

Annual Report

Marion County Master Recycler Program
Marion County Environmental Services



Program Description

The Marion County Master Recycler Program is a community engagement volunteer corps focused on sustainable consumption and resourcefulness, climate protection, saving food, reuse and repair of products, toxics reduction, waste reduction, composting and recycling. Each year, two to three 7-week training sessions are held in Marion County for incoming cohorts of volunteers. Armed with outreach techniques and resources, graduates volunteer in their community as well as pursue personal community projects. They also receive ongoing training and support that includes a monthly newsletter, open houses and continued education opportunities, and assistance on individual projects.



Program revamp and rebrand in 2022

Master Recycler programs are prevalent across various Oregon counties and the greater U.S, representing a durable and lasting commitment to service from resource conservation minded, and in some cases, life-long volunteers. In Marion County specifically, the program has a 27 year history, beginning with just a few humble volunteers taking the 1st class in 1994. Over its nearly

three decade history, the program has seen over 800 volunteers take the training, amassing over 12,000+ hours of community service.

Despite having a strong community impact, the program is undergoing a much needed “facelift” and rebrand to pursue more aggressive climate action strategies around waste reduction, support community empowered projects backed by mini-grants, and aims to address issues of equity and access to the environmental movement through prioritizing underserved community members and community wealth building in Marion County.

As a result, the next class and cohort offered through the rebranded program will be held in late April 2022 with a fresh set of topics, trainings, and speakers, but with the same vigor and spirit of getting things done!

Course successes and challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic has made serving the community difficult, and save for a small group, socially distanced “beta course” to test new curriculum, the in-person class itself has not been held for the previous two years. Therefore, focus shifted from recruiting more volunteers to supporting the existing corps of volunteers through meaningful projects. Volunteers have been up to the challenge in 2021, knocking out hours through socially distanced events, video making, and virtual gatherings to refresh their sustainability knowledge and educate others. Similarly, volunteers have been hard at work supporting their communities through food relief projects and community resourcing to lift one another up in difficult times.



Big picture view: Oregon has work to do

In 2019, Oregon recovered (recycled and composted) 42% percent of the waste generated, a 1.2% increase from 2018.

Unfortunately, Oregonians also generated more waste in 2019. We:

- generated 5,728,7966 tons of waste, up nearly 1.3 percent from 2018 and
- disposed of 3,322,700 tons into landfills and incinerators, down less than one percent from 2018.

The State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) sets goals and evaluates how Oregon is doing with waste recovery efforts. DEQ reports these recovery rates every year.

Every four years, DEQ conducts an analysis of what's in the garbage across Oregon. Below you can review what is found in Marion County's waste stream as the result of a waste composition study performed most recently in 2017. These varying categories, for example food waste, also represent where Marion County Waste Reduction and Master Recyclers plan to focus their efforts to make the largest impact in reducing waste and consumption of materials.



The way we get things done

Behavior change and education

Aim: Engage community members (individual and families) through creating awareness, outreach, and empowerment. Behavior change is on a spectrum, and these efforts range from one off events to long term engagement to facilitate lasting change.



Waste Reduction (reducing and reusing)

- 3 Master Recyclers supported a large-scale reusable, durable to-go container project in collaboration with Immanuel Lutheran to “ditch disposable” take-out containers during free community meals. Volunteers had conversations with a total of 300 meal site guests to educate on the project and how to use containers. These washable containers replaced over 22,000 single use containers going to landfill each year
- 10 people benefited from 4 Master Recyclers participating in a food waste audit with Mt. Angel Abby, which contributed to better understanding of food waste reduction strategies their sustainability program could implement during community meals
- 3 Master Recyclers attended a small group, socially-distanced “beta-course” held at Marion County Public Works in efforts to receive feedback on new course curriculum and refresh knowledge of Master Recycler volunteers who previously took the legacy course

- A repair fair and Really Really Free market and Radical Pride swap was held in Salem and benefitted 10 people directly with 100 people attending
- A repair fair was planned, but unfortunately canceled in partnership with Silver Falls library due to COVID concerns. Look out for many more repair fairs in 2022!
- No tours were conducted this year

Recycling

- 172 people learned how to effectively recycle and compost through conversing with volunteers and receiving information at tabling events (farmers markets, county fair)
- Master Recyclers supported winter storm debris clean-up and composting efforts

