



**2016 Second Quarter Report**  
**Nebraska Master Naturalist Program, April 1 to June 30, 2016**

**Current Metrics:**

The current total of active Master Naturalists is 298.

Total Volunteer Hours & Activity: <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 2016: April 1 - June 30</b>			
TOTAL Volunteer Hours	Total <u>Value</u> of Volunteer Time*	Contacts	Acres Impacted
<b>2573</b>	<b>\$60,626*</b>	<b>18,870</b>	<b>3891</b>
Total Program Life Volunteer Hours & Activity: <i>2010 through June 30, 2016</i>			
<b>37,433 hours</b>	<b>\$881,921*</b>	<b>464,740 Nebraskans</b>	<b>33,304 acres</b>

\*[Nationally estimated value of volunteer time for 2015 (& currently) is **\$23.56 per hour**: [https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time) ]

**Overview:**

The Coordinator continued supporting and developing program partnerships with the Nebraska State Museum; Hyde Observatory; Heron Haven preserve; Homestead National Monument; and new prospects with Lincoln City Watershed and the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators. Team planning was underway for the next Naturalist calendar.

The Coordinator and the Trainings Assistant posted notices of Master Naturalist training and volunteer opportunities in the media and online, while engaging with Program Partners. The Trainings Assistant arranged & launched the 2016 schedule for Core and Core+ Trainings, advertising in the media and online.

Master Naturalists also acted independently or on teams to advance awareness and understanding of Nebraska’s biodiversity at schools, parks, museum (and other) events, by cultivating reliable relationships with prospective and existing partners and agencies. They also promoted the program through the media and in person, with support from the Coordinator & the Trainings Assistant,

**2016 Master Naturalist Training Schedule:**

- ~~April 7 - 9~~ Core Basic (~~Ponca State Park, South Sioux City~~ *Cancelled*)
- May 19 - 21 Core Basic (NE 4H Camp, NE National Forest, Halsey, NE)
- June 5 - 11 Core Basic (TNC Niobrara Valley Preserve, Norden NE)
- ~~July 7 - 9~~ Core Basic (~~Panhandle Research & Ext. Ctr., Scottsbluff, NE~~ *Cancelled*)
- July 15-17 Core + (UNL Cedar Point Biological Station, Ogallala, NE)
- Sept.30 – Oct. 1 Core Basic, pt. 1 (AkSarBen Aquarium at Schramm Park SRA, Louisville, NE)
- Oct. 7 – 8 Core Basic, pt. 2 (AkSarBen Aquarium at Schramm Park SRA, Louisville, NE)

**2016 NMNP Executive Board meetings:**

- (May 13 Mahoney SP, Ashland, NE)
- Sept. 9 -*revised*- 8:30 am; Crane Trust, Wood River exit, I-80)
- Nov. 18 (tbd)



### **Highlighted Projects:**

**Outreach publications:** The Coordinator met with UNL Printing representative, Deb Green on May 9 to revisit the production schedule for the 2017 *Naturalist Calendar*. Calendar Team members met on 5/12 and 6/23 to review past progress, consider revisions, and continue preparing the next edition of the NET-supported Calendar. The Coordinator investigated printing and budget costs and drafted another calendar intro. Production will begin with proof submission for production on 7/18 & delivery of 1500 copies by 8/8/16. This edition will be available for sale through the Maps and More Store in SNR, and on Amazon, with each Nebraska Master Naturalist receiving one free copy.

**Endangered Salt Creek Tiger Beetle Reintroduction Project:** Five Master Naturalist citizen science monitoring teams continue to monitor Endangered Salt Creek Tiger Beetle larvae (supported by Bruce), after two spring reintroductions at Lincoln's saline wetlands on May 4 and again on May 13 by experienced MN monitors Tim Olin and Bill Smith volunteering to represent the program and the project for Lincoln city & county VIP stakeholders during a courtesy reintroduction for them. Spring planning for SCTB reintroductions took place on 4/22 by the interagency project planning team (Bruce, Matt & Allison attending), led by USFW rep. Bob Harms and NGPC T & E specialist, Mike Fritz.

