Parks and Wildlife Service

Volunteer Coordination Unit

Volunteer management manual

Contents

Preface

This manual is intended as a resource for Parks and Wildlife Service staff who are tasked with the operational supervision of volunteers. It includes information on policy, procedures and guidelines to support effective volunteer management within the department.

This manual supersedes Administrative Instruction 43 – Operational Guidelines for Volunteer Activities. The manual should be read in conjunction with the Department's Corporate Policy Statement No. 15 - Volunteers and Community Involvement and contains information from the *Public Sector Guidelines for Successful Partnerships Between Public Sector Agencies and Volunteers* and the *National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015*, published by Volunteering Australia.

The Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) provides technical services, support and advice to DBCA staff, including the development of policies, procedures and guidelines, to enable them to deliver best practice volunteer management, allowing volunteers to be effective and productive in a safe environment while contributing to the work of the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Using this resource

This resource is comprehensive, but you may find that only some aspects are relevant to your volunteer management needs. However, you may need to work with others undertake these other tasks, and this manual can help you to deliver the supervision of volunteers effectively.

You may choose to read this resource in full or prefer to use sections appropriate to your needs. To quickly find content, use the contents page.

All relevant documents can be found on the DBCA intranet or online – links to these, and other useful resources, are included in the Parks and Wildlife resources section.

If you require further information or clarification, please contact the Volunteer Coordination Unit: PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au or tel: 08 9219 8279.

Introduction

It is estimated that about 80 per cent[1] of West Australians donate their time and effort to volunteer work, and volunteers play a crucial and valued role in assisting the Parks and Wildlife Service with programs across the conservation estate. Volunteer numbers and their contributions are recorded officially in Parks and Wildlife Service annual reports and are coordinated by the Volunteer Coordination Unit.

The volunteer program provides numerous benefits to volunteers and the wider community while assisting the department in achieving its objectives. It does this by promoting community awareness and appreciation of the values of wildlife, land, water and resources entrusted to the Parks and Wildlife Service and developing understanding and support for the department's conservation and land management activities.

For volunteering to be effective, it needs to be supported. The department recognises that an efficiently managed volunteer program is imperative if it is to ensure maximum effectiveness of volunteer activities and thereby meet the needs of the agency, volunteers and the community.

The management of volunteers and their activities is, in many respects, similar to that of paid employees and in most cases should be treated as such. Of course, there are differences; particularly those brought about by the non-financial motivations of volunteers. However, similar degrees of flexibility are required to build an effective working relationship. It is also essential to recognise that no single formula will work in all cases.

Volunteering should not be exploitative or used to replace paid staff. Volunteers should not be a source of second-rate free labour, but they should be valued for the skills, experience and assistance they bring. Volunteers also do not come for free; supervising, training, equipping, supporting, recognising and rewarding all consume resources. However, volunteers can be highly skilled and capable of bringing great benefits to work programs.

Volunteers working with Parks and Wildlife Service are giving up their time to assist us in achieving our objectives. They should be respected, recognised and made to feel that they are part of the team and making a valuable contribution.

Volunteer activities increase the department's work capabilities and skills base, as well as fostering communication links and understanding within the community. Volunteers, through their work, gain a better appreciation of nature and are likely to value it more. Volunteers contribute to a wide range of management activities and play a crucial role in the recovery of threatened species, building or maintaining infrastructure, and visitor management.

While volunteering provides substantial benefits to society, importantly it also provides significant benefits to the volunteers themselves. These personal benefits, and the motivations of volunteers, should be recognised and fostered.

Further information regarding best practice and the appropriate involvement of volunteers in organisations and more widely is available on the Volunteering Australia website - http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

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[1] https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CommunityInitiatives/Pages/Volunteers.aspx

What is volunteering?

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as "Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain".

The department has a formal volunteer program with volunteers giving unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills to structured programs. This is as opposed to 'informal' volunteering, which is the casual unpaid help and care that is provided in personal networks, such as to family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances.

It is estimated that about 80% of West Australians donate their time to formal or informal volunteer work each year. The economic, social and cultural value of volunteering to Western Australia was estimated to be $39 billion in 2015 (*Volunteering WA,2015*).

Definition of formal volunteering

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion
- for no financial payment, and
- in designated volunteer positions only.

In 2017-18, 5,657 volunteers contributed more than 781,000 hours to more than 200 Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer projects across WA. This translates to more than 100,000 full time work days and approximately 138 hours per active volunteer.

If these volunteers were paid, the salary bill alone would top $22 million. This is before we consider the work they produce, which is likely to have millions of dollars in conservation, environmental and tourism value. It is easy to see that volunteers are a valuable resource to the department and should be treated as such.

While volunteers are unpaid, utilising them is not cost free, and effective, efficient management of volunteers is essential. A 2016 Volunteering WA study[2] found that current levels of volunteer investment yield a very strong return of $4.50 benefit for every dollar invested. The study also showed that this return increases further when the regular rate of volunteering is increased i.e. by retaining existing volunteers for longer (therefore reducing recruitment and training resources), the return on investment increases.

- [2] *The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering in Western Australia (2015) -*
  https://volunteeringwa.org.au/assets/downloads/vwa_report%20book_web.pdf

The principles of volunteering

The following principles are a nationally recognised code of ethics for organisations and projects involving volunteers:

- volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- volunteer work is unpaid
- volunteering is always a matter of choice
- volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances[3]
- volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community
- volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs
- volunteering is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only
- volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- volunteers do not replace paid workers nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers
- volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others, and
- volunteering promotes human rights and equality.

(Volunteering Australia, 2015)

Code of Practice for Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs)

To promote excellence in service and maximise the quality of volunteers' experience, the agency will:

- empower volunteers to meet their own and agency needs
- offer volunteers opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations
- provide volunteers with clear duty statements and orientation to their work and the agency
- offer training and support for volunteers to achieve personal and work goals
- implement procedures to safe-guard volunteer safety and well-being
- offer reimbursement or other compensation to cover out-of-pocket expenses
- recognise volunteers as valued team members, with opportunities to participate in relevant agency decisions where appropriate, and
- provide mechanisms to acknowledge the value of contributions made by volunteers.

This code of practice was developed by E. Kingsley and B. Tomlins for the South-East Community Development Council, in conjunction with the Volunteer Centre of WA and the Lotteries Commission of WA 1992. Revised by Volunteering WA 2006.

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[3] Some Centrelink clients may be eligible to elect to volunteer to meet their Mutual Obligation Requirements. An individual's eligibility to volunteer as part of their activity requirements will depend on that individual's Mutual Obligation Requirements. The Parks and Wildlife Service is eligible to have Centrelink volunteers. The DBCA organisation ID number is 34112. Contact VCU – PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au for more information.

A history of volunteering within the Parks and Wildlife Service

Prior to 1989 CALM (as the department was originally known) had no policy or guidelines for the management of volunteers. Volunteers had been utilised for many years by CALM and its predecessors the WA Forestry Department, WA National Parks Service and the wildlife section of the former Fisheries and Wildlife Department.

Volunteers were used mostly on a needs basis, and in a very ad-hoc manner. They were recruited by word of mouth in small numbers to assist with specific activities. Some "Friends groups" were established between 1985 and 1988. On occasion, large numbers of volunteers assisted with bushfire suppression, cetacean strandings and other emergency situations.

In 1985, a project officer was appointed to investigate the benefits that could be gained by establishing a comprehensive formal volunteer program, as well as the associated issues, concerns and problems that may arise. In mid-1985 the officer recommended that CALM embark on establishing a formal volunteer program.

It was clear that volunteers had a lot more to offer CALM than just getting "more done for less". Other successful volunteer programs had been established in Western Australia, such as the Perth Zoo Docents, WA Museum volunteers, Kings Park guides and the Rottnest Island volunteer guides, all demonstrating significant benefits and contributions to those organisations.

They included helping other people to find enjoyment and satisfaction in an area of interest or concern, not previously available, developing awareness and understanding of conservation practices and issues and developing an understanding and appreciation for the goals, objectives and operations of the department.

In 1988, CALM acknowledged the impact that the volunteer movement was making on conservation and recreation in Western Australia and other Australian states. As a statement to the department's commitment to volunteer involvement, a policy on volunteers and a set of administrative guidelines were drawn up to guide and assist staff in establishing, managing and retaining volunteers.