Toxics reduction

- 56 people learned how to reduce household toxics and made take-home safer, less toxic green cleaners at community events. 41 people within this group were monolingual spanish-speakers

Online and virtual

- 2 educational YouTube videos were produced by Master Recyclers outlining plastics recycling and plastic film recycling in Marion County. These videos collectively garnered 185 views.
- Master Recyclers virtually attended 2 waste reduction webinars to stay abreast of the most up-to-date information on new legislation in Oregon and waste reduction topics.
- 34 Master Recyclers submitted their thoughts on the future direction of the program through online surveys to make the course more accessible to their community
- Lastly, advocacy around reducing toxics at the federal level was pursued by a Master Recycler writing to their congressional district around support of the Better Beauty bill



*These photos were taken during July 2021 events when mask mandates had been temporarily lifted in Marion County.

Goals for the future of the program

Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

Aim and transparency: while the revamp is still underway, it is a goal of the future program, like others in Oregon and the Portland Metro Area, to work to address institutional, financial and social constructs that keep communities of color and low-income communities from participating in sustainability efforts while including their world view and lifestyles in a vision of sustainability. Future course attendees will be asked to complete a demographics survey to track program progress in this area. The survey data will reflect only the people who responded, and respondents can choose more than one option in several of the questions around identity.

Efforts to reduce barriers to access of the program will also include but aren't limited to:

- No cost scholarships to take course
- Mini-grants for volunteer projects
- Bus passes and carpooling transport available to class participants and event volunteers
- Recruitment of bilingual volunteers to provide culturally relevant sustainability content in specific communities
- Development of bilingual materials and literature for distribution during community events
- Long term: targeted community design classes focused on learning areas determined by underserved community members with room for remunerative (paid) opportunities

Contribute to community wealth

Aim and transparency: we strive to build partnerships that are truly mutually beneficial, while fostering ongoing relationships with community leaders. We plan to highlight and bring attention to community sustainability efforts cultivated from these partnerships.

- Master Recyclers volunteered 219 hours this year, contributing an equivalent value of \$6,250 to community efforts (based on Independent Sector report on valuation of volunteer time - \$28.54/hour)
- While this contribution is humble in 2021, we plan to aim for \$10,000 in community contribution in 2022 (350 community service hours)

