

2025 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	11	46	Educated 200 students about Minnesota birds and bird conservation
	Frog and Toad Calling Survey Program	50	250	Completed 180 surveys on frog and toads heard calling, in addition to reporting other environmental conditions
	Lake Level Monitoring	700	2,000	Collected over 17,000 lake level observations across the state for use in decision making
	MN County Biological Survey	8	1,821	Surveyed thousands of acres for uncommon, rare and invasive plants; completed numerous amphibian and reptile surveys in SE MN tagging over 80 snakes; digitized and archived field data making it accessible
	MN Loon Monitoring Program	451	2,352	Provided data on changes in the adult and juvenile population of loons on 543 lakes: this data records the reproductive success of the state's common loons

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Ecological and Water Resources	MN PlantWatch	91	2,885	Completed 98 rare plant surveys
	Nongame Wildlife Program	3	344	Completed 38 biological surveys completed by monitoring and management of a threatened species
	Office Assistance	4	197	Scanned thousands of documents and field notes; guided staff in understanding new fiscal processes and data analysis
	Project WET	35	1400	Provided watershed education to approximately 1750 youth and adults
	Rainfall Monitoring	1,042	12,504	Provided guidance on Minnesota's changing climate by monitoring and reporting Minnesota's rain, hail, and snowfall conditions
	Rare Plant Conservation	29	625	Monitored habitat sites for federally listed rare plant species
	Scientific and Natural Areas	760	2,668	Improved acres of habitat by removal of invasive species, site observations, and biological surveys; assisted with invasive species tracking in EDDMapS
	State Fair Volunteers	10	54	Assisted in educating thousands of fairgoers on invasive species
	Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey	119	1,587	Observed and monitored nesting of Common Loons on over 120 lakes
	Watercraft Inspection Program	4	162	Answered questions about aquatic invasive species at public access sites with 90+ people
	Eco/Waters Resources Subtotal	3,317	28,895	

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Enforcement	Advanced and Bow Hunter Education Instructors	465	17,670	Educated and certified approximately 651 students to hunt safely using a bow
	ATV Safety Instructors	914	5,484	Educated and certified 115 classes of students to safely operate All-Terrain Vehicles
	Firearms Safety Instructors	3,598	71,960	Educated and certified 694 classes of students to safely hunt using firearms
	Snowmobile safety instructors	1,241	14,892	Educated and certified 189 classes of students to safely operate snowmobiles
	Trail Ambassadors	186	5,205	Monitored thousands of 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	143	1,088	Provided real-life, hands-on scenarios for cadets training to be Conservation Officers to prepare them for working with the public
	Enforcement Subtotal	6,547	116,299	
Fish & Wildlife	Adopt-a-WMA	190	1,407	Maintained miles of Wildlife Management Area (WMA) boundary lines, picked up trash, replaced boundary signs, removed over 12 miles of barbed wire fence, mowed and maintained 24 parking areas, assisted in improving over 655 acres of habitat, and planted 24 acres of food plots for wildlife
	Aquatic Management Areas (AMA)	159	488	Improved 17 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 125 acres
	Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) Program	25	1,296	Provided outdoor skills education to 220 women engaged in outdoor activities; mentored new archery hunters
	Bird Banding	39	1,514	Banded over 1,400 Canada geese and 138 wood ducks
	Fish Harvesting and Stocking	9	206	Assisted with stocking trout and nearly 4,000 fingerling muskellunge from rearing ponds to lakes

