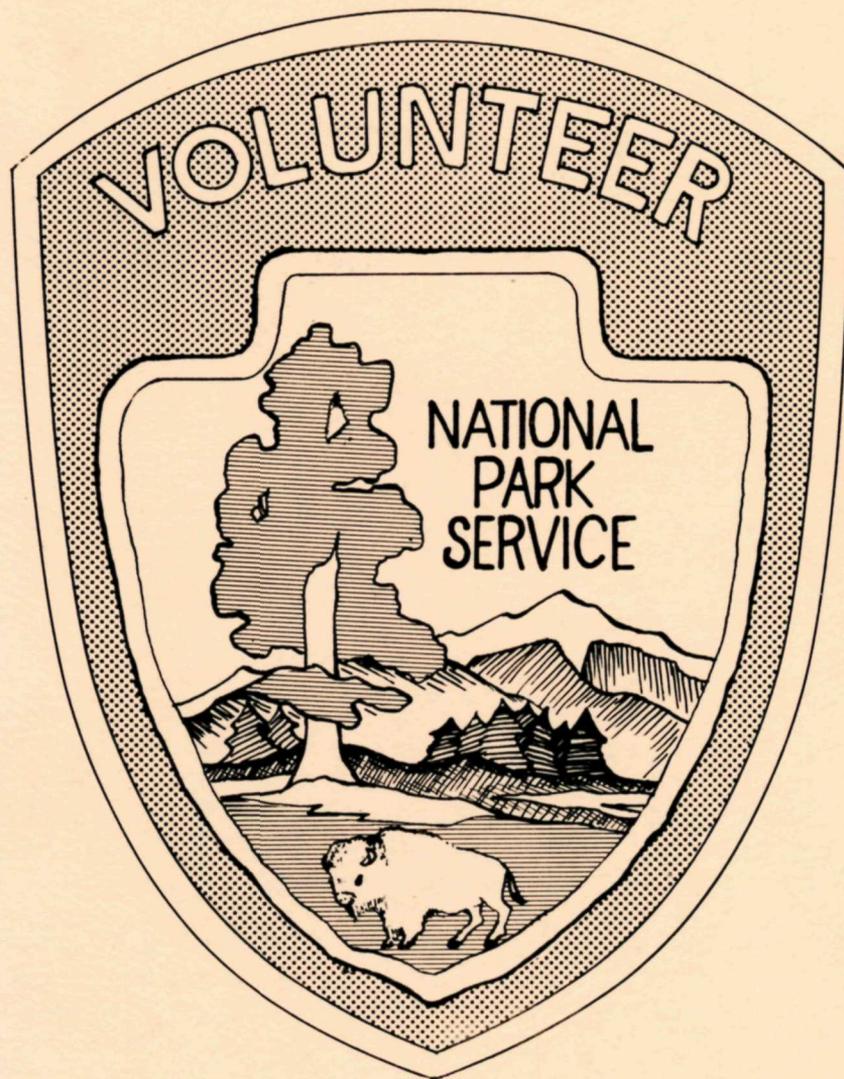


# VOLUNTEERS IN THE PARKS

Getting The Most Out of Your  
Park's Volunteer Program



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 1982

This handbook was prepared in the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, by a team composed of Lorraine Hohorst, Principal Researcher and Author; Julie Nagle, Ray Murray, Peggy Dolinich, Bill Dickinson, Jay Goldsmith, Martha Shibata, Audrey Rabinovitz and Ronnie Poligrates. Ms. Hohorst's work was done under contract through the Voluntary Action Center. Valuable assistance was also provided by Roy Graybill of the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services, in the Washington Office of the National Park Service. Numerous park staff also contributed to this project by sharing their valuable insights, ideas and experiences.

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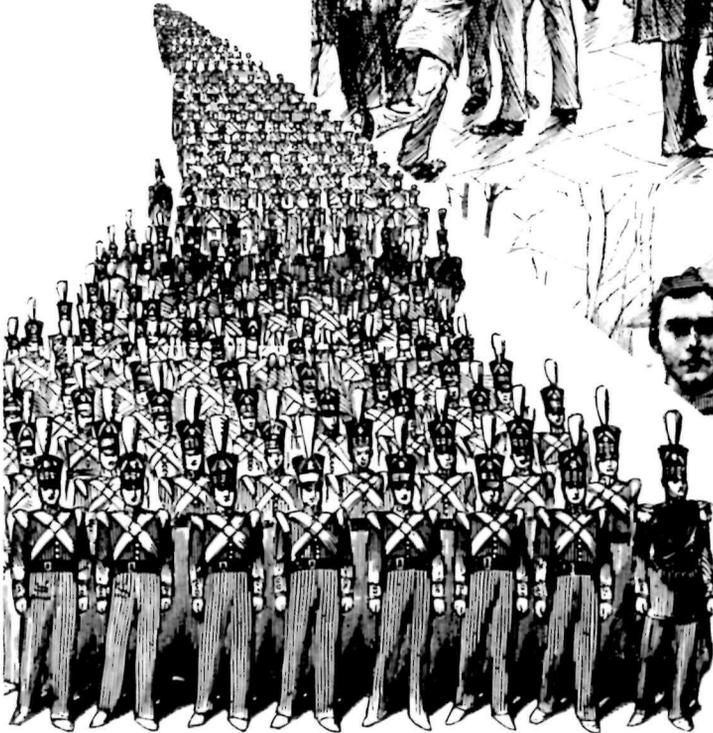
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*The most obvious benefit of a volunteer program is an increased labor force.*



# INTRODUCTION

In 1981 over 40 million people in the United States - or one out of every six - served as volunteers. The value of this volunteer time was estimated at a record \$64 billion. Out of the 40 million volunteers in 1981, 8326 individuals donated their time and talents to the Volunteers in the Parks (VIP) program of the National Park Service. They worked a total of 503,000 hours. Their assignments ranged from staffing visitor booths to excavating archeological sites, to repairing historical cannons, to improving backcountry trails. They ushered at concerts, gave thousands of walks and talks, and planned and supervised all kinds of volunteer activities. These volunteers allowed the Park Service to provide services and complete projects that could not have been done otherwise. As citizen representatives, volunteers can also become persuasive "friends" of the NPS and effective supporters of national parks.

To maintain its high standards of quality and excellence in the face of declining resources and escalating costs during the '80s, the National Park Service will need to rely increasingly on the assistance of volunteers. Volunteers supplement paid staff and help the NPS accomplish work that otherwise could not be possible. With adequate forethought and planning, improved volunteer management skills, enthusiasm and support, the present National Park Service VIP program can be improved and expanded cost effectively.

Volunteers require an investment of our most limited resource -- staff time. But we must recognize that our staff time investment is both necessary and cost effective. In order to realize the best return on that investment and to maximize results, we will need to resolve those problems, issues and biases that we may have had with volunteers in the past, and acquire the necessary skills of effective volunteer management.

The key to success is to be well prepared before starting or expanding a volunteer program. It is important to anticipate potential problems and think through the total process. This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for park unit staff to use in improving and expanding their volunteer involvement programs. The guide is divided into two sections:

- 1) The first chapter, ISSUES AND ANSWERS, discusses the major issues and problems which have arisen over the use of volunteers, and addresses them with specific, field tested park unit solutions.
- 2) The second chapter, AIDS AND IDEAS, provides specific, "how to" information that will help park staff systematically organize and manage their volunteer programs for maximum effectiveness.



*For every barrier identified, some park unit has found a solution to it.*

# ISSUES AND ANSWERS

## Suggested Solutions to Concerns About Volunteer Programs in the National Parks

Early in 1982 a telephone survey, reaching 77 units of the National Park System, was conducted to identify both real and perceived barriers which inhibit greater utilization of volunteers in the National Park System. The survey also identified successful strategies for overcoming these barriers, along with ideas for implementing and improving volunteer programs. For every barrier identified, certain park units had found solutions to problems still unsolved by others. The individuals surveyed included park superintendents, VIP coordinators, and chiefs of interpretation, resource management, visitor protection, and maintenance. All unit types of the Park System were contacted: national parks, monuments, memorials, historic sites and battlefields, as well as national recreation areas, rivers, seashores and lakeshores. Though each unit's problems varied, a general pattern of volunteer program issues emerged. Seven issue areas were universally mentioned:

- o VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF
- o TIME ALLOCATION
- o FUNDING
- o VOLUNTEER FUNCTIONS
- o VOLUNTEER DRESS
- o HOUSING
- o RECRUITMENT

A discussion of each of these seven issues follows, along with some examples of field tested remedies for dealing with them.

### I. VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF:

#### "Am I Replacing Paid Staff By Using More Volunteers?"

This is often a concern expressed by paid staff. They feel their jobs are threatened by the presence of unpaid volunteers in the park work force. This misapprehension can drive a wedge

between paid staff and volunteers which affects the morale of both, and can check the park staff's willingness to recruit and manage volunteers. Reassuring staff and gaining their genuine acceptance and approval of the volunteers from the outset will do much to alleviate their insecurity and resistance.

The use of volunteers is a viable means of accomplishing your park's goals. Keep in mind, however, that they must not be used to displace paid employees. Volunteers may be assigned any work identified as part of your park's unfunded work backlog, work that, because of personnel or funding limitations, would absolutely not get done if volunteers did not do it. Volunteers can provide assistance on needed tasks that your paid staff cannot get to. Valuable, behind-the-scenes volunteer contributions can free up paid staff for more upfront critical services.



*Volunteers can provide valuable behind-the-scenes contributions.*

Increased volunteer usage is an alternative strategy that stretches limited budget dollars and staff, and helps you accomplish your objectives at the park. Volunteerism is simply an additional resource to help get things done, and should be pursued wherever and whenever possible. Volunteers, therefore, do not replace paid staff. They augment and supplement the services you are providing at your park.

- \* Short-term wilderness cleanup projects are done each year by Sierra Club Service Outings groups at Denali National Park. In 1982 a group of 10 to 12 volunteers, accompanied by three Sierra Club staff (under the supervision of the Denali backcountry ranger), will backpack into the backcountry to dismantle an overgrown and ruined World War II military camp, and pack out all debris and scrap from the camp to the main trail (where it will be picked up by rangers with dog sleds during the less busy winter months). Resource management projects such as this are the sort that the limited ranger staff lacks the time to do. The Sierra group volunteers' involvement, therefore, expands the park program at Denali.
- \* At Gateway National Recreation Area in New York, girls with a knowledge and love for horses help out at the NPS police stable. They do chores and groom the horses -- necessary tasks requiring little supervision. These volunteers provide assistance on work that regular paid staff cannot get to.
- \* Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., has a "Volunteer Day" once a month. Individual volunteers are recruited and organized to work on group park projects that park staff members lack the time to do. Examples of "Volunteer Day" projects include tending park trails, controlling undesirable exotic plant species in the park, and tending the park's water diversion bars. By concentrating its volunteer projects on one day of each month, the park is able to compress the amount of supervisory time needed for its volunteers.

## II. TIME ALLOCATION:

### "I Don't Have Enough Time To Run A Volunteer Program."

This concern almost always arises. Some park staffs argue, however, that they can't afford not to invest the time because they depend so heavily on supplemental volunteer support.

There is no getting around the fact that volunteer programs require every bit as much management and supervision as other programs involving permanent and seasonal employees. The training, direction, feedback and support of volunteers require an investment of your limited staff time. As expressed by the volunteer coordinator at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California, a good volunteer program is not to be undertaken lightly: "It takes a lot of manpower to direct a group of volunteers ... rarely are they able to direct themselves." As with most things in life, including the use of volunteered "free" labor, nothing is free. You must decide whether or not the tangible benefits derived from a well managed volunteer program are worth the investment of staff time by you and the other NPS staff who will be involved in the management of the program. Consider two key points when weighing the benefits of a successful volunteer program against the time required to manage the program:

- A. Volunteers Can Stretch Your Dollars. The issue of having enough time for the VIP program is not a question of time, but of priorities. An old management cliché states that "it's not insufficient time, but insufficient management" -- in other words, if management priorities are set correctly, time will be allocated to the most pressing tasks. Volunteers are a resource that can be tapped to assist park staff in maintaining and improving the quality of the National Park System. If volunteers can provide the labor to do the work which you can't do with existing staff, and if the volunteers supply more work hours than is required to supervise and manage them, then you are able to stretch your limited dollars by using volunteers. Their involvement becomes worth your investment of staff supervisory time to manage them. The increasingly tight budgets in most parks should be viewed as a motivation rather than a constraint for the expanded use of volunteer assistance. A look at most successful volunteer programs shows that the staff investment usually pays high dividends for the park unit.

