

Building Capacity Among Environmental and Natural Resources Professionals and Volunteers

Impact Statement 2018

INVESTIGATORS

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SUMMARY

The School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) is a leader in the education and training of students, professionals, and volunteers in environmental and natural resource management. As students assume positions in public and private organizations, access to professional practice graduate education, professional development, and opportunities to network is important to their ability to work effectively. SENR provides a broad range of capacity building programs/services to support and develop environmental professionals and volunteers.

SITUATION

Every sector of society is affected by environmental and natural resource management issues. Those who choose an environmental career or who choose to volunteer their services to address these issues in their communities look to land-grant institutions for unbiased, research-based information and educational programs to enhance their knowledge and skills and to grow and diversify their professional networks. Given the diverse disciplinary and applied scientific experience of our faculty and staff, **SENR is well positioned to be a leader at the state and national levels to help in building capacity among professionals and volunteers** working to address complex environmental and natural resource issues. Like all academic units, the challenge for SENR is to **leverage our scientific expertise to provide high value applied programs and services that will have real, measurable impacts** on these individuals and in the communities and organizations in which they live and work.



RESPONSE

SENR has five core programs to support the state's environmental and natural resources community:

Environmental Professionals Network (EPN) maintains an on-line community, networking breakfasts and larger signature events with respected presenters. **Master of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR)** is a professional practice graduate degree program that serves around 18 in-career or career-transition professionals and recent graduates seeking to increase their scientific understanding of environmental issues. **Ohio Environmental Leaders Institute (OELI)** provides educational programs for environmental professionals on leadership, collaboration, and communication. **Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN)** is a natural resources outreach and service program, offering a 40-hour education program, certification, and continuing education. **Ohio Woodland, Water, and Wildlife Conference (OWWWC)** is a forum for professionals to gain knowledge on natural resource management and research.



average
EPN Participants
attended per event



hours of service from
OCVN naturalists



OWWWC professionals
were responsible for the
management of 78,000
acres across the state
of Ohio.

IMPACT

In 2018, SENR's monthly EPN gatherings averaged over 130 attendees and approximately 2000 online participants from diverse employment sectors and students. Feedback from participants shows **the network has led to numerous collaborations/partnerships, internships, jobs, and initiation or expansion of numerous projects. Our MENR graduates have found work** with a wide range of federal, state, and local governmental, NGOs and private sector companies. The OELI partnered with the Montgomery Conservancy District to help **launch the Greater Dayton Environmental Fellows Program** in which 35 fellows learned about local, state, and federal environmental issues, leadership and collaboration skills, while building their professional networks. We also **certified 280 volunteer naturalists** who contributed 39,370 hours of service totaling more than \$982,675 and benefiting 700 partner environmental and natural resources organizations. Roughly 100 certified naturalists attended a statewide conference on restoring, protecting, and interpreting Ohio's natural areas, with most respondents reporting significant gains in knowledge particularly in wildlife conservation, citizen science, and outdoor youth education. The OWWWC attracted almost 300 natural resource professionals, who are collectively **responsible for management of almost 78,000 acres across the state.** We also provided CE credits to approximately 200 NR professions through our SAF, ISA, and ODA pesticide workshops.

CONTACT

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