### **Master Naturalist Trainings & Report (Matt Jones, Trainings Assistant):**

In this quarter, Trainings Assistant Matt Jones, developed and facilitated two certification trainings, in which 33 individuals attended Master Naturalist trainings: A Core 24 training was held for the first time at the State 4H Camp in the *Nebraska National Forest* at Halsey from 5/19-21 (--but 10 of those attending did not join the program, having participated as **Master Naturalist Pro** attendees, who will not be obligated to volunteer their time, under the pioneering version of that program--since they will serve as 4H guides at Halsey this summer). The 3-day training bloc provided the initial foundation for the 18 trainees toward their certification as *Nebraska Master Naturalists*, and the event proved to be a great option for future programing and events.

June 5-11 then saw the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that we have partnered with *The Nature Conservancy's Niobrara Valley Preserve* to host our "Core Classic" training in the Sandhills. Fifteen participants achieved their fully certified status by the end of the week. With others relocating out of state, this brings a total of 298 active Nebraska Master Naturalists.

### **Continuing Education (Core+) Training Opportunities Sponsored and co/Sponsored by the NMNP:**

4/11 & 18 – Parts 1 & 2 of MN Core+ Astronomy workshop were presented at *Hyde Observatory* in Lincoln, by volunteer instructor, Emeritus Prof. Ed Schmidt and associate board members of the *Observatory Board*. 15 MN's attended, with Bruce facilitating (details under **Partner** section).

5/7 - Conservation Gardening & Gardening for Pollinators workshop hosted at the *TNC Derr House* in Wood River, with 15 participants led by Evan Barrientos of *TNC*; Carolyn Butler of *NE Wildlife Federation*; and *Nebraska Master Naturalist*, Karen Hamburger.

6/18 - Wild Edible Plants of the Prairie with 27 attendees including Master Naturalists, led by Cindy Trail of *TNC* and Karen Hamburger, *Nebraska Master Naturalist*.



### **Program Partner development:**

**Guild of Science Illustrators: Great Plains chapter:** Bruce met with Lana Johnson, president on 5/10 and with her chapter at PPNC on 5/21 to consider ways to engage any Master Naturalist with journaling or sketching from nature through possible future workshops or events. They will observe their 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence in 2016.

**Lincoln City Public Works Watershed Management Department:** Bruce invited coordinator, Erin Kubicek to consider formalizing a partnership, via Lincoln MN projects occurring this quarter, like Adopt-A-Stream (4/9 & 5/14), Waterfest (4/23), and the post-July 4 fireworks residue clean-up. He listed them & their logo/link as the *newest* Program Partner on our Nebraska Master Naturalist website at: <http://snr.unl.edu/naturalist/programpartners.asp> so that visitors can learn more of their mission and activities.

**University of Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall):** After establishing them as a Partner on our website, they are sending their Master Naturalist volunteer requests directly to our ListServ, to assist, for example, with the “Investigate!” activity on 5/14 (International Migratory Bird Month). Bruce also posted the invitation & request from the museum for volunteers needed on 6/26 (Archie’s Birthday), and for an upcoming Sunday family event there: “Sunday with a Scientist: Invasive species,” led by Allison Zach on 7/17. A group of Master Naturalists continue to volunteer there.

**Hyde Observatory/Prairie Astronomy Club:** After Bruce and Matt explored a partnership with the *Hyde Observatory Board* in Lincoln late last year, (when referred by *Prairie Astronomy Club* member and Master Naturalist, Beth Jenckes); UNL Emeritus Professor Edward Schmidt of the *Hyde Observatory* drafted an outline for a spring MN Core + Astronomy workshop to train and enlist Master Naturalist volunteers for supporting their public astronomy viewings at the observatory. Matt scheduled & registered attendees, as Bruce coordinated with Prof. Schmidt to forward & post his invitation and facilitate the two-part sessions held at the Hyde observatory on 4/11 & 4/18, with MN attendees from Lincoln, Omaha and Carleton. Prof. Schmidt shared his astronomy PowerPoints, outlines, and class resources which Bruce posted for access & reference as a new Core+ topic on the NMN Curriculum Resources webpage.

**Homestead National Monument:** Staff continue to invite volunteer Master Naturalists to participate with various events on site.

**Heron Haven preserve:** The partnership continued with the (Omaha) preserve, with representative Master Naturalist volunteer/contact Chris Robie hosting monthly Omaha group meetings there since.

### **Master Naturalist Community:**

4/4 –Bruce drafted and sent thank you letters to 15 silent auction donors for their contributions to the winter party on 1/23.