Once the benefits and advantages of using volunteers in your park are clearly established, you must assign a high priority to the management of an effective VIP program. With limited park staffing and budget, your volunteer program must be prioritized as a necessity with assigned responsibilities, anticipated results and a well conceived and carefully planned commitment of time in order for the program to be successful. You must make your volunteer program a priority in your park and make the time to run the program. Here are several ways others have prioritized their volunteer programs:

- \* Recognizing the need for commitment from the top down, Channel Islands National Park in California allocates 10 percent of the chief interpreter's time to serve as volunteer coordinator for the VIP program. The superintendent considers their VIP program's success a priority.
- \* Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in Ohio is restructuring its volunteer organization in order to improve and strengthen its program. Two consecutive seasonal positions will combine to provide full-time volunteer coordination. This action enables the park to expand its entire volunteer effort and underscores the park's strong commitment to the volunteer program.
- \* The Regional Director of the National Capital Parks Region has made an aggressive volunteer program a critical element in the superintendents' list of responsibilities.

B. Volunteers Can Help Manage Other Volunteers. If you use volunteers to manage other volunteers, your volunteer program can become self-managed. In parks with large volunteer programs, a "volunteer" volunteer coordinator or assistant coordinator reporting to the NPS staff person responsible for the volunteer program, can assume some of the responsibilities for managing the volunteer program. Examples of partially or wholly self-managed volunteer programs can be found at many park units:

- \* Saguaro National Monument in Tucson is aided by two "volunteer" VIP coordinators. A retired law officer coordinates all activities of the park's VIP mounted assistance unit. Another VIP handles the scheduling and volunteer coordination for the school group environmental education program.
- \* One volunteer oversees the American Landmarks Festival, a series of classical concerts presented at both Federal Hall and the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace (Manhattan Sites). The VIP handles all the details of the nine year old program, which in 1981 attracted over 7000 people. Based on the ratio of VIP funds to the number of site visitors, the volunteer coordinator estimates that it costs him a penny per hour of visitor time!

- \* Eighteen volunteer garden coordinators, ranging in age from 25 to 86 years, manage 700 plots and 1000 people at the nine community garden sites at Rock Creek Park and other pocket parks in Washington, D.C.
- \* While working for the volunteer coordinator, a student intern at Rock Creek Park developed a new program of monthly work days for volunteers, wrote job descriptions and sent out publicity connected with the program. In this manner, the intern, requiring little of the coordinator's supervisory time, expanded the park's volunteer program.
- \* A Boy Scouts of America explorer post formed the original nucleus of "The Fort Stanwix Garrison", a volunteer group at Fort Stanwix National Historic Site in Rome, New York. The Garrison has its own by-laws and elected officers who work closely with the superintendent and volunteer coordinator. They plan and carry out all activities connected with the volunteer interpretive program and relieve the coordinator of much of the management workload. Says the volunteer coordinator, the Garrison "is the VIP program".
- \* A senior citizen is the volunteer VIP coordinator for Adobe House at the John Muir National Historic Site in California. She recruits, screens and schedules the people needed there.

An argument often lodged against volunteer programs is that they take time away from a manager's other duties. Work tracking systems can have categories added for volunteer time, so that the time allocated for managing volunteer programs will not be perceived as "stealing" from other duties.

Once you get your volunteer program going, you need to insure that you continue getting the time and funds needed to manage the program. You must demonstrate the effectiveness of your use of volunteer resources at the park and publicize the success of your program. First of all, select projects for high priority volunteer efforts that are highly visible and that significantly and positively impact the functioning of the park. This will demonstrate the value and success of your volunteer program. Then, communicate your program successes up the line. Become an advocate for your program so that others will know about your successes and insist that adequate time and dollars be allocated to your volunteer program.



*Publicize the success of your volunteer program to assure that adequate time and dollars will continue to be allocated to it.*

It is helpful to inform your regional VIP coordinator of your volunteer plans and accomplishments in detail. Supplement the required trimester reports which request only basic, statistical information. In order to advocate your program, outline your specific accomplishments and successes, describe innovative uses of volunteers at your park, and discuss the exciting, unique aspects of your program.

- \* The Western Region's VIP coordinator admits that she came to be a champion for several volunteer programs after receiving in-depth reports from some of the region's park coordinators. These park coordinators discussed in specific detail the accomplishments and exciting features of their respective volunteer involvement programs.

Your regional coordinator can help your VIP program get more recognition, and possibly additional time and resources to manage the program more effectively.

### III. FUNDING:

#### "I Don't Have Enough Funds For My Volunteer Program."

You never will! But then, volunteer compensation is not the answer to maintaining a successful volunteer program. Consider three ways you can maximize your available volunteer program funding:

- A. Analyze Volunteer Motivation For Non-Monetary Considerations. Compensation is not a prime motivator for most volunteers. A 1981 Gallup poll indicates that 80 percent of those who volunteer do so because of altruistic reasons -- they want to be helpful. While it's always nice to get a free "uniform" or be reimbursed for gas expenses, most volunteers would be willing to work anyway, and will do so if their time is used effectively and thoughtfully.

Name any worthwhile activity or organization and there is likely to be a volunteer group supporting it. Common to all these volunteer situations are primary motivations other than money. Monetary reimbursement is almost always secondary. Frequently, volunteers provide their own transportation and "brown bag it" for meals. Some even pay for the privilege of volunteering!

- \* Members of the Volunteer Conservation Corps take "working vacations" each summer in national forests and parks. They agree to provide their own transportation to their work area. They also provide their own equipment, pay a registration fee and sometimes buy their own food!
- \* A Boy Scouts of America explorer post plans to do trail work in the backcountry of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in California and provide their own equipment. In addition, they pay an annual Scout registration fee.

Volunteer motivation is discussed in greater detail in the "Recruitment" section of the AIDS AND IDEAS chapter in this handbook.

- B. Minimize Volunteer Reimbursement. When the Volunteers in the Parks program was instituted in 1970, the purpose of the annual allocation was to defray volunteers' out-of-pocket expenses. This meant the reimbursement of commuting expenses or the cost of "uniforms", training materials or other supplies. Sometimes a volunteer's lunch expenses were reimbursed. In those relatively fat times, it was not uncommon to limit the number of volunteers to those for whom expenses could be reimbursed out of the current year's VIP budget. Now, as funding is compressed, there is a need to stretch dollars farther to cover more volunteers. The intent of the funding is to reimburse only those volunteers who would be presented with a real hardship if not compensated. VIP dollars today are best spent on the actual supplies or training needed to make the volunteer's time productive. Remember that volunteer funds are for discretionary use, and that reimbursement is not mandatory.

The challenge is to use your limited volunteer funds as leverage to support the largest number of volunteer hours. An appropriate and effective use of available VIP funds would be for supplies, materials and training that help support volunteer efforts.

- \* At Hyde Park, in New York, at the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historical Park, the staff recently decided to eliminate reimbursement (except for special hardship cases) and switch their funding to pay for the cost of supplies and materials only.
- \* The volunteer coordinator at Valley Forge National Historic Site in Pennsylvania bought a sewing machine with VIP funds. Now the volunteers themselves create historic costumes at virtually no cost.

- C. Enlist The Aid Of Your Cooperating Association. Another source of funding assistance for your VIP program may be your cooperating association. According to the Cooperating Association Guidelines, these associations are free to contribute to any program that will enhance interpretation. In line with this, your association may be able to fund volunteer related expenses for:

- o supplies and equipment
- o transportation to and from training
- o training materials
- o awards and recognition

This means that your association may be able to fund historical costumes. (Seven percent of the 1981 VIP budget went towards the purchase of historical costumes.) You can also ask your association to fund, or better yet donate, such things as special equipment needed for your volunteer program, name tags or badges, or special recognition awards. Donations from your association are best kept to projects of small dollar value.

- \* Volunteers at Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas look forward to the annual VIP appreciation dinner, funded by the park's cooperating association.
- \* At Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico, the park's cooperating association buys coffee and doughnuts for the ongoing program of informal appreciation get-togethers for park volunteers.

There are other instances when your association can provide assistance. For example, VIPs may collect fees in the park, but are liable if the money is lost or stolen. If fee collection is an essential area for the placement of a volunteer at your park, you may want to consider asking the association to pay for the bonding of the individual who, as a volunteer, will collect fees at the park.

#### IV. VOLUNTEER FUNCTIONS:

##### "What Can Volunteers Do?"

The VIP Guidelines were written specifically to help implement the Volunteers in the Parks Act of 1969. The Act authorized the VIP program, provided liability insurance coverage for the volunteers, and exempted them from Office of Personnel Management restrictions like competitive examinations, veteran's preference and age limitations. The Act also provided minimal funding for the program. The newly revised guidelines provide some guidance on the allowed uses of volunteers in the parks. Here are three key points to consider.

- A. Volunteers Supplement Rather Than Supplant. The VIP Act of 1969 includes the following basic principles about the uses of volunteers in the parks:
  - o Volunteers serve in a supplemental capacity -- ie. to assist and to help, not to perform the duties of regular paid staff.

- o Volunteers are not substitutes for permanent supervisory staff.
- o Volunteers are not substitutes for currently funded career or seasonal jobs.



*The distinction between supplementing and supplanting paid staff must be emphasized to overcome staff concerns. Otherwise, volunteers will get a distinctly cool, and sometimes even hostile, reception from the paid staff.*

The distinction between "supplementing" and "supplanting" paid staff must be emphasized to overcome staff concerns that their jobs may be threatened or that reliance on volunteers will weaken their budget requests. Our earlier discussion of the "volunteers and paid staff" issue in this chapter argued that volunteers do not replace paid staff if they are used to perform only work that has been identified as part of the park's unfunded work backlog.

- B. **Volunteer Projects Have Wide Variety.** Volunteer projects can be selected from any that could assist permanent or seasonal paid personnel in overcoming budget, time and manpower limitations.

- \* The 1982 volunteer project list at Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C. lists 72 jobs in six areas:
  - o resource management
  - o interpretation, recreation, & visitor services
  - o community gardens
  - o maintenance
  - o Art Barn Gallery
  - o U.S. Park Police, Rock Creek Park Substation

Some of the listed needs for volunteer assistance at Rock Creek Park are:

- + graffiti removal from statues, bridges, etc.
- + development of a new volunteer brochure for the park
- + adopting a bike trail
- + conducting visitor surveys
- + Art Barn Gallery administrative assistance
- + talks on various topics at community garden meetings

- C. **The Guidelines Are To Serve As A Guide For Action.** The VIP Guidelines are intended to provide a basic GUIDE FOR ACTION. They are not all inclusive and do not cover every situation. Moreover, they can be interpreted to fit the specific (and usually atypical) situations which will arise in your park.

The guidelines leave considerable flexibility for the innovative use of volunteers by the creative park manager in order to expand the limited resources of the park. Over 100 tasks presently being performed by volunteers in the National Park System are listed in Table I, and this list is far from being exhaustive. A sampling of more in-depth descriptions of in-park uses of volunteers follows:

TABLE I

101 WAYS VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP

A List of Projects and Ongoing Programs  
Taken from the 1982 NPS Survey

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Museum cataloguing/cleaning            | 51. Leading snorkeling tours                  |
| 2. Manning gate for passes                | 52. Planning facilities                       |
| 3. Maintaining park herbarium             | 53. Leading star walks                        |
| 4. Student interns                        | 54. Doing prescribed burns                    |
| 5. Compiling a bird list                  | 55. Wildlife management                       |
| 6. Performing Indian tribal dances        | 56. Building a jail facility                  |
| 7. Identifying cultural resource sites    | 57. Entomology identification                 |
| 8. Doing office work                      | 58. Search & rescue work                      |
| 9. Environmental education programs       | 59. Giving bus/train tours                    |
| 10. Volunteer leader coordinator          | 60. Artists-in-residence                      |
| 11. Staffing desk at visitor's center     | 61. Manning first aid station                 |
| 12. Re-establishing natural vegetation    | 62. Compiling catalogues                      |
| 13. Crowd control/ushering                | 63. Small mammal studies                      |
| 14. Preparing multimedia programs         | 64. Checking climbing routes                  |
| 15. Campground hosts                      | 65. Group talks to children                   |
| 16. Preparing orientation manual          | 66. Writing & producing skits                 |
| 17. Removing graffiti from statues        | 67. Doing park cleanups                       |
| 18. Writing pamphlets for foreigners      | 68. Manning fire tower                        |
| 19. Trail obliteration/rehabilitation     | 69. Building diversion dams                   |
| 20. Cave surveys                          | 70. Giving first aid courses                  |
| 21. Ornithology studies/eagles/falcons    | 71. Writing trail guides                      |
| 22. Photographic & graphics work          | 72. Guiding raft trips                        |
| 23. Recruiting other volunteers           | 73. Campground checks                         |
| 24. Mapping                               | 74. Trail patrol                              |
| 25. Arranging for site concerts           | 75. Guided walks and talks                    |
| 26. Taking air quality readings           | 76. Mounted assistance unit                   |
| 27. Rebuilding backcountry bridges        | 77. Creating exhibits                         |
| 28. Speakers bureau                       | 78. Roving park contact                       |
| 29. Manning contact station outside park  | 79. Marking boundaries                        |
| 30. Issuing permits/put-in point          | 80. Leading canyon climbs                     |
| 31. Cannon firings - black powder         | 81. Sewing historical clothing                |
| 32. Archeological excavation              | 82. Leading site tours                        |
| 33. Paleo-entomological research          | 83. Trail measurement                         |
| 34. Operating traveling library           | 84. Courier                                   |
| 35. Animal census                         | 85. Cross country ski patrol                  |
| 36. Gardening (produce/herbs/flowers)     | 86. VIP specialist lecturers                  |
| 37. Cabinetmaking for interpretation      | 87. Visitation monitoring                     |
| 38. Painting ships and structures         | 88. Fish creel census                         |
| 39. Hosting for special events            | 89. Feral animal reduction                    |
| 40. Road stabilization/preservation       | 90. Surveys for handicapped                   |
| 41. Grooming horses/cleaning stables      | 91. Campfire talks                            |
| 42. Leading overnight backpack trips      | 92. Backcountry patrol                        |
| 43. Publishing publications               | 93. Leading snowshoe walks                    |
| 44. Nonvertebrate animal surveys          | 94. Librarian                                 |
| 45. Gathering fire behavior data          | 95. Giving choir concerts                     |
| 46. Setting up pest management program    | 96. Fisheries management                      |
| 47. Rehabilitating overused campsites     | 97. Picking up/dropping off mail              |
| 48. Heliport scheduling/loading/unloading | 98. Field study projects                      |
| 49. Collecting/transcribing oral history  | 99. Marine life research                      |
| 50. Signing - deaf visitors               | 100. Leading nature hikes                     |
|   | 101. Telemetry/trapping of endangered species |

