



MEMO

To: Parks and Recreation Buildings and Grounds Committee
From: Jon Turkel, Assistant Director *jt*
Subject: Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting
Date: May 27, 2020

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is scheduled to meet at 10am on Tuesday June 2, 2020 in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 107 N. Kent St, Winchester, VA. Agenda includes:

Items Requiring Action:

1. Staff is seeking a recommendation of language for a policy regarding the maintenance of park open space adjoining RP (Residential Performance) zoned properties.
To address the unique boundary between park open space and RP property neighbors, staff is presenting the following policy language for consideration:

“In areas where park open space adjoins RP properties, a maintenance buffer of approximately 12’ will be established. Park staff will manage this maintenance buffer to a similar standard as trails in open space areas; mowed every two weeks during the growing season weather dependent.”

2. Interpretive Flora Program for Rose Hill Park
Staff is seeking a recommendation on a proposal to provide an interpretative flora program at Rose Hill Park (Attachment 1). The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley has been contacted and feels this is a “very promising” project they look forward to working with the department on if approved.
3. Children’s Playgarden Project Proposal
Staff is seeking a recommendation on a proposal to install a children’s playgarden at Rose Hill Park (Attachment 2). Members of the Virginia Master Naturalists have prepared a proposal for consideration. The proposal includes anticipated roles and responsibilities of the department.

Informational Items:

1. Staff updates
2. Other Business

Interpretative Flora Program for RHP

Purpose:

To provide all visitors to RHP with signage that identifies both native and invasive alien species. It is intended to be an aid to all who ask, 'What is that?'

Additionally, this can be replicated at other parks.

Proposed approach:

General -

Plants are identified and their locations marked along the trail(s) using a color-coded numbering system (Color A for invasive species, Color B for native plants, and possibly those which are skin irritants).

A guide is provided that identifies what plant each number represents. Having the markers repeated in multiple parts of the trail are expected to reinforce identification. The handouts will also have links to various sites where people can get additional information such as Blandy Farm, DCR, DGIF, etc.

Audience(s):

All Ages

Equipment required:

A sign/start point would be required that would require a trail map, large scale map (same as the handout/trifold), handout dispenser

Number signs to place at the various points (something relatively small but sturdy)

Children's Playgarden Project Proposal

Presented by Christie Green and Paul Guay
Members of the Virginia Master Naturalists, Shenandoah Chapter

Introduction

This is a proposal for the creation of a native plant garden with children's recreational activities incorporated into the design – a children's “playgarden” – at Rose Hill Park.

The project would be a collaborative effort between the volunteers of the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists and the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department. Any input, advice, guidance, and assistance from Park leadership and staff would be most welcomed and appreciated.

Vision & Mission

We envision inspiring local families with the beauty and educating them about benefits of native plantlife.



site to the right of the playground.

Illustration 1: View is looking toward Jones Road. Proposed garden.

Building

on the Department's mission of a natural playscape, our mission is to design and install a garden igniting children's imaginations via a complete wildlife habitat featuring plants all native to Frederick County as well as age-appropriate engagement.

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: encourage children to become interested in and engage with the natural world around them

Objectives:

- enchant children with a garden of native flowers, shrubs, and trees rich in colors, textures, shapes, sizes, and fragrances for a multisensory experience with a walking path down the center
- incorporate engagement opportunities encouraging learning, inspiring creativity, and building

observation skills

- captivate children's creative sense of fun with two resting alcoves to spend time observing, exploring, and participating in the natural goings-on of the garden

Goal 2: provide a complete wildlife habitat for pollinators and birds (and, yes, probably deer)

Objectives:

- use trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses native to Frederick County and its surrounding area
- follow the National Wildlife Federation's checklist for a wildlife garden with adequate food sources, available water, shelter, safe places to raise young, and using sustainable practices

Goal 3: promote native plants as gorgeous, potential additions to home landscaping, thus increasing food sources for pollinators beyond one garden

Objectives:

- showcase native plants and flowers in such a way that parents can visualize using them in their own gardens
- include list of specimens and nurseries where they can be purchased on main kiosk

The Playgarden

The space next to the existing playground, using the playground edge as one border, is 47' x 60' across the back x 33'.

