



# TOOLKIT

*FOR WORKING WITH*

# RURAL VOLUNTEERS



The OSM/VISTA Teams  
[www.coalcountryteam.org](http://www.coalcountryteam.org) • [www.hardrockteam.org](http://www.hardrockteam.org)  
[www.ruralvolunteer.org](http://www.ruralvolunteer.org)



## THE OSM/VISTA TEAMS

The OSM/VISTA Teams—in partnership with the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) and community-led nonprofit watershed restoration groups—place, coordinate, and train AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers who live and work in host communities to promote economic redevelopment, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. OSM/VISTAs are college-educated Volunteers who serve full-time as “capacity builders” for a one year term. The Appalachian Coal Country Team (ACCT) sponsors OSM/VISTAs in seven states in the Appalachian coalfields, while the Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) sponsors OSM/VISTAs in the hardrock mining belt of Colorado and New Mexico.

### Appalachian Coal Country Team

Founded in 2002 in response to demands from watershed/community improvement groups throughout coal country, the work of the Appalachian Coal Country Team (ACCT) supports a growing movement that is quietly bringing new strength and new hope to the Appalachian region. The Team trains, supports and coordinates a dynamic, successful group of OSM/VISTA Volunteers, Summer AmeriCorps members and their supervisors who promote social and environmental change at the grassroots level in Appalachian coalfields. The Team arms community organizations and watershed-based projects with the training, tools and volunteer support necessary to help local citizens become effective environmental stewards, community leaders and accelerators of change in places indelibly marked by the environmental legacy of pre-regulatory coal mining.



### Western Hardrock Watershed Team

Created in 2006, the Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) works with community/watershed improvement groups to confront the challenges that remain from historic mining in New Mexico and Colorado. To help these organizations address environmental degradation and community impoverishment, the Team provides them with OSM/VISTAs that help the organization grow while working on community revitalization and environmental stewardship projects. By implementing projects to clean up contaminated water, reforesting mine lands, and revitalizing former mining towns, watershed organizations are engaging and restoring their communities. After three years of having OSM/VISTAs members at their site, organizations have stronger volunteer bases, more sustainable funding, improved outreach and education programming, and more capacity to address their community's needs.



## PARTNERS



The **Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds (OWOW)** is one of four program offices in the Office of Water (OW) at the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) headquarters in Washington, DC. OWOW shares responsibility for safeguarding the nation's water resources with three other OW offices, EPA's 10 regional offices, and the states, tribes, and territories that implement many aspects of their water programs. Sister OW offices include the Office of Science and Technology, the Office of Wastewater Management, and the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. Together with OWOW, these offices implement key components of the nation's core clean water programs. To learn more about EPA's Office of Water, visit [www.epa.gov/ow](http://www.epa.gov/ow).



The **Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)** is a bureau within the United States Department of the Interior. OSM is organized with Headquarters located in Washington, DC, and three regional offices – the Appalachian, Mid-Continent, and Western regional offices. The Bureau was created in 1977 when Congress enacted the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. OSM works with State and Indian Tribes to assure that citizens and the environment are protected during coal mining and that the land is restored to beneficial use when mining is finished. OSM and its partners are also responsible for reclaiming and restoring lands and water degraded by mining operations before 1977. For more information about OSM, visit [www.osmre.gov](http://www.osmre.gov).



**AmeriCorps VISTA** is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years. VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, strengthen community groups, and much more. For more information, visit [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov).

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Funded by the Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

**T. Allan Comp, Ph.D.**  
Coordinator: OSM/VISTA Teams  
*Project Director*

**Joseph T. Campbell, M.S.**  
OSM/VISTA Volunteerism Coordinator  
*Lead Researcher 2008-2009*

**Jenna L. Fehr**  
OSM/VISTA Volunteerism Coordinator  
*Lead Researcher 2010-2012*



### **The OSM/VISTA Teams**

Appalachian Coal Country Team  
2795 Robert C. Byrd Drive, Beckley, WV 25801  
(304) 252-4848 • [www.coalcountryteam.org](http://www.coalcountryteam.org)

Western Hardrock Watershed Team  
701 Camino del Rio Suite 101, Durango, CO 81301  
(970) 403-0136 • [www.hardrockteam.org](http://www.hardrockteam.org)

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### **OSM/VISTA Teams**

April Trent	Megan Acord	Elise Rodgers
Andrew Barnes	Caitlin Coleman	Justin Theal
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Scott Fanello	Lauren Lindgren	Troy Burbank
Kat Bawden	Shannon Philbin	Jonathan Stewart
Nate Johnson	Alaina Asbury	Katie Commender
Elizabeth Dues	Stephanie Lilly	Virginia Farley
Monica Freeland	Alexandre Genest	Amber Heft
Adrian Uzunian	Joel Hager	Rachel Yoke
Elizabeth Lindner	Spencer Moss	Katie Coulter
Alex Brooks	Jorie Emory	

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Bonnie Thie  
Katie Flahive  
Don Waye

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Alfred Whitehouse, Chief, Division of Reclamation Support

### **Citizen's Conservation Corps of West Virginia**

### **Southwest Conservation Corps**

Heather Lukacs, M.Eng., Stanford University Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Tom Koontz, Professor of Environmental Policy in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University

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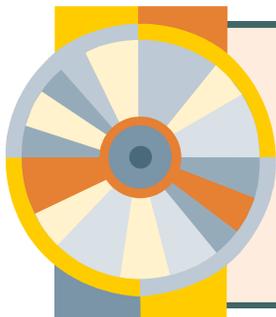
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Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Abingdon, VA	Friends of Lower Muskingum River, Marietta, OH
Roaring Run Watershed Association, Apollo, PA	Clear Fork Watershed Council, Mt. Vernon, KY/Jellico, TN

Edited by Joy Bolen

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Included in the back cover of this workbook is a disc containing worksheets, templates, checklists, case studies, and bonus material to aid you in working with volunteers in rural communities.

This workbook and disc are also online at  
[www.ruralvolunteer.org](http://www.ruralvolunteer.org)

# Researching Rural Volunteers



*Just who are rural volunteers? What are they doing? What are organizations in rural communities doing to recruit, manage and retain volunteers? What works? What doesn't? The OSM/VISTA Teams set out to answer these questions with the "Volunteers in Rural Watersheds" Research Project.*

## THE OSM/VISTA TEAMS

The OSM/VISTA Teams are a partnership among the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), and community/watershed improvement organizations. The OSM/VISTA Teams place, coordinate and train OSM/VISTAs who live and work in host communities to promote economic redevelopment, community engagement and environmental stewardship. The Appalachian Coal Country Team (ACCT) sponsors OSM/VISTA Volunteers throughout seven states in the Appalachian coalfields, while the Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) sponsors OSM/VISTA Volunteers who live and work in the hardrock mining belt of Colorado and New Mexico.

In the Appalachian coalfields, the acidic and metals-laden water coats streambeds with orange sediment, destroys aquatic habitat and renders waterways useless as economic and community resources. Hastily built sewage infrastructure sends untreated sewage directly into creeks, posing a significant threat to human health. In the hardrock mining West, contaminants are in the form of toxic chemicals such as arsenic, mercury, and cyanide in local streams. The three million citizens that live within a mile of an abandoned mine site are not only facing these environmental threats, but also overwhelming economic challenges. The average median household income for the counties served by the OSM/VISTA Teams is \$28,401 – nearly 33% below the national average of \$41,994, according to 2000 U.S. Census data.

The OSM/VISTA Teams believe that restoring local environments is an opportunity for long-term solutions to severe poverty in mining regions, and the foundation for community mobilization and economic redevelopment in communities. OSM/VISTAs work side-by-side with volunteers in local community/watershed improvement organizations to support community revitalization and engagement efforts.

At the completion of a three-year OSM/VISTA project, community groups and local volunteers are better suited to achieve their missions, striving to make rural communities healthier places to live and work. In spite of the barriers to volunteerism in the isolated and rural communities of Appalachian coal country and the Western hardrock mining region, a massive volunteer effort is happening for the betterment of mine-scarred watersheds. Thousands of volunteers contribute countless hours of service to support rural organizations. Whether described as stakeholders, engaged citizens or simply volunteers, concerned and active local people are essential to solving the myriad of problems presented in rural, under-resourced, environmentally degraded communities.



## THE NEED

After working in hundreds of rural communities with thousands of volunteers, it is clear that volunteers are necessary to the survival and mission of organizations striving to improve their community and environment. It also became clear that little empirical research into the role of volunteers had been done in these rural areas. Very few tools were available to help organizations overcome the unique challenges of recruiting, managing and retaining rural volunteers.

These challenges include:

- Less economic diversity than urban counterparts
- Mountainous terrain that can challenge commuting volunteers
- Lack of reliable internet and mobile phone coverage
- Small permanent population and ongoing population loss

With the support of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds and the Office of Surface Mining, the OSM/VISTA Teams developed the "Volunteers for Rural Watersheds" Research Project to investigate solutions to these challenges. The study is the first of its kind to examine volunteerism in rural community/watershed improvement organizations throughout Appalachia, Colorado and New Mexico.

## THE PROJECT

This three-year pilot project focused on developing resources that promote and improve locally-devised practices to encourage mobilization and participation of rural volunteers. Research was structured in three phases:

- *Phase 1:* Collect and analyze survey data from volunteers in rural organizations in both the East and West.
- *Phase 2:* Identify successful rural volunteer management practices; test practices for one year with two different rural organizations; compile case study accounts of trial practices.
- *Phase 3:* Synthesize and disseminate findings as a toolkit of best practices to guide organizations in rural areas.

In the first study phase, surveys were collected from 315 volunteers with 16 organizations in Appalachia and the Rocky Mountain West. Those surveyed must have volunteered at a minimum of two watershed events for no less than two hours total and/or have attended at least half of group-specific meetings within the past year. Data was analyzed to form a general profile of rural volunteers and to gain valuable insight into their opinions, identifying who is most likely to volunteer and, perhaps more importantly, revealing gaps where new individuals and groups can be targeted for recruitment. A volunteer's involvement in other organizations provides connections for potential partnerships that can benefit communities in new ways. Survey data also demonstrated that volunteers are very politically active, with a large percentage voting in national and local elections and contacting government officials at all levels about issues. The civic power of these volunteers is a large, often untapped resource for groups to use to spread awareness of issues and secure possible funding.