- \* At Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, volunteers assist with resource management by rehabilitating overused campsites in the rugged backcountry, a job that paid staff cannot get around to.
- \* VIPs with Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification staff a first aid station near the sledding hills and patrol the trails, as part of the cross country ski patrol program at Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, south of Cleveland.
- \* VIPs at Buffalo National River in Arkansas work alongside park technicians, helping with fisheries management, cave surveys and visitation monitoring.
- \* Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Big Bend National Park in Texas have found VIP campground hosts helpful. The hosts live in recreational vehicles or tents, and aid both the park staff and visitors. In return, they are permitted to camp for extended periods.
- \* A VIP helps out at the visitors center desk at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in the Seattle, Washington Unit.
- \* At the South Florida Division Research Center in Everglades National Park, 30 volunteers assist the research staff in such areas as fire research and marine and bird life studies.
- \* The Deputy Hunter group at Haleakala National Park consists of about 250 sportsmen with valid Hawaiian hunting licenses, who are deputized as park rangers for the purpose of controlling the feral animal population.

Other than the restrictions specifically outlined in the revised VIP Guidelines, the possibilities for the use of volunteers in the parks are limited only by your ability to be creative. Volunteers can be used virtually anywhere there is a need.



*Clothing for volunteers should be appropriate and functional for the task involved.*

#### V. VOLUNTEER DRESS:

##### "What Can Volunteers Wear?"

The common denominator that identifies all National Park Service volunteers is the Volunteer in Parks identification badge. The revised guidelines provide considerable flexibility as to what other identifying clothing volunteers can wear. The only prohibition is that volunteers cannot wear "any part of the regular NPS uniform." The selection of specific, appropriate attire for volunteers to wear at any park is left to the discretion of the park unit staff and the volunteers. Volunteer wear should be selected with the following considerations in mind:

- o It must be dissimilar to the regular NPS uniform.
- o It must reflect favorably on the National Park Service.
- o It must be in good taste.
- o It should be appropriate and/or functional for the task involved.
- o It should be reasonably priced.
- o It should help build an "esprit de corps" among the volunteers.

Here are some ways that volunteers have been identified by their dress in some parks:

- \* Volunteers at Wolf Trap Farm Park in Virginia found that they could not be recognized as they ushered at the evening concerts. They designed their own fluorescent green and white vests, which made them much more visible to the public.
- \* Volunteers at the Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site in Massachusetts are recognized by their blue smocks. Their work at the house involves extended periods of time spent in the museum archives, where the VIP's clothing needs to be protected from dust.

## VI. HOUSING:

### "I Can't House Enough Volunteers."

Before you say you that you can't accommodate more volunteers because you don't have any place for them to stay, consider these options for housing your volunteers:

- o Use existing park housing
- o Have the volunteers bring their own housing
- o Find housing outside the park
- o Arrange for use of hostel accommodations
- o Utilize camping as housing
- o Recruit residents already accommodated in the park

While parks can often draw from local populations on a day's work basis, many rural parks must import volunteers for a longer duration. Creativity is needed to deal with the housing crunch in these remote areas. It is important to weigh the worth of individual volunteers against housing costs and availability. The following is a discussion of the six VIP housing options identified above. Other options may occur to you. All possible avenues should be pursued. The solution to your housing problem may be found in any one or a combination of options.

- A. Use Existing Park Housing. Begin by laying your hands on all the available seasonal housing you can. Park housing is obtainable primarily in the off-season. The seasonal availability of park housing should be considered when scheduling volunteers. When feasible, schedule your intensive volunteer efforts during the off-season when park housing is more readily available. Since you will need to justify the use of park housing for volunteers in your budget, consider expanding the capacity of existing quarters by creating more dormitory-style arrangements, which reduce your volunteer housing costs. Another cost-reducing possibility is the use of dormitory-style fire crew quarters which may be available at lower rates, and can accommodate more volunteers, than is the case for unused park houses.
- B. Have Volunteers Bring Their Own Housing. Some volunteers can bring their own housing for extended stays in the park. Many national parks and forests utilize volunteers with recreational vehicles (RVs) as campground hosts and other volunteer functions. It is estimated that 10 percent of the U.S. population now owns some sort of RV, and that RV owners will increase to 15 to 20 percent in the near future, due to down-sizing, weight reduction and improved economy of these vehicles. The 45- to 65-year-old age group owns the highest percentage of self-contained motor homes, and has the highest frequency of use. These findings point to a logical target group to draw upon for park volunteer service. Many of these people are retired and have time to devote to volunteer work.

\* Campground hosts worked out well at Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. The park provides the campsite and utilities. The hosts help keep the campground orderly and are in radio contact with park rangers. One woman who comes to the park for an extended period each year also volunteers in the fire tower.

- C. Find Housing Outside The Park. Additional housing units can often be found just outside the park boundaries. Advertising for local housing sponsors for volunteers, either as a donation or at favorable rents, can turn up extra space. Contact church and civic groups, and request to advertise in their newsletters or other publications. Notes can be put up on message boards in the park and at local grocery stores, laundromats, etc. Sometimes a ranger's family or other park employee will provide a room for a volunteer on a short-term basis.
- D. Arrange For Use Of Hostel Accommodations. American Youth Hostels (AYH), which has a network of cottages across the country, is another volunteer housing possibility. Some of the hostels are in, or adjacent to, national park units. The hostels offer pleasant living conditions and kitchens, which help minimize the volunteers' meal costs. The three-day stay limit can be waived for park volunteers, and AYH generally charges the minimum lodging rate in these instances. Of course, everyone -- volunteer or not -- staying at the hostels must abide by International Youth Hostel rules. Arrangements with the hostels must be made on a case-by-case basis.
- \* After a series of mudslides closed roads into Point Reyes National Seashore in California, additional people were needed at the park to clear the debris. Through a cooperative arrangement, the local youth hostel provided housing for the extra workers, and that volunteer park workforce helped clean up damage in the hostel area. In addition, the couple managing the hostel volunteered to work on the cleanup project.
- E. Utilize Camping As Housing. Scout troops, hiking clubs or other organized groups who can house themselves through short-term camping can help stretch available housing. Their use can range from a weekend or several weekends, to stays of longer duration. Sometimes these groups will commit to work on a project or series of projects in exchange for a week- or two-week trip through the backcountry of your park.
- \* Scout groups do campground cleanup and rehabilitation and put in water stalls as they hike and camp across Isle Royale National Park in northernmost Michigan. Directed by their leaders -- in consultation with the park rangers -- the projects are adapted to the scouts' on-the-move existence during these one- to two-week outings.

Camping as housing is particularly advantageous in the spring, winter and fall, when campgrounds are often underutilized. Since many outdoor oriented organizations are equipped for winter camping, consider scheduling volunteer projects for them during the off-season. As organized units with their own management, outdoor organizations can readily plug into your volunteer network.

Camping may also be an option for individual volunteers not affiliated with any particular organized group.

- F. Recruit Residents Already Accommodated In The Park. Don't overlook the potential for solving the housing crunch by recruiting volunteers from NPS and concessioner staff-dependents who are already housed in the park. Concessioner employees, off-duty rangers and their families, and part-time staff should all be considered.

- \* Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in California get many of their volunteers from people living in the park. Many of the concessioner employees volunteer to work through the VIP program during their off-duty hours. Seasonal staff often stay beyond the end of their season to volunteer before returning to college.

The key to obtaining sufficient housing in many parks will be your willingness to be innovative and to consider any and all suggestions with an open mind.

## VII. RECRUITMENT:

### "Where Do I Find Capable Volunteers?"

This question was the one most often repeated as a major concern by park staff consulted during the 1982 NPS telephone survey. Because of its significance, the recruitment issue is treated more fully in the AIDS AND IDEAS chapter of this handbook.

There is no one simple solution to the problem of finding and recruiting volunteers. Recruitment is a continuous task, since new volunteers must be constantly recruited in order to bring in the fresh energy needed to sustain a good program. Keep in mind that recruitment of regular NPS staff also requires continuing efforts.



*Recruiting volunteers may be easier than you envision. More than half of the nation's adults and teenagers donate time to some volunteer activity.*

If a recent Gallup poll is any indication, you might find that recruiting is easier than you think. The survey, released in October 1981, found that more than half of the nation's adults and teenagers give their time to some form of volunteer activity. The results also indicated that 80 percent of the volunteers were motivated by the desire to help others.

In rural areas, the problem of recruitment is particularly difficult because of the often small local population pool from which to draw, and the distance that other volunteers from outside the area must travel to get to the park.

- \* The nearest town to Badlands National Park is Interior, South Dakota, with a population of 62. The next closest town, Wall, is 30 miles from the park and has a population of only 542.
- \* Cape Hatteras National Seashore, located near Manteo, North Carolina, a town with a population of about 600, has difficulty finding volunteers even in a heavily visited tourist area. Most of the local residents work, and the seasonal population is very transient.

In urban areas, there is intense competition among many diverse groups for potential volunteers. So, although the pool of possible volunteers is much larger in urban areas, the difficulty in attracting them is also greater. There are so many more volunteer opportunities and situations from which the interested volunteer may choose. It is important to make your volunteer program and its recruitment campaign as appealing as possible. Keep in mind that the NPS is an appealing volunteer opportunity for many people.

- \* The Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, a brownstone consisting of five period rooms, must constantly compete for its volunteers with many prestigious New York City museums.

- \* Fort Point National Historic Site, in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, must contend with over 25 other museums and historic buildings in San Francisco for potential volunteers.

But all of these recruitment challenges are solvable. Parks with successful recruiting efforts all approached their recruitment efforts systematically by:

- o Targeting the recruitment sources (or audience) which appeared to have the greatest potential;
- o Tailoring recruiting efforts to the identified sources;
- o Appealing personally to potential volunteers whenever possible;
- o Selling the benefits of supporting the NPS and the VIP program; and
- o Accepting only qualified volunteers.

For a more complete discussion of the systematic recruitment approach, consult the "Recruitment" section in the next chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

From sampling the successes in national park units across the country, it is obvious that there are ways to positively resolve the issues often raised in conjunction with starting up or expanding a VIP program. A basic ingredient for success is ATTITUDE:

- \*\*\* An ATTITUDE that volunteers are one essential resource which park staff can draw upon to get the job done.
- \*\*\* An ATTITUDE that volunteer programs should receive priority.
- \*\*\* An ATTITUDE that concentrates more on solutions than problems.
- \*\*\* An ATTITUDE that an investment of staff time is necessary in order to have a successful program.
- \*\*\* An ATTITUDE that a comprehensive, systematic approach to managing a volunteer program will yield the greatest results.

The next chapter is intended to guide you through the process of taking this basic attitude and developing a successful, well organized and well managed volunteer program for your park. It provides specific AIDS AND IDEAS on how to organize and manage your volunteer program for maximum effectiveness.



*Clarity from confusion! Consider all the resources to get your volunteer program off the ground.*

# AIDS AND IDEAS

## A Guide for an Optimal Volunteer Program

As VIP coordinator for your park, you will need to orchestrate all phases of the VIP program: recruitment, screening, placement, orientation, training (in some areas), recognition, volunteer evaluation and recordkeeping. To have a successful program, you need to systematically involve all staff members who will be working with the volunteers in the process of organizing and managing your park's VIP program. Your program can be just as successful as those cited in the previous ISSUES AND ANSWERS chapter.