The proposed size of the playgarden is approximately 45' (parallel to the playground edge) x 12' x 40' x 18'. This is an estimate, however, as the shape of the garden is more rounded and organic.

This size was chosen as it allows for necessary variety of plants for a true wildlife habitat and ample space for a couple of different ways to actively engage young visitors. At the same time, it leaves plenty of open space for children to run.

Helping with plant selection and design are master naturalists who are experts in Virginia native plants and have built pollinator gardens at Sky Meadows State Park and at the Park and Ride on Route 50 in Waterloo, Virginia. This will ensure all plants selected are truly native and safe for both humans and dogs.

For more details, including illustrated price list, please see the following attachments to this proposal:

Attachment A: Playgarden diagram (jpeg file)

Attachment B: Images of some of the proposed plants (Powerpoint file)

Attachment C: Full list of proposed native specimens and estimated budget. Please note in other pollinator garden projects, nurseries offered discounted prices. Other potential cost-saving measures include culling specimens from fellow naturalists' own gardens or even potentially the pollinator garden at Glen Burnie Gardens.

In addition to the plantlife, there are many options for incorporating children's engagement activities.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Free Little Library at child-height so they can access books and/or art supplies without adult help
- Child-sized bench to invite children to stop and absorb what's around them
- Age-appropriate educational signage at different points of interest
- A water feature, something as simple as a shallow puddle surrounded by rocks and toad houses
- A main kiosk with take-away sheets of riddles, puzzles, scavenger hunts, or other nature-based activities to solve by exploring the garden
- Child-friendly artwork/ sculpture for visual interest in dormant months
- A vine-covered arbor to walk under
- A vine-covered structure to sit inside, such as a tee-pee or a simple dome cover

Partner Roles & Responsibilities

Virginia Master Naturalists

Please see *Attachment D: VMN, Shenandoah Chapter Info Graphic*, for an overview of what the chapter contributed to the region in 2019.

Chapter volunteers will provide the following:

- Playgarden design and installation, including initial site prep work in July to be ready for planting in fall
- Writing of grants and other fundraising materials, seeking donations of gifts-in-kind
- Ongoing, larger maintenance issues such as plant replacement
- Initial mulching

There are some elements needed from the Frederick County Parks & Recreation Department, including:

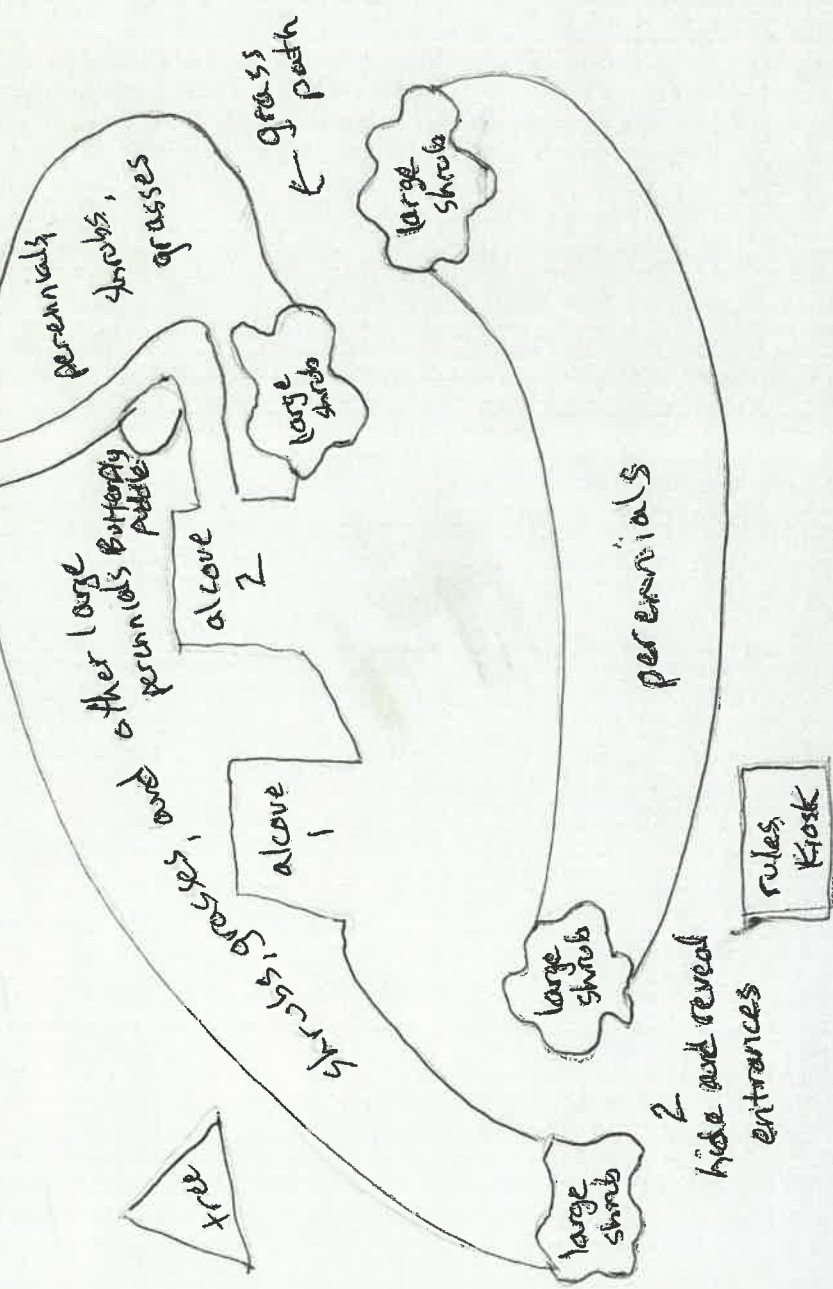
- The VMN program is not a 501(c)(3), and, as such, cannot be the accepting entity of donations. Therefore the P&R Department, or another partner organization, must be the recipient of all fundraising efforts.
- Routine maintenance, such as watering
- Notifying the VMN chapter when additional assistance is required, ex. plant replacement, major weeding, or help refreshing mulch
- Assuming of liability issues in the event of insect stings, inappropriate use of the playgarden space and equipment (ie. Children climbing on benches) etc., although the educational signage will address such rules and risks. The Department's suggested verbiage on these kinds of issues is most appreciated, though it would be nice to then translate it into child-friendly language.

Conclusion

Children are naturally inquisitive about the world around them. But ubiquitous construction reminds us that open spaces for children to safely roam and interact with nature are becoming increasingly rare. While a playgarden can't fill that sizeable void, it can be an introduction for children to the cycles and relationships that keep the natural world healthy and balanced. Igniting that curiosity and magical sense early can lead to a lifetime of enjoyment and reverence for our environment.

hayfield
Jones Rd ← → trails
parking lot

approximate border of raised flattened area
tree
Butterfly Alley



perennials
shrubs, grasses
grass path
large shrub
large shrub
alcove 2
alcove 1
shrubs, grasses, other large perennials
Butterfly path

hide and reveal
2
entrances

rules Kiosk

edge
perennials
shrubs

**Attachment C: Illustrated Plant List and Budget
for Children's Playgarden at Rose Hill Park
(2 pages)**

These prices are a mix of discounted prices from various nurseries as well as some retail costs, where we could find them. Most nurseries don't open until April.