For the second research phase, 25 successful volunteer management practices were identified and tested for one year by one or two different rural organizations. Forty-eight case studies revealed successes, challenges and ideas for other rural groups to utilize. While each volunteer practice has its own specific characteristics and obstacles, several overarching trends emerged. The need for a lead person or committee to guide planning was a key factor in the success or failure of many trial practices.



In small rural communities, specificity of task and leadership was crucial. Broad appeals for help with tasks and events often went unheeded. Practices that employed targeted recruitment of individuals and groups with skills for specific tasks had the best results. For tasks requiring large groups or crews of volunteers, rural organizations often succeeded by bringing in outside groups, such as alternative spring break crews and faith-based mission teams.

### **THIS WORKBOOK**

Under-resourced and under-staffed organizations often pour all of their time and effort into an event or task and are able to achieve some goal: raise money, appear in the newspaper or recruit volunteers. Key tasks, especially with volunteer management, often slip through the cracks—such as gathering contact information for those involved, entering that information into a database, welcoming new individuals to the organization, developing them as committed dues-paying members, and informing them of upcoming events or tasks to continue their involvement. The list goes on.

After engaging in place-based research at 34 rural sites, this workbook was created to share approaches to volunteer recruitment, management and retention that are successful in rural settings. It is a source of new ideas with real-life accounts of where to start and what to expect, thus enabling organizations to learn from each other ways to improve rural communities with volunteers. We could have bound this information into an extensive 200-page manual, but we know that

rural volunteer managers generally lack three things: time, people and money. An impenetrable block of “research findings” would simply gather dust on a shelf.

With this workbook, we aim to take this research to the next level by putting it in a useable format that establishes a complete framework necessary for sustainable volunteer management. Readers will not only learn new ways to work with volunteers, but be guided through the larger process of really bringing those volunteers into an organization and keeping them there—with *the least amount of time, people and money*—because we know you have a lot of important work to do.

### ***Who should use this workbook?***

This workbook is intended for **rural volunteer managers**—a term that encompasses **anyone** from a full-time paid staff member to a volunteer striving to involve more people from their rural community. Generally this involves working with less than 5 individuals to complete the tasks necessary for effective, sustainable volunteer management.

### ***Interested in our study of rural volunteers?***

The raw data from all phases of the “Volunteers for Rural Watersheds” Research Project is available by request from the OSM/VISTA Teams. For contact information, visit

**[www.coalcountryteam.org](http://www.coalcountryteam.org)** or  
**[www.hardrockteam.org](http://www.hardrockteam.org)**

# Rural Volunteer Statistics

***The first question addressed in this research project is: Who are rural volunteers? Volunteers with 16 different rural watershed organizations were surveyed to answer this question and many more.***



The first phase of the “Volunteers for Rural Watersheds” Research Project involved the distribution and analysis of a survey designed to:

- Form a general profile of rural volunteers
- Gain valuable insight into their opinions
- Identify who is most likely to volunteer
- Reveal gaps where new individuals and groups can be targeted for recruitment
- Discover potential partnerships that can benefit communities in new ways through volunteer involvement in other groups

This survey contained 16 pages of questions related to various aspects of volunteering in rural watersheds: demographics, environmental concerns, activities and involvement, individual volunteer beliefs and opinions, watershed group impacts in the community, watershed group impacts by region, and civic engagement. In addition, the survey provided space for volunteers to express certain practical issues such as days and times when they are available to volunteer, areas of concern for the watershed group and community and availability for follow-up interviews.

Those surveyed must have, within the past year, volunteered at a minimum of two watershed events for no less than two hours total and/or have attended at least half of group-specific meetings. 441 surveys were distributed to the volunteers of 16 different watershed organizations. 315 surveys were retrieved, tallying a response rate of 71.4%.

On the following pages, survey responses are detailed overall and by the following regions:

- Northern Appalachia (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland)
- Southern Appalachia (West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee)
- West (Colorado, New Mexico)

This Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis provides helpful insight into volunteerism throughout Appalachian coal country and hardrock-mining West.

These pages contain only a sampling of survey findings. For the entire analysis of rural volunteer surveys, read  *Volunteer Survey Analysis* on the enclosed disc.

<b>Volunteers from the following organizations participated in this survey:</b>	
<i>Western Pennsylvania</i> Crooked Creek Watershed Association: Indiana, PA	<i>Northeast Ohio</i> Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation: Lisbon, OH
<i>Northeast Pennsylvania</i> Lackawanna River Corridor Assoc.: Scranton, PA Schuylkill Headwaters Association: Pottsville, PA	<i>Northern West Virginia</i> Friends of Deckers Creek: Dellslow, WV
<i>Western Maryland</i> George’s Creek Watershed Association: Barton, MD	<i>Southern West Virginia</i> Plateau Action Network: Fayetteville, WV Upper Guyandotte Watershed Assoc.: Mullens, WV Morris Creek Watershed Assoc.: Montgomery, WV
<i>Southwest Virginia</i> McClure River Restoration Project: Clintwood, VA Friends of Russell Fork: Haysi, VA	<i>Northeast Tennessee</i> Woodland Community Land Trust: Clairfield, TN
<i>Southeast Kentucky</i> Headwaters, Inc.: Whitesburg, KY	<i>Western Colorado</i> North Fork River Improvement Assoc.: Hotchkiss, CO Lake Fork Valley Conservancy: Lake City, CO
	<i>Northern New Mexico</i> Upper Pecos Watershed Association: Pecos, NM

<i>Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis</i>		Overall	Appalachia		West
			<i>Northern</i> PA, OH, MD	<i>Southern</i> WV, VA, KY, TN	CO and NM
Percent of survey respondents		315 responses	29%	54%	17%
1.	Average age	50	52	47	55
2.	Gender				
	<i>Male</i>	54%	54%	50%	67%
	<i>Female</i>	46%	46%	50%	33%
3.	Marital status				
	<i>Married</i>	65%	68%	61%	74%
	<i>Single</i>	25%	22%	26%	24%
	<i>In a relationship</i>	6%	7%	6%	2%
	<i>Widow/Widower</i>	5%	3%	7%	0%
4.	Source of water in home				
	<i>Public water</i>	77%	72%	82%	68%
	<i>Private well on own property</i>	18%	27%	13%	21%
	<i>Other</i>	5%	1%	5%	11%
5.	Primary source of drinking water at home				
	<i>Water from piped system</i>	58%	62%	53%	65%
	<i>Bottled water</i>	18%	12%	26%	2%
	<i>Well water</i>	14%	20%	8%	21%
	<i>Other</i>	7%	2%	10%	4%
	<i>Spring</i>	4%	3%	3%	8%
6.	Has children	63%	61%	62%	69%
7.	Resides in area served by this watershed group	78%	72%	80%	83%
8.	Highest level of education				
	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	39%	40%	35%	47%
	<i>Graduate Degree</i>	29%	41%	17%	41%
	<i>Some College or Associate's Degree</i>	18%	13%	22%	12%
	<i>High School Diploma or GED</i>	8%	6%	12%	0%
	<i>Some High School</i>	6%	1%	10%	0%
	<i>No High School</i>	1%	0%	2%	0%
9.	Current employment status				
	<i>Employed or self-employed full-time</i>	49%	59%	48%	39%
	<i>Retired</i>	24%	29%	19%	29%
	<i>Employed or self-employed part-time</i>	11%	9%	8%	23%
	<i>Unemployed</i>	5%	2%	6%	4%
	<i>Full-time homemaker</i>	4%	0%	6%	4%
	<i>Disabled</i>	4%	0%	7%	2%
	<i>Student</i>	3%	1%	5%	0%
	<i>Other</i>	.3%	0%	1%	0%

<i>Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis</i>		Overall	Appalachia		West
			<i>Northern</i> PA, OH, MD	<i>Southern</i> WV, VA, KY, TN	CO and NM
10.	Gross household income				
	<i>\$20,000 - \$39,000</i>	22%	19%	24%	20%
	<i>\$40,000 - \$59,999</i>	19%	25%	16%	20%
	<i>\$60,000 - \$79,999</i>	17%	20%	14%	20%
	<i>\$80,000 - \$99,999</i>	11%	20%	7%	5%
	<i>\$10,000 - \$19,999</i>	10%	4%	14%	8%
	<i>\$100,000 - \$149,999</i>	10%	10%	11%	8%
	<i>Less than \$10,000</i>	9%	0%	14%	8%
	<i>\$150,000 or more</i>	3%	1%	1%	13%
11.	Primary interest in watershed group (top 3)				
	<i>Environmental preservation</i>	70%	88%	62%	67%
	<i>Opportunity to give back to community</i>	12%	4%	15%	14%
	<i>Recreation</i>	5%	3%	4%	12%
12.	Local water issues of most concern (top 5)				
	<i>Abandoned mine drainage</i>	45%	72%	36%	23%
	<i>Drinking water quality</i>	40%	29%	50%	27%
	<i>Mine waste</i>	35%	31%	34%	46%
	<i>Deforestation</i>	34%	37%	30%	44%
	<i>Wastewater pollution</i>	33%	30%	39%	21%
13.	Learned about watershed group through (top 5)				
	<i>Friend from group</i>	36%	31%	33%	54%
	<i>Family member from group</i>	18%	10%	27%	0%
	<i>Other</i>	14%	11%	17%	12%
	<i>Watershed group event</i>	10%	13%	8%	14%
	<i>Founded watershed group</i>	5%	7%	4%	6%
14.	Participation in watershed group				
	<i>Read newsletter to stay informed</i>	66%	77%	60%	65%
	<i>Attend events</i>	59%	68%	57%	53%
	<i>Participate in decision making</i>	35%	44%	29%	37%
	<i>Conduct water sampling</i>	28%	28%	26%	35%
	<i>Education &amp; outreach</i>	22%	33%	20%	10%
	<i>Represent group to other groups</i>	21%	27%	18%	22%
	<i>Other</i>	18%	16%	15%	29%
	<i>Organize events</i>	16%	20%	13%	16%
15.	Made donation or paid membership dues this year	52%	56%	49%	55%
16.	Made in-kind donations this year	44%	41%	45%	49%