**River City Chapter news:** The Omaha Group met monthly at three sites this quarter: *Heron Haven* preserve in west Omaha on 4/28 and on 5/24 (which Bruce attended) to meet their new officers and to plan for the months ahead; and at *Glacier Creek Preserve* on 6/22 with a guest speaker on medicinal plants. The River City Chapter formation was approved by the Executive Board at the May 13 meeting. (\**At the Executive Board’s request, Bruce prepared a Survey Monkey on revised program By-Laws, to clarify this development and ease future chapter formations. This was launched for a membership vote on 6/21.*)

(see outreach activities from Central Nebraska members in media section, following)



## **Outreach and Media:**

Both staff and volunteers promoted the Nebraska Master Naturalist training schedule and program through several newspaper articles and notices, along with formal & informal in-person outreach opportunities, which staff supported through program e-newsletters and the online events calendar listings at the MN website.

The Coordinator also invited Master Naturalists to consider writing conservation articles for the *Lincoln Sunday Journal's* Outdoor page. He facilitated the editing & scheduling of three such articles by members, so far. Thus, through the media:

- 4/1 – Grand Island: [http://www.theindependent.com/news/state/nebraska-schedules-training-to-certify-master-naturalists/article\\_618522ae-5113-599d-9116-5cc5ec82853a.html](http://www.theindependent.com/news/state/nebraska-schedules-training-to-certify-master-naturalists/article_618522ae-5113-599d-9116-5cc5ec82853a.html) ;
- 4/14 - Wahoo Newspaper: MN Paula Hoppe mentioned in “Eagle nest watchers see activity”: [http://www.wahoo-ashland-waverly.com/news/local/eagle-nest-watchers-see-activity/article\\_cb329162-024c-11e6-ad1b-2bb78d1a15fd.html](http://www.wahoo-ashland-waverly.com/news/local/eagle-nest-watchers-see-activity/article_cb329162-024c-11e6-ad1b-2bb78d1a15fd.html) ;
- 4/23 - Grand Island Independent: “May Training at Halsey”: [http://www.theindependent.com/news/ag\\_news/master-naturalist-training-may---at-halsey/article\\_82e402ee-08df-11e6-9c01-1fcb4685db9b.html](http://www.theindependent.com/news/ag_news/master-naturalist-training-may---at-halsey/article_82e402ee-08df-11e6-9c01-1fcb4685db9b.html) ;
- 5/15 – Lincoln Journal Star: fellow MN, Kris Chavez’s article “Master Naturalist’s hikes start with small steps”: [http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/master-naturalists-hikes-start-with-small-steps/article\\_6a6bbbb7-264e-5902-95ef-c1943e0ef49a.html](http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/master-naturalists-hikes-start-with-small-steps/article_6a6bbbb7-264e-5902-95ef-c1943e0ef49a.html) ;
- 5/16 – UNL newsroom: “Nebraska Naturalist Program training sessions to begin” <http://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/snr/5448/30735> ;
- 5/19 – May issue of NET’s “Resource: A Monthly Publication of the NET” [http://www.environmentaltrust.org/publications/resource\\_eneews/2016%20Resource%20PDFs/2016\\_Resource\\_May.pdf](http://www.environmentaltrust.org/publications/resource_eneews/2016%20Resource%20PDFs/2016_Resource_May.pdf) (noting MN volunteers at the 2/27 Morrill Hall Photo Ark event of their hands-on demo, *with photo which Bruce requested from the State Museum, along with text credited from SNR Communications Associate, Shawna Richter-Ryerson’s 5/16 news release.*)
- 5/31 – UNL newsroom: “Master Naturalist Program receives Nebraska Environmental Trust grant” <http://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/snr/5449/30905> ;
- 6/12 – Lincoln Journal Star: fellow MN, Merri Johnson’s article “Mourning doves bring nature closer”: [http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/mourning-doves-bring-nature-closer/article\\_587a268a-62df-5af6-98f8-e8f3152cd338.html](http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/mourning-doves-bring-nature-closer/article_587a268a-62df-5af6-98f8-e8f3152cd338.html) ;
- 6/26 – Lincoln Journal Star: fellow MN, Teresa Mentzer’s article “Mentors guide budding master naturalists”: [http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/mentors-guide-budding-master-naturalists/article\\_c89299b1-f128-50fb-a594-a1cc3ebc5990.html](http://journalstar.com/sports/local/outdoors/mentors-guide-budding-master-naturalists/article_c89299b1-f128-50fb-a594-a1cc3ebc5990.html)