These documents provided for central coordination of the program through the appointment of a Community Involvement Coordinator. This was seen as critical to the success of the volunteer program. The administrative guidelines have now been integrated into this Manual to help all Parks and Wildlife Service staff in delivering best practice volunteer management.

Benefits of the Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer program

Since the inception of the formal volunteer program, it has been proven that the department can achieve more through volunteer involvement. However, these benefits are not the only reason for engaging volunteers.

The department's volunteer program has also shown to provide benefits to three main groups:

1. The **volunteers** - they are given opportunities to take part in meaningful and enjoyable experiences and pursue areas of interest while connecting with nature and like-minded people.

   Volunteers also get social benefits from working alongside like-minded people, as well as the proven physical and mental health benefits - volunteering is good for you!

2. The **community** – the local and wider community benefits in terms of high-level management of the environment and involvement in areas that are important to them. They also receive an improved level of information, education and general communication from the department.

3. The **department** – the department benefits from having a committed and passionate volunteer workforce that believes in its mission and to help achieve its environmental, conservation and recreation objectives. By offering a range of opportunities, the department gets assistance from the community to help achieve objectives across all aspects of its work.

What we are attempting to achieve is an overlap of the benefits to each group, achieving positive outcomes for all. This can be achieved by developing volunteer projects that bring these three groups together in a mutually beneficial relationship.

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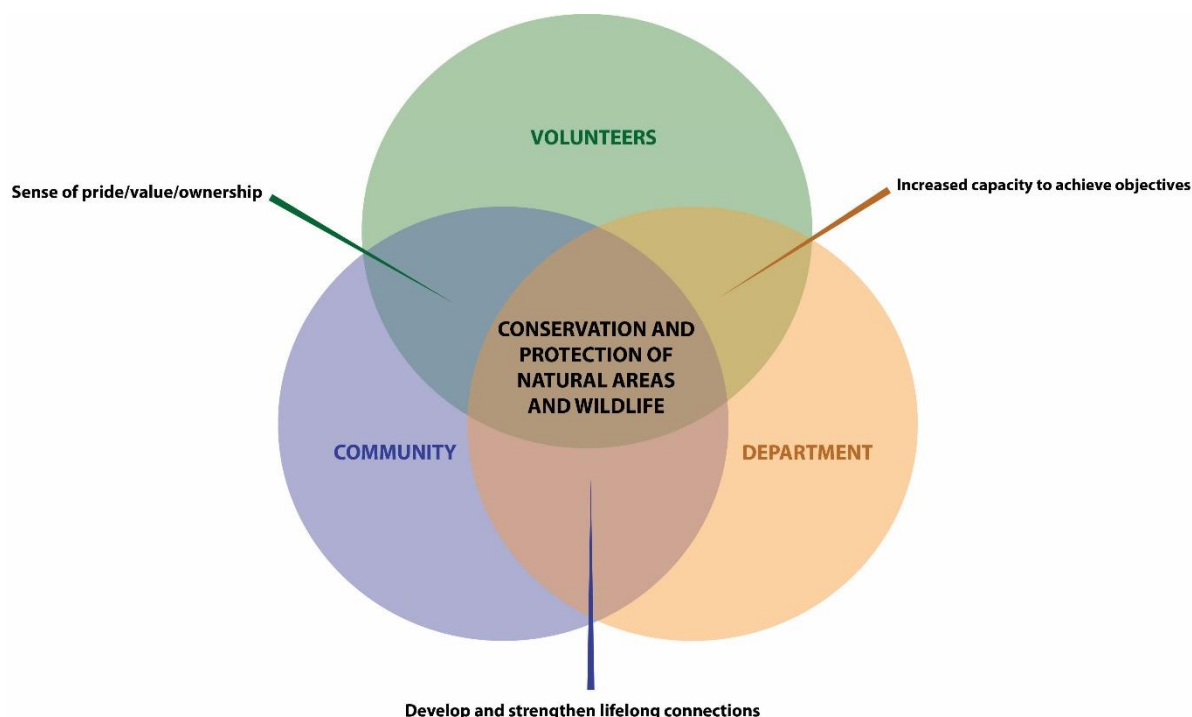
Benefits of volunteering to the Parks and Wildlife Service

- Tapping into the energy and skills of people while providing a sense of community and belonging
- providing broader community viewpoints, and bringing the community to the department
- providing for democratic involvement in the management of public resources, thus improving outcomes and the potential for resolving conflict
- providing rewarding and enjoyable experiences for staff and volunteers
- an increased acceptance and appreciation of the department's activities within the community
- assisting in promoting the conservation ethic
- improved productivity and efficiency in departmental activities
- improved visitor experiences
- increased awareness of the department's budgetary and legislative constraints, and
- can reveal areas of inadequacy within the department, with opportunity for improvement.

Benefits of volunteering to volunteers

Volunteers have many personal motivations and identifying these can help when designing new projects. Parks and Wildlife volunteer surveys have identified several reasons volunteers chose to volunteer for the department. The list is not exhaustive, but includes:

- helping to protect the environment
- gaining or improving skills
- increasing cultural awareness
- meeting people / socialising
- having fun
- keeping active
- physical and mental health benefits
- being involved in areas of interest
- gaining work experience
- improving conditions in society / environment
- gaining a sense of satisfaction
- connecting to, and better understanding of, their community
- physical and mental health benefits
- personal development and boosting self-esteem, and
- being involved in unique opportunities and locations that aren't available elsewhere.

Volunteer and departmental rights and responsibilities

Volunteer rights

Volunteering is a two-way relationship. Volunteers can expect to have a number of rights, but they have certain responsibilities too, as outlined below. The rights of volunteers are addressed by a range of legislation, but volunteers are not covered by awards or work-place agreements.

Volunteers have the right to:

- work in a healthy and safe environment
- be adequately covered by insurance
- be engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- have a job description and agreed working hours
- worthwhile and stimulating activities, using any special skills they may have
- be given constructive and honest feedback
- be recognised for their contribution
- say no if they are uncomfortable with the task assigned
- have access to a grievance procedure
- be given accurate and truthful information about the department
- be provided with orientation to the department
- be provided with sufficient training to do their job
- be provided with a copy of the department's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects their work
- be reimbursed for agreed out of pocket expenses
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- not do the work of staff during industrial disputes, and
- have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988.

Volunteer responsibilities

While volunteers may not have a formal contract, volunteers are expected to fulfil responsibilities to the department. These include:

- following policies and procedures and abiding by the department's Code of Conduct and government Code of Ethics
- being loyal to the department
- accepting direction
- respecting and maintaining privacy and confidentiality
- maintaining safe work practices in accordance with health and safety
- speaking up regarding important issues or concerns regarding regulations that apply to the department
- undertaking training provided to them
- carrying out agreed duties in the agreed time frame
- being dependable and reliable
- working the hours agreed

- being accountable and accepting feedback
- saying no when they are unable or uncomfortable with completing a task, and
- complying with the legal and organisational requirements of the volunteer position.

Departmental rights

The department has the right to:

- interview, screen and check all applicants as per departmental policies and procedures
- assess the volunteer's capacities and place them appropriately
- expect volunteers to adhere to their job / role descriptions
- expect effort and service from the volunteer
- expect volunteers to work within the department's Code of Conduct
- expect volunteers to follow occupational Health and Safety rules
- expect assignments to be adequately completed
- expect loyalty to the department
- expect clear and open communication from the volunteer
- negotiate work assignments
- redirect volunteers determined unsuitable for placement or to say no to volunteers
- release (dismiss) volunteers under certain circumstances
- evaluate volunteers regularly, and,
- express opinions about poor volunteer effort in a diplomatic way.

Departmental responsibilities

The department is expected to:

- ensure that the volunteer rights are upheld
- offer volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations
- provide volunteers with clear duty statements and orientation to their work and the agency
- implement safety systems of work to ensure volunteer safety and well-being
- offer reimbursement or other compensation to cover out-of-pocket expenses, and
- recognise volunteers as valued team members with opportunities to participate in relevant agency decisions.