<i>Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis</i>		Overall	Appalachia		West
			<i>Northern</i> PA, OH, MD	<i>Southern</i> WV, VA, KY, TN	CO and NM
17.	Group participants' roles and responsibilities are made clear.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	38%	36%	45%	21%
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	25%	25%	22%	35%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	20%	17%	19%	29%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	11%	14%	9%	12%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	5%	7%	4%	4%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	1%	1%	1%	0%
18.	This watershed group brings financial benefits to the community.				
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	32%	37%	25%	47%
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	29%	28%	29%	31%
	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	18%	18%	21%	12%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	14%	10%	19%	6%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	4%	5%	5%	2%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%
19.	Involvement in organizations (top 5)				
	<i>Conservation organization</i>	41%	44%	35%	57%
	<i>Civic or political organization</i>	38%	37%	40%	36%
	<i>Church-affiliated group</i>	38%	45%	38%	25%
	<i>Community improvement organization</i>	29%	38%	24%	26%
	<i>Professional or academic society</i>	23%	28%	20%	22%
20.	Civic engagement				
	<i>Talked to someone about politics</i>	92%	92%	90%	98%
	<i>Voted in 2008 Presidential Election</i>	90%	92%	86%	98%
	<i>Voted in a local election in 2006 or 2007</i>	82%	83%	76%	98%
	<i>Voted in the primary election</i>	79%	80%	80%	77%
	<i>Contacted a member of Congress or state legislature</i>	63%	63%	58%	79%
	<i>Contacted local govt. official about a policy issue</i>	51%	46%	48%	67%
	<i>Attended a political rally, speech, or meeting</i>	41%	31%	43%	54%
	<i>Participated in an interest group</i>	40%	36%	40%	48%
	<i>Made a contribution to political party or candidate</i>	38%	33%	35%	56%
	<i>Assisted in a political campaign</i>	27%	20%	24%	46%

Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis		Overall	Appalachia		West
			Northern PA, OH, MD	Southern WV, VA, KY, TN	CO and NM
21.	This watershed group helps improve local environmental conditions.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	70%	80%	64%	75%
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	23%	14%	29%	21%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	3%	4%	2%	2%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	1%	0%	3%	0%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	1%	0%	1%	0%
22.	Number of volunteers is adequate for accomplishing goals.				
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	28%	23%	31%	28%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	24%	39%	17%	20%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	22%	14%	24%	28%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	11%	12%	10%	10%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	10%	11%	10%	10%
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	5%	1%	8%	4%
23.	This group does <i>not</i> have enough financial support to accomplish goals.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	28%	30%	26%	32%
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	24%	30%	21%	26%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	22%	9%	27%	24%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	13%	18%	11%	10%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	10%	10%	11%	6%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4%	3%	4%	2%
24.	This group is capable of producing on-the-ground results.				
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	46%	48%	44%	51%
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	27%	30%	25%	31%
	<i>Don't Know</i>	15%	9%	20%	10%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	10%	11%	10%	8%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	1%	0%	1%	0%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	1%	2%	1%	0%
25.	I have a high level of knowledge about local watershed issues.				
	<i>Mildly Agree</i>	47%	46%	48%	44%
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	22%	38%	15%	15%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	19%	6%	26%	17%
	<i>Mildly Disagree</i>	9%	9%	6%	20%
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	3%	1%	4%	4%



# Documenting Rural Volunteer Practices



***Been wanting to include more youth in your organization? To hold a 5k race? To work with local businesses? Learn where to start and what to expect from 34 rural organizations that spent one year working to improve their volunteer recruitment, management and retention.***

The second phase of the “Volunteers for Rural Watersheds” Research Project was designed to identify, test and document a variety of approaches to engaging volunteers in service to rural organizations. The first step was to identify practices or strategies used successfully by organizations within the Appalachian Coal Country Team (ACCT) and Western Hardrock Watershed Team (WHWT) networks.

Successful volunteer management practices were identified through informal interviews with watershed organization stakeholders during site visits and analysis of ACCT and WHWT Quarterly Reports. Quarterly reports, required for all OSM/VISTAs, capture their progress and accomplishments through narrative and quantitative reporting components. Through these means, 25 volunteer management practices were identified.

The next step was to transplant these 25 practices to other organizations that needed them. Through a formal application process, all ACCT and WHWT-partnering groups were given the opportunity to apply for and, if approved, test up to three practices. Applications were ranked and awarded based on the following criteria:

- Requested practice addressed a significant need for that group
- Group is capable of implementing the practice to the best of their ability
- Each of the 25 practices is tested by two separate organizations

Thirty-four different organizations were selected to test one, two or three trial practices. Twenty-one organizations tested only one practice, 12 tested two, and one organization tested three practices. Research partnerships spanned one to two years in which each site received mini-grants according to their level of participation.

These organizations submitted initial reports for their trial practices in January 2010 to document the progress of their initial planning and implementation efforts. Also, they worked with the ACCT Volunteerism Coordinator to select indicators to measure the impact of their practice over the coming year. These indicators were tailored to each trial practice and the site's goals and intentions, ranging from the number of new volunteers recruited for an event to the average time duration of board meetings.

Midterm reports were collected in June 2010 to assess progress in implementing trial practices after six months of effort on the part of participating rural organizations. Groups were in every stage of implementation from planning to the final result. Some were recruiting volunteers for planning committees, picking dates and venues, or waiting on grant funds to buy needed equipment. Others were making final event arrangements, changing plans due to new obstacles, or continuing discussions on things like board development, meeting efficiency, and community outreach. After a winter of planning, many held events relevant to their trial practice,

working with student athletes, local businesses, community service volunteers, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program to complete a variety of projects.

Final reports were collected in January 2011 to assess trial practices after 12 months of effort by participating watershed organizations. These reports were a detailed reflection of the entire year—the implementation of the practice, its applicability to the group and an evaluation of effectiveness based on indicators of success identified for each practice.

The successes, challenges and ideas compiled throughout this research phase are presented in the following pages as a suite of volunteer management options. We invite you to explore new methods of volunteer recruitment, management and retention through the case study accounts of each trial practice, replete with ideas on where to start and what to expect.



**The following pages give a brief overview of 25 practices selected as successful volunteer management strategies and the trial practices conducted by other organizations.**

**To read the entire case study for a practice,** refer to this  icon for the corresponding file on the enclosed disc.

**Case studies on disc feature:**

- Snapshot of the area served by each organization
- Contact information
- Detailed accounts of the needs being addressed
- Explanation of the planning process from inception to implementation
- Analysis and recommendations from real organizations after an entire year of work
- Useful planning documents and resources provided by participating organizations

**Not sure where to start?** Complete this simple exercise to identify practices that meet your needs.

Does your organization need to:

**Recruit new volunteers? Go to Question 1.**

**Manage existing volunteers? Go to Question 2.**

**Organize volunteer-based projects and events? Go to Question 3.**

**1. Does your organization need to recruit new volunteers?**

*Do you want to recruit volunteers with specific skills or capabilities?*

- #1 Board member recruitment spreadsheet – page 12
- #2 Partnerships with off-road and 4x4 groups – page 13
- #6 Support from community service volunteers – page 17
- #15 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) – page 26

*Are you interested in working with volunteers trying to meet mandatory service hour requirements?*

- #5 Support from mandatory service volunteers – page 16
- #6 Support from community service volunteers – page 17
- #7 Support from student athlete volunteers – page 18
- #14 Engaging students in service-learning – page 25

*Are you looking to develop beneficial partnerships with other local entities?*

- #2 Partnerships with off-road and 4x4 groups – page 13
- #3 Partnerships with church and faith-based groups – page 14
- #4 Partnerships with businesses – page 15
- #5 Support from mandatory service volunteers – page 16
- #6 Support from community service volunteers – page 17
- #7 Support from student athlete volunteers – page 18
- #8 Bi-monthly outreach meetings – page 19
- #14 Engaging students in service-learning – page 25
- #17 Volunteer water monitoring through partnerships – page 28

**2. Does your organization need to better manage existing volunteers?**

*Do you want to reduce burn-out amongst dedicated volunteers?*

- #8 Bi-monthly outreach meetings – page 19
- #9 One-hour board meetings – page 20
- #16 Providing or organizing transportation – page 27
- #19 Hosting a volunteer appreciation picnic – page 30

*Do you want to foster deeper participation in your organization?*

- #1 Board member recruitment spreadsheet – page 12
- #9 One-hour board meetings – page 20
- #10 Volunteer contributions to group's newsletter – page 21
- #11 Developing a Youth Advisory Board – page 22
- #12 Forming a youth helper organization – page 23
- #16 Providing or organizing transportation – page 27
- #18 Volunteer water monitoring with individuals – page 29
- #19 Hosting a volunteer appreciation picnic – page 30
- #24 "Adopt-a-Stream" fundraiser and outreach event – page 35

**3. Does your organization need to organize volunteer-based projects and events?**

*Are you interested in holding an outreach or fundraiser event, usually on an annual basis?*

- #13 Hosting a Wild & Scenic Film Festival – page 24
- #19 Hosting a volunteer appreciation picnic – page 30
- #22 Hosting a duck race – page 33
- #23 Hosting a 5k race – page 34
- #25 Fish fry fundraiser and outreach event – page 36

*Do you need volunteers to help with ongoing or long-term projects?*

- #10 Volunteer contributions to group's newsletter – page 21
- #11 Developing a Youth Advisory Board – page 22
- #12 Forming a youth helper organization – page 23
- #14 Engaging students in service-learning – page 25
- #15 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) – page 26
- #16 Providing or organizing transportation – page 27
- #17 Volunteer water monitoring through partnerships – page 28
- #18 Volunteer water monitoring with individuals – page 29
- #24 "Adopt-a-Stream" fundraiser and outreach event – page 35

*Do you need volunteers to complete projects involving physical labor or a group effort?*

- #2 Partnerships with off-road and 4x4 groups – page 13
- #3 Partnerships with church and faith-based groups – page 14
- #4 Partnerships with businesses – page 15
- #5 Support from mandatory service volunteers – page 16
- #6 Support from community service volunteers – page 17
- #7 Support from student athlete volunteers – page 18
- #20 Working with volunteers to construct rain gardens – page 31
- #21 Working with volunteers to construct wetlands – page 32





*Based on the work of*  
**Headwaters, Inc.**  
*Southeast Kentucky*

The Head of Three Rivers Project existed for several years as a watershed group without 501(c)3 nonprofit status. In order to take the next step to become Headwaters, Inc., the group needed additional volunteers for their board of directors, so they devised a new method to identify and recruit volunteers with specific skills. Two group leaders and an OSM/VISTA created a spreadsheet that listed the skills they needed and those that were met by their current volunteers. It clearly indicated types of people they would need to recruit in the future. In addition, they sat down and made a list of 20 to 25 people in the community from across various careers and roles as leaders in the community. They sent each one a personal letter inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss the formation of the non-profit. The meeting resulted in a functioning board. They continue to use the spreadsheet to identify new volunteers.

