

ILLINOIS

Master Naturalist

2018 Illinois

Master Naturalist Annual Report

Master Naturalists are trained volunteers who provide support in the conservation, management, and interpretation of the area's natural resources.

In 2018, 52 people participated in the approximately 60 hours of training throughout Illinois. Of the 102 counties in Illinois 81 have MN programs.



Master Naturalists of Dupage, Kane, and Kendall Counties



Unit 17 Master Naturalist, Clarence Josefsen, transplanting natives into the newly planted native garden at Rock Springs Nature Center.

Volunteer Hour Categories	Hours
Administrative and Leadership	3,705
Citizen Scientist Efforts	2,886
Educational Efforts	13,084
Natural Resource Stewardship	51,492
Other Extension Support	1,518



IDNR's District Forester, Stephen Felt, shows a Master Naturalist trainee from Unit 1 how to measure a tree's dbh (diameter at breast height).

Volunteer Statistics



892
Volunteers



50,464
Contacts



72,686
Service Hours



14,372
Continued Education
Hours



\$1.7 Million
Value to
Communities



2018 Project Highlights



Cache River outing with Southern Illinois Master Naturalists

Happenings across the state

Southern Illinois Master Naturalist volunteers in Units 24, 26, & 27

Program partners include the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuges, and area State Parks as well as local groups like Keep Carbondale Beautiful, the local chapters of the Sierra and Audubon clubs, and the Illinois Native Plant Society.

Southern Illinois Master Naturalist volunteers in Units 24, 26, & 27 assisted program partners with outreach through activities such as interpretive hikes, and school programs, frog and toad surveys. Stewardship activities performed by these volunteers includes trail inspection and maintenance, and invasive species control and removal. Examples of ongoing projects in these three Extension Units include three pollinator gardens located at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, the Harrison Bruce Historical Village at John A. Logan Community College, and the Rend Lake Visitor Center; as well as, the presentation of environmental education programs at Dixon Springs Extension Center and DuQuoin State Fairgrounds.

Cook County Master Naturalists



Volunteer Projects

Master Naturalists in **Winnebago County** participate in many different volunteer activities. One service they provide is education and outreach to youth and adults through school programs, programs with partnering agencies, library programs and more. One of the most fun programs that Master Naturalists have helped with for the past two years is International Mud Day at Nicholas Conservatory where they teach kids and their parents about worms and vermicomposting. One of our Master Naturalists put together a bin of worm resources, such as books, diagrams, a hand-sewn, stuffed worm, and more, that they use at their booth. She also borrows a vermicomposting bin and purchases some bait worms for the kids to touch. The kids and the Master Naturalist volunteers look forward to this event each summer and always have a blast.



Winnebago Master Naturalist

One of the projects Master Naturalists from **Unit 5** work on are the Fermilab Natural Areas Restoration. They help with seed harvesting, invasive species removal and more. Volunteers also monitor snakes, frogs and Plants of Concern. They also participated in a project that enhanced the genetic diversity of native orchids via hand pollination.



Photo of Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary (taken by the Illinois Audubon Society)

In December of 2016, the Illinois Audubon Society purchased 395 acres from Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. This parcel, located within two miles of the Amboy Marsh Nature Preserve, provides opportunity to expand critical habitat that was once part of a 100,000-plus acre complex of wetlands in Lee County. The **Unit 8** Master Naturalist volunteers assist here at the Gremel Wildlife Sanctuary with bird counts and restoration efforts, including invasive species removal. They also assist in producing interpretive materials about the sanctuary.



Unit 5 Master Naturalists



East Central Illinois Master Naturalist

East Central Illinois Master Naturalist help out at Bottenfield Elementary Natural Area !