The 1982 NPS survey found that successful programs existed in all types of park units. No parks were so unique that an effective volunteer program would be precluded. The basic ingredient shared by the good programs was a comprehensive, systematic approach, based on the following nine continuing functions:

- o COMMITMENT
- o PLANNING
- o RECRUITMENT
- o SELECTION AND PLACEMENT
- o ORIENTATION
- o TRAINING AND SUPERVISION
- o RECOGNITION
- o VOLUNTEER EVALUATION
- o PROGRAM EVALUATION

If you eliminate, de-emphasize, or suspend any one of these components, you will undermine the success of your program. It should be understood from the outset that all of these components are continuing functions. Also, remember that you must involve park management and staff in these functions. They need to understand how all the pieces fit together so that they can make the program work.

The nine basic components of a volunteer program will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

## I. COMMITMENT

"Only if you're a true believer yourself can you preach the gospel". If you don't believe in the potentials of volunteerism yourself, you won't be able to convince others that your volunteer program is important. Commitment is the first basic ingredient needed to organize a successful volunteer program. As evidence of commitment at the park level, a volunteer coordinator has been designated for your park (you), and must be provided with an adequate amount of staff time to support a successful program. There must be commitment in the park from the superintendent on down to the staff who will be supervising and working with the volunteers.

In most parks the volunteer coordinator's job is a collateral-duty assignment. Usually this assignment accounts for about 25 percent of the responsible person's time. VIP program coordination duties should be identified in the coordinator's job description, and included as a critical or required job element in evaluating and appraising job performance.

You, as the coordinator for your park's VIP program, can be trained to manage your program more effectively and efficiently, but a heavier time commitment may be necessary in order to maximize your results. Since almost all park functions (interpretation, resource protection, maintenance, etc.) will be making use of volunteers, it is important that all have sufficient input and support to be able to utilize the volunteers effectively. Commitment is the critical first step.

## II. PLANNING

According to Knight's Law, "life is what happens to you while you're making other plans." But planning is essential to any complex undertaking involving a number of people. Like anything else, planning is most effective when done in a systematic manner.

- A. Organize Your Volunteer Program from the top down and from the bottom up. Contact managers and staff to get input and generate ideas from all functional areas -- interpretation, maintenance, resource management and ranger activities. As a group, consider your total park program to decide where volunteer support can be used and where it will prove most effective. Focus on the park's unfunded work backlog to identify work that can be assigned to volunteers. Involve

the staff and management in conducting a thorough survey of all jobs and tasks that need to be done. Be sure to include any park staff members who will train and supervise the volunteers. Their assistance in planning the tasks to be undertaken by volunteers and their acceptance of the volunteers is essential. After all, the staff knows firsthand what isn't getting done and where volunteers could provide assistance.

Together with the staff, determine specific volunteer needs and establish priorities. The unfunded work backlog in some parks may be sizable and includes much work of significant priority. List backlogged work in priority order as identified by park staff. Once this is done, you can define objectives for volunteer services and outline volunteer opportunities and requirements.

*Organizing your volunteer program must be approached with forethought and with eyes wide open.*



This entire process will help identify which specific volunteer skills are desired and will involve the staff in a positive manner in the formulation of the program.

- \* Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in Ohio has made some changes aimed at "professionalizing" its VIP program. At parkwide sessions held several times during the year, all park staff have an opportunity to provide input into the volunteer program.
- \* In 1981, the staff of Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., began the year by drawing up a list of 63 separate projects suitable for volunteers. More than half of them were completed before the year's end. A year-end review identified more opportunities and 72 additional projects were listed for 1982.
- \* At Yosemite National Park in California the district rangers identify projects in the backcountry suitable for volunteer groups. In 1982, a group of 10 to 15 "vacationers" from the Sierra Club will do trail improvement projects and clean up non-combustible items from firepits while moving from site to site.

B. Evaluate The Possible Types Of Program Expansion that can be undertaken. Estimate the cost of using volunteers in terms of budget dollars and/or supervisory time. Consider the alternatives to using the volunteers. Are there alternative ways to accomplish the work? What are the consequences of not doing the work? Then, decide with your managers if the use of volunteers in a particular area will be cost effective. Keep in mind that with volunteers you may be able to get things done that you couldn't do otherwise - e.g. build more trails, serve the public better, etc.

- \* The volunteer coordinator at Zion National Park in Utah estimates that in 1981 the park received \$18,000 worth of volunteer time for its initial investment of staff time and \$1000 in VIP funds.

A job survey should be done at least once a year because situations, needs and volunteers change. An annual review of jobs is also necessary to ensure that existing volunteer assignments are still productive.

C. Prepare Specific VIP Job Descriptions. After the focus of the volunteer effort has been agreed upon, and suitable program assignments for volunteers have been identified, prepare brief job and/or project definitions or descriptions in terms of individual full-time, part-time, seasonal, or one-shot volunteer jobs. Job descriptions should be brief but specific, and written to include job responsibilities, necessary qualifications, time required per week or month, name and phone number of supervisor, and training time requirements. Keep the definitions simple. If you avoid professional jargon or "bureaucrat-eze", these job definitions can be used to describe your needs when recruiting potential volunteers.

\* A student intern at Rock Creek Park wrote a dozen volunteer job descriptions. With the staff's help, he identified and described needs ranging from compiling a book inventory for the Nature Center to maintaining water diversion bars on the park's foot paths and horse trails.

D. Schedule Volunteer Assignments. Summarize where and when volunteers will be needed during the year. This summary serves several purposes:

- o It communicates the objectives of the program to the staff.
- o It makes scheduling and monitoring volunteer assignments and supervisory responsibilities easier. (A time/project/volunteer chart showing volunteer work needs is a useful device for tracking this kind of information.)
- o It provides a useful measuring stick for program evaluation at the end of the year.

### III. RECRUITMENT

Recruit volunteers wherever and whenever you can find them. The volunteer job definitions which result from your overall job survey (discussed above in the section on "Planning") will help determine what types of volunteers are needed, how many can be used effectively and when they need to be "hired". To some extent, your identified volunteer needs will dictate how vigorous a recruiting effort you will need to staff your program.

Recruitment techniques will vary according to the number of volunteers you need, and should be planned well in advance of need. Don't try to be overly ambitious in your recruitment efforts; to solicit more volunteers than you can actually use would be counterproductive from the standpoints of both effectiveness and goodwill. Above all, keep your program manageable.

Recruitment is most effective when done systematically. The systematic recruitment process includes the following measures:

- o Targeting your appeal to those recruitment sources with the greatest potential
- o Tailoring your recruitment appeal to the identified sources
- o Appealing personally to potential volunteers
- o Selling the benefits of supporting NPS and the VIP program
- o Accepting only qualified volunteers



*Recruitment techniques will vary according to the number of volunteers you need.*

A. Target Your Appeal To Those Recruitment Sources Which Appear To Have The Greatest Potential. Targeting is necessary to pinpoint the skills you need and to identify the population groups most likely to have those skills. Having identified the audience which you intend to target, you will be able to recruit more effectively.

- \* Through contact with groups such as the American Hiking Society and the Sierra Club, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, Yosemite National Park in California, and Denali National Park in Alaska have all identified and enlisted volunteers who want to participate in backcountry working vacations and give something back to nature.

The primary targets for recruitment publicity should be groups and individuals who are likely to be the most interested and best qualified. These include:

- o Schools
- o Organizations that share mutual interests and concerns (such as outdoor and environmental groups, hiking clubs and other recreation-oriented organizations, and civic and service groups)
- o Military units
- o Scouting groups
- o Other volunteer sources (such as park visitors, former NPS employees, park residents and neighbors, court referral programs, corporations, unions, volunteer bureaus and senior citizens)

Be sure to consider everyone -- all shapes, sizes, ages and incomes -- for their potential as volunteers.

Finding good sources of volunteers will make your recruiting efforts more effective. It is essential, therefore, that you develop a list of good volunteer sources. The following discussion of proven sources now used at many parks should be viewed as a starting point in developing a list of potential volunteer sources that are most appropriate for your park.

- 1) Schools (all levels) and universities are excellent sources to tap.

- \* The Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee runs a student intern program where high school and college students gain practical experience and course credit while testing career choices. In return, the park program is expanded considerably. From places as far away as Sweden and Africa, and from many schools in the United States, students come to participate in the ecological research program of the Uplands Field Research Laboratory.
- \* General Grant National Memorial, a part of Manhattan Sites in New York City, has a successful Junior Ranger program involving many young people, aged 10 to 16 years, who assist in interpretation and public contact. The program draws heavily on neighborhood youth and has regular advertising and recruiting programs at a nearby school. (One fringe benefit of this program has been a marked drop in vandalism and graffiti at the landmark since the program was initiated.)
- \* Wupatki National Monument, north of Flagstaff, recruits archeologists at Northern Arizona University. These VIPs are the backbone of the spring and fall educational field programs, which involve leading groups of 25 on overnight backpack trips.

2) Organizations that share mutual interests or concerns for the environment or for cultural preservation are a valuable source of volunteers. Included would be hiking clubs and other recreation-oriented groups, environmental groups, historic preservation groups, civic organizations and service groups.

- \* Sierra Service Trips, a program of work outings in wilderness areas, has benefited such parks as Sequoia & Kings Canyon and Yosemite in California, and Grand Canyon in Arizona. These outings, organized by the Sierra Club, are typically trips of 10 to 14 days' duration (50 percent work and 50 percent vacation), with members paying their own way. Parks must provide such support as packing in food and supplies, ranger guidance, and provide food or a stipend toward the cost of food. The projects are limited to those located in an actual or defacto wilderness and must be those that could not be done otherwise. Similar wilderness "working vacations" are sponsored by a number of other outdoor-oriented groups.

- \* Since 1968 the San Francisco Sidewalk Astronomers have traveled throughout the western United States and Mexico with large, portable reflecting telescopes offering free programs to the public. Zion National Park and Cedar Breaks National Monument in Utah were included on last summer's tour, enabling them to offer several free astronomy programs to the public.
- \* The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club has adopted 15 miles of trail within Rock Creek Park in Washington D.C. Ten to fifteen members come once a month, usually on Saturdays in the spring, summer and fall, to install water bars, deal with erosion control and keep the trails usable. They receive no compensation.
- \* Each summer the Waimea Hawaiian Civic Club sponsors a two-day cultural festival at Puukohola Heiau National Historic Site. In 1981, over 1200 people were taught many unique ancient Hawaiian crafts at 30 different workshops. The event heightens native cultural awareness, creates goodwill, and enhances community/park cooperation.
- \* In the early 1960s, the Junior League of Philadelphia made an agreement with Independence National Historical Park to train league members as volunteer guides and interpreters. Out of this has come the notably successful Friends of Independence organization, which is active in most areas of the park program, as well as in raising sizable amounts of funds. In 1981 about 200 volunteers donated over 8000 hours of personnel time.

3) All branches of the United States Armed Forces have participated in community service projects at some time or another. This often overlooked resource is almost cost-free and can aid your park in any number of projects. Units come equipped with whatever is needed and are fully supervised. In return, the military likes the training aspect of many projects, the practice of bivouacking and working as a unit, the public relations value of park projects and the satisfaction of directly serving the public.

- \* Search and rescue missions in the high altitudes of Mount Rainier National Park frequently combine the efforts of specially trained park rangers and helicopter pilots of the 243rd Aviation Battalion from Ft. Lewis, Washington.

- \* At Joshua Tree National Monument, marines from the Air Ground Combat Center at nearby Twentynine Palms, California, provide a day's labor in the park in exchange for two days of instruction by the park staff in desert survival skills.
- \* When a cannon at Fort Massachusetts, in the Gulf Islands National Seashore, was in need of repair, two skycrane helicopters from a local unit, the 2348th Transportation Company, Mississippi Army National Guard, transported the 18,000 lb. carriage to Keesler Air Force Base. Skilled personnel at the base made the needed repairs, and the cannon (the only remaining piece of armament at the fort) is once again on display.



*All branches of the U.S. Armed Forces have participated in community service projects.*

- 4) Scouting groups are another underutilized volunteer resource that can be tapped to provide a needed immediate service, while promoting the development of a lifelong relationship between young people and our national parks. Every four years, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) organization does a major promotion of its Save Our American Resources (SOAR) program. SOAR encourages scouts to get involved with natural resource protection and historic preservation projects.

Two other scouting groups to consider are the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and Camp Fire, Inc., another coeducational outdoor-oriented youth organization that is similar to the scouts.

Most scout groups are always seeking monthly weekend outings and are usually receptive to combining these outings with work projects. They will require a place to camp but can camp under primitive conditions. Scout leaders can handle most of the project supervision, although extra training in specific park skills and procedures may be required. Scout councils can publicize project needs and provide follow-up publicity to their member troops and posts through direct mailings or council newsletters.