TREES	Qty	\$ each	Total \$
Pagoda Dogwood <i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	1	\$38	\$38
Downy Juneberry <i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	1	90	90
SHRUBS			
New Jersey Tea <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	3	25	75
Virginia Sweetspire <i>Itea virginica</i>	3	25	75
Carolina Allspice <i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	3		
Joe Pye Weed <i>Eutrochium purpureum</i>	15	10	150
Arrow-Wood Viburnum <i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	2	44	88
Maple Leaf Viburnum <i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	2		
GRASSES			
Pink Muhly Grass <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	5	10	50
PERENNIALS			
New York Ironweed <i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>	7		
Butterfly Weed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	9	10	90
Kansas Gay Feather <i>Liatris spicata</i>	7	10	70
New England Aster <i>Symphyotrichum novae-angliae</i>	3	15	45
Black-Eyed Susan <i>Rudbekia hirta</i>	7	7	49
Common Milkweed <i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	45	4	180
Purple Milkweed <i>Asclepias purpurascens</i>	11	10	110
Great Blue Lobelia <i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	7	7	49
Bee Balm <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	7	10	70
Smooth Oxeye <i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	7	10	70
Jacob Cline <i>Monarda didyma</i>	7	7	49
Fireworks Goldenrod <i>Solidago rugosa</i> 'Fireworks'	7		
VINES			
Trumpet Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	2	15	30

Estimated total for plant material and mulch should not exceed \$2,000.

CHILDREN'S ENGAGEMENT

The hope is to get various groups involved in the making of these extra special items that will make this truly a children's playgarden. For example, a high school workshop class to make the free little library and arbor, a scout troop to make the bench, some local school art classes to make little sculptural surprises hidden throughout. But if items must be purchased at retail, below is an illustrative list of items and costs.

Free Little Library: est. retail cost approx. \$300

Child-sized bench: est. retail cost approx. \$50

Arbor: est. retail cost for pre-made approx. \$400

Still to be priced out – the cost for a child-sized signage with rules and warnings and little surprises spread around the garden to delight kids.

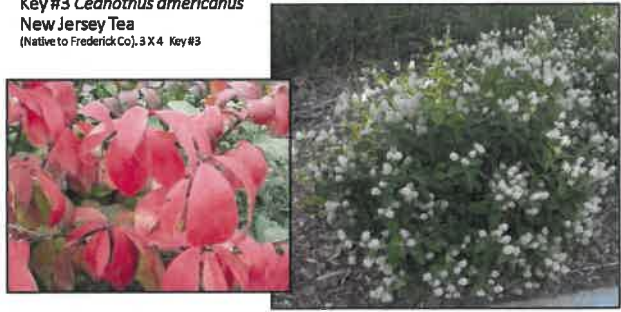
The main goal, however, is to get as many groups in the community as possible creating different elements to generate awareness, create a share sense of ownership and pride, and keep costs to a minimum.

After the challenges of social distancing, having a creative cause for citizens to rally around can only help to revitalize our sense of community.

SOME EASTERN REGION
NATIVE PLANTS
 A Selection of Native Plants
 For The Rose Hill
 Children's Garden

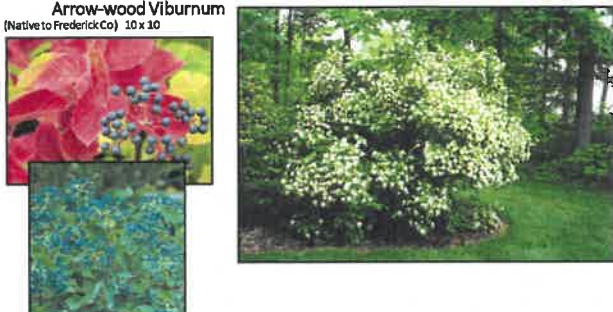
1

Key #3 *Ceanothus americanus*
New Jersey Tea
 (Native to Frederick Co.) 3 X 4 Key #3




4

Key #1 *Viburnum dentatum*
Arrow-wood Viburnum
 (Native to Frederick Co.) 10 x 10