Bottenfield Elementary School (Champaign, IL) parents have embarked on an ambitious project to create natural areas among the elementary school playgrounds since the summer of 2015. The Kindergarten through 2nd Grade area will consist of seasonal "pollinator pockets" representing spring, summer, and fall. The design will demonstrate native plants across the growing season, with a visual progression that will move across the play area from West to East. This also aligns with planned ECIMN led 4H programming in the fall, which is focused on habitat development. The Grades 3-5 area is a nature and fitness circuit. This natural area will be developed with less structure, a variety of native prairie plants, and builds on the rain garden already present. It will lie within the confines of the walking path. Currently, ECIMN stewards of other school prairies are advising this project on plant selection.



Unit 23 Master Naturalist volunteers

Unit 23 has had the opportunity to work on some successful Unit projects despite the fact that we cover almost 75 miles between our volunteers. The Program Coordinators have planned events to accommodate as many projects as possible for our volunteers. Some of the key projects that we would like to highlight for our volunteers include:

Carlyle Lake Trail project that involves working to remove invasive species from the trail. The outstanding volunteers have removed 500 feet of mostly Honeysuckle back from the trail. This will make the trail safer and help to prevent tick exposure to nature trail hikers. These volunteers along with others in the unit are also participating in an outreach to the community to help design an Outdoor Classroom Environment. This will be an outreach program to have availability for youth and adults to conduct sessions in a natural setting and invite new learning opportunities for many community members and organizations. Our volunteers are involved with the early design and planning stages of the project.



Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell – Unit 11

In 2013, The Sun Foundation invited University of Illinois Extension Unit 11 Master Naturalist volunteers to be presenters at their annual Clean Water Celebration. Six years later Master Naturalists have taught over 12,000 students from Central Illinois how to help keep our water clean via a demonstration about watersheds. Over the time frame, 90 Master Naturalists have taught the watershed lesson. Teams of two to three presenters work together in five separate watershed stations talking to students about where water comes from, what we use it for, where it goes, and what we all can do to ensure clean water for the future. Each presentation is twenty minutes long and repeated nine to twelve times by each team. To demonstrate, the watershed volunteers use an interactive educational model called EnviroScape.



Each year Master Naturalists receive training to become familiar with the EnviroScape model and work through logistics of teaching the 2,500 students they will see throughout the day-long event. This year, “EnviroScape veterans” Lee Maki of Washington, Cathie J. Maguire of Edelstein, and Doug McCarty of Peoria took on additional leadership roles as they became the trainers of the new volunteers.

UNIT 8 MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

Unit 8 is home to a dedicated group of Master Naturalist Volunteers from Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, and Putnam counties. Our location in north central Illinois offers nearby access to a number of natural areas, and numerous groups in need of year-long volunteer assistance. Here is a synopsis, though not exhaustive, of some of the great things our volunteers take part in. Some program topics delivered by our volunteers in 2018 at local libraries, schools, and various community events included the following: Pollinators, Native Plants, Beekeeping, Tree Identification, Vermicomposting, Building Bird Houses, Geology of Illinois - A Brief History, The Natural History of Starved Rock, Flora of the Illinois Valley, Birding In Illinois, Hummingbirds, Butterflies of the Illinois Valley, Citizen Science Opportunities, and Nature Photography.



Master Naturalist volunteer Sandy Miller assists youth with building bird houses at the Marshall-Putnam County Fair Family Fun Night.



Unit 7 serves Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark Counties

Our four-county Unit has 31 active Master Naturalists. They support the conservation, management, and interpretation of our region's natural resources under the educational supervision of Martha Smith and program supervision of Tracy Jo Mulliken-Burke.

Here are some of our 2018 community projects and partners:
Black Hawk State Historic Site – Helped create the River Trail Guide and serve as docents to numerous youth on field trips.
Bald Eagle Days—Promoted pollinators and educated youth and adults alike. Master Naturalists led hands-on activities for youth. Over the three day event the booth had thousands of youth and adult visitors.

ECO camp – Partnership with numerous agencies including soil and water and local Regional Office of Education to provide an all-day field trip for 5th graders for spring and fall.

Giant Goose Conservation Club, Atkinson – Created identification name plaques to identify trees along the paths.

Pollinator/native garden – Maintained an organic native garden at the U of I Extension office in Milan, IL. They planted the garden using native plants known to attract various pollinators from spring to fall.