*Tested by*  
**Friends of the Cheat**  
*Northern West Virginia*

With this trial practice, Friends of the Cheat (FOC) challenged its board of directors to recruit new members to join the board by creating a spreadsheet that identified specific skills to be developed to enhance FOC's overall effectiveness. The intent of this practice was to attempt to strengthen the FOC Board—going through its own complacency/disengagement issues—in order to take some of the transitional stress off the staff. Though under different circumstances than Headwaters, FOC utilized their own version of a spreadsheet of listed skills needed and pursued people with those skills for the board. Instead of writing letters to prospective new board member candidates, FOC approached specific people with skills or qualities needed who had varying levels of existing involvement with FOC. Key weaknesses in the existing board were acknowledged and potential candidates that might fit those needs were identified at board meetings. Two new board members were added and several others were approached but opted not to join for various reasons. There was also a change in attitude as to what is an appropriate level of involvement as a board member. People recognized that if they are not able to serve at that level, then it is not fair to the organization, other board members or themselves.

**"It's never a bad thing to look at the strengths and weaknesses of your board. If you're working on developing a board, creating a spreadsheet that highlights strengths and weaknesses and, more importantly, needs, is a great tool...It's a delicate process, but if executed properly it's definitely a healthy practice for pretty much all organizations."**  
*-Friends of the Cheat*

*Tested by*  
**Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance**  
*Northeast Pennsylvania*

Shamokin Creek Restoration Association (SCRA) has been operating for more than 10 years and had a need for new board members to bring fresh hope, faith and excitement into the operations of the organization. Longtime members were facing volunteer burn-out issues from tackling projects with a lack of community support. Several members left or severely cut back the time they spend working with the group. Attempting to add to and improve SCRA's existing board presented a different set of challenges than those faced by Headwaters, but SCRA was still able to use an adapted version of this board recruitment model. Skills needed to help the group move forward were listed, then presented to the group for additions and amendments to create a comprehensive skills/needs spreadsheet. Naming and contacting potential candidates to fill those needs, however, was difficult for this organization. Group members were reluctant or unwilling to offer suggestions for people they thought might want to become involved. Without this crucial input, a new strategy for letter-writing had to be devised. Approximately 100 letters were sent to local churches and businesses. Current members were asked in a letter accompanying membership renewals. One new person joined the board and three other people became active members of the organization as a result.



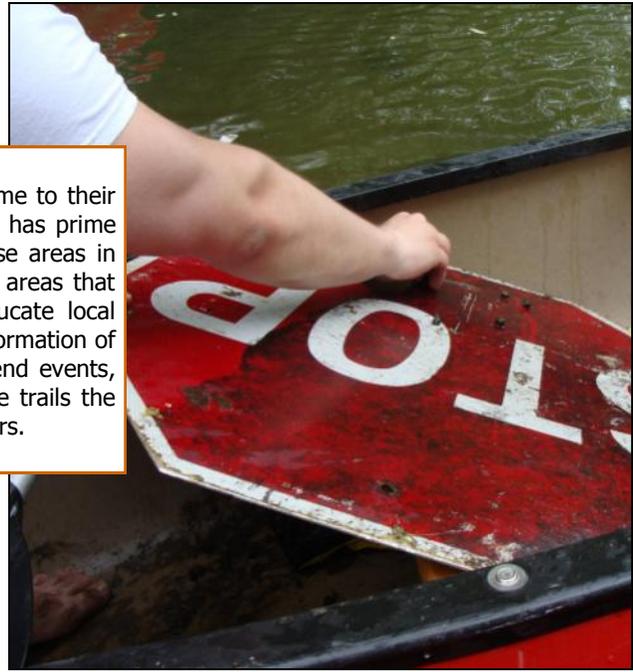
Read the full story:  
 #1 on disc



## #2 Partnerships with Off-road and 4x4 Groups

*Based on the work of*  
**Morris Creek Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Morris Creek Watershed Association (MCWA) works directly with people that come to their watershed to ride all terrain vehicles (ATVs) or go off-roading. The watershed has prime terrain for off-road recreation and MCWA is able to give visitors access to these areas in return for some volunteer service. Visitors help with water sampling in remote areas that are difficult for traditional volunteers to access, lead watershed tours to educate local residents, and clean up trash in the creek. These volunteers were critical to the formation of the group. In recent years, MCWA has hosted "work a day, play a day" weekend events, where members of a 4x4 club come and clean up trash one day, then ride the trails the next. These events have been very successful and fun for the group and volunteers.



*Tested by*  
**Rural Appalachian Improvement League**  
*Southern West Virginia*

The abandoned mine lands of southern West Virginia are often well-suited for off-road recreation, leading Rural Appalachian Improvement League (RAIL) to tap into the people using the land as a resource to also keep the area clean. There are many people, both local and visiting, that often ride the local trail systems such as the Hatfield-McCoy Trails and Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park. These trails, therefore, are a key component in the local business and tourism industry. RAIL wanted to focus on litter which required alteration to the planning and implementation of MCWA's "work a day, play a day" concept.

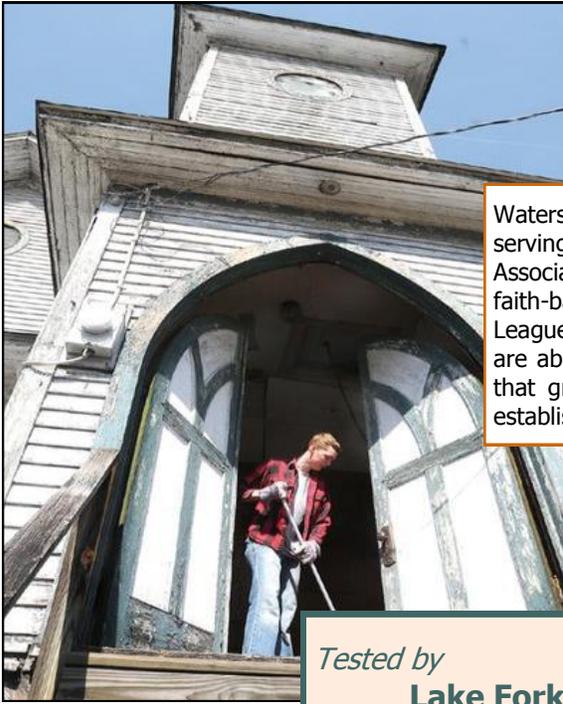
RAIL decided to plan an ATV Poker Run/Trail Clean-up event where volunteers would pick up litter on sections of the Indian Ridge trail, a part of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails system near Mullens, WV. Upon completion of the trail ride and litter clean-up, volunteers would receive the first of five playing cards. The following day volunteers would have a chance to ride other trails, stopping at four other locations and acquiring four new playing cards. The rider with the best hand would win a prize at an end-of-day BBQ. RAIL worked with the director of the trail system and contacted local campgrounds and businesses for food and prize donations, but general interest and willingness to help was low. The biggest problems were finding ATV riders that were willing to spend their valuable recreation time and money doing a litter clean-up and conducting the major outreach effort necessary with a small, overworked staff.

Even though the Poker Run event fell through, RAIL was able to follow a different route. RAIL has the capacity and facilities to host alternative spring break groups and has successfully hosted hundreds of students. The Mullens Opportunity Center is a converted grade school that houses offices and meeting rooms for local programs and services, including kitchen, bath, and sleeping quarters often sought by visiting volunteer crews. With these facilities available, RAIL incorporated an ATV ride and litter clean-up of Hatfield-McCoy trails into an alternative spring break trip for students from Columbia University in New York. Fifteen visiting students used ATVs for a Hatfield-McCoy Trail clean-up. Participants were able to clean 10 miles of trails with donated equipment that included electric hedge trimmers, hand-held hedge trimmers, machetes and Kawasaki Teryx ATVs.

**"The success was in getting a section of trail maintenance done, while also engaging an alternative spring break group in a different aspect of mountain culture than they might otherwise see. This was important for them to understand that West Virginia is not all poverty and helplessness."  
-Rural Appalachian Improvement League**



Read the full story:  
#2 on disc



*Based on the work of*

**Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Watershed groups and faith-based organizations share similar values when it comes to serving others and being a good steward of the Earth. Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association (UGWA) plans environmental and community improvement projects for visiting faith-based volunteer teams in conjunction with the Rural Appalachian Improvement League—a local organization who has the facilities to host the teams. Church groups that are able to travel to an area to engage in volunteer work can be an excellent resource to that group, often visiting several times throughout the year after a solid partnership is established.

*Tested by*

**Lake Fork Valley Conservancy**  
*Western Colorado*

Lake Fork Valley Conservancy (LFVC) decided to build partnerships with church groups due to difficulty getting volunteers for planned events. LFVC had never previously reached out to religious groups in an attempt to recruit new volunteers. LFVC decided to approach the nearby Redcloud Christian Camp and Retreat Center to recruit a younger crowd for LFVC events from Redcloud's employee pool. LFVC's OSM/VISTA gave a presentation at Redcloud on the history of the local Ute-Ulay mine site and informed them about upcoming LFVC events, including a tree planting the next month. The most enthusiastic potential volunteers were the Camp Redcloud employees between the ages of 18 and 25. This was a challenge, however, because the workers could only volunteer on Saturdays and LFVC's upcoming tree planting took place during the week. LFVC held two successful tree plantings during the trial practice period. The first planting was aided by a family of six who were successfully recruited from Camp Redcloud. However, no one from the camp participated in the second tree planting. Camp Redcloud conducts public school retreats in the fall that focus on outdoor education. LFVC hopes to train Redcloud employees in local watershed issues.