2

Key #4 *Eutrochium purpureum*
Joe Pye Weed
 (Native to Frederick Co.) 5x3



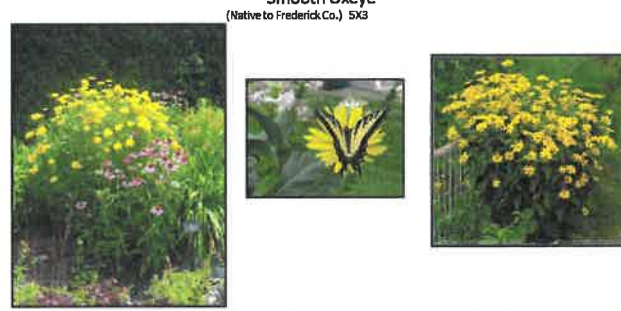
5

Key #2 *Viburnum acerifolium*
Maple Leaf Viburnum
 5X4 (Native to Frederick Co.)

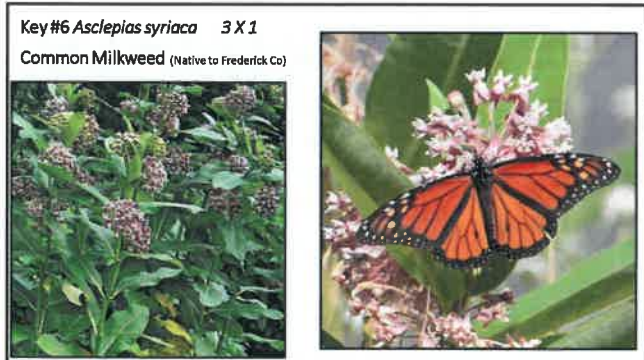


3

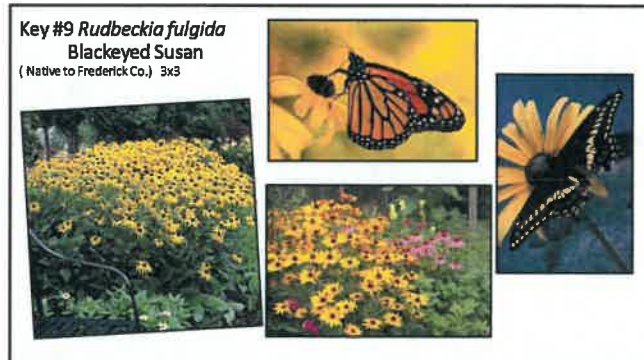
Key #5 *Heliopsis helianthoides*
Smooth Oxeye
 (Native to Frederick Co.) 5X3