Fermilab Natural Areas Restoration - seed harvesting, invasive species removal and more. Volunteers also monitor snakes, frogs and Plants of Concern. They also participated in a project that enhanced the genetic diversity of native orchids via hand pollination. *Naperville Park District* – Idea garden and native plant display. Currently creating a woodland savannah area.

Plants of Concern – Monitoring endangered and protected species.

Dayton Bluffs Preserve – MNs are leading a major restoration of this beautiful property.

Unit 7 Master Naturalists at Black Hawk State Historic Site.



Chicago, Illinois, USA Common Sparrows

Mark Vaughan

Photos by Mark Vaughan unless indicated. Produced by Mark Vaughan with the help of Taryann Washburn
 © Mark Vaughan (markvaughan2011@gmail.com)
 Birds captured in red are common in Chicago

[fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org]

Rapid Color Guide #881 version 2 ©8/2017



1 American Tree Sparrow
Spizella arborea
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Woody edges of woods, weedy fields, scattered rural fields.
 Seasonal: Late October to mid-April
 Field Marks: Dark crown, grey on breast, red-colored bill and mostly russet crown

2 Chipping Sparrow
Spizella passerina
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Low, like areas with some or deciduous. Red crown, sometimes, rust on sides and edges of wings.
 Seasonal: Mid-April to late-September
 Field Marks: Dark eye line, entire crown and nape reddish-brown, brown

3 Clay-colored Sparrow
Spizella pallida
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Like forest parks, in deciduous, brush, in and near fields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late May and mid-September to mid-October
 Field Marks: Strong dark "moustache", grey nose and bright buffy breast

4 Field Sparrow
Spizella pusilla
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Barren, open, dry, brushy, wood and some scrubby or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Early April to late-September
 Field Marks: White eye-ring, reddish bill, crown & grey crown and red and grey crown



5 Fox Sparrow
Passerella iliaca
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Woodland, deciduous, weedy fields, & some brushy or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Late March to mid-April and early October to mid-November
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

6 Grasshopper Sparrow
Ammodramus sycanorum
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Yellow or green fields, like cornfields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late-September
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

7 Marsh Sparrow
Zonotrichia querula
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Thickets, hedgerows, and wooded edges, like forest parks.
 Seasonal: Late March to mid-April and early October to mid-November
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

8 Henslow's Sparrow
Ammodramus henslowii
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Open fields and meadows with some scrubby or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late-September
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill



9 House Sparrow (male)
Passer domesticus
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Open fields, like cornfields, and some brushy or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late-September
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

10 House Sparrow (female)
Passer domesticus
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Open fields, like cornfields, and some brushy or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late-September
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

11 Lark Sparrow
Chondestes grammacus
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Thickets, hedgerows, and wooded edges, like forest parks.
 Seasonal: Late March to mid-April and early October to mid-November
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

12 Leconte's Sparrow
Ammodramus lecontei
 (EMERSONIAN)
 Preferred Habitat: Open fields and meadows with some scrubby or grassy fields.
 Seasonal: Late April to late-September
 Field Marks: Large bill, buffy breast & brown crown, red eye line, red and grey head and bright red crown & bill

1

Partnerships are growing with Master Naturalists!

Relationships with partner organizations are growing as the MNs are becoming fully engaged in their support of them and their willingness to offer extensions to existing programs.

One example of this is in the growing number of MNs becoming published as scientific nature guide authors. By collaborating with the Field Museum, MN volunteers have begun interpreting the nature in their communities by creating rapid color guides. One such guide can be found here: http://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/rapid-color-guides-pdfs/881_usa_common_sparrows_v2.pdf

As seen in the above link, these guides are vetted by Museum staff, uploaded to the Field Museum website, and made available for download around the world. These types of guides are very useful for those who may be interested in learning about nature in their communities and are utilized by scientists, forest preserves, museums and educators to offer scientific facts about local nature to students, residents, and practitioners.