Projects suitable for scout groups are diverse, and include:

- o Interpretive programs
- o Crowd control
- o Trail maintenance, eliminaton of shortcuts
- o Erosion control, riprapping
- o Archeological work assistance
- o Community program about parks
- o Obliteration of illegal, overused campsites
- o Painting ships and buildings

The ways to enlist their support are just as varied:

- + Recruit existing scout troops for a specific project. Recruiting may be done from an individual scout council for daylong and weekend projects or from several councils in your region for projects of longer duration.
- + Encourage an existing scout unit to adopt a park, site, building, trail segment, stretch of beach or riverfront. Recognition and a sense of responsibility will encourage a scout group to monitor and help maintain a physical portion or feature of your park unit on an ongoing basis.

- + Request assistance on emergency projects. Scouts are attracted by the challenge of coping with emergencies. Examples include opening a trail closed by mudslides, or rebuilding a washed-out trail or bridge.
  - + Charter an explorer post specifically to work with the NPS and your park. This takes the most work on your part, but may also produce the most reliable assistance over the long term. To establish an explorer post, the BSA Council provides organizational assistance, and can target individual youth for participation through the BSA interest profile inventory of local high school students. The park must offer technical assistance to the post, and recruit a volunteer advisor, possibly someone on your staff who has been a "scouter".
  - \* A local Boy Scout lodge is working with the staff of Isle Royale National Park in Michigan, to help solve camping problems on the 45-mile-long island. The scouts produce mailout informational brochures and assist other groups in planning routes, food and equipment and other needs peculiar to wilderness camping in the park.
  - \* A history and archeology oriented explorer post formed the nucleus of the original VIP program at Fort Stanwix National Monument in New York, and provided interpretation at the site before the fort was reconstructed.
  - \* The Potomac Area Council of Campfire, Inc., has had a resident camp in Prince William Forest Park (National Capital Region) in Virginia for over 30 years. Each summer, campers work in the park on projects such as erosion control and campsite improvement.
- 5) Additional sources of volunteers to contact and send your volunteer recruitment notices to include companies and unions (particularly for construction-type projects), court referral programs, volunteer bureaus and voluntary action centers, senior citizen groups and former employees. Don't forget sources close at hand such as families of employees, park neighbors or concessioner employees. Remember that park residents and close neighbors can be particularly valuable in remote parks, as they are already housed and may have considerable free time for volunteer work.

- \* Wives of park employees at Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in Wisconsin, volunteer to work on research projects.
- \* A retired NPS park planner redesigned parking lots in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. As a result of his work, the capacity of the Wild Basin parking lot was doubled, many safety hazards were eliminated and more aesthetically pleasing parking sites were created.
- \* In St. Louis, at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site (or the "Arch") there is an active program dealing with alternative sentencing. First-time minor offenders make restitution by volunteering in the park's interpretive program.
- \* The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) supplies a pool of active, interested people who are available for volunteer work at numerous parks. At Fort Vancouver in Washington, retired teachers give park orientations to many children's groups. Retired carpenters make furniture needed by the interpretive program.
- \* Cape Cod National Seashore in Massachusetts is a non-urban area that draws volunteers from its neighbors. In the wildlife management program, volunteers help protect four species of terns by erecting fences and signs, participating in public education, keeping notes and records, and occasionally acting as complaining witnesses.
- \* Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming draws most of its VIPs from among people already living in the park. Concessioner workers, part-time help and families of employees all volunteer to work in their free time. This makes for a stable volunteer work force. In 1981, 80 percent of the park's VIPs volunteered as regularly scheduled workers (the remaining 20 percent worked on a project or seasonal basis).

B. Tailor Your Appeal To The Identified Source. Once you identify the audience you intend to concentrate on, appeal to them in such a manner that they are more likely to respond favorably. Custom-tailor your appeal to your audience. A particularly difficult recruiting problem may require a unique solution. You might want to analyze what might be the self-interest of the potential volunteer and then tailor your appeal to that self-interest.

- \* Glacier Bay National Park barter with volunteers from nearby Bartlett Cove, a remote Alaskan area with no electricity. In return for their volunteer efforts, VIPs can use the park's washing machine and transport their groceries via the park supply boat.

C. Appeal Personally To Potential Volunteers. Most coordinators have discovered what was verified by the 1981 Gallup poll, "Americans Volunteer", that the largest percentage (44%) of adult volunteers became involved in the volunteer activity because someone asked them. The next largest percentage volunteered because a friend or family member was already involved. The third largest became involved through some organization or group.

- \* "Word of mouth is great!", says the volunteer coordinator at Custer Battlefield National Monument. Similar sentiments were expressed at San Juan Island National Historical Park, Hopewell Village National Historic Site, Buffalo National River and Biscayne National Park.

Among teenaged volunteers, the top three reasons for becoming involved were the same as for adults, with 53 percent stating that they first became aware of the volunteer activity when someone asked them to volunteer.

The ideal way to approach any volunteer source is by personal contact. Whenever possible, you should appeal personally to potential volunteers by asking them face-to-face to volunteer. The entire park staff can become volunteer recruiters. Make the staff and the current VIPs aware of volunteer needs and have them ask friends and neighbors to volunteer in your park. Satisfied volunteers often become an agency's best recruiters. So be sure to enlist their help.

- \* At Scotts Bluff National Monument in Nebraska most of the VIPs are recruited by other VIPs and staff. The volunteer program has a history of family and local community involvement.

Contact visitors while they are in your park enjoying its special qualities. VIPs as well as park staff can be very effective recruiters in this situation.

- \* Biscayne National Park in Florida recruits volunteers primarily by going out into the park and recruiting among park visitors. Nearly all park employees are actively involved in this recruitment effort.



*The strongest recruitment technique is to appeal to potential volunteers face-to-face.*

Personal appearances at local meetings and schools will publicize your needs and provide leads to potential volunteers in your community.

- \* The "theme" of the Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site in Massachusetts is landscape architecture. Volunteers are recruited through personal contact by the staff with those they meet in landscape architecture classes.

D. Sell The Benefits Of NPS And The VIP Program. The direct approach is best. Don't be bashful about asking potential volunteers to help. Consider the reasons that motivate people to volunteer and use them to your advantage. You can make your recruiting efforts more effective by capitalizing on the unique benefits of volunteering in the National Park System.

When polled as to their motivation for getting involved in volunteer activity, both adults and teenagers said they liked doing something useful to help others (adults 45%, teenagers 49%). Other reasons frequently given were interest in the activity and the belief that the volunteer work would be enjoyable. Most people have a strong positive feeling about the National Park System and are inclined to help if they are asked.

The Park Service has a great deal of job satisfaction to offer. A bulletin published by the American Hiking Society echoes this sentiment, listing benefits of volunteering that are often taken for granted:

- o "Beautiful wilderness areas filled with wildflowers and perhaps moose, deer, elk, bear, eagles and hawks"
- o "Interesting and fun people to work with"
- o "A feeling of great satisfaction and accomplishment"

Similar sentiments were expressed in a 1981 survey of past participants in the Volunteer Vacations program and 600 hiking clubs. They listed a variety of reasons for volunteering:

- Doing something useful
- Backpacking in a new area
- Increasing one's strength and endurance
- Gaining a sense of pride for contributions to the environment
- Getting away from the city's hubbub
- Experiencing challenge, testing oneself
- Enabling others to have more use of the wilderness
- Having a time for personal reflection
- Having recreational enjoyment at little cost
- Giving back to nature
- Meeting people with the same interests
- Learning new skills
- Having the opportunity to see a new part of the country or a new national park

While some of these may seem appropriate only to such wilderness parks as Grand Teton or Glacier, many apply everywhere. Each park unit has its own unique character, offering that "intangible reimbursement" to the volunteer that will be his/her primary source of motivation. Identify the benefits of volunteering in your park, and use them in your recruitment campaign to encourage people to volunteer.

In making your pitch to potential volunteers, you might want to consider developing and using audiovisual tools. Interest in your park volunteer program can be sparked through an audiovisual presentation. It does not need to be elaborate in order to be effective. Include slides of your own VIPs working in the various areas of your volunteer program. A few "before" shots of projects that are on the current work schedule may be included to illustrate the need for more help. Prepare a short narrative or script to go with the slides to assure the continuity of your presentation. The AV presentation can be prepared in-house by staff or by VIPs, so the cost may be minimal. The most effective approach is to have a VIP and an NPS staff member present the slide show and answer questions, to help illustrate that the VIPs are equal partners on a winning team effort.

In order to reach potential volunteers, you will need to publicize your program. Use newspaper articles, public service announcements, speaking engagements, direct mailings to groups or individuals, placement offices, volunteer fairs and so on, to solicit volunteers. Several ways to create awareness of your park volunteer opportunities have proven useful in turning up new leads and new sources of volunteers:



*Don't be bashful about asking potential volunteers to help.*

- 1) Posters in public places -- especially at the park. If you have a VIP skilled in graphics, you may wish to create your own poster for your park unit. This is an opportunity not to be overlooked. Whenever recruiting can be tied to your own individual situation, it will be much more effective.
  
- 2) Use of local media outlets, including local radio and TV spots, and local or national newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements. Broadcasting stations are required by law to make a portion of their advertising time available for public service announcements (PSAs).
  - \* Through a series of press releases sent out to nearby area newspapers, Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland recruited volunteers while informing the public of special program offerings.
  
  - \* Valley Forge National Historical Park in Pennsylvania utilizes local newspapers and the Volunteer Hotline of the National Center for Volunteers to publicize its volunteer program.
  
  - \* Fort Miley, in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, advertises for volunteer cleanup help on KCBS and other San Francisco radio stations.
  
- 3) Advertisements or articles in park theme-related journals and magazines.
  - \* An article about the activities of the Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site, outside of Boston, appeared in the 1981 fall/winter newsletter of the National Association for Olmstead Parks, a volunteer-oriented parks organization with a membership of over 1000. Use of this newsletter is a very direct way of recruiting from a group with a special interest in parks designed by Olmstead.
  
  - \* Signpost Trails Association, an outdoor oriented nonprofit educational organization, publishes a directory of volunteer jobs and internships on America's public lands. This quarterly directory, called "Helping Out in the Outdoors", goes out to 1100 libraries and 300 colleges and universities.

4) NPS "in-house" publications, newsletters and fact sheets.

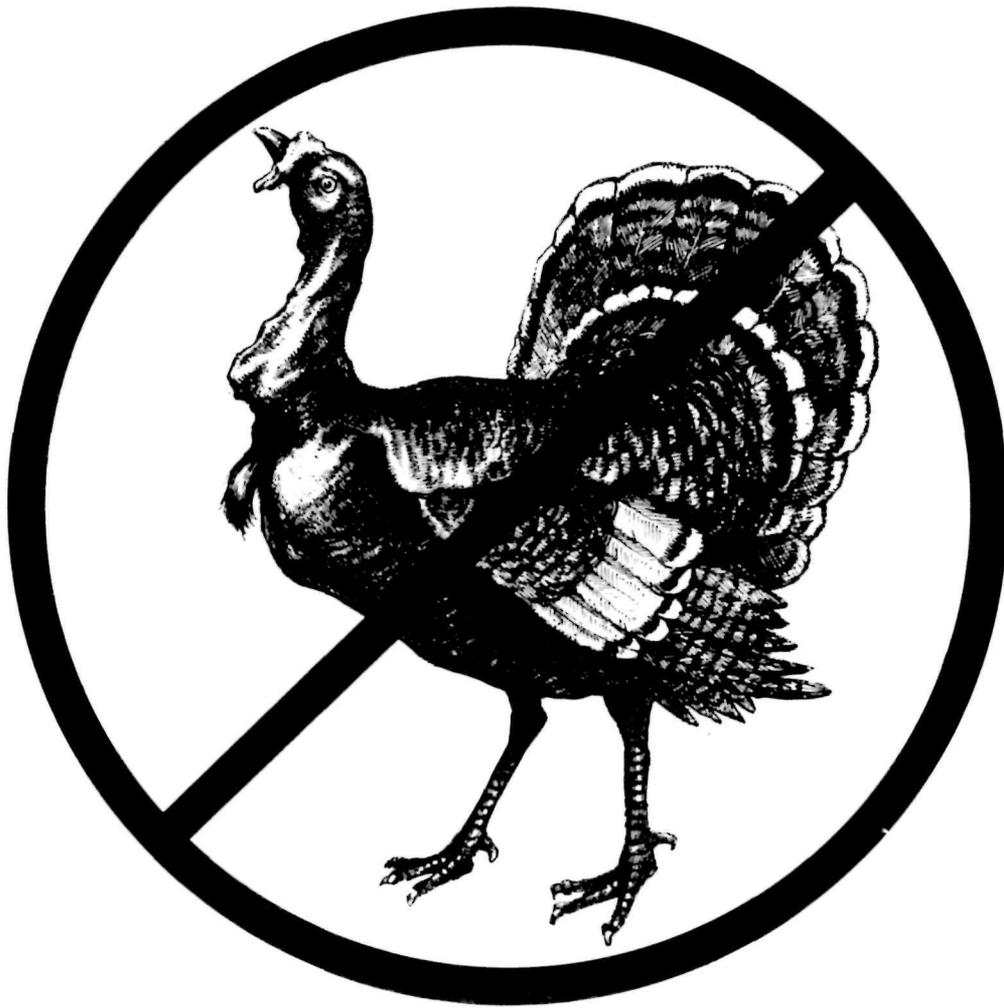
- \* Yosemite National Park in California developed a two-page informational guide about volunteer opportunities in the park that is mailed to interested volunteer applicants, along with the VIP brochure. It includes general categories of job descriptions, time commitments necessary, and the name of a park contact person.
- \* Members of the Fort Stanwix Garrison, in upper New York State, publish an informational brochure which contains a prospective volunteer application and describes volunteer activities.
- \* At Lowell National Historical Park, in the Boston area, junior rangers publish a "Kids' Bulletin" and mail it to 75 to 80 other young people who have indicated they would like to participate in the volunteer program. This keeps up the interest of those on the waiting list and helps foster a strong program.
- \* An article in the June 1982 issue of the Courier, the official NPS newsletter, appealed to NPS retirees to consider volunteering for a month or two to help fall visitors enjoy Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming ("Picture 'golden days' at Yellowstone as a volunteer"). Recent retirees interested in competing with others for the privilege of "living in" at Canyon, Norris, Mammoth, Grant or Old Faithful, were asked to contact the park's chief of interpretation.

