



2024 Annual Volunteer Report

Description of volunteering in each DNR division

Division	Volunteer Position	Number of Volunteers	Number of Hours	Conservation Impacts
Ecological and Water Resources	Bird by Bird Program	10	44	Interacted with 200 students connecting them to nature and nourishing a love of birds and wildlife
	Fish Habitat Survey	3	72	Completed fish habitat survey on the Yellow Medicine River
	Frog and Toad Calling Survey Program	30	150	Collected data on frog and toads heard calling in addition to reporting other environmental conditions
	Invasive Species Program	20	140	Removed buckthorn on 1 acre of calcareous fen habitat for state threatened plants
	Lake Level Monitoring	695	1,400	Provided over 18,000 lake level observations collected across the state for use in decision making
	MN County Biological Survey	10	782	Surveyed thousands of acres for uncommon, rare and invasive plants; completed 10 surveys for rusty patched bumble bee nests; digitized and archived field data making them accessible
	MN Loon Monitoring Program	345	2,574	Provided data on changes in the adult and juvenile population of loons in 515 surveys; this data records the reproductive success of the state's common loons

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Ecological and Water Resources	MN PlantWatch	66	1,993	Completed 76 rare plant surveys and 39 seed collections
	Nongame Wildlife Program	6	160	Biological surveys completed by monitoring and management of a threatened species; 15 timber rattlesnakes were relocated
	Office Assistance	6	540	Assisted with researching phenology records on rainfall; scanned thousands of documents and field notes: mapped 50 species; guided staff in understanding new fiscal processes
	Rainfall Monitoring	1,665	19,980	Provided guidance on Minnesota's changing climate by monitoring and reporting Minnesota's rain, hail, and snowfall conditions
	Rare Plant Conservation	21	399	Monitored over 30 habitat sites for 3 federally listed rare plant species
	Scientific and Natural Areas	548	1,948	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 Fair Volunteers	9	59	Assisted in educating thousands of fairgoers on invasive species
	Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey	214	2,547	Observed and monitored nesting of Common Loons on lakes across the state
	Watercraft Inspection Program	1	47	Answered questions about aquatic invasive species at public access sites with 90+ people
	Eco/Waters Resources Subtotal	3,649	32,835	
Enforcement	BWCAW Enforcement Trip	1	120	Covered over 60 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	36	1,080	Educated and certified approximately 1,420 students to hunt safely using a bow.

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Enforcement	ATV Safety Instructors	975	5,850	Educated and certified over 3,000 students to operate All-Terrain Vehicles.
	Firearms Safety Instructors	3,549	70,980	Educated and certified over 13,000 students to hunt using firearms.
	Snowmobile safety instructors	1,310	15,720	Educated and certified almost 1,600 students to operate snowmobiles.
	Trail Ambassadors	170	1,767	Monitored 14,460 miles of trails for safety hazards, signage, and washouts to keep the community safe, as well as educated adults and/or youth on trail etiquette.
	Training Academy Actors	36	844	Provided real-life, hands-on scenarios for 20 cadets training to be Conservation Officers to prepare them for working with the public
	Enforcement Subtotal	6,077	96,361	
Fish & Wildlife - FISH	Aquatic Management Areas (AMA)	290	859	Improved 7 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; removed trash from 160 acres
	Fish Hatchery	4	28	Counted and cleaned 20,000,000+ eggs; clipped fins on over 2,000 steelheads
	Harvesting Rearing Ponds	8	8	Assisted with stocking about 3,000 fingerling muskellunge from rearing ponds to lakes
	Sampling and Tagging Fish	86	502	Completed more than 42 fish population surveys on streams and lakes; tagged over 2,000 Muskellunge fingerlings prior to stocking to help gather data to study them
	State Fair (fishpond)	2	16	Interacted with over 100 adults and youth regarding fishing and Fisheries activities.
	Walleye Spawning	4	72	Collected walleye eggs resulting in hundreds of thousands of fertilized walleye eggs producing fry raised for stocking in area lakes
	Fisheries Subtotal	394	1,485	