### Other outreach activity:

- 150 rack cards were sent to all *NE Game & Parks Commission* state and historical park visitor centers.
- Matt Jones drafted & sent press releases which went out via *NACEE & NE Game & Parks* outlets in April.
- 4/16 - Matt spoke to 20 participants at the *Wildcat Audubon Chapter* meeting in Scottsbluff. He also visited *Scottsbluff National Monument, Riverside Zoo, NRD, ESU* office and other public places where distributed some 200 program fliers, to promote the program's scheduled July 7-9 Core training there.
- 4/11 ~ 25 – MN Deb Mowry voluntarily continued distributing copies of the *Explorer's Guide to Central NE Prairies* (which she & MN's Deb Miller and Karen Hamburger had researched & printed) to area schools, scouts, TNC, Rowe, Crane Trust and SOAR camp, with help from Matt.
- 4/16 – at least 3 Master Naturalists--Tisha Johnson, Karen Klein and Kelly Kelly--voluntarily staffed an *Earth Day* Booth in Omaha's Elmwood Park, representing the program to over 150 contacts, several of whom shared their contact info for program updates for the Naturalist Network ListServ. (Bruce processed the booth rental fee for both Lincoln & Omaha Earth Days, and for the Holmes Lake Waterfest event. Doug Wells helped coordinate the Earth Day outreach supplies.).
- 4/20 – Master Naturalist Julie Thomas volunteered to present an NMNP overview to the Kearney Golden Kiwanis meeting & distributed Naturalist Calendars to those attending. (Bruce offered her the program outreach Ppt, NMNP display board, calendars & hand-outs).
- 4/23 – 4 Master Naturalists—Bill Smith, Mark Mayer, Tim Olin and Jon Garbisch volunteered with the Coordinator to staff a NMNP program table at Lincoln's *Earth Day* at Union Plaza, contacting over 150 Nebraskans & capturing contact info from those interested in program updates via the Naturalist Network ListServ.
- 4/25 – Master Naturalist Midge Dublinske volunteered to present an outreach overview of the NMN Program to a professional women's group of 12, also distributing copies of the Naturalist Calendar. (Bruce supported her with program outreach Ppt & hand-outs, display board, calendars and UNL Foundation donation forms.)
- 5/7 - Allison & Matt staffed an outreach booth at *Fort Kearny Expo*, contacting some 200 Nebraskans.
- 6/8 - Master Naturalist Bill Smith represented the program at a *Waterfest* table with his hydrology activity.
- 6/22 - Master Naturalist Karen Hamburger voluntarily staffed an NMN outreach booth at the *TNC Platte River Prairies* Field Day (Derr House), contacting 40 attendees.
- 6/20-23 & 6/27-30 - *Platte River Safari Camp*. Matt represented the NMNP as a teacher/Leader for his 6<sup>th</sup> year at the 4-day long ecology camp, focusing on the Platte River at *Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary*. 120 youth participants over both weeks and 250 total family members participated in a family program, Wednesday eves.
- 6/25-26 – Matt placed ads to run in the *Scottsbluff Star Herald* for the Nebraska Master Naturalist July training
- Matt designed and ordered a half-page training announcement ads in *NebraskaLAND* magazine for several mos.
- Matt also developed & ordered outreach display items, supplies and new program apparel sales items, after he and Allison solicited input from membership on designs.
- Bruce and Matt also posted continuing educational and volunteer opportunities, along with program-related links, public activity notices and factual info on the *Nebraska Master Naturalist Facebook* site: <https://www.facebook.com/masternaturalist>; and on the (NMNP website) Online Master Naturalist Events Calendar: <http://snr.unl.edu/naturalist/calendar.asp>; with help from assistants Allison Dush and Doug Wells.



### Planning, Staffing, Website, Digital Resources, ListServ:

Coordinator Bruce Mellberg prepared & submitted the third-year NET Grant Budget and Public Information Plan in April with assistance from the UNL Office of Sponsored programs, after submitting the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter NET report for 2016.