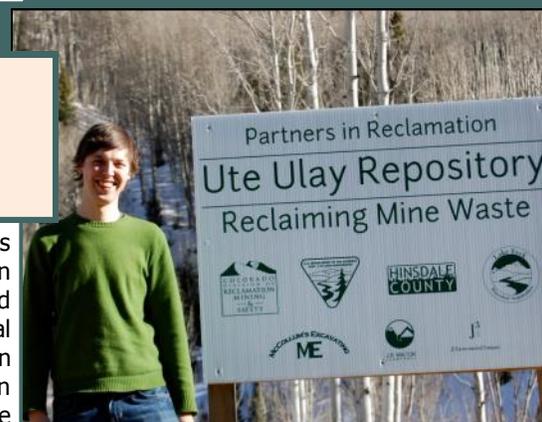
**"The people who work for these sorts of religious camps are often very enthusiastic about the outdoors. I would encourage any watershed group who needs volunteers to reach out to these groups... You may run into limitations as far as potential volunteer time. If the pieces fall into place though, you may find an enthusiastic, organized group of volunteers right under your nose."**

**-Lake Fork  
Valley Conservancy**

*Tested by*

**Friends of Russell Fork**  
*Southwest Virginia*

Friends of the Russell Fork (FORF) has difficulty recruiting the large numbers of volunteers needed to complete volunteer projects from the small local population of about 300 people in Haysi, VA. Because of these challenges, they have begun looking beyond town limits. Based on the number of local families in need of home repairs and the limited number of local volunteers available to do that type of work, FORF decided to contact faith-based mission teams that visit areas to do service projects. FORF has been in regular contact with an Asheville, North Carolina-based organization called ReCreation Experiences, a program whose mission is to share their faith through home repair. ReCreation Experiences would bring in a home repair crew of about 100-120 people for two weeks at two different times during the summer. The main requirement for the host area is finding a place for the volunteers to stay with access to a kitchen. Other than housing, there is no cost to host a volunteer crew. Volunteers pay a fee to participate that covers the cost of supplies and they have their own tools. This is a huge advantage for rural organizations with limited resources. FORF is now tasked with identifying homes in need of repair, working with homeowners, and locating housing for visiting volunteers.



**Read the full story:**  
#3 on disc



## #4 Partnerships with Businesses

*Based on the work of*

### **Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation** *Northeast Ohio*

Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation (LBCLF) worked with a local bank to find volunteers for a tree planting project. The bank has an employee volunteer program and 12 volunteers participated in the tree planting in two shifts. There is potential for this relationship to lead to future funding opportunities from the business. To reward the service of these business volunteers, LBCLF sent a picture of the volunteers hard at work to several of the bank's branches within the watershed.



**"It's important to partner with local businesses no matter what their size. I think the task at hand really becomes more about framing the event or designing to event so that its benefits are extremely clear and specific to the businesses you'd like to involve."**

***-Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation***

*Tested by*

### **Piney Creek Watershed Association** *Southern West Virginia*

Although Piney Creek Watershed Association (PCWA) has always had a close relationship with the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce, PCWA had not attempted to formally recruit volunteers from the local business community. PCWA decided to focus their efforts on a sustainable business fair to be held in conjunction with the Beckley-Raleigh County Chamber of Commerce's Business Show. The idea was for local sustainable businesses to be supplied with booths to exhibit their work, thereby showcasing this work to the community as a whole and hopefully begin a discourse in the local business community on sustainability efforts. PCWA planned to actively seek business partnerships to help plan and hold the fair but the event was canceled due to a lack of both monetary and personnel resources. They then decided to pursue a more specific, lower-scale event and partnered with West Virginia Sustainable Communities (WVSC) to host a Riverside Sustainability Action Training in the Beckley area. WVSC offers this training for communities to synthesize community sustainability efforts and establish a regular working group to continue building collaboration efforts. PCWA held a successful Riverside Sustainability Action Training that was welcomed and well-attended by prominent members of the business community. This "green community working group" will hopefully continue to coordinate various local efforts on sustainability in the Beckley/Raleigh County community.

*Tested by*

### **Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation** *Southwest Pennsylvania*

Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation (BARC) hoped to gain closer relationships with local businesses in order to build a volunteer base for the various community activities. BARC has faced issues with a lack of volunteer recruitment and wanted to bring in more long-term volunteers. Over the years, BARC has acquired a long list of businesses that support BARC's mission through monetary donations, but had never reached out to these supporters for volunteer efforts. It was anticipated that many businesses might view it as asking too much considering financial contributions in the past, but they decided it could be refreshing to be asked for volunteers instead of donations. BARC decided to focus recruitment efforts on an upcoming creek clean-up. An OSM/VISTA wrote letters to businesses, made follow-up phone calls, and visited personally to ask them to come and distributed volunteer information. Two volunteers from the Brownsville Re-Use It Shop volunteered for the event and donated their store space for a cook-out for all the volunteers. The Rt. 40 Classic Diner also donated hot dogs for the cook-out. Challenges in garnering involvement and support may have been caused by some uncertainty of how the businesses would benefit from the activities outside of getting good publicity.



**Read the full story:**  
#4 on disc



*Based on the work of*  
**Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority**  
*Southwest Virginia*

The member counties of Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority (CPRWMA) created a system of using people on probation to clean-up illegal trash dumps in exchange for reductions in their fines. The counties first conducted GPS surveys of illegal dump sites in order to create location maps that also indicated dump severity—first level clean-ups which mean light roadside litter, up to third level where large objects have been dumped in hard-to-reach places. With knowledge of the number and severity of dump sites, members could then relate the need for a clean-up system to local governments and secure the support needed to make the system function. Next, they gathered materials and equipment needed to do clean-ups such as gloves, bags, litter poles, dumpster, truck and a winch to haul large objects, Bobcat, etc. They also worked with landowners to get permission to clean-up private property. Litter officers from participating counties met and arranged a clean-up schedule. These clean-ups rotate from county to county weekly. Clean-ups may also involve measures to prevent continued littering, such as constructing dirt berms to prevent roadside dumping and placing hidden cameras to monitor sites.

*Tested by*  
**Friends of Deckers Creek**  
*Northern West Virginia*

The Deckers Creek watershed is impaired by litter along roadways and illegal trash dumps. Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) decided that incorporating mandatory service volunteers to help address litter issues within the watershed could be an effective solution. FODC began by meeting with the Monongalia County Probation Office officers, Monongalia Chief Magistrate, and Prosecutor's Office to explain the project. Making these key officials aware was important in securing mandatory service sentencing for those that would be a good fit for the project, such as youth that would normally be given a fine. With FODC's litter control mission in mind, officials worked to send volunteers to the organization. Unlike the CPRWMA's schedule of weekly group clean-ups, FODC developed a method for "signing off" on individual volunteers' work. Probationers took pictures of areas before and after cleaning and of themselves with the trash collected. Next, they came to the FODC office and reported on their work. FODC staff and volunteers would look over pictures and make a judgment call on whether they were being honest about their time commitment before signing off on completed hours. Some volunteers without a digital camera brought the collected litter to the office. By having volunteers complete all work on their own time, the program was popular amongst probationers with conflicting work schedules and it didn't require significant amounts of FODC staff time.

**"The implementation of this practice could be easier for our watershed group because we are working with a total of 5 miles of creek. For rural watershed groups that encompass more waterways, a stronger and longer commitment would be necessary."**  
*-Friends of Milam Creek*

*Tested by*  
**Friends of Milam Creek**  
*Southern West Virginia*

One of Friends of Milam Creek's (FMC) most pertinent and consistent needs is to keep Milam Creek clean and litter free. FMC hoped that working with mandatory service volunteers through Wyoming County's Day Report Center would fulfill FMC's need for trash clean up and initiate a strong partnership for future endeavors. FMC discussed the practice with the Wyoming County Commission and Day Report Center. Both entities committed to organizing a Milam Creek clean-up by mandatory volunteers. After some communication issues due to an intermediary, FMC was able to establish a direct contact at the Day Report Center and clean-ups commenced. Clean-ups were supervised by an FMC volunteer with experience in this type of work. The volunteer also provided transportation when needed and lunch for volunteers. Trash bags and gloves were donated from WV Make-It-Shine Project and FMC provided bug repellent, sunscreen and water. Operations were based out of the FMC office with restroom facilities, phones and safe storage of belongings for volunteers. Four truckloads of trash were collected over three different clean-up events. Each time, FMC had a probationer volunteer group for two to three consecutive days. Each clean-up day lasted from 9am-3pm with one hour for lunch at noon. Three community and nine mandatory service volunteers participated.



Read the full story:  
 #5 on disc 

## #6 Support from Community Service Volunteers

*Based on the work of*

### **Lackawanna River Corridor Association** *Northeast Pennsylvania*

Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA) has worked with the local magistrate and county probation office for over eight years to recruit community service volunteers. These volunteers have performed activities ranging from database management and graphic design to electrical work and office landscaping. LRCA performs an upfront screening interview that is critical before assigning tasks. It has benefited from the various skills of these volunteers.



*Tested by*

### **Coal Creek Watershed Coalition** *Western Colorado*

Coal Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) wanted to work with community service volunteers to fill crucial needs in remediation work: the watering of re-vegetated slopes and maintaining other Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion along Coal Creek. CCWC hopes that the BMPs will enable the stormwater collection and distribution system along Kebler Pass Road to more effectively filter and deliver water to Coal Creek. Various BMP measures extend across an eight-mile stretch of the watershed. Maintaining and continuing this work requires volunteer help beyond CCWC's current capacity and is crucial to the success of this remediation work. While LRCA found office skills such as bookkeeping and graphic design helpful to them, CCWC worked mostly with volunteers on targeted field work projects.

CCWC first secured status as a participating non-profit organization in Gunnison County's Alternative Services program. CCWC had a specific project to recruit volunteers for the summer, in addition to volunteer opportunities that arose in day-to-day work. At LRCA's advice, CCWC set up a process of finding and screening volunteers to gauge how comfortable and experienced volunteers were with outdoor work, which involved coming up with a new set of questions and practicing close observation in the field rather than in an office. CCWC began working with community service volunteers to install erosion-reducing Best Management Practices (BMPs) along Kebler Pass Road. Installing BMPs requires large teams of people in order to be successful. The community service volunteers they worked with became instrumental in helping staff and contractors reach an appropriate number of participants. The community service volunteers were also helpful in teaching new participants how to install the BMPs.