Volunteer management responsibilities – All staff

To facilitate a sustainable volunteer program, DBCA staff have a responsibility to:

- identify and provide a list of potential projects and tasks in which volunteers can be effectively utilised, and
  - o submit these as part of the Parks and Visitor Services action planning and budgeting process
- register proposed projects and volunteers with VCU, ensuring that all proposed work by volunteers has been:

- properly assessed and approved
- registered in accordance with the DBCA volunteer policy guidelines
- provide appropriate resources for the effective management and support for volunteer activities
- compile and maintain a record of all volunteer projects undertaken and submit quarterly or annual returns of volunteer hours to VCU for reporting purposes
- provide support and training to staff and volunteers in the planning and management of volunteer programs in accordance with departmental policy
- foster volunteer commitment and involvement by identifying and meeting volunteer needs and expectations, and engendering project ownership
- liaise with and utilise agencies such as Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA), corporate organisations, MOU partners etc (where appropriate) for specific projects
- recognise the efforts and contributions made by volunteers in accordance with departmental guidelines and procedures, and
- partner and facilitate national, regional and local initiatives and programs that seek to promote and support the department's mission and goals.

Volunteer management responsibilities – Volunteer Coordination Unit

To assist DBCA staff to effectively manage and support a sustainable volunteer program, VCU will:

- develop, review and implement departmental volunteer policy and procedures
- develop, review and implement systems for managing, recording and recognising volunteer effort
- develop, review and implement volunteer reward and recognition systems
- support and advise staff to foster and encourage volunteer involvement
- develop or research volunteer management training courses for staff
- liaise with external agencies regarding the implementation of volunteer projects
- coordinate certain volunteer projects of state significance, and
- undertake other activities necessary for the administration of the volunteer program.

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Health and Safety for volunteers

Under the provisions of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*, the department has a responsibility to provide and maintain as far as practicable, a safe working environment for its workers. Under this legislation, the department has a duty of care to ensure that the health and safety of volunteers is not affected by the work, a hazard, or the system of work being undertaken.

Orientation

Care should be taken to ensure that new volunteers are properly and effectively introduced to the department in such a way as to clear away any uncertainties and generate a positive relationship between the new volunteer, the department and staff.

Induction is a critical factor in reducing risks to new volunteers as it has a significant influence on the volunteers' willingness and ability to learn the department's occupational health and safety policies, as well as skills and behaviour essential for a healthy and safe working environment.

Training can take a variety of forms and should be tailored to suit the requirements of the specific project. For example, training may take the form of group workshops or on-the-job specific training.

Involving staff with whom the volunteers will be working in the design and implementation of training will help them to develop ownership of the project.

It may sometimes be useful to utilise a "buddy system" where new volunteers are teamed up with experienced volunteers in the initial stages to allow them to learn specific tasks.

Local Induction - Before a newly recruited volunteer is trained for their specific job, and preferably on their first day, they should:

- be welcomed, and made to feel at home
- be introduced to the department with an accurate and useful overview
- be introduced to other volunteers and staff
- be asked to raise any questions they may have
- have administration needs completed
- be shown around the workplace.

New volunteers should not be overloaded with too much information, especially on their first day.

Supervisors should refer to the Parks and Wildlife staff induction for general information (http://intranet/csd/People_Services/Induction/default.aspx), as well as the following volunteer Health and Safety risk management information.

Orientation strategies are two-way processes that enable the agency to define roles, behaviours, and expectations of the volunteer and to allow the volunteer the opportunity to ensure the role meets their needs and interests.

The aim of orientation is to inform volunteers of their role in the delivery of the agency's services. Volunteers should receive formal induction into the workings of DBCA to:

- gain an understanding of the agency's mission, objectives, policies and services;

- understand how volunteer activities contribute to the agency

- understand lines of authority and management within the organisation and pertaining to their role

- learn about the facilities provided in their work environments

- understand entitlements (if any) to reimbursement of expenses

- understand reporting mechanisms and protocols, and

- be aware of individual responsibilities and accountabilities.

In addition to understanding lines of management and accountability, volunteers also need to know about lines of communication to raise concerns or to source information. Volunteers have the right to confidential sources of advice, information, and counselling. If volunteers are aware of and encouraged to use these lines of communication, they are more likely to be able to raise issues.

Health and Safety induction

As part of the department's commitment to ensuring a safe working environment, volunteers are required to complete a health and safety induction. Volunteers <u>must</u> complete the induction prior to commencing work with the department. The induction may be completed before or on arrival at the work site.

The application of the induction material will focus initially on new volunteers, with existing volunteers to be retrospectively inducted when new projects are commenced, or training is undertaken.

For the purpose of this information, the following definitions apply:

- The *supervisor* is the Parks and Wildlife Service employee who is responsible for the volunteer(s) and for ensuring adherence with the requirements outlined below. Responsibility for specific components may be delegated to appropriate department employees or nominated volunteers as required.

- A *work site* is any site, on land and waters, where the volunteer will be undertaking work for the department.

The induction is a one-off requirement, but will need to be completed again if:

- the volunteer is exposed to new, or different, hazards

- there is a near-miss or incident relating to work undertaken by the volunteer
- the department's policies, guidelines or procedures change, or
- the volunteer has not undertaken work for the department for more than 12 months.

The health and safety induction involves the following at or prior to registration:

1. Volunteers must read the induction information and Policy 60: Work Health and Safety electronically or in hard copy.
    a. Electronic copy - This enables the volunteers to read the information prior to arriving at a work site. – available online here - https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/get-involved

    b. Hard copy - Documents need to be provided to volunteers who have not read the information prior to arrival at the work site. The department supervisor is required to provide this information.

2. The supervisor will complete the induction checklist with the volunteer/s. This may be completed in a group where several volunteers are working at the same work site.

3. For volunteer/s undertaking hazardous tasks, a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is required. See the Management of Hazardous Tasks guideline for examples of such tasks. The supervisor should work with the volunteer/s to complete the JSA to reflect the work they will be undertaking. It is important to ensure it is understood and signed by all volunteers performing the task.

- Volunteers require a JSA for each hazardous task they undertake on department work sites. The JSA will be valid for one year, unless the task changes or there is a near-miss or incident in which case it must be reviewed, re-signed and resubmitted to the supervisor.

- See the Job Safety Analyses guideline and section on the intranet for more information.

The nature and location of the volunteer activity may have an effect on how and when you do your induction e.g. it may be difficult to complete the induction checklist in the field. In these cases, it is feasible to deliver the induction on-site, and then complete the induction checklist on your return to the office.

Some volunteers may not always have a supervisor while working in the field, therefore a thorough induction and access to the health and safety information before and during their volunteering is essential.

Work Site Sign-In

Volunteers should sign in and out of the work site or notify their supervisor of their whereabouts.

Licenses, Certifications and Training

Where applicable, volunteers must provide their supervisor with copies of current certifications / licenses prior to commencing work. Volunteers are not permitted to undertake tasks that require a license/certification/training without first providing the relevant documentation to the department.

Examples of tasks that may require a license or certification include driving departmental vehicles, use of herbicides, use of heavy vehicles and chainsaw use.

Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment (PPE)

Volunteers must wear attire appropriate to the tasks they will be undertaking. Volunteers working outdoors need to wear enclosed shoes and be sun safe – slip, slop, slap, seek and slide.

Volunteers undertaking tasks where PPE is required must wear the same level of PPE as employees. This should be provided by the department, (budget for PPE should be covered by the project or local cost centre) but can be supplied by the volunteer providing it meets departmental standards.

PPE, whether it is provided or supplied by the volunteer, must:
- fit properly
- be used properly
- be kept in good condition. If it is damaged, it needs to be repaired or replaced in line with the manufacturer's requirements.
- be appropriate for the task.

Examples of PPE include helmet, goggles, ear muffs, gloves, high visibility vest, chaps and safety boots.

Fitness for Work

It is essential that volunteers are fit-for-work. This may be impacted by injury or illness, medication, stress, fatigue and alcohol or other drugs.

Supervisors need to ask volunteers if they have any pre-existing conditions which may compromise their ability to undertake work safely. If an affirmative response is received, the supervisor should determine appropriate tasks in consultation with the volunteer or, if required, the supervisor should ask for confirmation from a medical practitioner stating that the volunteer is fit to undertake the required work tasks. The same approach should be applied in situations where volunteers are returning from injury/illness or are on workers' compensation.

