

VOLUNTEER ROUNDTABLE

Natural Resources Management Workshop
Thursday, April 20th 1:00-2:00 – Partnerships and Volunteers Track

Panelists:

Carmen Boyette (SAW)

Miriam Fleming (SAM)

Bobby Jackson (LRN/Volunteer Clearinghouse)

Taylor Saia (SPK)

Amber Tilton (NWP)

Allison Walker (LRN)

"The views, opinions and findings contained in this report are those of the authors(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation."



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LET'S GET STARTED!

1. Grab three stickers from the moderator
2. Check out the topics and questions posted around the room. Put your stickers next to the three topics or questions that interest you most
3. Don't see the topic you want to hear about? Grab a marker and add your topic to the others listed around the room
4. Panelists will start the conversation with the topics that have the most interest – indicated by your stickers
5. Join the conversation! If you have experience in the topics being discussed, pipe up and share your experiences! We'd love to hear from you!



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I'VE GOT TWO PARK HOSTS WHO HATE EACH OTHER. HOW DO WE SURVIVE THE SEASON WITHOUT ONE OF THEM QUITTING?

- Use conflict resolution tactics (mediate/facilitate)
- Relocate or reschedule to minimize time together
- Use Verbal Judo tactics
- Do not negotiate (you are in charge of the program)
- Provide training to the volunteers on conflict resolution/verbal judo/PROFESSIONALISM
- Assign a volunteer mentor or lead volunteers
- Have volunteer elections if they would like to nominate a group leader
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to bond and find common ground (ice breakers)



WE ARE THINKING ABOUT BUILDING A VOLUNTEER VILLAGE. ANY TIPS? ANY DOWNSIDES?

- Don't put the sites too close together
- People like the communities, but still want some privacy
- Bury the water lines deep enough so you can have it open year round
- Have good septic sites!
- Have amenities that people want like large washers/dryers and wifi.
- Be particular about who you hire and consider group dynamics (maybe have your volunteer lead sit in on the interview process)
- You can use old government housing and convert to volunteer site
- Try to use utility connections that are already there
- Remember: It's not a requirement for volunteers to live in the village. They can still volunteer as park hosts (or other duties) in other locations.

ARE THERE ANY BEST PRACTICES WHEN DISCUSSING PERSONNEL/PERFORMANCE ISSUES WITH OTHER MANAGERS DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS?

- Don't throw them under the bus but don't lie
- There are no restrictions on what you can and can not say
- Be kind – find their strengths too. If you can't – silence speaks louder than words.
- You can turn down the opportunity to provide a reference
- If you don't want to hire a particular volunteer, you could explain that there are no opportunities at this time or that many people applied but you will keep them in mind and keep them on the list.
- Sample interview questions available on the Gateway

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO FIRE A VOLUNTEER? ARE THERE ANY CONSIDERATIONS I SHOULD KEEP IN MIND?

- At VA training or safety meeting you could practice role playing this scenario.
- In the volunteer agreement, include a probationary period clause.
- Have shorter 'term' agreements.
- Prevention is the key: have SMART goals/obj's and job descriptions, have more frequent performance reviews/mid-point evaluations, council and mentor.
- However, if the situation calls for immediate action (safety, sexual harassment, etc) then don't be afraid to skip the formalities and terminate immediately.



I DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO MANAGE A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM. TIPS?

- Be organized. Keep updated binders with the forms ready to go in them. having a “lead volunteer” that coordinates volunteer effort
- It's a hard job. Use this experience on your resume as supervisory experience
- Try to do onboarding and safety meetings with all of your volunteers at once
- Ask for help – if the volunteers are assisting the facilities staff, have the facilities staff “manage” and report back to you. Consider



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IF YOU ARE THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR/POC, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF VOLUNTEERS ARE HABITUALLY BREAKING THE CHAIN OF COMMAND?

- Ask supervisors to redirect them back to you.
- Explain to them why it's important they come to you first.
- Go over what constitutes an emergency situation versus non-emergency and provide them the list of contacts/chain of command/who to call when, etc.
- Share your schedule with them
- You don't have to supervise all volunteers.
- Delegate/share responsibility (example: if volunteer is working on the maintenance crew, give them a maintenance POC).



ARE THERE ANY TIPS TO GETTING AROUND THE LIMITATIONS OF USING PROJECT FUNDS TO HONOR VOLUNTEERS, ESPECIALLY IF WE HAVE NO FRIENDS GROUP?

- Have a potluck/picnic
- Give them a volunteer coin (get them from the Corps Foundation)
- Make a photo collage, print on photo paper and frame it
- Take good photos of them doing stuff and put it on your District/Project face book page with a nice write up about them or just a 'Thanks!'
- Feature them on your District website or send photo/write up to Head Quarters public affairs for them to put on the HQ website
- Send a story/write-up with photos to your local media/newspaper
- Feature them in the Workamper (cover story or short write up)
- Have a wall of recognition (volunteer of the month/year)
- Events! Example: Chili cookoff.... Then spray paint a spoon gold and use it as a rotating 'award'. Each month/quarter/year, someone else gets the golden spoon. (It becomes an inside joke.)
- www.pointsoflight.com
- Present them with an official certificate from the Commander (work through your District POC)

ANY POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS LOSE INTEREST IMMEDIATELY AS SOON AS THEY FIND OUT OUR SITES DON'T HAVE SEWER HOOKUPS? ANY CHEAP SUGGESTIONS TO GET SEWER HOOKUPS INSTALLED?

- Landscape Architect at Lake Lanier could be a great source for ideas and suggestions