**"Having a variety of different types of tasks—from large group work to individual projects that can be done at any time—would probably make implementing the trial practice easiest."**

**- Coal Creek**

***Watershed Coalition***

**"While we have long had a relationship with Gunnison County, based on our work along its roads, implementing this trial practice has helped us develop relationships with new departments of the County, who we worked with in applying for and in managing the community service volunteers. The trial practice has also helped us establish relationships with volunteers who represent facets of the community we have not worked with in the past, and with Restorative Justice, a local non-profit organization that helped us begin the process of applying for a spot in the County's community service volunteer sites."**

Read the full story:  
#6 on disc

*Based on the work of*

## **USDA Forest Service-Center for Wetlands and Stream Restoration** *Eastern Kentucky*

Tom Biebighauser has partnered with Morehead State University's athletic department to recruit student athlete volunteers to clean up the watershed. At this school, all athletic teams are required to volunteer. One team in particular helps out four times a year with projects. Biebighauser advises: Saturdays are usually the best day to assign projects, keep them for only a few hours, and provide lunch. To begin, find projects suitable for student athlete participation. Then, contact the school's athletic department and establish a rapport with a coach. This establishes the availability of volunteer work and eventually coaches may seek out your organization for projects.

*Tested by*

## **Friends of Deckers Creek** *Northern West Virginia*

Friends of Deckers Creek's (FODC) intentions were to capture the student athlete resource from the local university, West Virginia University (WVU), in order to gain a willing and able workforce to complete some of the organization's more daunting tasks. Contacting student organizations was difficult because either the presidents of these organizations are full-time students with many other things to deal with or the paid staff members are unwilling to let athletes participate unless it is a school requirement. Over 30 athletic teams and organizations were initially approached for this program and five showed interest in partnering. In April, the remaining 25 organizations were approached again and another four or five demonstrated interest in partnering with FODC. Group-based volunteer opportunities were filled with willing and able student athletes. FODC's time spent coordinating volunteers was reduced significantly because they were able to contact one individual, either a coach or representative, who would bring their entire team, club or organization to a volunteer opportunity. Overall, participating organizations took part in four litter clean-ups (15-20 people each), Deckers Creek Adventure Day Race (over 65 volunteers), quarterly and monthly water quality monitoring (over 120 hours of volunteerism), and fundraising mailings (4 or 5 people for 15 volunteer hours).

**"In my limited experience I would tend to only recommend this trial practice for watershed groups that need labor done like tree plantings or stream clean-ups. Some of the volunteers we had were really enthusiastic and funny, but I think a lot of them just liked being outside, doing the manual labor and working hard. If you found a particularly enthusiastic team you could have them help with outreach, but you would probably need to get to know your volunteers first."**

**-George's Creek  
Watershed Association**

*Tested by*

## **George's Creek Watershed Association** *Western Maryland*

George's Creek Watershed Association (GCWA) planned to do an Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) tree planting project in their watershed and needed volunteers to make it successful. GCWA wanted to forge a better relationship with nearby Frostburg State University (FSU), so reaching out to student athlete volunteers for this trial practice seemed like a great way to build that relationship. After some issues finding a good contact person were resolved, GCWA was able to work with FSU's Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement. The contact person helped to compile a list of all FSU coaches and aided in composing an e-mail to draw interest. GCWA was able to recruit the FSU football team to help an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) crew plant trees on reclaimed mine lands in partnership with ARRI. Twenty football players and five coaches assisted the NCCC in planting 4,000 trees on 7 acres in 4 hours, which was part of a larger 10-day project where a total of 8,000 trees were planted on 11 acres by 135 volunteers recruited by the GCWA.



**Read the full story:**  
#7 on disc

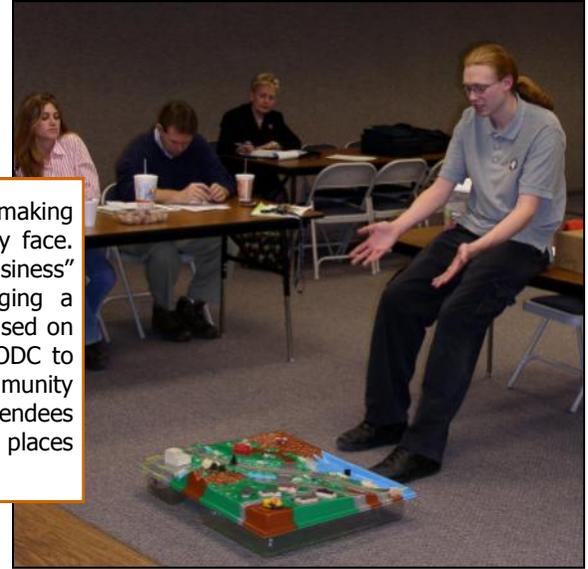


## #8 Bi-monthly Outreach Meetings

Based on the work of

### Friends of Deckers Creek Northern West Virginia

Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) uses board meetings to spread their mission by making them a forum for the community to share their ideas and discuss the issues they face. FODC holds this board meeting every month. Each month they alternate between "business" and "outreach" meetings. Business meetings cover the usual issues of managing a watershed group. Outreach meetings, although still attended by the board, are focused on reaching out to new or different parts of the community. This has helped the FODC to spread their mission and open new avenues for partnerships. To promote community involvement, they also advise lingering after meetings to answer questions from attendees in order to get to know people from other groups and host meetings in different places across the watershed.



**"Managing and supervising volunteers takes a lot of time and energy and doing it well takes a bit of talent. Not having the time or skills to make good use of volunteers is likely to result in less than positive experiences for those rare volunteers and the volunteer supervisors. It is not a sustainable situation."**  
**-Plateau Action Network**

Tested by

### Headwaters, Inc. Southeast Kentucky

Headwaters, Inc. consists of a small board with a moderate list of volunteers. Water quality has been a major issue in Letcher County and they plan to build a network of people and volunteers in the community to address the concerns. They hoped that this approach of going to the people would increase volunteer recruitment and engagement. Headwaters held six different bimonthly meetings. A stream clean-up had 10 volunteers that picked up over 40 bags of garbage and around 30 large items. At the meeting during Whitesburg Day festivities, Headwaters recruited four volunteers and developed a partnership for a video project. Headwaters' meeting during the October local art walk increased community contacts and secured \$175 in donations by raffling a photo of a local recreational lake. As they organized clean-ups and attended community-based functions, they made more personal contacts with organizations throughout the county. In meetings, Headwaters encouraged local community-based groups to take a lead in cleaning up the water that runs through their communities. Headwaters increased their regular volunteer base by approximately six people.

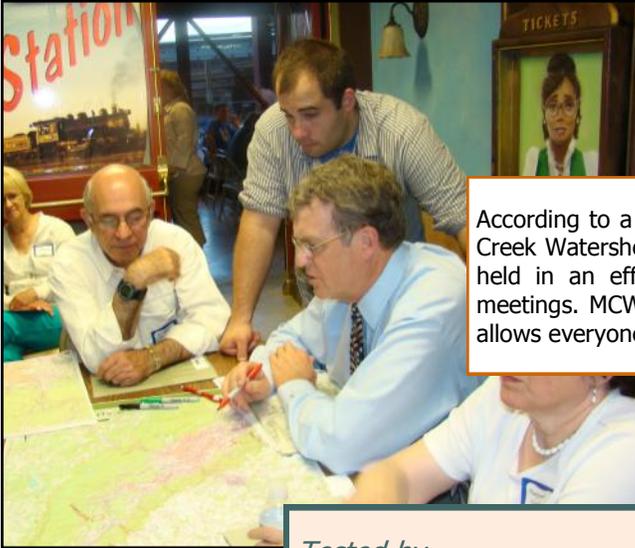


Tested by

### Plateau Action Network Southern West Virginia

Plateau Action Network (PAN) is more than a watershed association and has been involved in several complicated, and sometimes contentious development issues. PAN's advocacy for complex issues may discourage people from being involved with the organization, which makes capacity building and the creation of public interest events difficult. Faced with these issues, PAN hoped to create some non-threatening, informational events to build relationships to the community and to find new board members. PAN wanted its members and the general community to gain a better understanding of local issues, feel informed enough to speak of them on their own, and become more involved. PAN was able to plan or support a number of informational events for the public, though they were not bi-monthly or quarterly as first planned. PAN learned that some projects are too complex and intimidating to engage the general public. PAN has created a five-year plan and shifted from seeking volunteer capacity to seeking financial capacity in order to hire paid staff. PAN cautions other organizations to be realistic about the group's abilities and capacity. Without the proper organizational capacity, it is not wise to plan a regular series of events but do them as you are able to.

Read the full story:  
#8 on disc



*Based on the work of*  
**Morris Creek Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

According to a survey conducted in the first phase of this research project, 85% of Morris Creek Watershed Association (MCWA) volunteers strongly believed that group meetings are held in an efficient and productive manner. MCWA also has a very high turnout at meetings. MCWA keeps meetings to an hour or less every month, accomplishes tasks and allows everyone to get involved. Providing food doesn't hurt either!

*Tested by*  
**Savage River Watershed Association**  
*Western Maryland*

Savage River Watershed Association's (SRWA) meetings were too long because they combined education and outreach, in the form of a guest speaker and with a business meeting that encompassed typical board tasks. SRWA wanted to hold shorter, more efficient meetings to keep members engaged, increase turnout, and facilitate decision-making within the time allotted. SRWA's planning involved preparation before meetings begin, including the distribution of pertinent information on agenda topics so attendees are informed on issues before the actual meeting. This would cut back on time used for background explanation. Practices during the actual meeting included setting simple but flexible ground rules and allotting specific amounts of time for a particular discussion or issue. This would involve formal time keeping by a designated board member. This member would be responsible for keeping the meeting on task by giving notices of time limits and calling for decisions after a certain amount of time. These practices were implemented by board members before and during meetings, making them the most valuable resource for this practice. Business meetings were shorter (under an hour) and required less volunteer time from board members, allowing more emphasis on the community outreach portion of meetings. The board of directors has adopted this practice as the standard for how business meetings are conducted.