E. Accept Only Qualified Applicants. If you have targeted your recruitment effort correctly, you will turn up only those volunteer applicants who are genuinely interested and truly qualified to volunteer for needed jobs in your park. But you will need to take special precautions to insure that only the best qualified are accepted for your volunteer positions. Methods for screening, evaluating and selecting qualified candidates will be discussed in the next section.

#### IV. SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

The final outcome of the recruitment effort is the selection and placement of qualified volunteer workers. A five-step process has proven to be the most effective:

- o Develop application procedures for your park
- o Interview volunteer applicants by phone or in person
- o Evaluate and select a qualified candidate for your volunteer position
- o Place the volunteer in a suitable activity or job
- o Negotiate a work agreement and meaningful time commitment with the volunteer



*A carefully designed selection process will help assure that only the best qualified applicants are accepted.*

- A. Develop Application Procedures for your park. Decide what information you will need to evaluate prospective volunteers, how it will be obtained, who will do the interviewing, where it will be done, etc. The process will be much like the one used to hire paid staff and can be modeled after your regular hiring procedures.
- B. Interview Prospective Volunteers by telephone, or if possible in person, after carefully screening volunteer applications. This is a "must" when selecting people for ongoing programs, and valuable when interviewing individuals or group leaders for jobs of a "one-shot", single project nature. Many parks have more volunteer applicants than they have slots available. You may be able to select the best qualified volunteer from a field of applicants. Your task is to "separate the wheat from the chaff" to assure your park will realize the best possible return in volunteer support for your staff time investment.

- \* The staffs of Haleakala National Park in Hawaii, and Everglades National Park in Florida, have found that the use of telephone interviews helps separate the vacationer from the volunteer.

Prepare your questions thoroughly before the interview. Use the five "W's" to get the most pertinent information -- who, what, where, when and why. Interviewers should familiarize themselves with techniques for learning the needs and interests of applicants without allowing interviews to become too lengthy. As in any interview, conduct it in a positive and friendly manner to put the applicant at ease.

Since the volunteer will be working for free, you may need to promote NPS, the VIP program and the unique opportunity you are offering the candidate. Use some of the benefits and motivations discussed earlier in the "Recruitment" section of this chapter. But don't oversell the program. Promises that can't be met are far more damaging than frank, up-front answers.

Even if the qualifications and interests of a particular applicant do not fit your needs, he/she can be a source for recruiting volunteers for other positions. The interviewer should refer an applicant to other parks or programs if it appears that the individual will not fit into the program intended.

Finally, don't be afraid to decline the services of an unsuitable applicant.

- C. Evaluate And Select A Qualified Candidate for your volunteer position. Evaluate the interviewee's answers to your questions to decide if the applicant's skills, personality and interest match up with your park unit's needs.
- D. Place The Volunteer in a suitable activity or job. Volunteers should be given assistance in choosing the activity suitable to their goals and needs, and compatible with their skills and interests. Individual motives such as the desire to work with others as part of a team, the need to re-establish old skills, develop new interests or test career possibilities, should be determined and considered in placing each volunteer. Of course, the accomplishment of a meaningful park unit task must be the overriding objective in volunteer placement. But the more you can accommodate the volunteer's needs and interests, the more successful the volunteer placement will be.
- E. Negotiate A Written Work Agreement With The Volunteer. Once you've made your decision to engage the services of a particular volunteer, you must work out with the volunteer an agreement specifying job duties and time commitments. Make sure he/she understands the specific requirements of the volunteer position involved (i.e. the services to be provided) and agrees on the length of service and regular work schedule (i.e. the hours and amount of time to be worked). You can use "Agreement for Voluntary Services" forms (10-85 for individuals, and 10-86 for groups) to spell out these duties. If there is a thorough understanding of the volunteer position by both parties at this point, there will be minimal problems later.

- \* At Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, the volunteer coordinator uses the 10-86 form in detailing the duties for groups working in resource management. From the beginning, there is agreement between the park coordinator and the volunteers on what is expected from each.
- \* The staff at Pinnacles National Monument in California uses the seasonal evaluation form in conjunction with a modified Individual Development Plan (IDP) to specify areas of involvement and levels of performance for new volunteers.

If there is no match, let the prospective volunteer know that while there is no need at this time for his/her particular abilities, his/her name will be kept on file for future consideration. Thank the individual for his/her interest.

These applicants can be referred to other parks or to the regional office, which may be able to put the person in touch with a more appropriate park unit. "No" is perhaps the hardest word to say in the English language, but it may be necessary to insure that you enlist only volunteers who can do the job.

The regional office presents an opportunity for "networking" VIP programs on a regional basis -- interrelating one park's needs and capabilities with those of other parks in the region. Ask your regional VIP coordinator to help provide assistance in cross-referring interested volunteer candidates to neighboring parks with volunteer service needs.

The decisions on placement of volunteers will be made before orientation and training take place (consistent with the job description, as agreed upon). Make assignments early so that your volunteers can begin to make their contributions as quickly as possible.

It is also important that the volunteer's work assignments be tasks that really need to be done and offer immediate and positive results. A volunteer's first work experience is particularly critical in assuring that he/she will continue to volunteer. Remember that volunteers can choose to allocate their free time in any one of several places, and they have chosen your park. Assigning them to meaningful work will motivate them and demonstrate that you also value their time and contribution.

#### IV. ORIENTATION

Like any other employee, a volunteer is a representative of NPS, and it is important that the volunteer represent the agency and your park properly. The volunteer must understand the NPS organization and mission if he/she is to represent the agency adequately. Orientation is essential before a volunteer can begin to contribute meaningfully to your park's operation. It is a basic right of paid and volunteer employees to be properly oriented.

Managing a volunteer is very much like managing any other employee. Management starts with the assignment of a specific job and the scheduling of hours to do the work and follows with basic orientation and training. Management continues with supervision, rewards and recognition, and includes recordkeeping and program monitoring.

*Orientation is the first step in creating a "team" feeling among volunteers and the entire park staff.*



Volunteer management is also different in a few key ways. Volunteers are less permanent. While you may have some turnover with NPS paid staff, volunteer turnover will be higher. Therefore, greater consideration needs to be given to developing brief, effective orientation and training procedures.

Several tools have proven useful in orienting new NPS volunteers:

- o Formal orientation sessions
- o Audiovisual presentations
- o Volunteer Orientations Packets

Consider these proven methods when devising volunteer orientation procedures for your park:

- A. Conduct Formal Orientation Sessions For New Volunteers At Your Park. Orientation sessions are used to acquaint the new volunteer with NPS history, organization, philosophy and goals, and present an overview of the VIP program. At these sessions:

- o Welcome the new volunteer to NPS and to your park unit
- o Describe precisely what duties and qualifications you require of the volunteer, and what his/her obligations to the park and to staff are
- o Outline the volunteer's specific program assignments and their relationship to the overall functioning of the park
- o Instruct the individual in park safety practices
- o Provide useful everyday information such as where his/her assigned work space is located, where supplies are kept, how to use the telephones, etc.

The volunteer's orientation should include a word of welcome from your superintendent. Orientation is the first step in creating the "team" feeling among the volunteers and the entire park staff. The orientation should enable volunteers to see where they fit into the overall scheme of things and make them feel a welcome addition to the park.

- \* The docent orientation sessions at Hampton National Historic Site in Maryland stress the importance of Hampton House and the importance of the volunteer. Volunteers are told they are the first and possibly the only contact NPS will have with the visitor, since they are the ones who conduct tours of the historic house.
- \* The newly formed "Mounted Assistance Unit" at Saguaro National Monument in Tucson, Arizona, is a VIP group organized to patrol the various hiking and horse trails infrequently patrolled by rangers due to lack of manpower. From their orientation, volunteers learn they are the "eyes and ears" of NPS while on the park trails.

Where feasible, orientation is most effective when given in sessions involving both staff and existing volunteers. Knowledgeable staff members should participate in these sessions. Using staff members in orientations can increase the team feeling and help create favorable staff attitudes toward the volunteers. Volunteer involvement is also important in a good orientation program. Testimony from seasoned volunteers may help in building team spirit among new recruits. Experienced

VIPs can anticipate many of the anxieties and questions of the new volunteer and quickly establish a rapport with the newcomer. Whenever possible, involve the superintendent in some portion of the orientation to illustrate the importance of the volunteer program to both the park staff and the individual volunteer.

- \* Prior to the start of the concert season at Filene Center in Wolf Trap Farm Park, Virginia, a volunteer usher must attend an orientation session. Sessions are offered at four separate times -- three evenings and a Saturday session. The house manager, the head usher and the volunteer coordinator give the program jointly, covering NPS philosophy, history of Wolf Trap Farm and specific ushering and crowd control instructions.

**B. Use Audiovisual Tools.** An audiovisual presentation is an effective orientation device and can be readily adapted from recruitment material (see the earlier discussion of audiovisual presentations in the "Recruitment" section of this chapter). AV presentations work well with either a large group or with just one or two VIPs. Use slides of your own VIPs working in the various areas of your volunteer program, as well as slides illustrating safety rules, park regulations or the volunteer dress code. A tape-recorded narrative may be prepared to accompany the slides. This initial effort will save time later in developing successive orientation sessions for new volunteers.

**C. Provide Each New Volunteer With A Volunteer Orientation Packet (VOP).** A VOP is very helpful in orienting new VIPs, especially when orientation must be directed to just one or two individuals beginning their volunteer association with you. The VOP should be tailored to your particular park unit.

- \* The VOP guidebook of Annapolis National Historic Site in Maryland, deals with what dress is appropriate, what hours are expected and historic details of the house and its occupants. A recent addition to this manual is "How to be a Good Guide", listing both desirable volunteer qualities and the manner in which to conduct a house tour.

Solicit ideas for the VOP from existing volunteers' ideas. They know the problem best. Better yet, have the volunteers organize the orientation packet themselves! A looseleaf notebook-type format is suggested for the packet, and should include:

- o a letter of greeting from your park's superintendent
- o a brief history of NPS and your park unit
- o an organization chart for your park
- o descriptions of your programs
- o copies of your public relations materials
- o pertinent sections of the Volunteer Guidelines
- o basic logistical information to facilitate volunteering (i.e. location of telephones and rest rooms, where to park, etc.)
- o specific material that the volunteer needs to know in order to support your park's program (i.e. history of a home or historic site, information about the park's flora and fauna, etc.)
- o procedures for making volunteer contributions and suggestions

The VOP should be continually changed and updated as your program evolves. The looseleaf format will enable you to do this easily.

- \* The VIP group in New York, the Fort Stanwix Garrison, is putting together its own volunteer training manual.
- \* The staff at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is developing a combined VIP/seasonal employees' handbook, along with a training course outline.

## VI. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

While orientation conveys knowledge of the basics, training provides the specifics of the volunteer duties in your park. Training allows the volunteer to "learn the ropes" and covers all aspects of the job. Training should concentrate on the additional skills required by the task for which the volunteer has offered to work. The training of volunteers should be treated like the training of paid staff as much as possible.

Sometimes the volunteer coordinator will be the trainer/supervisor. More often, a volunteer's training and direct supervision will be the responsibility of the NPS staff person with whom the volunteer has been assigned.