Ensure that volunteers bring or have any medical equipment they need, such as inhalers or allergy medication (e.g. Epipen), and that there is a plan in case it's needed in an emergency.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

The department's alcohol and other drug policy applies to volunteers as well as employees and contractors. It is important to ensure volunteers understand these policy requirements, including potential for testing, impact of medication and the process if a positive result is obtained.

It is important to ensure that volunteers understand that the policy applies when undertaking work for or representing the department. However, when work has ceased for the day this is considered the volunteer's personal time and the policy does not apply. Volunteers must be compliant at the commencement of their next shift.

If a volunteer has ceased work for the day but is asked to resume work, they must be fit-for-work in line with policy requirements. If the volunteer is not fit-for-work, they must decline and not resume work.

See the volunteer OHS induction document for further information.

Wellbeing support

It is recommended that volunteers needing wellbeing support are provided access to the department's Peer Support program or chaplain, or external services such as LifeLine (13 11 14) or Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636). They can also be advised to consult their GP and seek a referral for an appointment with a psychologist.

The services provided through the Employee Assistance Program are not an entitlement for volunteers. In exceptional circumstances, such as following a critical incident, the service may be extended to particular individuals, however this does not encompass all volunteers at all times.

If a volunteer or incident warrants further assistance and the use of the Employee Assistance Program, please contact the Employee Relations and Safety Unit so it can be determined whether the service could be extended.

Reporting of Hazards, Near-Misses and Incidents

It is essential that all hazards, near-misses and incidents be reported. Volunteers should report such issues to their department supervisor who is then required to report it via the online system. See the Reporting Hazards, Near-Misses and Incidents section of the intranet (or contact VCU) for details.

Insurance

All registered volunteers are insured against personal accidents while volunteering, under the Parks and Wildlife Service's insurance policy with RiskCover, as follows:

(NB: all incidents are assessed on a case by case basis)

Property Insurance

Cover providing the full cost of reinstatement, replacement or repair (to a condition equal to, but not better than its condition when new) for the loss of, or damage to, personal property (excluding money and jewellery) belonging to the volunteer used in connection with the business of Parks and Wildlife and which is not otherwise insured.

Vehicle Insurance

The cover provided to Parks and Wildlife Service volunteers for using their own vehicle while on official business or activity with the consent of Parks and Wildlife. RiskCover excesses apply.

There are no concerns with volunteers assisting with driving in regard to normal sealed road conditions, assuming they are licensed to do so. However, it is not necessary or wise for volunteers to be assisting in off-road situations, including gravel.

If, in a rare circumstance this was deemed necessary, it would be essential for any supervising Parks and Wildlife staff to be satisfied that the volunteer has the required level of competence to undertake the off-road driving and holds certification to do so. This could include attending an appropriate course under the supervision of a qualified instructor.

Personal Injury Insurance

For an accepted claim for personal injury, RiskCover will pay the excess of any amount recovered from Private Health Fund or Commonwealth Government Medicare Scheme. This

is not workers' compensation but needs to be treated as a public or private patient. The process for making a claim is similar to the workers' compensation process as it uses the same claim forms/medical advice; however, it is for information purposes only.

Follow the steps below if a volunteer gets injured while undertaking work for the department:

1. Volunteer attends GP and obtains 'First Certificate of Capacity' as a private patient, not as a worker's compensation patient. The volunteer pays the bill and claims portion back from Medicare.

2. Volunteer fills in a Personal Accident Claim form (available via VCU or Employee Relations and Health Section.

3. Volunteer hands claim form, 'First Certificate of Capacity' and receipt (showing out of pocket expenses for GP visit) to the supervisor who sends the documents via email to the Injury Management Coordinator.

4. RiskCover assess the claim and reimburses the volunteer directly for any out of pocket expenses, if approved.

Queries relating to insurance and personal injury should be directed to the Injury Management Coordinator.

Please direct any queries relating to the health and safety of volunteers to Employee Relations and Safety Section via healthandsafety@dbca.wa.gov.au.

International volunteers

Visa requirements - Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) system[4]

Restrictions apply to non-permanent residents, tourists and visitors to Australia for employment and volunteering positions. Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) are required to have a process in place to ensure applicants for volunteer positions are legally allowed to volunteer in Australia.

For non-permanent residents, VIOs must verify an applicant's immigration status before offering a volunteer position. Under the Migration Act 1958 (Cth), penalties apply to VIOs that engage a volunteer in breach of a visa condition, unless it can show that reasonable steps were taken to ascertain whether the person was legally allowed to be a volunteer.

If required, the Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) can access VEVO to confirm an applicant's eligibility to volunteer legally in Australia.

To do this, volunteer supervisors should forward a copy of **one** of the following documents to VCU, with the volunteer registration form:

- Passport
- Provisional Travel Documents
- ImmiCard
- PLO56 (M56)
- Titre de Voyage / Convention Travel Document (CTD)

Further information https://www.passports.gov.au/travel-related-documents

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[4] https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/Volunteer_Checks_Information.pdf

In summary – to register non-resident volunteers, DBCA staff must:

1. provide VCU with a copy of one of the appropriate documents above to enable confirmation of appropriate visa, **or** proof of visa conditions that allow volunteering (e.g. Visa confirmation letter)

2. provide copies of insurance cover

3. provide completed volunteer registration form when returning to VCU.

Where Parks and Wildlife are unable to host volunteers in registered programs for insurance reasons, refer interested parties to:

Conservation Volunteers Australia – Email: perth@conservationvolunteers.com.au **Tel**: 08 9335 2777

Insurance requirements for international volunteers

International visitors must have their own adequate health insurance which adequately covers any anticipated volunteering activity for the whole period of voluntary work for Parks and Wildlife. As the department's RiskCover volunteer personal accident policy does not cover non-residents they cannot, in most cases, be registered as volunteers.

Reciprocal Health Care Agreements

However, the Australian Government has signed Reciprocal Health Care Agreements (RHCA) with the **United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Norway, Slovenia, Malta** and **Italy**.

These agreements entitle visitors from these countries to some subsidised health services for essential medical treatment while visiting Australia and therefore separate health insurance may not always be necessary for volunteers from these countries.

Note: Students from Norway, Finland, Malta and the Republic of Ireland are **not** covered by the agreements with those countries. They will require separate cover either independently or through their University.

In all reciprocal health care cases there may be time, treatment and/or cost limitations on any cover provided, and repatriation costs would not be covered.

More information from:
http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/medicare/reciprocal-health-care-agreements/health-care-for-visitors-to-australia

Other volunteers

Volunteers under 16 years

The usual requirement of the volunteer personal accident policy is that a volunteer is a minimum 16 years of age. However, under certain circumstances, this can be adaptable.

Any child under the age of 16 may be formally engaged in a volunteer project but will be considered as accompanying a parent or guardian and under their direct supervision.

The decision to allow children under the age of 16 to accompany a parent or guardian will be made by the Parks and Wildlife Service project supervisor, based on their appraisal of risk.

Children under 16 years can be registered as Parks and Wildlife Service volunteers and as such covered by the department's volunteer personal accident insurance if:

- They are supervised by a parent or guardian at all times while on the project
- The project supervisor agrees that a person of that age can perform the tasks required of volunteers on the project
- The project supervisor determines that the risks i.e. task, location and other issues associated with project are acceptably low for the child to undertake the tasks
- The child must complete the PWS205 (or parent completes on their behalf), which must be countersigned by the parent or guardian
- The project supervisor should indicate on the volunteer's registration form that they aware and supportive of any volunteer under 16 years-old participating on their project.

Upper age limit

DBCA's personal accident insurance policy does not have any age restrictions. However, volunteer safety is a primary concern and the decision to allow any volunteers will be made at the DBCA volunteer project supervisor's discretion, who may request a medical check from a GP at the volunteer's own expense. Any medical check must be considered on an assessment, based on the tasks associated with the role (listed on the PWS206 Project Registration form, or listed locally with the project supervisor).

Volunteers can be registered DBCA volunteers and covered by the department's personal accident insurance if:

- they are supervised while on the project
- the project supervisor agrees that the person is physically able to perform the tasks required of volunteers on the project
- the project supervisor determines that the task, location and risks associated with the project involvement are acceptable for the volunteer to undertake the required tasks, and
- The volunteer has completed a registration form PWS205.