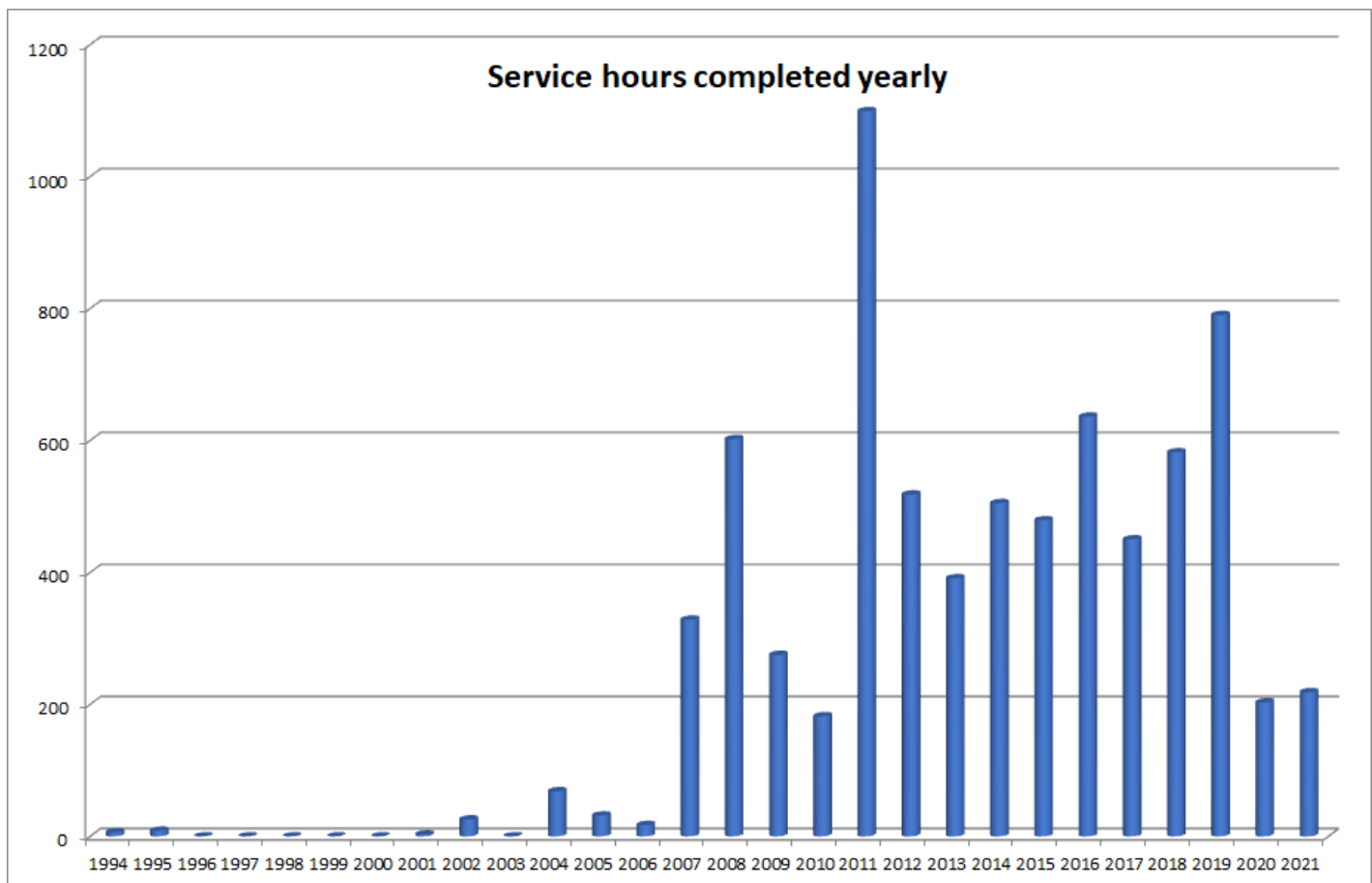
Master Recycler certification

Additionally, 3 Master Recyclers earned their official certification by satisfying the minimum 30 hours of community payback hours in 2021! A hallmark of the program is asking volunteers to pledge to participate in 30 volunteer hours to receive their official Master Recycler certification after taking the course. Below is a quick breakdown of payback hours, certification, and general hour completion of the course's history.

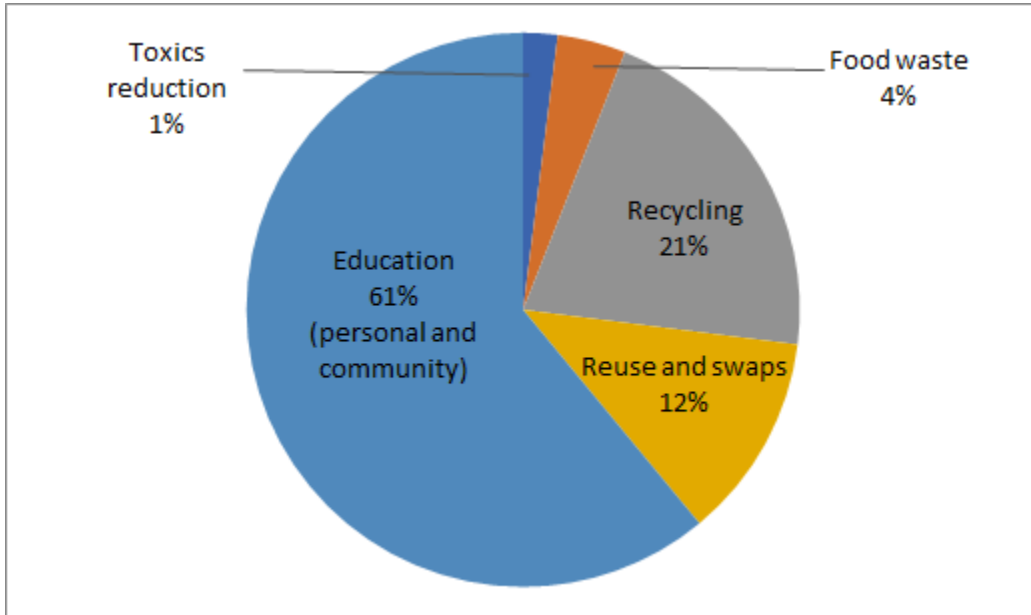
- 161/837 members who have completed the training portion of the program completed 30 payback hours. This translates to 19% or 1 in 5 Master Recyclers completing 30 hours of payback
- On average, Master Recyclers who have gone through the program volunteer 15 hours during their active community service period