**"With a more efficient board of directors, made up of citizens that take pride in their service, SRWA can more effectively reach out to the community. There is an increased community awareness of the organization."**  
***-Savage River Watershed Association***

*Tested by*  
**Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority**  
*Northeast Pennsylvania*

Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority (LHVA) selected this practice in order to increase control and productivity of board meetings. The organization and its board deal with a large volume of programs, grants and projects. They needed new ideas to improve efficiency and board member engagement at board meetings. LHVA decided to remind board members of the time practice and its goals at the beginning of each meeting to keep everyone on track. While there were not any board meetings in 2010 that ran under the one-hour time limit, four meetings were less than one hour and fifteen minutes. An additional four meetings were less than one hour and a half and one meeting ran for one hour and forty minutes. This was the result of reminding the board of the time limitations. Also, board members and LHVA staff became more prepared for board meetings. Both board members and LHVA staff began making notes and discussing issues beforehand in order to make the meeting move along in a shorter, more productive manner. However, more documentation was needed to present to the board before meetings which cost LHVA more staff time and printing costs. It was not practical for an organization with so many projects, events, programs, and grants to limit board meetings to one hour.



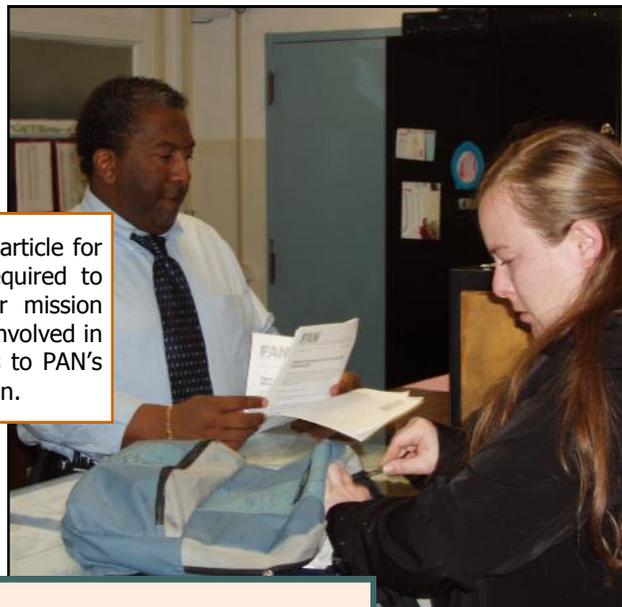
Read the full story:  
#9 on disc



## #10 Volunteer Contributions to Group's Newsletter

*Based on the work of*  
**Plateau Action Network**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Plateau Action Network (PAN) has avoided having the same person write every article for their newsletter by soliciting contributions from board members (who are required to submit an article each quarter), volunteers and community members. Their mission incorporates the environment and the economy, so members of the community involved in these areas are encouraged to contribute their thoughts, opinions and projects to PAN's message. A volunteer then organizes submissions into a newsletter for distribution.



*Tested by*  
**North Fork River Improvement Association**  
*Western Colorado*

North Fork River Improvement Association (NFRIA) selected this trial practice to increase membership and board involvement in the organization's print media. NFRIA already had a membership list to receive the newsletters and to distribute monthly e-mail updates. They also had templates for each of these media, but board members and other volunteers had not contributed. NFRIA volunteers personally asked the board of directors to submit articles for the monthly e-mail updates. They also included an announcement in an email update soliciting volunteers from the membership to submit articles for the e-newsletter. These efforts resulted in some input from board members on a few isolated articles for the newsletter, but were unsuccessful in facilitating a shift towards sustained membership participation in print media. In August 2010, NFRIA merged with the Western Slope Environmental Resource Council. The merger resolved many of the challenges that limited the success of the practice in 2010. The merger provided an opportunity to redefine the responsibilities of committees and to create new volunteer opportunities. If this trial practice were to be re-implemented and expanded by NFRIA-WSERC, one approach worth trying would be to provide topics for individuals to write about in the newsletter.

**"Board and member contributions to print media are important to the community because we want to accurately and thoroughly represent our membership's perspectives on issues with which our organization is involved."  
-North Fork River Improvement Association**

*Tested by*  
**Crooked Creek Watershed Association**  
*Western Pennsylvania*

Crooked Creek Watershed Association (CrCWA) wanted to use a newsletter to accomplish their goal of keeping the community informed of their activities and projects and to possibly broaden membership. CrCWA, however, had not issued a newsletter in almost two years. In the past, the newsletter was created and written entirely by the group's secretary, which proved to be unsustainable. CrCWA also had no electronic copy of its membership list and was working with addresses written on note cards making it difficult to send out publications. CrCWA created an electronic membership database for the group. Willing volunteers who attend events would be asked if they would like to contribute an article for the upcoming newsletter. Each board member was assigned an article to write and all board members submitted an article for the newsletter. A CrCWA volunteer worked with the OSM/VISTA to draft the newsletter, but the draft was then accidentally deleted from the computer and needed to be completely redone. The loss of the original draft of the newsletter coupled with the departure of the OSM/VISTA was a major setback and CrCWA was unable to distribute a newsletter within the one-year trial practice period. Despite setbacks, distributing a biannual newsletter is a top priority for CrCWA.

Read the full story:  
#10 on disc



*Based on the work of*  
**Friends of Deckers Creek**  
*Northern West Virginia*

Friends of Deckers Creek's (FODC) Youth Advisory Board (YAB), formed in 2006, is "open to all youth 18 and under interested in the future of Deckers Creek and willing to work 30 hours a year volunteering for FODC and YAB," according to the YAB's bylaws. Their mission is to increase youth participation in helping clean up the Deckers Creek watershed for conservation, preservation and recreation through youth-led projects and research. FODC uses a YAB as a creative way to engage youth, while also incorporating their voice in the management of the organization. With help from an adult coordinator, these youth volunteers created their own by-laws, mission statement, and more. They've participated in rain barrel workshops, water monitoring and recycling programs. They have a representative that sits on the FODC's board.

*Tested by*  
**Piney Creek Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Piney Creek Watershed Association (PCWA) reached a plateau with their youth outreach and wanted a youth advisory board (YAB) to kick off continued youth engagement efforts. A discussion with Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) launched a more elaborate plan: FODC was working with The Mountain Institute, an international nonprofit dedicated to generating awareness for the critical role mountain regions play in sustaining life, to develop sustainable youth advisory boards. In partnership with The Mountain Institute (TMI), FODC and local middle school and high school youth and educators, PCWA sought grant funding to establish and facilitate a Watershed EYES (Engaging Youth in Environmental Service-Learning) Youth Advisory Board. PCWA proposed to use the successful YAB model built by FODC and supported by TMI that encompasses a number of activities addressing the entire continuum of environmental education. PCWA was unable to form a YAB due to lack of funding and adult volunteers. Perhaps more importantly, no adult member of the organization was interested or able to champion the YAB to move it forward and gain a youth base.

**"It is very difficult to schedule meetings around everyone's schedules. There are probably too many YAB members, but we decided to let all of the kids who had applied be a part of it in some way. This is fine but we need to find very specific roles for each member. The charter of YAB is very broad by design, but it would probably be best to offer specific activities for YAB so that they can focus."**  
*-Kids' Pasta Project*

*Tested by*  
**Kids' Pasta Project**  
*Western Colorado*

As a program dedicated to helping youth serve their community and learn through the process, the idea of empowering youth volunteers is a top priority for the Kids' Pasta Project (KPP). Developing a youth advisory board (YAB) was a way to formalize this intention. KPP needed to explore ways of involving youth more in management—not only to enhance their educational experience, but also to help ensure the sustainability of the organization. The formation of a YAB was an ideal opportunity for youth to learn to work together, discuss issues, offer thoughtful input and communicate effectively with the board and community. KPP advertised the creation of a YAB and received applications from interested youth. Every child that applied was accepted and invited to the YAB's first meeting where they elected their board. Scheduling management meetings at times when youth were available was difficult, so regular management activities had to continue without consistent input from youth. In hindsight, KPP recommends detailing the YAB charter before announcing its formation so that the YAB can get right to work instead of being bogged down in discussions of possible functions and responsibilities. The KPP board was not fully engaged in the YAB development and board members were not available to mentor the YAB officers as planned.



Read the full story:  
 #11 on disc 

# #12 Forming a Youth Helper Organization

*Based on the work of*  
**Woodland Community Land Trust**  
*Northeast Tennessee*

The TN-KY Helpers, a youth organization affiliated with the Woodland Community Land Trust (WCLT), was created out of the need to do clean-ups and involve youth. This project became a vehicle to involve youth volunteers in a variety of service projects. An OSM/VISTA contacted some local young people through the organization and participation grew through a snowball effect. WCLT was able to create a youth group that conducted litter clean-ups, participated in and led a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event, raised its own money and—perhaps most importantly—fostered ownership of the project. WCLT recommends having an adult in place to keep the group organized who knows the youth volunteers' schedules and who can provide transportation.



*Tested by*  
**Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation**  
*Northeast Ohio*

Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation (LBCLF) had no outreach initiatives to engage the youth in their watershed. Moreover, youth in the community weren't involved in any conservation efforts in a consistent, ongoing way. LBCLF approached the Beaver Local High School Science Club advisor to discuss the possibility of her Science Club students working with the LBCLF on a conservation project. The Science Club came up with the idea of establishing a bluebird trail at Hellbender Bluff near the high school. The students would build the boxes, help put them up, and then monitor them on a regular basis. After a year of planning, one LBCLF volunteer and two adults and 10 students with the Science Club met after school at the high school to assemble boxes. A total of 20 bluebird boxes were constructed to be posted at Hellbender Bluff. Science Club students also helped with a tree planting at Hellbender Bluff County Park and stream monitoring on a section of the Middle Fork of Little Beaver Creek that runs behind the school. Though this project unfolded slowly due to the difficulties of coordinating with busy students and a busy teacher, the bluebird trail is an excellent project for the Science Club students and an asset to the community.



