SC Master Naturalist Volunteer Hours Criteria

Purpose: The purpose of the volunteer service requirement of the SC Master Naturalist Program is to provide a service to the community/region or state with regard to natural resources; to help the volunteer gain knowledge and experience; and to support the work of the State Office, partner agencies and Host Sites through their volunteerism.

Requirements for projects: Projects must involve educating the public, enhancing the natural resources of our state, or other approved functions (see examples below). In general, volunteer projects must fall into one of the *four main areas:* Citizen Science projects, Ecological Services projects, Education and Interpretation, or Coordination for the Master Naturalist program.

What doesn't count toward volunteer service hours?
An activity that primarily benefits the volunteer or activities with a political agenda will not count toward volunteer hours. Examples of this include but are not limited to: work conducted on your own property of which you are the primary beneficiary (potentially excepting demonstration projects); projects on public or private lands that benefit an individual or business; organizing a letter writing campaign to support a political agenda or viewpoint and advocacy work toward the same.
For questionable volunteer service opportunities, please work with local chapters or Host Sites. See the website for contact information on these. *The State Office reserves the right to refuse a project for volunteer hours if it falls significantly outside the four categories of service or abuses the definition of a good volunteer project.*
Only members scheduled to give a presentation may include preparation time as part of volunteer service hours. Travel time greater than 30 minutes and up to one hour for each project can be counted.

Examples of Some Possible Volunteer Projects

Education/Interpretation:
Speaking to school classes and other groups Information/educational booths at meetings or events Environmental workshops for children
Leading nature walks
Children/youth outdoor classroom naturalist activities Development of audiovisual materials
Creating brochures, fact sheets, etc.
Web site development

Citizen Science:
Field surveys for various biota
Wetland sampling, classification, and mapping
Plant collections (adding to and maintaining)
Bird census (point count surveys)
Monitoring populations of rare biota, water quality, etc. Ecological inventory of public lands
Assisting raptor facilities with transportation of injured birds

Ecological Service:
Wetland restoration
Trail building and maintenance
Erosion control
Building boardwalks, observation platforms, kiosks Construction and placing of nest boxes
Organizing stream cleanups
Advising/assisting with habitat improvement Exotic invasive removal or monitoring

Program Service:
Coordination for SCMN program (could be either at state, host site or chapter level):
Fund raising
Maintaining volunteer data Editing/writing for newsletter
Clerical work (mail outs etc.) Telephone coordination
Photography
Coordinating/assisting a local MN class Website maintenance or development

References:
https://www.clemson.edu/extension/mn/training/upstate.html

Covid Exceptions:
https://www.clemson.edu/extension/mn/advanced-training.html