawning	23	204	Collected over 224 quarts of walleye eggs resulting in hundreds of thousands of fertilized walleye eggs producing fry raised for stocking in area lakes
	<b>Fisheries Subtotal</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1,291</b>	

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<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife - Wildlife</b>	Area Wildlife Management Volunteers	41	697	Improved over 50 acres of habitat; restored 2 miles of trail; led educational tours for 150 adults and youth; maintained and cleaned 7 parking lots; budcapped 3 acres of white pine seedlings; serviced 11 wood duck boxes; built 5 kiosks, rebuilt a Prairie Chicken blind; completed 4 surveys of scent post stations; assisted with office work
	Adopt-A-WMA	179	3,119	Removed over 8 miles of fence, replaced 14 signs, removed over 1,000 acres of trees, seeded 81 acres, planted 6 acres of food plots, picked up trash, built 2 new parking areas, and mowed and cleaned 53 parking areas of litter on 43 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)
	Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) Program	45	803	Provided outdoor skills education to 350 adult women and youth engaged in outdoor activities
	Bird Banding	5	60	Banded over 500 Canada geese
	Hunter Walking Trails	20	16	Cleared miles of trail with hand tools
	State Fair (Wildlife Wing)	23	112	Educated adults and youth attending the State Fair on wildlife
	Wildlife Health – CWD	2	40	Assisted with extracting lymph nodes and collecting hunter/harvest data on approximately 150 Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples
	Wildlife Research	43	430	Collected waterfowl harvest data from 150 WMA users; completed spruce grouse surveys; assisted with bear den research and prairie chicken fieldwork
	<b>Wildlife Subtotal</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>5,277</b>	
<b>Forestry</b>	Fire Wardens	1,517	9,819	Protected thousands of acres by issuing 7,416 burning permits to residents
	Urban and Community Forestry Volunteers	320	32,957	Educated communities and assisted in planting and maintaining trees in their area
	Forestry Volunteers	6	666	Collected 75-100 bags of garbage and trash in the state forest; built 18 shelves, 55 bird boxes, 109 prairie chicken blinds, 9 signs, and 114 tree boxes; repainted 1 flagpole; refinished 6 suggestion boxes

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<b>Forestry</b>	Project Learning Tree (PLT)	8	64	Trained 99 future teachers (in universities) in environmental education
	School Forests	3	88	Constructed 120 field desks and delivered directly to students at 4 schools; trained 9 in-service teachers in environmental education
	State Fair Volunteers (Wildfire Prevention)	36	157	Smokey Bear delivered wildfire prevention messages approximately 5,000 people at the MN State Fair
	<b>Forestry Subtotal</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>43,751</b>	
<b>Operations Services</b>	State Fair Volunteers	29	193	Educated approximately 10,000 adults and youth attending the State Fair on various environmental topics; greeted and provided directions to fairgoers
	<b>OSD Subtotal</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>193</b>	
<b>Lands &amp; Minerals</b>	Aggregate mapping	1	30	Helped staff safely accomplish mapping tasks
	State Fair Volunteers	1	6	Assisted in educating adults and youth visiting the Lands and Minerals exhibit at State Fair
	<b>Lands &amp; Minerals Subtotal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>36</b>	
<b>Parks &amp; Trails</b>	Adopt-a-Trail	49	809	Picked up trash, removed graffiti, and reported trail conditions to staff
	Bison Ambassador Program	18	624	Interacted and taught over 11,000 park visitors about the bison herd and the Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd partnership.
	Bluebird Monitoring	34	830	Collected data and monitored change in abundance of bluebirds in 300+ nesting boxes noting bluebird young that survived to fledglings

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<b>Parks &amp; Trails</b>	Campground Hosts	257	37,619	Maintained campgrounds and facilities, provided customer services to thousands of campers, served as public contact and aided with safety in parks
	Candlelight Events	213	953	Placed luminaries on trails, kept fires going throughout event, and picked up luminaries at the end of event; engaged over 5,200 visitors
	Naturalist Programs	626	4,852	Over 7,600 adults and youth educated and engaged in activities on environmental topics such as light pollution, archaeology, outdoor recreation and aquatic insects; monitored bumblebee populations; conducted resource inventory of Mystery Cave
	Other State Park Projects	223	1,307	Cleaned up campgrounds, horse camp area and public water accesses; groomed cross-country ski trails; assisted with office work and at events; completed non-game fish and frog and toad surveys; assisted with oral history project; served as Wildflower Ambassadors in park
	Prairie Restoration	21	160	Restored over 40 acres of land to native prairie; collected and cleaned seed
	Resource Management	635	2,085	Improved 70+ acres of habitat; removed invasive species; collected and planted seeds; completed biological surveys; translocated rare fish species; installed and repaired fence to prevent shoreline erosion
	Shade Tree Planting	29	140	Planted shade trees in picnic areas and campgrounds over 10 acres
	Trail Maintenance	366	3,675	Repaired and improved over 140 miles of trail for recreational use; cleaned up trash
	<b>Parks &amp; Trails Subtotal</b>	<b>2,471</b>	<b>53,054</b>	
<b>2023 Volunteer Totals</b>		<b>14,471</b>	<b>240,178</b>	Volunteers do important work in the areas of community science monitoring, safety instruction, fish and wildlife surveys and habitat restoration, tree planting, and helping to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for all Minnesotans.

*Since creating a department wide DNR Program in 1988, Minnesotans have engaged in more than **12.9 million hours** of volunteer service adding **\$252.3 million** in value focused on managing our state's natural resources.*

## **Volunteer Statistics Summary**

**14,475 DNR Volunteers**

**255,270 Hours Donated**

**115 FTE's** (Full Time Equivalents based on a 40-hour workweek or 2,080 hours/year.) Volunteer hours are equivalent to an extra 4% or 115 full-time people helping the DNR manage the state's natural resources.

**\$8.3 Million Value** – using \$34.47/hour is based on the hourly earnings of all Minnesota production and non-supervisory workers on private non-farm payrolls average as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and increased by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits as listed by [Independent Sector](#).

**Conservation Impacts** – Volunteers monitored changes in abundance of fish and wildlife, conducted biological surveys, improved acres of habitat, educated and engaged citizens in outdoor activities, safety and conservation practices.

**Global Pandemic** - The World Health Organization declared a COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. People were not allowed to gather with others in public places and volunteering almost came to a complete halt for a time at the DNR. In 2021, masking, social distancing and vaccines made it possible for more volunteering to take place and on May 11, 2023, the health emergency was declared ended. The numbers on this year's annual report and table below show the results.

**Our Mission** - The mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is to **work with Minnesotans** to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

## DNR Volunteer Trends 1993-2023