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Fish & Wildlife - WILDLIFE	Area Wildlife Management Volunteers	123	1,002	Improved over 240 acres of habitat; removed over 3 miles of degraded fence; thinned trees on 10 acres; picked up trash; harvested 22 pounds of native seeds; added signs to 4 boat ramps; installed 24 area access signs; cleared and maintained 3 miles of trail; led 8 tours to educate visitors; maintained wildflower gardens; assisted in monitoring wetland gauges and water level management; built and installed 6 bluebird houses
	Adopt-A-WMA	208	1,953	Maintained 21 miles of Wildlife Management Area (WMA) boundary lines, picked up trash, replaced over 150 boundary signs, removed over 4 miles of barb wire fence, installed 1 culvert, mowed and maintained 97 parking areas, assisted in improving over 76 acres of habitat, removed over 100 trees, planted 1,000+ trees, created 2 miles of trails, planted 54 acres of food plots for wildlife
	Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) Program	25	920	Provided outdoor skills education to 210 women engaged in outdoor activities; 15 women became new archery hunters
	Bird Banding	14	146	Banded over 1,100 Canada geese
	Learn to Hunt	23	1,000	Mentored others hunting
	State Fair (Wildlife Wing)	29	123	Educated adults and youth attending the State Fair on wildlife
	Wildlife Research	54	177	Assisted with extracting lymph nodes and collecting deer hunter/harvest data on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples; completed spruce grouse surveys; assisted with bobcat research
	Wildlife Subtotal	476	5,321	
Forestry	Fire Wardens	1,550	9,372	Educated adults on safe outdoor burning practices and issued burning permits to residents
	Forestry Volunteers	22	471	Built 14 bat houses to enhance bat habitat within St. Croix, Gooseberry Falls and Maplewood State Parks; created 40

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				handmade appreciation gifts for participating Township Fire Wardens; fixed 12 signs along various parks and trails; introduced 4 students to natural resource education/career opportunities; created 2 kiosks for state parks to educate visiting adults and youth
Forestry	MN Forest Resources Council	24	2,424	Coordinated outreach education and recommended sustainable forest resource management to hundreds of Minnesotans statewide
	School Forests	2	100	Constructed field desks and delivered directly to students at 4 schools with a combined student population of 1,150
	State Fair Volunteers (Wildfire Prevention)	47	208	Smokey Bear delivered wildfire prevention messages and volunteers interacted with approximately 25,000+ people at the MN State Fair
	Tree Care Advocates and Tree Board Advisory	175	2,450	Provide tree care advice and hands on tree care management; educate the public on tree care
	Forestry Subtotal	1,820	15,025	
Operations Services	State Fair Volunteers	26	120	Greeted and approximately 10,000 adults and youth attending the State Fair on various environmental topics; greeted and provided directions to fairgoers
	Well-being Support	1	50	Tai Chi instruction for employees
	OSD Subtotal	27	170	
Parks & Trails	Adopt-a-Trail	58	612	Picked up trash, removed graffiti, and reported trail conditions to staff on 43 miles of trail
	Bluebird Monitoring	30	775	Collected data and monitored change in abundance of bluebirds in 230+ nesting boxes noting bluebird young that survived to fledglings

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Parks & Trails	Campground Hosts	171	29,044	Maintained campgrounds and facilities, provided customer services to over 500,000 campers, served as public contact and aided with safety in parks
	Candlelight Events	160	526	Placed luminaries on trails, kept fires going throughout event, and picked up luminaries at the end of event; engaged over 4,300 visitors
	Citizen Science	560	507	Conducted monitoring numbers of bats and birds to contribute to knowledge of species abundance
	Naturalist Programs	396	2,309	Over 14,500 adults and youth educated and engaged in activities on environmental topics such as light pollution, proper trail etiquette interacting with horses, archery, and how to make bird feeders
	Other State Park Projects	369	4,627	Cleaned up campgrounds, horse camp area and public water accesses; groomed 8 miles of cross-country ski trails; assisted with office work and at events; completed non-game fish and frog and toad surveys; built wood duck houses; assisted with maple syrup production
	Prairie Restoration	40	441	Restored over 60 acres of land to native prairie; collected and cleaned seed; planted over 2,500 prairie plants
	Resource Management	208	2,269	Improved 210+ acres of habitat and 10+ miles of trail; surveyed and mapped Mystery Cave; sampled non-game fish; collected and planted seeds; completed biological surveys; removed invasive species and planted native plant plugs
	Trail Maintenance	74	262	Repaired and improved over 30 miles of trail for recreational use; cleaned up trash; built 4 benches; painted over graffiti on tunnels and bridges
	Parks & Trails Subtotal	2,066	41,372	

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2024 Volunteer Totals		14,509	192,569	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 **13.1 million hours** of volunteer service adding **\$259.3 million** in value focused on managing our state's natural resources.

Volunteer Statistics Summary

14,509 DNR Volunteers

192,569 Hours Donated

93 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.

\$7.0 Million Value – using \$36.31/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 1993-2024