The amount and type of training needed depends on the skill required to perform the specific assignment, and the skill and expertise the volunteer brings to the program. Adequate training is an essential ingredient in the supervision of a volunteer worker in your park. The need for supervisory time will lessen when the volunteer knows his/her duties and can perform them well.

In many cases, the training of volunteers can be piggybacked onto on-site skills trainings given to regular and seasonal staff. This type of training opportunity can often be a reward or incentive for volunteers. One basic motivation for volunteers is to learn new skills. Staff trainings provide such an opportunity for volunteers. Remember that volunteers are a potential source for recruiting regular NPS employees, so the



*While orientation conveys knowledge of the basics, training provides the specifics and allows the volunteer to "learn the ropes."*

training of a volunteer may be an investment in a future employee. The training of volunteers and paid staff together also impacts positively on the staff. It helps communicate to staff that the volunteer is a resource, not a threat, and that he/she is part of the team. Joint volunteer/staff training also helps reinforce the importance of the volunteer program.

- \* Big Bend National Park in Texas, uses volunteers in many areas. Some are trained in the duties required at the visitors center. Others learn to conduct guided raft trips or help with river patrol. All are trained in the same way as seasonal employees.

If very specialized training is needed, try to get together with other park units to provide it. This can be coordinated through the region, or arrangements can be made directly with nearby parks. Another possibility is to bring in a volunteer who has special skills to help with the training.

- \* Valley Forge National Historical Park in Pennsylvania, arranged a VIP field trip to Morristown National Historical Park in nearby New Jersey, to augment its standard training sessions. As an added incentive, spouses of the volunteers were also invited.

In some instances, individuals bring to your park special skills or expertise. Following orientation, they can be incorporated directly into the program without additional training. Such may be the case when utilizing scientists, professors or people with special skills certification.

- \* Bandelier National Monument draws many of its VIPs from the scientific community in Los Alamos, New Mexico. One Ph.D. entomologist spends the summer collecting and identifying insects in the park. Six new species have been found, making the park's insect collection one of the premiere collections in the country.
- \* During winter weekends VIPs who are expert skiers travel almost 200 miles from Corvallis and Eugene, Oregon, to join the cross country ski patrol at Crater Lake National Park.

The volunteer's supervisor must take special care in making the volunteer feel welcome and a necessary part of the park team. The best overall strategy for managing a volunteer program is to treat your volunteers as much like paid staff as you possibly can. Volunteers need to receive as much attention, support, direction and recognition as your paid staff. And like the paid staff, they should be given real responsibility and accountability. Ongoing direct supervision is important in order to:

- o Assure the full utilization of the volunteer's skills and energy
- o Allow volunteers to grow and develop through their activities
- o Maximize the benefits and personal satisfaction derived by the volunteers from their work experience
- o Provide a forum for discussing problems and giving appraisal, evaluation and appreciation

## VII. RECOGNITION

A second major area in which managing volunteers is different from managing regular staff concerns the volunteer's unique motivation and special need for job satisfaction. Obviously, volunteers are not in it for the money. They bring to your park a desire to be useful. They also have certain expectations and needs which must be met. These needs and expectations are best met by using their time effectively and showing appreciation for their efforts.

- \* "Being flexible enough to accommodate the VIP is very important. As long as it's interesting and rewarding, the volunteer will continue," is the philosophy at Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts.

The reasons why people volunteer may vary. The greatest rewards are the personal satisfaction derived from the work experience itself, and the appreciation expressed by the staff and others who benefit from the services volunteered. Our earlier discussion of volunteer motivation in the "Recruitment" section cited the 1981 Gallup poll which asked people what motivated them to volunteer in the first place, and then to continue doing so. The volunteers responded that they wanted to do something useful, had an interest in the activity, and enjoyed the work and the feeling of being needed.

Even though volunteers work for no pay, remember that "nobody works for nothing". Supervise volunteers as you would paid staff, but compensate them through even more recognition and attention for work well done.

In dealing with volunteers and staff alike, recognition is often an underused administrative tool. A well placed commendation acts as an incentive to the recipient to continue to perform well, or to strive to perform even better. It is a morale booster for all involved, an intensely humanizing gesture which costs little in monetary terms.

Be aware that appropriated VIP funds cannot be used to buy gifts to present to volunteers as awards or tokens of appreciation, no matter how small. The only authorized and official form of recognition that you can provide is the VIP certificate. However, cooperating associations, local merchants or other private sources may be asked to donate items to be used as gifts of appreciation for volunteers. Make sure that these items are given directly to the volunteers and not routed through the NPS as donations.

The specific forms of recognition may vary according to your imagination -- certificates, mentions in publications or on bulletin boards, special events such as luncheons, banquets, picnics and breakfasts, commemorative gifts, t-shirts, pins, public praise at organizational ceremonies or other events, yearly volunteer day ceremonies and, of course, hiring the volunteer when staff vacancies occur. The forms of recognition are endless. Feel free to develop your own special means of showing your appreciation for your park's volunteers. Consider the following points when developing a system of recognizing and expressing appreciation for the volunteers at your park:

- o Recognize volunteers on a daily basis
  - o Solicit volunteers' suggestions and follow their advice
  - o Recognize volunteers through formal events
  - o Present volunteers with awards
  - o Publically praise volunteers in the media or at ceremonies and events
  - o Grant volunteers special privileges
  - o Tell your regional VIP coordinator about your volunteers' contributions and accomplishments
  - o Reward paid staff who work with volunteers
- A. Recognize And Express Appreciation For Your Volunteers' Contributions On A Day To Day Basis. Simple gestures, such as a smile, a handshake or a sincere "thank you", are still one of the most appreciated ways to show appreciation. Volunteers need to feel welcome, and be recognized and rewarded for coming to the job, for sticking with it and for completing the job.

- B. Recognize Volunteers By Asking Their Advice And Following It. Volunteers may have excellent suggestions on ways to improve your program. If your park operation is small enough, and you have only a few volunteers, simply encourage them to express their feelings and concerns about the program on an informal, regular or ongoing basis. For a larger operation, consider using written evaluation forms to get more formal input from your volunteers, or ask for input when you do your formal evaluations of volunteer performance.
- C. Recognize Volunteers On A More Formal Basis. Many parks have found it useful to reinforce the daily forms of recognition with formal recognition events. Formal events can be a meeting, a luncheon, a tea, a picnic, a barbecue or a dinner. A "pot luck", where all contribute some special dish, is popular at many parks. It can be held whenever the occasion seems appropriate. A good time might be after some particularly big volunteer "push" in helping with a park program, or perhaps during National Volunteer Week each April. Invite all who have volunteered and the staff involved.

*Recognition and appreciation are important and the forms are endless. Simple gestures, such as a smile, a handshake...or including their portrait in your "Volunteers Gallery" are still the most appreciated.*



One resource to involve in assisting your recognition efforts is your cooperating association. They can help you organize and finance your volunteer recognition activities.

- \* At a recent gathering, Valley Forge National Historical Park applauded its volunteer force. More than 55 people, volunteers and staff, attended an 18th-century dinner, prepared by the park interpretive staff and served in historic Maxwell's Quarters.
- \* VIPs at the information kiosks on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., were treated to a barge ride to Great Falls, Maryland, where the staff put on a picnic.

Awards of VIP pins and certificates can be incorporated into these formal types of recognition. Even a simple "thank you" coffee with the park staff goes a long way towards recognizing and rewarding volunteers for their special contributions.

D. Present Special Awards. Many parks have found that books, t-shirts or speciality items such as belt buckles are often prized by volunteers.

- \* VIPs at the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites in upper New York state receive awards at an annual picnic on the grounds of the Eleanor Roosevelt home. Everyone receives a VIP certificate. Special awards go to the most improved young volunteer and the outstanding volunteer. The teenager receives a belt buckle, while the adult VIP is given a framed print of one of the sites.
- \* Volunteers receive quarterly recognition at Channel Islands National Park in California -- an award plaque, or occasionally a book. For outstanding achievement, volunteers' names are put on the perpetual plaque at the visitors center.

E. Provide Recognition Through Public Praise. Publish articles in your park or association newsletter or the NPS Courier. Write a letter to the editor or submit a story about VIPs to your local newspaper. Take a group picture of staff and volunteers upon completion of a special project. Praise your volunteers and involved staff at ceremonies and other events.

- \* Badlands National Park in South Dakota, sends articles and pictures of its VIPs to their hometown newspapers.

- F. Take Advantage Of Special VIP Privileges (Or "Perks") As Work Motivators Appreciated By Volunteers. These give special status to the volunteer. "Perks" can be such things as getting away from the city's hubbub while on a volunteer "working" vacation in the backcountry, RV parking privileges granted to campground hosts, open access to libraries at historic sites for history buffs, extended trail rides for mounted patrol volunteers or special instruction by a staff member on a pet subject. Figure out what "perks" you can make available at your park.
- \* The VIP photography group at Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts was taught by a professional photographer to take, develop and print pictures and slides while working on photographic projects at the park.
  - \* After ushering for the first half of the evening, VIPs at Wolf Trap Farm Park in Virginia may join their friends and see the rest of the show for free.
  - \* Volunteer "working vacation" groups will help out in a number of "crown jewel" national parks in 1982. At Yellowstone in Wyoming, for example, this year's resource management effort will include trail improvements and bridge construction by volunteers in the southwest corner of the park. In exchange, the volunteers receive a unique wilderness vacation experience at the park.
- G. Keep Your Regional VIP Coordinator Well Informed About Your Volunteer Program Accomplishments. Advocate your program by sending more than the required trimester reports. Your regional coordinator can help your VIP program get more recognition and thereby get your volunteers more recognition.
- H. Reward Staff Who Are Involved In Working With Volunteers. A good job done by the volunteers means that a good job has been done by staff as well. Staff can be recognized in commendation letters to their personnel files and to their supervisors, by special mention at staff meetings, and through performance appraisals, etc.

#### VIII. VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

It's not always a bed of roses! Problem situations should be dealt with before they fester. Malcontents or poor performers affect the morale of all those who work with them. If a volunteer is not performing adequately, the problem should be

diagnosed and discussed with the individual directly and as early as possible. Sometimes poor performance is the result of misunderstanding what is required.

Several parks have found it useful to have the low performance volunteer and the coordinator/supervisor jointly write out the level of performance expected in the future or by a certain date. In most instances, this cleared up the problem. When it didn't, the volunteer (realizing his inability to meet the standards) often offered to resign. However, as with paid staff, there may be times when a volunteer must be terminated. In those instances, be as straightforward, objective and factual as possible. It is important that terminations be handled with sensitivity and with minimal criticism of the volunteer. The supervisory and evaluation process may provide a means of helping the volunteer see why he/she is being asked to leave. If appropriate and possible, find and offer the volunteer an alternative voluntary position elsewhere that is better suited to his/her strengths.

- \* Big Bend National Park in Texas has a "trial period" for new campground hosts. During the first few weeks of their 90 day commitment, these volunteers are assessed by the district ranger. At the same time, the VIPs decide if their expectations for the job are being met.
  
- \* Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia was able to reassign a volunteer no longer able to meet the demands of rigorous tours. The VIP is now the park's official greeter, a job limited to just one building.

Evaluation is a joint responsibility and right. The volunteer's feedback and communication is as important as the supervisor's evaluation of the volunteer. The volunteers work as partners with park staff and management in accomplishing work at the park. Each volunteer must have his/her say, understand his/her responsibilities, give honest feedback and have an opportunity to say "no" or request changes. This necessary feedback and input can be incorporated into the volunteer evaluation process.

- \* VIPs at Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana are evaluated just like the regular park personnel. They put together their own talks and record them on videotape. In this manner, they see firsthand their problems with interpreting, just as the regular interpretive staff does.



*Volunteers should have the opportunity to say no or request changes.*

Key elements in the evaluation of volunteer performance are recordkeeping and volunteer monitoring:

A. **Keep Accurate Personnel Records.** Obviously, maintaining personnel records is a basic VIP program requirement and an essential ingredient in any park volunteer program. The records should include the number of hours spent in volunteer service, an evaluation of volunteer career "growth", and any problems encountered by the volunteer. Develop a system that is best suited to your own needs and is consistent with NPS personnel requirements. The system should be as simple as possible and must be understood and used by all volunteers and staff. Record-keeping is normally a function of the volunteer coordinator. Good documentation of volunteer accomplishments can help justify support funding for the volunteer program. Well kept records document the value of the individual volunteer's contributions and show the volunteer that you value his/her work. Provision should be made to accommodate student interns who need records and evaluations to receive academic credit for their work. Volunteer personnel records are also helpful when the volunteer requests a work reference from NPS.