By the numbers

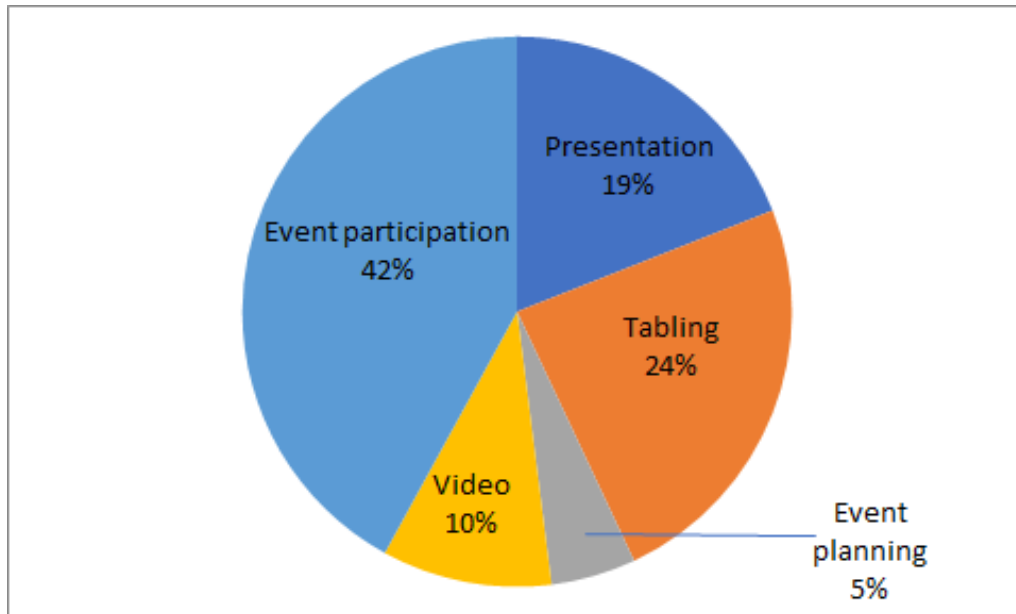
In 2021, Master Recyclers continued efforts to volunteer while safely and effectively responding to the challenges of COVID in their communities. The following pages use graphs and charts to demonstrate those hours.



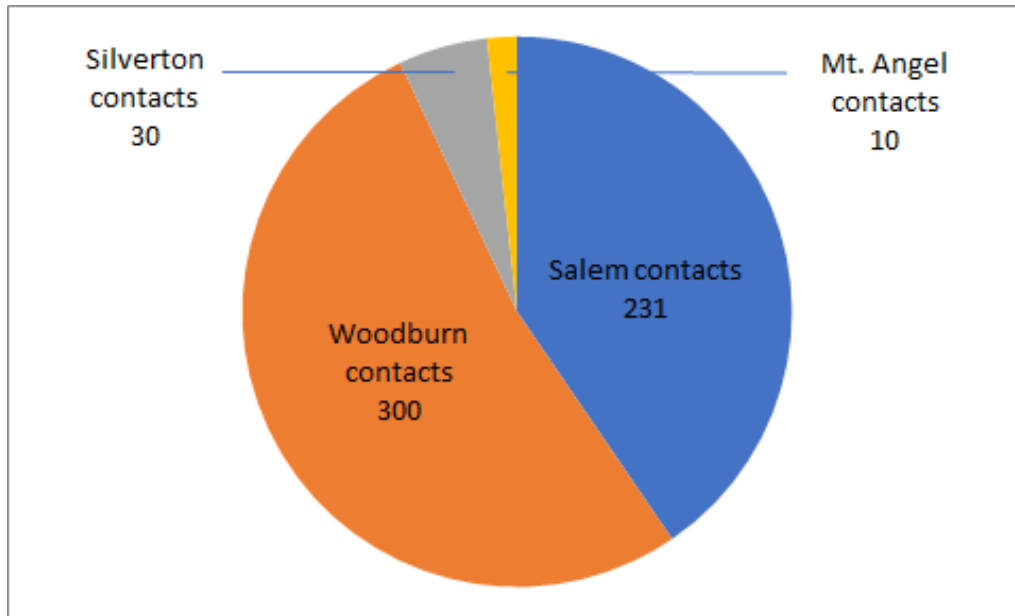
Where we focused our volunteer efforts



How did we reach out?