(photo: Adam Thompson)

Starting a new volunteer project

Staff should take the commitment to a volunteer program seriously and consult Corporate Policy 15 – Volunteers and Community Involvement (available here: https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/about/policy/corporate_policy_statement_15_volunteering_and_community_involvement_website.pdf).

Policy 15 outlines the department's values and expectations from the volunteer program clearly for all staff and volunteers.

It is essential that new and existing volunteer projects are formally registered with the Volunteer Coordination Unit. District or regional staff are responsible for providing complete and accurate information regarding their project, as well as ongoing management of the project and its volunteers.

Why develop volunteer projects?

Volunteer programs can be developed with several purposes in mind. These include:

- satisfying a need that is not currently being met by the department
- adding value and increasing efficiencies to departmental capabilities
- providing opportunities for community involvement, thereby increasing community understanding of departmental work and issues
- meeting the department's legislative obligations.

Identifying a need for volunteers

To assist in identifying the need for volunteers on your project:

1. List current tasks or priorities
2. List tasks not yet complete, or where assistance is required
3. Identify which of these tasks could be improved with volunteer assistance
4. Adapt or develop a plan to allocate tasks and resources available for volunteers.

Volunteer work should be considered in all engagement and management planning. It is important to think about engaging volunteers in any works plans and the contributions they can make to your identified priorities.

This will then help you to decide what resources you can commit to volunteer engagement for greatest return. Statistics show that a well-organised program recruits and retains volunteers more effectively than one that lacks structure.

The first step in developing a volunteer program is to establish what part of your service will be enhanced by having volunteers and identifying the exact roles they will fulfil i.e. what activities, roles and tasks are suitable for volunteers.

All volunteers must be assigned to a current registered project. (Contact VCU if you are unsure of a project's status – PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au). If a project is not already in place it may be necessary to register a new one (see 'Registering new volunteer projects' section).

Things to consider when planning a volunteer project

Workforce planning (the process used to align your project needs and priorities with its objectives), is as important for volunteers as it is for staff.

Consider the following:

- What specific priority outcomes will volunteers contribute to?
- How will volunteers make your project more productive?
- How will volunteers contribute, and what will they be doing?
- How many volunteers will be required?
- How will they be recruited?
- What types of skills will be required (If any)?
- What activity, role and tasks may be suitable for volunteers?
- What experience and commitment are you looking for from volunteers?
- Does the role and / or task meet the needs and interest of volunteers?
- Ability, desire and role of staff to complete the project;
- Level of supervision and support required;
- Number of available, or potentially available, volunteers;
- Training requirements – (NB: induction, including health and safety are mandatory, but other task-specific training may be necessary);
- What resources are available – staff, equipment, time, budget etc.

After considering the above, you should be able to develop a volunteer role and volunteer job description, which will assist in formulating your new volunteer project. The level of detail will reflect the size or goals of your project – the bigger the activity, the bigger the plan.

Essentially, planning and developing volunteer projects follows the same basic principles as any other project:

- Set the objectives
- Plan the project
- Implement the project, and
- Evaluate regularly.

Registering a project

Once you have decided that you are going ahead with starting a volunteer project, a formal procedure is necessary to register the project.

The Volunteer Project Registration Form PWS206 and further information is available here: https://confluence.dpaw.wa.gov.au/display/PMS/How+to+register+a+new+volunteer+project or from VCU via PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

A step-by-step guide on how to complete the PWS206 to register new volunteer projects can be found in the *Administration and essential forms* section of this manual.

Volunteer role descriptions

The volunteer role description is a useful tool to clearly define expectations and boundaries and should be included in the PWS206 for reference. If volunteers' roles are clearly outlined in writing, supervisors and volunteers both have something to refer to should there be any misunderstanding. There may be several volunteer roles on your project, including supervisory roles, but each should be clearly defined.

A basic overview of what should be included:

- **Objectives of the role** – general statement of what the job is and how it relates to departmental goals
- **Duties and responsibilities** – a bullet-point list of each specific task and requirements
- **Time requirements** – realistic total of hours required per week or month, length of commitment or start and end date
- **Location** – the primary location(s) of where the work will be
- **Work environment** – field or office-based, who they'll be working with, any special tools used or information about physical requirements of job
- **Skills and qualifications** – if any are necessary e.g. chainsaw license, could also be a short additional list of desirable skills, depending on needs
- **Training** – what the volunteer can expect to receive
- **Supervision and support** – who will be the volunteers' direct supervisor.

Additional elements that can also be included:

- **The impact of the role** – How does the work affect the community and the department's work? And why is it important?
- **The benefits volunteers will receive** – besides the standard department rewards, what are the perks of volunteering for your project? Making new friends, great coffee, working in off-limit areas or with native species etc?
- **Testimonials** – real comments from volunteers and staff about the value of the project and its volunteers can be very powerful and can reinforce that the department is worthy of involvement.

Consider your current volunteer role description – would it attract you to commit your free time, or inspire you to get involved? Having this information set out clearly helps to develop recruitment strategies to attract the most suitable volunteers to your project.

Volunteer recruitment, selection and retention

Planned recruitment and selection ensures that that the department is effective in attracting appropriate and informed volunteers to projects; volunteers that have clear expectations from the outset. It also ensures the first step in screening to maintain safety and security in specific roles, as outlined in each volunteer role description.

Prospective volunteers should be provided with information to make informed decisions about volunteering for the department. Consistent procedures should be implemented for assessing, selecting and placing new volunteers. Recruitment becomes an ongoing process once the needs for a project have been identified.

Generally, the most effective style of volunteer recruitment is "targeted recruitment." This method is based on identifying a volunteer role and then targeting individuals or group(s) who have the skills or interests necessary to fulfil the job's responsibilities.

The targeted method generally provides the best results and involves several specific steps:

1. Develop a list of all volunteer jobs needed for your project – these should be included on the PWS206 Project Registration form.

2. Identify types of skills or qualities desirable for specific jobs,

3. Identify potential target groups, who may be best suited to your project (e.g. retired people, students, special interest groups) and then consider where best to reach these target groups e.g. camping websites / forums, social media, universities, or on the existing department volunteer database.

4. Use this information to create a targeted recruitment article, advert, poster or email. Share what your project hopes to accomplish and, importantly, what it can offer volunteers in return for their efforts. Indicate what the department has to offer and what may be unique and special about your project (for example, volunteers may work in areas that are off-limits to members of the public).

5. Presentations to small groups of potential volunteers can be an effective way of recruiting volunteers. They allow potential volunteers to ask questions and learn about the actual volunteer work.

6. For existing projects, it could be beneficial to involve other volunteers in the recruitment process. Current volunteers may be more effective in talking about the work they are doing and the experiences they have.

Advertising to recruit volunteers

Much information about volunteer activities takes place through word of mouth, and active recruitment may not always be necessary. Active recruitment may become more important if a very large number of volunteers are needed for a short period of time, at short notice, or if some special skills or characteristics are being sought.

Advertisements should conform with government advertising templates and generally outline the role description, including:

- type of volunteer work

- skills, knowledge or experience required
- time commitment and obligations involved, and other expectations
- application procedures, and
- contact details of the project supervisor or appropriate contact person.

You are encouraged to advertise in your local community, such as local papers or radio, or regional volunteer hubs. However, VCU can assist with recruitment through various other channels - contact PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au to discuss utilising:

- the 'Get Involved' pages on the DBCA website
- volunteer referral agencies (e.g. Volunteering WA)
- departmental social or other media
- direct communication to existing registered volunteers via Volgistics, the volunteer database managed by VCU.

It is important that once an individual expresses an interest in volunteering every effort is made to engage them quickly. **NB:** At DBCA, volunteers are registered only when they can be assigned to an active project.

If prospective volunteers contact you but you don't currently have an opportunity for them, it may be advisable to keep an 'Expressions of Interest' list, with contact and availability details, so when an opportunity arises, they can be contacted and registered.

It may also be of interest to give details of other volunteer projects across DBCA, which can be found on the website - https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved/volunteering-opportunities

Screening and selection

In some cases, there may be more volunteers interested in a project than you need. In these instances, interviews and/or general group orientation sessions may be useful in selecting suitable volunteers. Selecting the right volunteer is important and can determine the success of a project.

