

MISSISSIPPI HILLS MASTER NATURALIST  
ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

January - Clarksville Eagle Days – Our chapter was asked to take over this event by MDC in 2019. This year approximately 700 visitors attended on Saturday and 300 on Sunday. Visitors enjoyed the live eagle show, observed 40 eagles on the riverfront and the children’s crafts and activities. Fifteen chapter members staffed the event throughout the weekend.

February - The first annual Hannibal Eagle Days was attended by 300 visitors and 20 members staffing the event without live eagles. In November we applied for and received a grant and will have raptors from World Bird Sanctuary, simulated eagle nest, booths from other conservation related groups.

March brought several new activities for us. We partnered with area regional 4-H and taught about bluebirds and house building with 30 young 4-H’ers(8 members assisted). MDC invited us to participate in 2-day project on streambank revitalization on the Mississippi River with willow cuttings and grass planting(10 members assisted). The new Environmental Trail at Frank Russell was the site for the monthly hike and trees were marked for identification signs for visitors on the trail(20 members). To wrap up the month, our members participated in the Mark Twain Lake Clean up with Stream Team United with organizations and the public from around the NEMO area.

Spring was in the air in April and one of our members organized the local Callery Pear Buy Back program through Forest ReLeaf, and we participated in the Family Field Day with several of our partners. Our burn team completed a prairie burn for one of our members, and the annual spring bird and wildflower hike was held at Steyermark Nature Preserve.

June brought several nature programs for local daycare and summer school including fishing programs. Later in the month we feasted at our annual picnic with the highlight being graduation of 21 members of the 2024 Core Training Class.

The heat of the summer did not stop our activities in July as we assisted USACE with Bat Monitoring at Indian Creek and Mississippi Hills made a great showing at the Missouri Bluebird Conference at HLGU with our booth and presentation about our chapter. Our Facebook page was filled with updates on prairie garden flowers and members’ prairies.

In August, 10 members assisted at HAC Wild and Wacky event while children made art with notecards using a “flower pounding” technique.... no fingers were smashed at this event. We partnered with MDC for the Ralls County North American Butterfly Association Survey and identified 20+ species of butterflies. The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual float trip was held on the Salt River with members floating/capsizing/getting wet.

September brought the annual Summer Safety program in Pike County with 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Over 200 students learned about outdoor safety with ID of Venomous Snakes, Tick and Mosquitoes, Poison Ivy,

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and Sun Safety(5 members). We were able to give back to HLGU for allowing us to meet on campus with Shrub Trimming Event for the college and a booth at their Family Day on Nature Breaks. We celebrated a member who was moving to be closer to family with a tribute sponsored by HAC. Bella was a gifted writer and contributed to our newsletter and local news on our events.

The Whelan's hosted our annual Field Day in October with tree cutting and identification, great food and fellowship, and other nature programs. Other October activities included a booth on night creatures at Palmyra's Trunk or Treat, prairie seed collection, Stream Team Training, and a new program, "Honeysuckle Hack" at Riverview Park. This program will assist in eradicating invasive species such as honeysuckle. Burning bush and others.

November rings in the month with a few special deer hunts that MHMN partner with USACE and Whitetails in providing training, guides, hunt opportunities, and food for youth and persons with disabilities.

December highlights include our annual holiday party and election of officers, annual Christmas Bird Count in the Mark Twain Lake area, and continued work monthly with the Honeysuckle Hack team.

The MHMN Hiking Group sponsored a monthly hike at a variety of locations throughout our area and averaged 10+ people per hike.

Our Chapter Book Club met every quarter to discuss a nature related book

OFFICERS

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HOW WERE GENERAL MEETINGS HELD AND TOPICS

The Mississippi Hills Master Naturalists meetings were all in-person except for the January meeting which was held via Zoom to due the winter weather we experienced. We averaged ~40 members at each meeting, and trainings varied from: Beekeeping, Cicada Armageddon, Forest ReLeaf, Raising Monarch Butterflies, Safe Use of Pesticides, Soils Conservation/Health, Special Use Permits/MDC, Stream Team, and an Update from NE Regional MDC

HOW CORE TRAINING WAS RUN THIS YEAR?

Core training was all in-person training with 40+ hours of classroom training and 3 field trip trainings.

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PARTNERS (32 TOTAL)

Audubon Society – Christmas Bird Count/Great Backyard Bird Count  
City of Clarksville – Clarksville Eagle Days  
Marion County - City of Palmyra – A Taste of Palmyra – Trunk or Treat  
Marion County Schools  
Forest Council  
Forest Keepers  
Hannibal LaGrange University  
Hannibal Parks and Recreation  
Hannibal Regional Hospital – Prairie Planting/Prairie Native Garden  
Hannibal Regional Airport  
Hannibal Tree Board  
Hannibal Arts Council  
Heartland Seeds  
Mark Twain State Park  
Missouri Bluebird Society  
Missouri Prairie Foundation  
MODOT  
MO Bat Census  
National Deer Association  
NEMO Regional 4-H Council  
NEMO Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Pike County Schools  
Pike County Young Farmers and Ranchers  
Ralls County Schools  
Shelby County  
Stream Team United  
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
USA National Phenology Network  
USGS Wild Bee Lab  
Whitetails  
Wild Turkey Federation, Hannibal Chapter  
Xerces Society- Bumble Bee Atlas

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The report only included the year 2024 but I included 2023 for comparison. There is a lag in certifications from year to year because the members have 18 months to complete their 40 hours of volunteer work and 8 hours of advanced training. Some members complete quickly; others take awhile. With the establishment of the Engagement Committee, our goal is to assist members to complete certification sooner by providing a partner to assist them on their journey, answer questions, and get them involved in activities that suit their individual interests.

**REPORT ON TOTAL HOURS 2024 COMPARED TO 2023**

	2024	2023	CHG
TOTAL CHAPTER VOL.HOURS FOR 2024	7063 HRS	5895 HRS	+1168
TOTAL CHAPTER TRAINING HOURS FOR 2024	1017 HRS	893 HRS	+ 124
# OF INDIVIDUAL COMPLETING CORE TRAINING	21	29	-9
ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS FOR 2024	66	56	+10
INITIAL CERTIFICATION	18	9	+9
RECERTIFICATION	37	36	+1
TOTAL MEMBERS	101	84	+17