How many people did we reach?



Expenses and revenue 2021

| | |
|--|----------|
| Program coordinator | \$54,000 |
| Overhead - transportation, printing, credit card fees, network events, supplies, online/in-person training (budgeted but not spent) | \$18,620 |
| Total expense | \$54,000 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Revenue | \$0 |
| No classes held, no tuition fees for 2021 | |
| Total revenue | \$0 |

Master Recycler activity 2021-2022

| January | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|------------|---|
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Continued education - SB 582 webinar | January 19th | 30 | n/a | 2 | 0 | Marion County (ES staff), DEQ |
| February | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Tree Debris Clean-up and recycling | February 20th | 25 | 25 | 3.5 | 0 | City of Salem, Master Recyclers |
| March | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Food waste collection from restaurant | March 3rd | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0 | Marion County Waste Reduction, Taproot |
| Food waste audit at Mt. Angel Abby | March 21st | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | Mt. Angel Abby Sustainability, Master Recyclers |
| April | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Master Recycler Meet, Greet, and Swap | April 9th | 2 | 36 MR volunteers | 2 | 3 | Marion County (ES staff), Master Recycler volunteers |
| May | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Plastic film recycling video | May 20th | 143 views | 143 views | 0 | 5 | Master Recyclers, Marion County Waste Reduction |
| Plastics in the recycling cart video | May 20th | 42 view | 42 views | 0 | 5 | Master Recyclers, Marion County Waste Reduction |
| June | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Immanuel Lutheran Durables to-go project and outreach | June 23rd, June 30th | 350 | 200 | 4 | 2 | Immanuel Lutheran Church Woodburn meal site |
| July | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Immanuel Lutheran Durables to-go containers project and outreach | July 7th | 350 | 100 | 2 | 1 | Immanuel Lutheran Church Woodburn meal site |
| Marion County Fair 2021 - waste reduction tabling and outreach | July 9th-11th | 2,000 | 92 | 24 | 3 | Marion County Waste Reduction, Mid Valley Garbage and Recycling Association |
| Marion County Fair Event Recycling | July 9th-11th | 2,000 | 50 | 5 | 20 | Master Recyclers, Garden Services |
| Really Really Free Market - radical pride | July 24th | 50 | 10 | 4 | 3 | Pringle Park, Master Recyclers, Free Fridge Salem |
| August | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Green Cleaner Hallman NHA Friday Fun event with | August 6th | 400 | 56 cleaners made, 80 conversations | 2 | 2 | Hallman Neighborhood Association |
| Master Recycler Feedback form and community survey | August 21st | 34 | 34 | 68 | 2 | Marion County Waste Reduction, Master Recyclers |
| September | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Silverton Farmer's Market (recycling and styrofoam collection) | September 4th | 100 | 15 | 2 | 0 | Sustainable Silverton Coalition |
| Repair Fair w/Silver Falls Library planning | September 23rd | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 | Silver Falls Library, Sustainable Silverton Coalition, Master Recyclers |
| October | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Master Recycler beta course | October 21st, October 28th | 6 | 6 | 5 | n/a | Marion County Waste Reduction, Master Recyclers |
| Association of Oregon Recyclers conference continuing education | October 20th-22nd | 100 | 0 | 15 | 0 | AOR, Master Recyclers |
| November | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Master Recycler beta course | November 4th, November 11th, November 18th | 6 | 6 | 7.5 | n/a | Marion County Waste Reduction, Master Recyclers |
| Silverton Farmer's Market (recycling and styrofoam collection) | November 6th | 100 | 15 | 2 | 0 | Sustainable Silverton Coalition |
| December | | | | | | |
| Name | Date | Event attendance | Direct contacts | Outreach hours | Prep hours | Partners |
| Better Beauty Bill: Toxics Reduction advocacy and congressional letter | December 8th | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, Master Recyclers |