Volunteer selection should match the volunteer's own expectations, interests, availability, commitment and skills, and tasks should be appropriate for their skill level. Unsuccessful applicants should be notified and, if possible, referred to another more suitable project or role, or directed to external agencies.

You should ensure that your volunteer screening methods, such as interviews, police checks, medical checks etc are appropriate to the nature of the volunteer tasks and their associated risks. For more information on requirements for screening volunteers visit https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CommunityInitiatives/Pages/Volunteers.asp.

Formally recruited volunteers will, in most cases be seeking volunteer projects on an individual basis. However, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate to formally recruit an existing group (e.g. club or organisation) to carry out a project. In such cases, for insurance and volunteer recognition reasons, it is preferable to register each volunteer individually, although group sign-on forms are available for one-off events. See Administration and essential forms section for details.

In some cases, particularly with long-term volunteer groups, it may be useful to encourage self-administration to reduce administration loads on DBCA staff. This will only be necessary where there are enough volunteers to warrant an independent group.

Functions which could be taken over by volunteers themselves include:

- organisation and running of meetings (usually via an elected committee)
- recruitment of new volunteers
- training and mentoring volunteers
- maintenance of records of hours worked / other general admin
- setting and evaluation of performance standards
- supervision of projects
- newsletters & social media updates, and
- organising social events.

A DBCA staff member will need to remain as a contact in an advisory and support role between the group and department.

Tips for attracting volunteers

- Be strategic with your advertising:

  o Identify and highlight the benefits (to the volunteer) associated with the volunteering opportunity. It could be unique opportunities, training, meeting new people or learning new skills.
  o Where possible, try to offer incentives, such as social events or travel expenses.
  o Use the right language and platform, for your audience. For example, 20-year-olds need to be spoken to in a different way to baby boomers and may use different media (e.g. online vs print).
  o Look for new and innovative places to advertise your vacancies – e.g. university campuses or music magazines / websites / events / various social media platforms, depending on your intended audience.
  o Be aware that different types of volunteering appeals to different demographics – e.g. younger volunteers may be more interested in short-term or one-off events, whereas older volunteers may want longer term commitments.

- Get other volunteers to help evaluate your program to improve and develop it – they can be your most relevant resource
- Be flexible in terms of commitment from volunteers - many people are juggling work or studies, so their volunteer hours or days may need to be adjusted

(adapted from www.qld.gov.au)

One reason why people say they have not volunteered is simply because they have not been asked - a crucial part of recruitment success is to directly ask people to volunteer.

A recurring finding from Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer satisfaction surveys is that volunteers want to do more, but don't always know where they are needed or what projects are available. The VCU can utilise several channels to raise awareness of DBCA volunteer

projects and help to recruit more volunteers where they are needed, as well as broadcast the success and outcomes of your project.

What can your volunteers do?

Your volunteers can contribute in more ways than you may realise:
- your volunteers are the ones with hands-on experience - go to the source for constructive ideas for improving your programs
- ask the volunteers for feedback or advice – some may have hidden skills or experiences
- have a suggestion box
- invite newsletter or website submissions to promote their work and your project.

Volunteer supervision and management

Managing volunteers can be a significant task. It is strongly recommended that a paid staff member with appropriate management skills be allocated time to coordinate volunteer activities and supervise volunteers.

It is important that the staff member(s) supervising volunteers and volunteer projects receive support, adequate resources, and training if necessary so they can fulfil the duties expected of them.

Eight areas have been identified as key factors to successful supervision and are detailed below and in the following pages:

1. Outlining rights and responsibilities
2. Appropriate level of supervision
3. Direction
4. Clear expectations
5. Showing appreciation
6. Conflict resolution
7. Delegation
8. Team building

By following the key factors outlined in this section, effective supervision is achievable.

1. Outlining rights and responsibilities

The volunteer supervisor should ensure that, as part of the induction, the rights and responsibilities of both the volunteer and the department are clearly stated.

If volunteers are aware of their rights and responsibilities, there is a greater likelihood of cooperation, communication and mutual support.

All volunteers involved with the department should receive a copy of the Code of Conduct at registration. This document forms the foundation for proper conduct and, to a lesser extent, supervision and management of staff and volunteers. The Code of Conduct is available here - https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/about/working/code_of_conduct.pdf

2. Appropriate level of Supervision

The quality of supervision will have a large bearing on the success of the volunteer program. Time invested by volunteer supervisors before and during the project will pay dividends in the future.

The amount of supervision required should:

- be appropriate to the task
- be appropriate to the qualifications and expertise of volunteer/s
- be dependent on the experience of a volunteer leader
- be appropriate to the size of the group
- change according to the time volunteers have been contributing to a project
- depend on the age and maturity of the volunteer or volunteer group.

3. Direction

Effective supervision involves providing volunteers with a clear explanation of what is to be achieved in the project or activity.

A project description should be written and included in the PWS206 Project Registration form, outlining the objectives of the project and methods of implication. Directions should be clear and complete, with the level of detail and complexity depending on the tasks.

For volunteers involved in simple tasks, directions may simply be verbal instructions. In more extensive or complex projects involving one or more separate tasks, it will be necessary to review and write job or task descriptions and provide verbal orientation on site. In some instances, the job description will need to also define the extent of the task in relation to department staff roles.

Supervisors must be readily approachable and available to volunteers to answer questions, reinforce directions, and assist in areas of difficulty.

4. Clear expectations

It is important that supervisors ensure that expectations are clear to everyone i.e. that both volunteers and staff understand the objectives and what is to be achieved within the given time frame.

Again, a position description can be a useful tool for managing volunteers' expectations regarding training and skill development, or how the role may change or grow in the future.

Volunteers should be encouraged to discuss any concerns or confusion as soon they arise. Clarifying the role early reduces dissatisfaction later in the project.

If volunteers feel their needs are not being met at any time, action should be taken to address them immediately. If it is agreed that their concerns are realistic and acceptable within the bounds of the project, then changes should be made to the design of the project, or the involvement of volunteers needs to be reassessed.

In some cases, volunteers will be involved in projects over a long period of time and the project may involve several tasks. Some of the tasks may need defining regarding the extent of volunteer involvement, in order to ensure differentiation with paid staff roles.

5. Showing appreciation

Everyone needs their work to be appreciated, whether they are being paid or not. However, unlike paid staff, volunteers are less likely to stay if they feel their contributions are not appreciated or acknowledged.

Showing appreciation doesn't have to be costly. Whilst it relates to recognition, it is an essential part of supervision, and may involve merely showing an interest in the volunteer's work, providing ongoing feedback or advice and assistance in tackling difficult tasks.

The list of reasons why people volunteer in the first place is long. After time, however, the reasons volunteers *remain* committed essentially distils down to four factors:

1. The work they are doing is visibly meaningful
2. They feel appreciated for their service
3. They continue to learn and grow
4. They enjoy it.

Making volunteers feel welcome, valued and an equal part of the department, and respecting their skills and knowledge, is an important part of recognising volunteers. Volunteers – even confident and experienced ones – do not like being taken for granted.

Similarly, while staff within the agency are paid employees, their contribution in support of the volunteer program should also be recognised.

If volunteers are to remain motivated, they will need to feel appreciated. This is an area open to creative thinking and each project supervisor is encouraged to research ways to acknowledge their volunteers. See the external resources section for some useful websites.

6. Conflict resolution or disciplinary action

As the supervisor of volunteers, you may occasionally be asked for advice on resolving sensitive issues relating to the behaviour of a volunteer.

This behaviour may take the form of:

- poor job performance
- working outside the agreed job description
- conflict with other volunteers or paid staff.

Essentially, there is no set process to follow but it is necessary to ensure that the volunteer has clearly been told what the expected standard of behaviour or performance is and given the opportunity to improve.

Following are some recommended steps in resolving the problem:

- point out to the volunteer that a difficulty does exist. Clearly explain the nature of the problem, and the implications of his/her actions

- modify the task if the volunteer is unable to meet the required standard, or offer training

- change the volunteer to another task that they would like to do and are capable of undertaking.

- if the conflict is personal, try to clarify issues, and the perspectives of each party. Generate possible solutions (such as allocating to other tasks or areas), assess each one and implement an agreed preferred solution.