\* Pinnacles National Monument in central California is able to recruit a number of student intern volunteers though it offers transportation, housing and "uniforms". Through a formal agreement with a community college, students work weekends and receive one semester hour of credit for the fall and one semester hour of credit for the spring. A record of the time served and an evaluation of the service rendered must be forwarded to the college. Upon completion of their internships, over 90 percent of these volunteers have gotten jobs as seasonals with the Park Service, Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the California State Department of Parks and Recreation.

B. **Monitor The Volunteers.** In the interest of the continuity of the overall volunteer program and to simplify record-keeping, the volunteer coordinator should continue to monitor the individual VIP's progress.

\* Although the lead technician at the Arch in St Louis has the supervisory responsibility for the VIPs, the volunteer coordinator oversees the program, tracking individual progress by getting daily feedback.

## IX. PROGRAM EVALUATION

Like any other program, the volunteer program needs care and periodic examination. Program objectives, training materials and methods, as well as accomplishments should be examined with critical judgment based on the best information available. Most importantly, the staff should frequently evaluate its goals, the goals and objectives for the volunteer program and the methods for achieving these goals.

Evaluation should be done annually, at a minimum, but preferably on a more frequent basis. Examine training materials, methods and other details to make certain these are still the best options available. Assess the benefits and costs from both supervisory and volunteer perspectives. Evaluation should focus on problems and opportunities, and should be done in conjunction with the staff who work with the VIPs. Be sure to consider issues raised as a result of feedback and input from the volunteers themselves, in your evaluation of the volunteer program at your park unit. Basic points to cover in your periodic volunteer program evaluation include:

- o What progress did you make toward completing the program objectives decided upon in the beginning of the year?
- o What problems are you having with your overall volunteer program?
- o What opportunities do you have to expand the program?

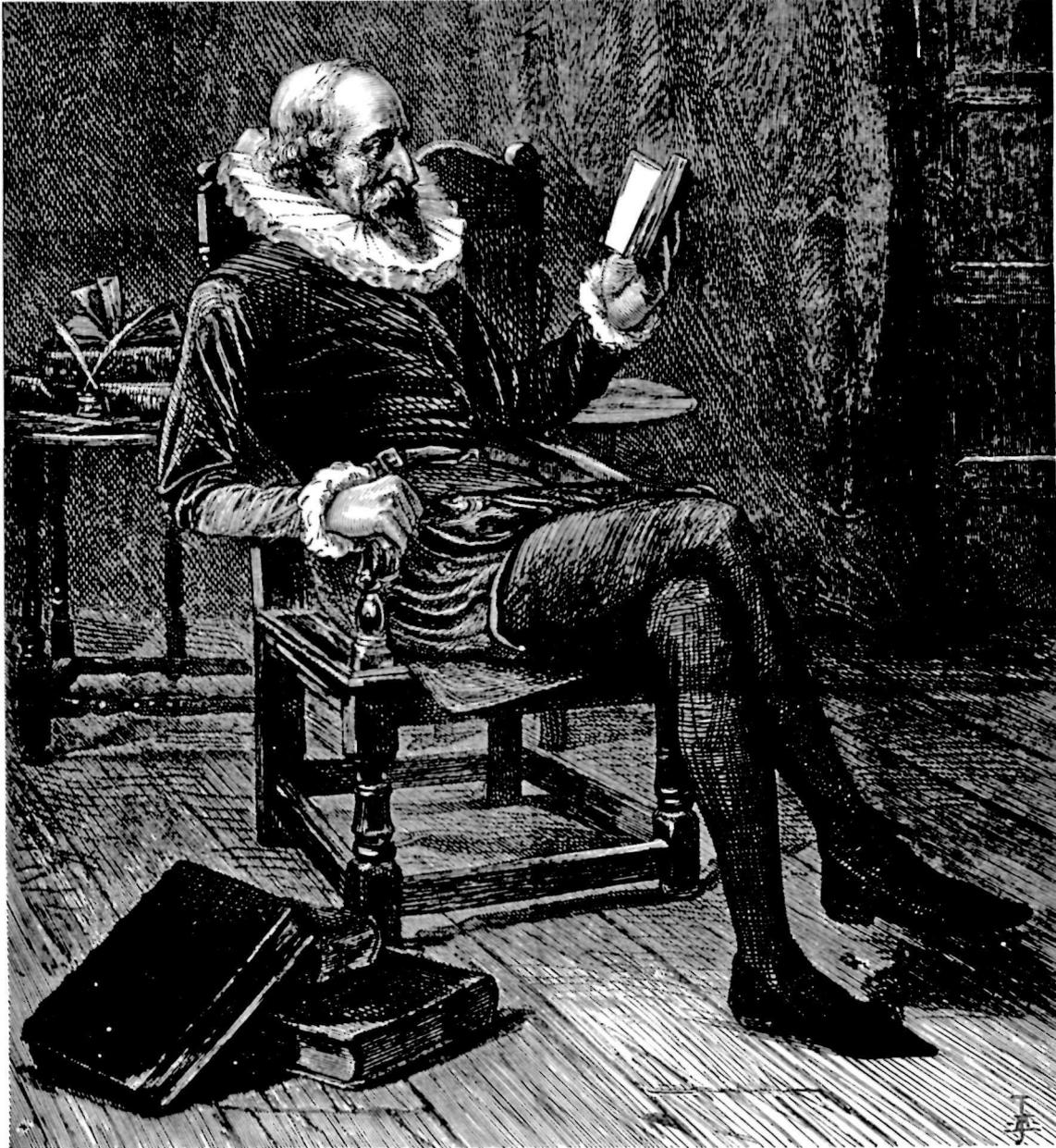
Answers to these questions should identify key problems and opportunities for each phase of the program, i.e.:

- Commitment
- Planning
- Recruitment
- Selection and Placement
- Orientation
- Training and Supervision
- Recognition
- Supervision and Evaluation of Volunteers

Consider which corrective plans will alleviate or eliminate the problems identified, or will allow you to take advantage of the identified opportunities to increase the effectiveness of the volunteer program. Although objective evaluation is very demanding, takes time and can be sensitive, it is absolutely essential for sustaining a strong volunteer program. It is the step that starts the management cycle all over again.

\* At Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., gardeners, volunteer managers and staff meet each fall to review the community garden program and to insure its continued effectiveness.

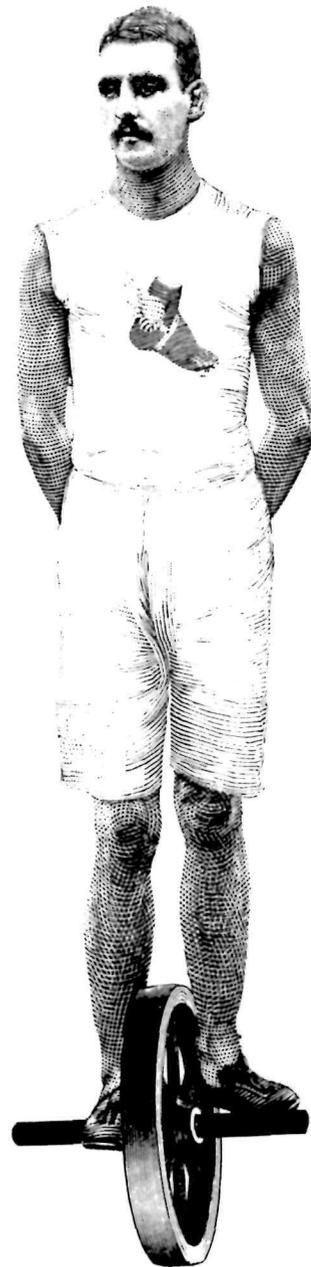
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*Looking back on this chapter...*

Looking back on this chapter, here are a few basic strategies, based on the successful experiences of VIP coordinators in several parks throughout the country, that can help you organize and manage a more effective VIP program at your park:

- \*\*\* Be systematic and comprehensive when you implement a volunteer program. Don't use the "shotgun approach". Don't just rush out, recruit a few volunteers and put them to work. Look at the "big picture" first, and be sure you have the commitment necessary to run an effective volunteer program at your park. It will make your effort more productive if you know where volunteers can be used best and how many are really needed.
- \*\*\* Deal with staff attitudes and reservations about volunteers. Build a consensus of opinion on appropriate roles for volunteers in your park.
- \*\*\* Recruit volunteers anywhere and everywhere you can.
- \*\*\* Develop and use effective park volunteer application and evaluation procedures that will allow you to screen and accept only qualified volunteer candidates.
- \*\*\* Treat volunteers a little differently than regular staff. The turnover rate of volunteers is higher, so orientation and training must get more attention if volunteers are to be efficiently and effectively handled. Volunteers are not paid in cash, so motivation is more closely tied to recognition. You and the staff are responsible for providing positive rewards for the volunteers' contributions.
- \*\*\* Evaluate the volunteer's work performance. Resolve problems as quickly as possible.
- \*\*\* Review your program at least annually. Make sure that what you are doing is necessary and that the solution (i.e. last year's program) still fits next year's needs and opportunities before you continue the program unchanged.



*There is no need to reinvent the wheel with all the resources available to you.*

# SOURCES OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

This handbook is intended to be self-guiding, but it doesn't have all the answers. There is an entire career field in managing volunteers, complete with national and statewide clearinghouses, professional organizations, college curricula, a wealth of literature, and consultation and training services. So there is really no need to "reinvent the wheel" with so many resources available to you..

To get the most out of the volunteer program at your national park unit, you should take advantage of available training, information and consultation resources. This section discusses pertinent literature and information services. The following section lists a number of agencies and organizations that can help.

Your nearest Volunteer Bureau or Volunteer Action Center is a good place to seek guidance, advertise your volunteer needs, and tap into their network of successful volunteer managers.

Large institutions such as hospitals, museums, and schools often have sophisticated volunteer programs which you might want to look to for advice and inspiration.

To tap directly into volunteer programs serving missions similar to the National Park Service, contact your counterparts in nearby national forests, state parks and historical societies.

Within the National Park Service, the Park and Recreation Technical Services Division has gathered extensive case study information and can provide consultation and training resources, in concert with your regional VIP coordinator.

You are encouraged to take advantage of locally provided training opportunities, and where feasible, import trainers to provide face-to-face orientation for your park staff on how to make your volunteer program work even better. Training on volunteer management provides an opportunity to build consensus and confidence among park staff on the best ways to manage volunteers cost effectively.

AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP

OUTDOOR ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS:

American Forestry Association  
1319 18th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/467-5810

American Hiking Society  
Volunteer Vacations  
P.O. Box 86  
North Scituate, MA 02060  
617/545-4819  
Katherine Beebe

American Motorcyclist Association  
P.O. Box 141  
Weterville, OH 43081  
614/891-2425

American Rivers Conservation  
Council  
323 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
202/547-6900

Appalachian Mountain Club  
National Volunteer Program  
Northern NE Regional Office  
Gorham, NH 03581  
603/466-2721  
Thomas Deans

Appalachian Trail Conference  
Box 236  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
304/535-6331  
Bob Prudman

Federation of Western  
Outdoor Clubs  
4534 1/2 University Way. NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
206/621-1696

International Snowmobile  
Industry Council  
1800 M Street, NW  
Suite 850 South  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/331-8484

League of American  
Wheelmen  
P.O. Box 988  
Baltimore, MD 21203  
302/659-5540

The Mountaineers  
719 Pike Street  
Seattle, WA 98101  
206/623-2314

National Audubon Society  
950 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
212/832-3200

National Trail Council  
13 West Maple  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
703/548-7490  
Jeanette Fitzwilliams

REI Service Trips  
REI Co-op  
1525 Eleventh Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Kathleen Nichols

Sierra Club Service  
Outings  
530 Bush Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
415/981-8634  
Kelly Runyon

Signpost Trails  
Association  
16812 36th Avenue West  
Lynwood, WA 98036  
206/743-3947

The Wilderness Society  
1901 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
202/828-6600

**SERVICE ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS:**

American Association of Retired  
Persons (AARP)  
National Activities  
1909 K Street  
Washington, DC 20049  
202/872-4700

American Youth Hostels, Inc.  
1332 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Toll Free # 800/426-9426

Association of Volunteer Bureaus \*  
801 North Fairfax  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703/836-7100

Boy Scouts of America  
1325 Walnut Hill Lane  
Irving, TX 75602-1296  
214/659-2421  
Walter J. Wenzel

Camp Fire, Inc.  
4601 Madison Avenue  
Kansas City, MO 64112  
816/756-1950  
Connie Coutellier

Girl Scouts of the USA  
830 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
212/687-8383  
Nancy Richardson

Retired Senior Volunteer  
Program (RSVP)  
ACTION  
806 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20525  
Toll Free # 800/424-8580  
Thomas Pauken

VOLUNTEER: The National  
Center for Citizen  
Involvement  
1111 North 19th Street  
Arlington, DC 22209  
703/276-0542

\* Listings of statewide Volunteer Bureaus and Voluntary Action Centers can be found in NPS's VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK, 1981 Edition.