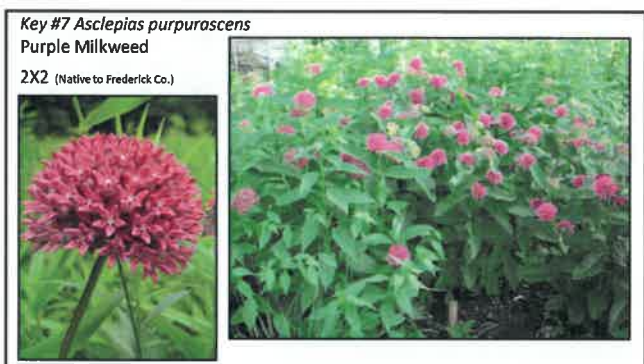
6



7



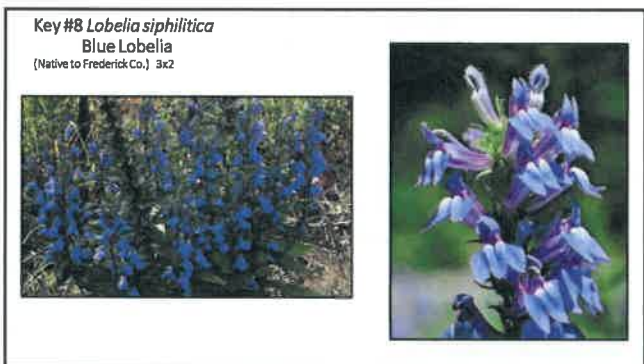
10



8



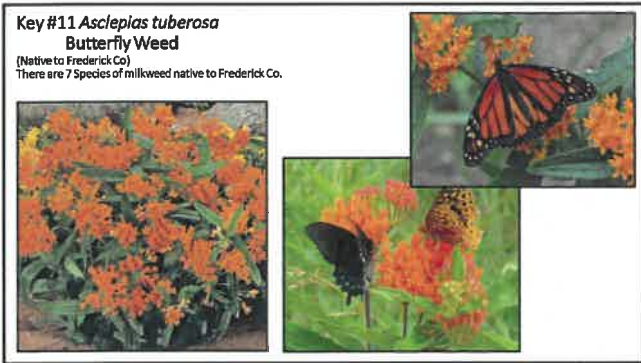
11



9



12



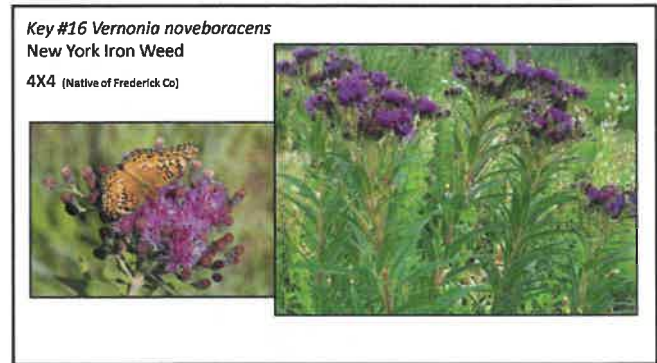
13



16



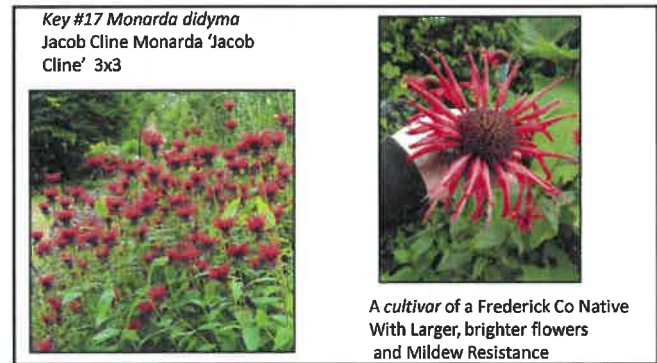
14



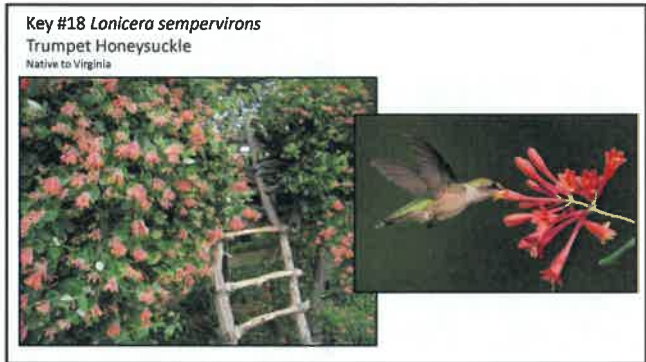
17



15



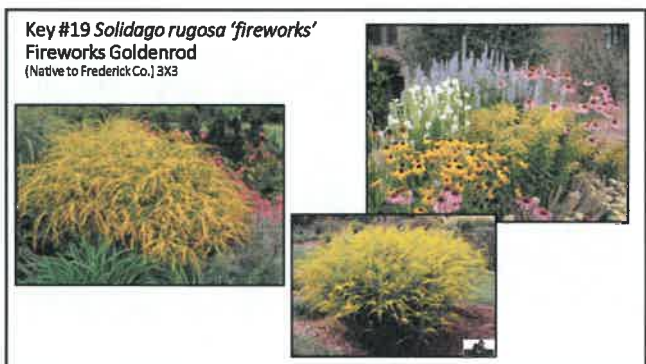
18



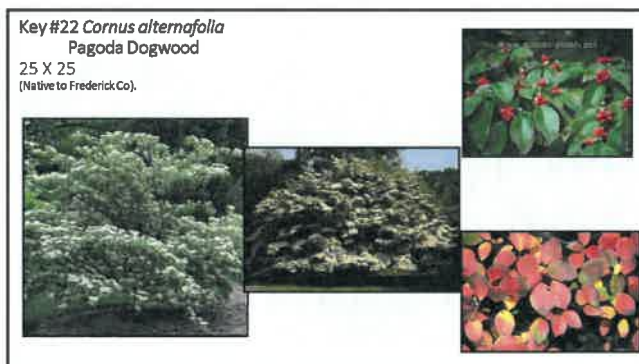
19



22



20



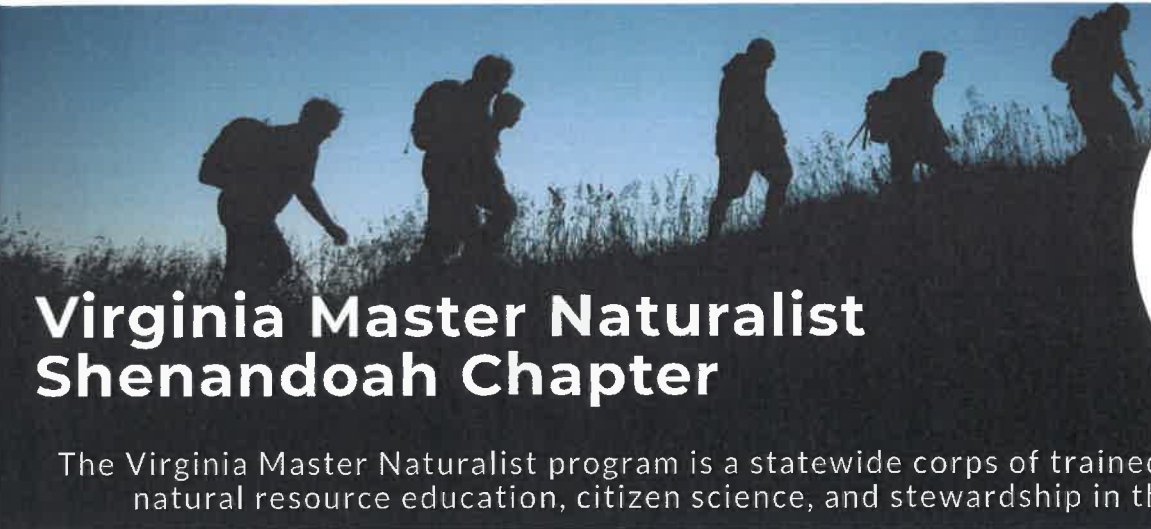
23



21



24



Virginia Master Naturalist Shenandoah Chapter

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of trained volunteers providing natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship in their communities.



60 Members
achieved **Certified Virginia Master Naturalist** status

1,952 Hours
contributed to **education & outreach** in the community



10 Outdoor Sites

improved through **stewardship** activities at parks and natural areas



33 Scientific Studies
supported through **citizen science** projects

15 Trainees
graduated from the basic training course



Project Highlights

- Increasing Access to Nature**
Volunteers planned & built the Sensory Explorers Trail at Sky Meadows State Park, providing a place for people of all ages and abilities to explore the natural world.
- Providing Community Education**
Volunteers assisted with educational programs at Blandy Experimental Farm, Shenandoah National Park, and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute.
- Researching Biodiversity**
Volunteers collected data on birds, pollinators, & plants in field & grassland habitats with the Virginia Working Landscapes project.

Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.