If the volunteer has been unable or unwilling to address the issues, the last resort is to ask the volunteer to leave. It is paramount that the volunteer's self-esteem is preserved. The golden rule is to criticise performance and/or behaviour, not the person.

None of this is pleasant or easy. However, the relief to all concerned, including the volunteer, is usually quite significant. Contact VCU to discuss if necessary.

7. Delegation

Volunteer supervisors often have many other tasks and responsibilities. It is not always possible or appropriate to dedicate large amounts of time to supervising and managing volunteers. Volunteer supervisors may only be able to devote a small amount of their work time to individual volunteers.

Part of the volunteer supervisor's role should be to identify members of the volunteer group who are potential leaders or supervisors and monitor their work and involvement during the early stages of the project.

It is well worth considering the following options:

- select volunteers who are self-sufficient and can work in teams with their own support mechanisms

- select a volunteer capable of acting as a volunteer leader
- pair volunteers so each can give the other support
- delegate as many jobs as are appropriate.

If a volunteer is selected to supervise other volunteers, the responsibility for safety control and job standards must still be managed by the Parks and Wildlife staff supervisor. Regular checking procedures and good communication with all volunteers is important.

8. **Team Building**

A positive team is more productive, which leads to greater outcomes. Team building is an important part of successful group supervision as it brings a feeling of belonging and mutual support. Supervisors should be aware of how to build, maintain and operate effective volunteer teams.

Effective implementation and management of the points previously mentioned will form the basis of good team building. Some principles of effective teamwork include:

- clearly defined goals, and each volunteer's role in achieving them
- effective coordination of groups / teams
- understand how your volunteers work best – (independently, or part of a group?)
- be adaptable and flexible to find solutions to problems
- be professional always
- effective communication around expectations and tasks
- share your knowledge – education helps with understanding the bigger picture
- balanced task and group maintenance functions
- an enjoyable working environment – have fun, celebrate successes
- a sense of team achievement, and
- genuine, constructive feedback and encouragement.

Some potential issues to be aware of in your volunteer program that can lead to reduced productivity, motivation or commitment:

- exploiting volunteers by assigning tasks that paid staff are not willing to undertake
- assigning repetitive tasks can lead to boredom
- overloading volunteers may lead to burnout
- placement of volunteers with 'difficult' staff members
- supplying equipment that is not adequate to the task
- not adequately informing volunteers of the nature of the task
- assigning tasks that volunteers are not confident with
- management not being supportive of your volunteer project
- failing to acknowledge volunteer achievements
- inadequate supervision that may lead to wasting time, for you and the volunteer.

Volunteer evaluation

When effectively delivered, feedback, whether positive or negative, can motivate and inspire volunteers to stay and / or to deliver more. However, when it is badly handled it can lead to lack of motivation, frustration, resentment and the possibility of permanent damage to the relationship between a volunteer and the department.

Evaluations need not necessarily be formal appraisals; the main aim is that meaningful information is provided regarding their contribution and performance. An informal approach to performance appraisals may in fact be preferred by volunteers.

An accurate job description aids the volunteer evaluation process considerably. With a clear idea of what volunteers' tasks are, it is easier to determine if their performance has been measuring up. This information should be included in the PWS206 Project Registration form when the project is created and updated or reviewed as necessary.

Volunteer tasks should be regularly reassessed, to determine that they continue to be relevant and producing useful and appropriate outcomes for them to perform.

Always respect and acknowledge your volunteers and the variety of skills and experience they bring; people don't know they are doing a good (or bad) job unless you tell them.

Volunteer project debrief

The end of your volunteer project, or when volunteers leave, is an ideal opportunity to assess their performance and your project.

You should use the occasion to:

- thank volunteers for their efforts, and ask for feedback from their point of view – noting high points and / or low points
- consider if your project's expectations are being met
- ask volunteers to send photos to use in the volunteer newsletter, website and social media, to help promote your project and the department's work
- discuss future opportunities and events
- leave on a positive note.

Recognition of volunteers

Studies have shown that volunteers' *least* preferred forms of recognition include formal gatherings and public acknowledgment in newspapers, radio or television. Interestingly, these methods are common methods for many organisations, with 60% citing formal gatherings, and 50% using public acknowledgement, as their recognition strategies. *(Dixon, Hientz, 2013).* Try searching online alternative ways to recognise volunteers.

Sometimes the simplest and most effective way to show appreciation to volunteers is a personalised 'thank you'. The best appreciation methods have several characteristics:

- they are personal and acknowledge the volunteer's personal sacrifice –
  - o this says that you know their time is valuable and that you noticed they gave it to your project. Sign your name or include a personal message.

- they are specific – point out something they did that was above and beyond (even if that is just being consistently reliable)

- they are connected to the mission – volunteers are with DBCA because they care about our work; thank them for making a difference

- they are timely – Acknowledge something when it happens – this way you won't forget!

- they are open and honest – let them know that you are personally impacted by their time and efforts, and their contribution has helped you and / or your team.

There are several resources for volunteer recognition listed at the end of this manual.

Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer rewards

Departmental rewards are detailed below, and all registered volunteers are eligible each financial year that they are active (correct from 1 July 2018):

Annual hours	Reward
20	20% discount voucher for *WA Naturally* publications
50	12-month volunteer park pass
150	Limited edition WA native species lapel badge
300	$30 discount voucher for *WA Naturally* publications
500+	Annual Landscope subscription

Note 1: Rewards and correspondence will be issued as soon as is practicable after the end of each financial year.

Note 2: Each reward is issued once only in a financial year.

Parks and Wildlife outlets are requested to accept volunteer reward vouchers in good faith, under the following conditions:

- Vouchers are to be used for WA Naturally or other Parks and Wildlife publications only
- Only one voucher used per transaction
- Vouchers are not transferrable for cash
- No change is to be issued – value is 'up to $30 inc GST'

Vouchers should be retained and forwarded to the VCU, along with copy of receipts and your long code. VCU will then arrange for an Electronic Transfer of the value redeemed back to your cost centre.

Other Entitlements and reimbursements

Authorised costs associated with equipment or required resources (e.g. fuel) for volunteer duties should be reimbursed. Volunteers should speak to their project supervisor before spending money, to ensure that the expenses are approved so that they do not accrue out of pocket expenses.

Parks and Wildlife regions may support volunteers in remote or isolated areas by providing supplies and provisions as appropriate to the project, budget, and with manager approval.

Individual sections or volunteer programs may provide additional rewards of reasonable value and as appropriate to their project, budget and manager approval.

More ideas for volunteer recognition can be found in the External resources section.

Contact PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au for further advice or information.

Administration and essential forms

For the volunteer program to run smoothly the initial administration should follow the procedures set out here. The following information will explain the reason for requesting this information and clarify the use of this data.

Project supervisors are responsible for ensuring the correct administration procedures are followed for their projects. In short, the essential requirements are as follows:

1. Volunteer project must be formally registered with VCU – this ensures that there are staff aware and actively involved in the project;

2. Volunteers must be registered and assigned to a registered project - they are not insured otherwise;

3. Timesheets must be returned to VCU at the end of each quarter, or at the end of the project, whichever is shorter. This is essential for ensuring volunteers are insured and receive their rewards, as well as for reporting on project, district and regional volunteer activity.

Which forms do I need?

To register new volunteers: PWS205 Volunteer Registration Form

Please note:
PWS205 registration forms are available upon request *only* from the Volunteer Coordination Unit, to ensure that they are the most current and are associated with the correct project. Please advise VCU of the registered project name and number via: PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au or tel: 9219 8279**.**

The PWS205 form provides essential data regarding any person volunteering for the department.

Any potential volunteer is not covered under the department's personal accident insurance policy until the PWS205 form has been completed and the volunteer assigned to a currently active registered project (contact VCU to confirm if necessary).

It is essential that, when filling in the PWS205 form, the volunteer provides all the required information so that reporting, future research and planning for projects will contain complete and accurate information, as well as emergency contacts.

Before completing the PWS205, the volunteer must be given a copy of the department's Code of Conduct, and the volunteer Health and Safety information, or be provided access to them via the department's website here - https://www.dbca.wa.gov.au/get-involved**.**

The completed registration form, including the induction checklist on the reverse, should be sent to the VCU at the Kensington office for their records, with a copy kept at the office of origin.

