



2021 Annual Volunteer Report

Volunteer Statistics Summary

15,837 DNR Volunteers (down ~7,000 volunteers from average)
236,401 Hours Donated (down ~44,000 hours from average)

114 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 126 full-time people helping the DNR manage the state's natural resources.

\$7.3 Million Value – using \$30.98/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. By March 17, all fifty states in the US had reported confirmed cases. Illness and death came to many infected. Federal and state actions were taken to try to slow the spread. In 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. The numbers on this year's annual report show the results. See DNR Volunteer Trends 1993 – 2021 at the end of this report to see how volunteering has changed over time.

| Division | Volunteer Position | Number of Volunteers | Number of Hours | Conservation Impacts |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Ecological and Water Resources | Lake Level Monitoring | 620 | 5,580 | 655 unique lakes and waters monitored - information used for decision making |
| | MN County Biological Survey | 9 | 1,131 | 3,667 NPC polygons delineated covering approx. 74,000 acres; data collected on rare species; bat research |
| | MN Loon Monitoring Program | 271 | 2,093 | Biological surveys completed – loons counted on 608 lakes |
| | Nongame Wildlife Program | 41 | 187 | Biological surveys completed including moving eight rattlesnakes out of harm's way; data acquisition |
| | Rainfall Monitoring | 1,496 | 17,952 | Monitored Minnesota's climate |
| | Rare Plant Conservation | 27 | 344 | Dwarf Trout Lily, Prairie Bush Clover and Western Prairie Fringed Orchids monitored |
| | Scientific and Natural Areas | 385 | 1,711 | Acres of habitat improved by removal of invasive species, site observations, and biological surveys |
| | State Climatology Office | 1 | 8 | Assisted with reporting Lake Ice In/Out data |
| | Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey | 170 | 1,485 | Monitored loons on 190 lakes in Minnesota |
| | Watercraft Inspection Program | 8 | 53 | Adults and/or youth educated on aquatic invasive species |
| | Eco/Waters Resources Subtotal | 3,028 | 30,544 | |
| Enforcement | All Safety Instructors – firearms, snowmobile, ATV, wildlife, bow hunter | 6,201 | 113,800 | 49,216 adults and/or youth educated |
| | Trail Ambassadors | 182 | 4,833 | 15,896 miles of trail conditions observed and reported. Adults and/or youth educated on trail etiquette. |
| | Enforcement Subtotal | 6,383 | 118,633 | |

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| Fish & Wildlife - Fisheries | Aquatic Management Areas | 19 | 88 | 3 acres of habitat improved and 100+ adults and/or youth educated |
| | Harvesting Rearing Ponds | 34 | 250 | Harvesting Muskellunge from rearing ponds to stocking lakes |
| | Sampling and Tagging Fish | 33 | 122 | Approximately 3200 Muskellunge fingerlings tagged with PIT tags prior to stocking; gill netting in large lake monitoring |
| | Stream Restoration and River Work | 2 | 65 | Completed fish surveys |
| | Fisheries Subtotal | 88 | 525 | |
| Fish & Wildlife - Wildlife | Area Wildlife Management Volunteers | 81 | 649 | Banded Canada geese; trails maintained; parking areas kept clean of debris; 217 acres of habitat improved, protected or restored; downed logs removed from trails; prairie bare root plug planting and litter cleanup |
| | Adopt-A-WMA | 26 | 374 | 28 miles of trail improved and 30 facilities checked, cleaned and repaired (parking areas, trails) |
| | Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) Program | 8 | 154 | Adults and youth engaged in outdoor activities |
| | State Fair (Wildlife Wing) | 0 | 0 | Wildlife Wing was closed at State Fair |
| | Wildlife Research | 64 | 984 | Bear dens visited and 14 bears collared; assembled kits and sampled over 300 deer for CWD testing; collected data on spruce grouse; completed 14 prairie chicken surveys; trapped wolves for research; bluebird and kestrel nesting box monitoring and maintenance |
| | Wildlife Subtotal | 179 | 2,161 | |
| Forestry | Fire Wardens | 1,805 | 18,500 | Thousands of acres protected by issuing burning permits to citizens |
| | Urban and Community Forestry Volunteers | 946 | 23,673 | Trees planted and maintained; education and outreach |
| | Forestry Volunteers | 6 | 36 | 1 acre of habitat improved with invasive species control |
| | PlayCleanGo Volunteers | 0 | 0 | All events were canceled |
| | Project Learning Tree (PLT) | 24 | 290 | Youth were educated; tree cookies created for classroom use |

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| Forestry | School Forests | 220 | 4,000 | Over 5800 adults and 35,000 youth engaged in forestry activities; trails maintained |
| | State Fair Volunteers (Smokey Bear) | 5 | 41 | Reduced number of Smokeys at fair; wildfire prevention messages |
| | Forestry Subtotal | 3,006 | 46,540 | |
| Operations Services | Landscape Management | 293 | 1,048 | 5 acres of habitat improved on the Willowbrook Campus on Warner Rd, St Paul and Pig's Eye, St Paul |
| | State Fair Volunteers (stages and greeters) | 256 | 914 | Environmental education and music on DNR stages and volunteer greeters on grounds |
| | OSD Subtotal | 550 | 1,975 | |
| Lands & Minerals | LAM Volunteers | 1 | 6 | Assisted at State Fair exhibit |
| | Lands & Minerals Subtotal | 1 | 6 | |
| Parks & Trails | Bluebird Monitoring | 13 | 503 | Collected data and monitored change in abundance of bluebirds in nesting boxes; more than 200 bluebird young survived to fledglings |
| | Campground Hosts | 161 | 22,930 | Maintained campgrounds and facilities, provided customer services, served as public contact and aided with safety in parks |
| | Naturalist Programs | 105 | 481 | Adults and youth engaged in activities and educated on nature topics; Bison Ambassadors; Archaeology Day |
| | Other State Park Projects | 912 | 2,557 | Park clean-ups; nature play area installed; transcribed oral histories; nature photography; wildlife surveys; bird counts; Governor's Fishing Opener; Green Touch Day; OHV trails |
| | Prairie Restoration | 381 | 570 | Acres of land restored to native prairie; seed collected and cleaned |
| | Resource Management | 923 | 6,454 | Acres of habitat improved; seed bank maintained for native prairie plants; bee survey; bat house inventory; loon survey; trash cleanup; biological surveys completed; long-term monitoring of plants |

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| Parks & Trails | Shade Tree Planting | 30 | 110 | Shade trees planted in parking lots and picnic areas |
| | Trail Maintenance | 77 | 2,412 | Groomed cross-country ski trails; miles of trail improved, restored, built or cleaned |
| | Parks & Trails Subtotal | 2,602 | 36,017 | |
| 2021 Volunteer Totals | | 15,837 | 236,401 | Volunteer numbers continue to maintain at the same level during the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. |

*Since creating a department wide DNR Program in 1988, Minnesotans have engaged in more than **12.5 million hours** of volunteer service adding **\$238 million** in value focused on managing our state's natural resources.*

DNR Volunteer Trends 1993 - 2021