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Fish & Wildlife	Fish and Wildlife Outreach Events	5	26	Assisted in new hunter education; engaged people in furbearer activity at conservation day
	Sampling and Tagging Fish	73	476	Completed fish population surveys on streams and lakes; tagged 1,631 Muskellunge prior to stocking to help gather data to study them
	State Fair (Wildlife Wing)	34	171	Educated adults and youth attending the State Fair on wildlife
	Walleye Spawning	18	228	Collected walleye eggs resulting in hundreds of thousands of fertilized walleye eggs producing fry raised for stocking in area lakes
	Wildlife Management Area Projects	179	1,388	Improved over 100 acres of habitat; removed barbed wire fence; removed over 10 acres of invasive species; planted 6 acres of food plots; installed 8 area access signs; cleared and maintained trails; picked up trash; assisted in monitoring wetland gauges and water level management; built and installed 6 nesting boxes; assisted with waterfowl hunter bag checks; planting trees and pollinator plants on 40 acres
	Wildlife Research	30	412	Collected data in 50 bear den visits; completed spruce grouse surveys
	Fish & Wildlife Subtotal	761	7,612	
Forestry	Forestry Volunteers	28	367	Built 32 toolboxes for fire wardens, 40 birdhouses and suet feeders, 3 raised flower beds and 5 picnic tables for parks; fixed 21 signs for public navigation in forests, trails and parks; created 50 rods and reels for guest use at Itasca State Park; fixed 3 pickup boxes for local area timber sales
	School Forests	13	402	Constructed 120 field desks and delivered directly to students at 4 schools; improved trails by constructing 9 sections of boardwalks within school forest land; constructed a permanent outhouse for students and staff in school forest

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Forestry	State Fair Volunteers (Wildfire Prevention)	40	211	Smokey Bear delivered wildfire prevention messages and volunteers interacted with approximately 25,000+ people at the MN State Fair
	Job Shadowing	3	24	Improved 100 acres by assisting staff with setup at 3 timber sales
	Tree Care Advocates	343	5,704	Provided tree care advice by email and phone calls with MN residents; conducted presentations to 12 communities; provided tree care outreach; interacted with 6,225 individuals at the State Fair
	Forestry Subtotal	427	6,708	
Lands and Minerals	GIS Assistance	1	18	Assisted with georeferencing 156 maps in a Geographic Information System (GIS) and digitizing 336 drill hole data
	Minerals Education Workshop	1	45	Helped engage 80 teachers in activities at a Minnesota Minerals Education Workshop in St. Paul
	LAM Subtotal	2	63	
Operations Services	State Fair, Steele County Fair, and FarmFest Volunteers	41	222	Shared knowledge and interacted with thousands of attendees on various environmental topics; greeted and provided directions to fairgoers
	Well-being Support	1	188	Conducted Tai Chi classes for well-being of employees
	OSD Subtotal	42	410	
Parks & Trails	Adopt-a-Trail	48	1,057	Picked up trash, removed graffiti, and reported trail conditions to staff on 44 miles of trail
	Bison Ambassadors	18	694	Educated over 13,000 visitors to Minneopa State Park about the bison herd residing there
	Bluebird Monitoring	34	908	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	223	56,587	Maintained campgrounds and facilities, provided customer services to over 500,000 campers, served as public contact and aided with safety in parks
	Candlelight Events	280	1,129	Placed luminaries on trails, kept fires going throughout event, and picked up luminaries at the end of event; engaged over 10,000 visitors
	Citizen Science	568	653	Conducted monitoring numbers of bats and birds to contribute to knowledge of species abundance
	Naturalist Programs	254	3,989	Over 10,000 adults and youth educated and engaged in activities on recreation and environmental topics such as light pollution, maple syruping, archery, and how to make bird houses
	Other State Park Projects	482	3,471	Cleaned campgrounds, horse camp area and public water accesses; groomed cross-country ski trails; assisted with office work and at events; built bluebird houses and installed in parks; greeted visitors; took photos; played in 14 concerts at Itasca State Park; improved OHV trails
	Prairie Restoration	68	574	Restored over 10 acres of land to native prairie; collected and cleaned seed; planted prairie plants
	Resource Management	255	1,846	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
	State Fair	17	92	Discussed Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) safety with over 1,000 attendees
	Trail Maintenance	134	2,146	Repaired and improved over 70 miles of trail for recreational use; cleaned up trash; helped clear fallen trees from trails
	Parks & Trails Subtotal	2,381	73,146	

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2025 Volunteer Totals		13,477	233,133	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.

Volunteer Statistics Summary

13,477 DNR Volunteers

233,133 Hours Donated

*Since creating a department wide DNR Program in 1988, Minnesotans have engaged in more than **13.3 million hours** of volunteer service adding **\$268.2 million** in value focused on managing our state's natural resources.*

112 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 112 full-time people helping the DNR manage the state's natural resources.

\$8.9 Million Value – using \$38.16/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.

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.