Volunteers providing a short-term service (e.g. one-off event) need not necessarily complete this form. In this instance, a group registration sign on form (PWS208) may be sufficient.

NB: International volunteers are generally NOT covered by the department's RiskCover insurance policy – a copy of their travel health insurance must be attached to the PWS205 – refer to Health and Safety section for more information.

Flowchart for volunteer registration

1 The project supervisor contacts the Volunteer Coordination Unit (VCU) with details of the volunteer project (name and number). For insurance and reporting requirements, it is essential that volunteers are registered, as no cover is provided to unregistered volunteers.

2 A project specific volunteer registration form (PWS205) is created and emailed to the project supervisor after successful registration of a project. The name of the project is pre-populated on the form and used for that project only.

3 Each volunteer needs to complete the PWS205 form and is given access to the Parks and Wildlife Code of Conduct and Health and Safety Induction information, either online or hard-copy. Supervisors must ensure that the Health and Safety information is discussed with the volunteer at the pre-start induction and the checklist on the reverse is completed.

4 The completed PWS205 form must be signed by both the volunteer and the project supervisor (on the reverse) before forwarding to pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

5 International volunteers must provide proof of eligibility to volunteer on their visa and health insurance.

6 VCU will record the volunteer's details into the volunteer database.

7 The project supervisor reports volunteer's contributions using the timesheet (PWS207).

To register new volunteer projects: PWS206 Volunteer Project Registration Form

The PWS206 form is used for formally registering volunteer projects. Volunteer project registrations require the following information:

1. The name of the project, plus the region / district and the staff member who will be responsible for coordinating / supervising
2. The start date, estimated duration and number of volunteers involved
3. The project objectives - what you hope to achieve, the value and benefits of utilising volunteers
4. A brief volunteer role description (JDF)
5. The background of the project and reason for requesting volunteer involvement
6. Training requirements - note that safety and health, and local inductions are mandatory
7. Supervision requirements and involvement of Parks and Wildlife staff in each stage of the project
8. Equipment and other resources required / supplied
10. Comments from consultative committees (if any), plus comments from local Union representatives if available
11. Indication of whether any hazardous tasks are involved (and attach JSA if necessary)
12. Indicate whether the project is to be listed on the 'Volunteering Opportunities' web page
13. Approval of project from district, region or branch manager.

NB: Project information is forwarded to Unions to ensure that the use of volunteers does not infringe on Parks and Wildlife's commitment to its paid staff.

Once filled out, the PWS206 form must be signed by the listed project supervisor and the appropriate regional, district or branch manager before returning to VCU for processing prior to the start of a project.

A Job Safety Analysis form should be attached if the project is expected to include hazardous tasks - JSA and associated information are available here - http://intranet/csd/People_Services/rm/Pages/HazardousTasks.aspx

When registered, VCU will forward a PWS205 registration form with the new project name and number, a PWS207 timesheet, Code of Conduct and the OHS induction information.

Flowchart for registration of a new volunteer project

1 Consider the need for the volunteer project and how it will assist the work plan.

2 Download a project notification form (PWS206) from the Intranet or contact VCU to request one at pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au .

3 Complete each section of the PWS206 form - this doesn't need to be in great detail, but background, description and objectives helps to identify the purpose of the project, and a description of the role will explain what is required from volunteers.

4 Wherever possible, allow opportunity for local DBCA staff Union representatives to see the form and make comment.

5 The project coordinator/supervisor can add any comments they may have before signing and dating the form.

6 A District, Regional or Branch manager will need to approve the project by signing the form.

7 Forward the signed copy to pwsvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au.

VCU will review and process the form. Feedback will be provided if necessary. VCU will issue you with a project name, number and a volunteer registration form (PWS205) specifically for the new project (volunteers cannot be registered without being assigned to an active project).

To submit volunteer hours: PWS207

It is essential to return accurate and timely records of volunteer contributions for a number of reasons. Primarily to ensure insurance cover can apply, but also so volunteers receive any rewards due to them. It is also important for projects to report volunteer contributions for inclusion in departmental reports, and accurate reporting of contributions may also be useful to groups who are seeking funding through grants or other sources.

Depending on the project structure, volunteers or their supervisors should keep their own record of a volunteer's daily hours separately on a sign in/out sheet or similar.

Using this daily information, volunteers (or the supervisor on their behalf) then complete the PWS207 Timesheet, which requires only the total number of hours for each nominated time period (e.g. month, quarter, year), then submitted to the volunteer project supervisor for approval.

Forms should then be forwarded to: PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

NB: projects that do not return timesheets for three years are considered inactive and are removed from reports. Volunteers that do not return timesheets for three years will be listed as inactive. Registered volunteers that have never returned timesheets after three years, and have zero hours recorded, are removed from the database – they will need to re-register.

The financial year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year; timesheets should be submitted at the end of each quarter i.e. Quarter 1: July to September 30, Quarter 2: October 1 to December 31, Quarter 3: January 1 to March 31, Quarter 4: April 1 to June 30.

Groups or one – off events: PWS208 Group Sign on form

Used for one off events as sign in and sign out sheets. For insurance purposes, anyone volunteering must be recorded, but some may not wish to go through the full process of registration for a short level of service.

All necessary forms associated with volunteer management (PWS206, 207, 208) can be found via the intranet:
https://dpaw.sharepoint.com/Divisions/pws/pvs/SitePages/Volunteers%20and%20Community%20Unit.aspx

or on The Cauldron: https://confluence.dbca.wa.gov.au/display/PMS/Volunteers

NB: The exception is the PWS205 Volunteer Registration form, which is available upon request from the Volunteer Coordination Unit. This is to ensure that volunteers are assigned to current and active projects.

Please advise VCU of the project name and number to PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au or tel: 9219 8279. Contact VCU for advice if you are unsure of a project's status.

Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer management resources

Further Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer management resources for staff are available on:

The Cauldron: https://confluence.dpaw.wa.gov.au/display/PMS/Volunteers

Intranet:

https://dpaw.sharepoint.com/Divisions/pws/pvs/SitePages/Volunteers%20and%20Community%20Unit.aspx

For any further information please contact Volunteer Coordination Unit:
PWSVolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au or tel: 08 9219 8279

External resources

DBCA is a member of Volunteering WA[5] which allows discounted training sessions and workshops for staff. Course details are listed here:
https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/training-and-events/training/training-for-volunteer-management

101 Ways to recognise volunteers:
 https://volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-Managers-101-Ways-to-Recognise-Your-Volunteers.pdf

Simple volunteer recognition: https://volpro.net/simple-heartfelt-volunteer-appreciation/

Volunteer Benefits Calculator:
https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/resources/volunteer-benefits-calculator

Volunteer Screening Information:
https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/Publications/Documents/Volunteer_Checks_Information.pdf

Volunteering Australia: https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

Volunteering WA: https://www.volunteeringwa.org.au/#/

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[5] Correct as of 1 January 2019.

References

Department of Conservation NZ – *Volunteers for Conservation Standard Operating Procedure 2016*

Department of Conservation NZ – *Kete for working with volunteers*

Energise, Inc – International training, consulting and publishing firm specialising in volunteerism - www.energizeinc.com

Government of Western Australia, Department of Commerce:

- *Guidelines for Successful Partnerships between Public Sector agencies and Volunteers (Sixth Edition, October 2017)*

Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities - https://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CommunityInitiatives/Pages/Volunteers.aspx:

- *WA Volunteering Strategy 2017*
- *Volunteer Checks: Information for WA Volunteering Organisations*

Johnson, T, 2016 - VolunteerPro Training and resources for Leaders of Volunteers - http://volpro.net

Local Government WA – *A Guide to Managing Volunteers* – www.lgiswa.com.au

Volunteering Australia - http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org, includes:
- *The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015 - http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Document-FINAL_Web.pdf*

Volunteering NSW - https://www.volunteering.com.au/

Volunteering Western Australia - http://www.volunteeringwa.org.au, includes:
- *The Economic, Social and Cultural Value of Volunteering in Western Australia (2015) - https://volunteeringwa.org.au/assets/downloads/vwa_report%20book_web.pdf*

Volunteering Queensland - www.volqld.org.au

www.e-volunteerism.com/ - A journal to inform and challenge leaders of volunteers

www.AAMOV.org - Australasian Association for Managers of Volunteers