4/7 – Bruce continued updating the Spotlighted Master Naturalist bios on the program website, as members responded.

4/14 – Dennis and Bruce attended the NET Grant Award seminar, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year award of the 3-year NET grant for the program. Bruce was asked to briefly outline program mission & progress, with Dennis supporting, as Principal Investigator.

5/12 – Matt, Dennis & Bruce attended the UNL-SNR mandated *Strengths Finder* session for employee development.

5/13 – Bruce & Matt attended the Executive Board meeting at Mahoney SP with Board members.

5/24 - Bruce and Matt met with UNL-SNR IT resource, Mark Mesarch to fix web & tracking system updates

6/2 - Matt, Dennis & Bruce attended the final UNL-SNR mandated *Strengths Finder* session for employee development, toward “working together as a team from their strengths, while managing around their weaknesses.”

6/27 - Dennis and Bruce met with Executive Board members Kristal Stoner, Jeanine Lackey and Brice Krohn of the Strategic Planning committee on future grant funding prospects for the program.

6/28 – Bruce again met with and consulted UNL-SNR IT resource, Mark Mesarch on IT training on extracting quarterly metrics; fixing web & tracking system updates.

6/28 – Bruce arranged a date (July 12) for the Evaluation Committee to meet after requesting input via Doodle poll from participating members: Lindsay Rogers, Andrea Faas, Kris Chavez, Jim Hoke, Dennis Ferraro, Matt Jones and Mike Schrad.

The Coordinator again reminded Master Naturalist volunteers in mid-June to submit their activity hours (volunteering and continuing education) on the website tracking system by the end of the month (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2016) for better metrics reporting & accuracy.

Bruce and Matt also responded to several ongoing phone and e-mail inquiries from MN’s about the program, training, volunteering, website and tracking input, re-setting passwords, etc. to gain confidence with more effective reporting.

There is now a trend toward listing Continuing Education or Core+ workshops on the program website (rather than sending all of them via the ListServ) under the **Online Events Calendar page**, for easier reference & fewer e-mails to members. Incoming volunteer opportunities are also listed there, but will continue to be routed through the NMNP ListServ, as well.

Program assistants Doug Wells & Allison Dush continued working part-time supporting program tasks, schedules and training. The familiar Nebraska Master Naturalist Newsletter was prepared and sent by Doug Wells on 4/13 and again, in a different format on 6/2.



## **What's Ahead:**

We welcome 8 new Core-24 trainees and 15 newly Certified Master Naturalists, thanks to Matt's training, venue & instructor arrangements this quarter! We continue to seek and promote continuing education hosted by partnering organizations to fully support all members with achieving and maintaining their certifications by developing further learning and volunteer opportunities.

We also continue to invite and develop new opportunities for partnerships in conservation and education, promoting them to our members.

We marvel at how our fellow Master Naturalists commit and dedicate their personal time in meaningful ways as volunteers and learners, by promoting biodiversity and actively conserving Nebraska's natural heritage through their reliable enthusiasm for collaborating with participating Program Partners. We commend the remarkable service record of our conservation volunteers who have thus proven their willingness to contribute their time, reflection, good cheer and steady determination toward a cause greater than themselves.

We continue to encourage our fellow Master Naturalists to connect their passion for nature, record their volunteer hours, collaborate with others who share their interests, and to deepen and further their understanding of why native resources matter to them.

It is good to remember to invite Nebraskans from all demographics to join in discovering the wonders of the natural world around us. By welcoming a greater humanity of talent, tradition and interest in our state to our introductory Core training, we may together reveal new and better ways to share awareness, sustain fragile habitats and promote biodiversity. In this way, I feel that our combined efforts will be more inclusively strengthened as good neighbors and stewards of the state's natural landscape. Let us therefore strive to acknowledge how our human resources may inform and advance the quality of care for our natural resources, for those yet to come.

*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children"*

--attributed to American Indian source

**This report was researched, compiled and submitted by Bruce Mellberg, Nebraska Master Naturalist Program Coordinator. Details from Matt Jones, Nebraska Master Naturalist Program Trainings Assistant, and guidance from UNL Professor Dennis Ferraro, Principal Investigator for the supporting grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, both helped to tell the story of this quarter's progress.**

**Bruce Mellberg, Coordinator  
Nebraska Master Naturalist Program  
July 22, 2016**