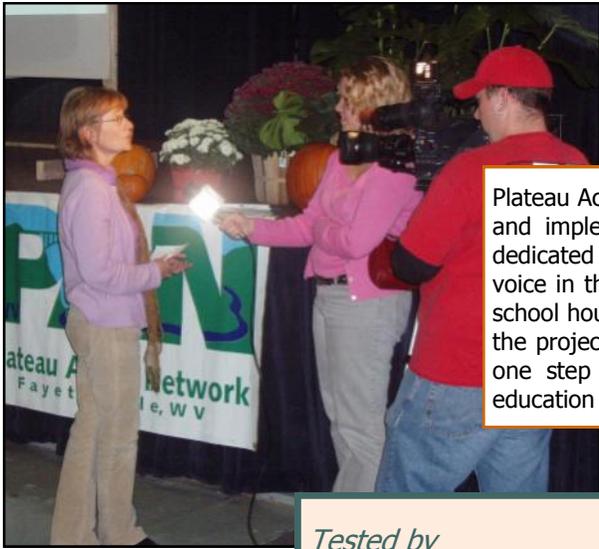
**"I think there's potential for this to be a great practice. With commitment from the youth advisor, and projects that give the kids a sense of ownership and buy-in, it has the potential to develop a very actively interested and engaged youth group, who may become our conservation leaders of the future!"**

**-Little Beaver Creek  
Land Foundation**

*Tested by*  
**Upper Pecos Watershed Association**  
*Northern New Mexico*

The Upper Pecos Watershed Association (UPWA) had very little youth involvement in volunteer activities and clean-ups. UPWA had taught the importance of clean water and monitoring in local schools, but having a youth task force responsible for monitoring and maintaining a portion of the river would support both the longevity of UPWA and the health of the river. Youth involvement was minimal during the school year, but UPWA was able to help with Trout Unlimited's Trout in the Classroom program and taught a water course in an afterschool program. UPWA was also involved in a youth group managed by a board member called Sembrando Semillas, a youth agricultural organization organized by the NM Acequia Association. An OSM intern worked to get the UPWA youth group off the ground by advertising around Pecos and trying to be involved in as many youth-oriented events as possible. The primary challenge, however, was having no full-time staff or other adult volunteers to take the lead with the youth program. Most board members and volunteers were already over-committed, so UPWA had to tag along with others efforts instead of implementing their own separate youth program. Setting up a youth group would require a lot of work to keep the kids engaged and could potentially be its own full-time job.





*Based on the work of*  
**Plateau Action Network**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Plateau Action Network (PAN) received national recognition for engaging youth in organizing and implementing a Patagonia-sponsored Wild & Scenic Film Festival. For two years a dedicated community volunteer and an OSM/VISTA coordinated an effort to give the youth a voice in the festival. They worked to have environment-oriented short films played during school hours for hundreds of local high school students. Patagonia, critical to the success of the project, seeks to expand the membership base of hosting organizations. PAN took this one step further by building community membership and focusing primarily on youth education that was fun for those students involved.

*Tested by*  
**Friends of Russell Fork**  
*Southwest Virginia*

Friends of the Russell Fork (FORF) wanted to host a Wild and Scenic Film Festival as a way to recruit volunteers and to spread the word about their organization to a larger area. It was also a way to form new and stronger partnerships with other local groups, such as the Clinch Coalition who had hosted a film festival before. FORF applied for and was awarded a Patagonia Wild and Scenic Film Festival grant, with a remaining cost of \$500 that was split between the partnering organizations. This grant gave FORF access to Patagonia's film bank, technical support, planning toolkit, donations from national sponsors and more. FORF and its partners decided to make the event free to attend and did not sell tickets, though that is allowable with Patagonia. The film festival was also an opportunity to recognize the winners of an environmental art/essay contest that was held in the area schools. The reception was held in the courtyard outside the auditorium from 6-7pm with refreshments, crafts for kids, raffle items and a display of artwork from a school art/essay contest. Attendance was lower than they hoped, however, because it was difficult to generate interest in an event that was held about 40 miles from FORF's home site in Haysi and 20 miles from McClure River Restoration Project's site in Clintwood. The host organizations agreed that the money and time needed for this event were not worth the returns, though they were satisfied with the learning experience. It was agreed that if a film festival is held again, it would be held independent of Patagonia in an attempt to reduce costs and allow more freedom in its execution.

**"The event came together nicely in the end—it went more smoothly than I expected. Everyone pitched in and knew what job they needed to do. We also had a great film line-up and I feel like the people in attendance really enjoyed the films that were chosen. We also learned a lot from the event about what works and what doesn't and how we should approach it next time."**  
*-Friends of Russell Fork*

*Tested by*  
**Kiskiminetas Watershed Association**  
*Western Pennsylvania*

Kiskiminetas Watershed Association (KWA) wanted to build new partnerships as well as engage new volunteers/members to kick-start a more innovative approach and enable the group to become more active. A Wild and Scenic Film Festival was seen as an opportunity to move KWA outside its comfort zone with a new event to encourage growth. They particularly wanted to get youth involved in the local environment to increase their awareness of water issues and history. KWA decided that the organization would not be able to handle the costs and tasks that accompany an official Wild and Scenic Film Festival through Patagonia. They decided instead to work on a small youth film festival to be held in a local school independent of the Wild and Scenic Film Festival program. There were many issues with implementing this event, however. KWA had limited volunteers and resources to help with planning and speaking with school officials and local venues to gauge interest in holding a film festival either on or off school property. The science teachers KWA contacted expressed interest in the project, but it seemed to stop with them and never spread to higher levels of administration. KWA still wants to focus its efforts on educating local youth and may focus on smaller groups of children rather than take on a school-wide assembly.



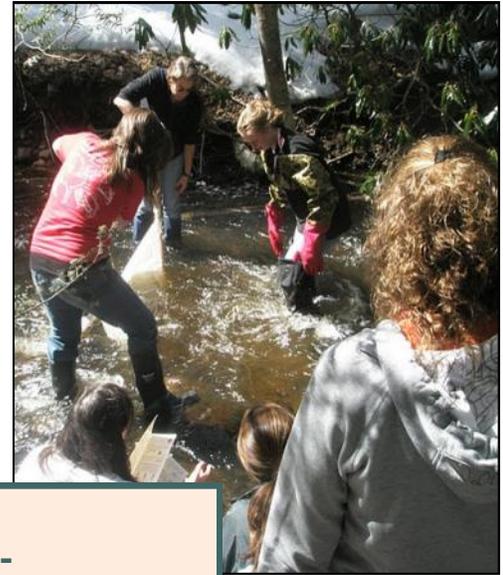
**Read the full story:**  
 #13 on disc 

# #14 Engaging Students in Service-learning

*Based on the work of*

## **Appalachia—Science in the Public Interest** *Eastern Kentucky*

Appalachia—Science in the Public Interest (ASPI) has implemented service-learning projects that benefit both their organization and participating students tremendously. ASPI finds that college students can serve (doing tasks such as litter and stream clean-ups, trail maintenance, gardening) and learn (about local ecology, history, and more) at the same time. For a group of students on an alternative spring break trip, it helps to provide some sort of lodging, showers and meal facilities. A local college can be an excellent source volunteers for day-long trips and projects. To get started, ASPI recommends contacting a college's student life coordinator, a position that can be found at most colleges.



*Tested by*

## **Jefferson Conservation District - Upper South Platte Watershed Association** *Eastern Colorado*

Jefferson Conservation District (JCD), working with Upper South Platte Watershed Association, partnered with a geography lecturer at the University of Colorado-Denver and a local landowner to create a pilot garden to test best practices and experience the difficulties an urban farmer might encounter. Through a test garden in the City of Wheat Ridge, JCD wanted to improve understanding of watering techniques, city zoning regulations, city permitting and the process of selling produce. The information gathered during this test garden project would be used to create a comprehensive urban agriculture resources toolkit of information made available for community use. This pilot plot included fruit trees, bee hives and vegetable plots with differing irrigation systems. Three students from two different universities worked on three service-learning projects: Understanding zone code regulations and how they relate to urban agricultural activities, assessing the potential for economic efficiency among small-scale home growers and producers, and learning about beekeeping. When all three projects were underway, the students worked between 5-10 hours a week and did not receive university credit for their work. UC-Denver and Colorado College, like many universities, require payment for credit hours. Neither JCD nor the students had the funds. The organization also hopes that this project laid the groundwork for other service-learning projects and volunteers in the future.



**“Although the students are still learning, the fact that they cannot get school credit for their work makes the project much less appealing. There were several students interested in working with us who, upon discovering they would not get credit for their work unless they paid, decided to work elsewhere.”**

***-Jefferson Conservation District-Upper South Platte Watershed Association***

*Tested by*

## **Headwaters, Inc.** *Southeast Kentucky*

Headwaters, Inc. had several important labor-intensive projects—such as extensive water sampling events, a point source pollution survey and the establishment of a water-testing lab. Having college students participate in service-learning projects was one way to both make progress on these projects and provide students with an important opportunity to learn about relevant local issues. Headwaters reached out to contacts at various universities to bring students on alternative spring break trips. As Headwaters made contact with universities, it became clear that this was a long-term project. Developing relationships within educational bureaucracies takes time. Though it seemed unlikely that any actual projects would be completed in the first year, they were laying the groundwork for future service-learning projects. They feel that it has the possibility of being successful, but were not able to hold a successful weeklong service-learning project. They learned that these projects require planning at least six months in advance in order to secure all factors and partners involved. They also discovered that many groups are already committed to other service-learning projects and programs and are unable to make new commitments. Headwaters plans to continue working on getting an annual service-learning project established. Due to difficulties in planning a weeklong project, they plan to begin with day trips and projects in order to build up their capacity to host longer projects in the future.

**Read the full story:**  
#14 on disc



*Based on the work of*

**Schuylkill Headwaters Association**  
*Northeast Pennsylvania*

Schuylkill Headwaters Association (SHA) has met a variety of volunteer needs by partnering with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in their county. RSVP is a national program operated through SeniorCorps, a branch of the Corporation for National and Community Service. In Pennsylvania, RSVP was previously linked with environmental causes through the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement Program (EASI), but this program ended. However, SHA was able to maintain a senior volunteer base called Senior Environmental Corps (SEC) through their local RSVP office. At one point, SHA had about 15 active senior volunteers involved in water monitoring, but generally have 8-10. Their approach has been not only to train the volunteers in water monitoring protocols, but to personalize the work for the volunteers. They also inform the volunteers for what the data is used so they can see the fruitfulness of volunteering. Two RSVP water monitors now train RSVP volunteers that are new to SHA.

*Tested by*

**Upper Tennessee River Roundtable**  
*Southwest Virginia*

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable (UTRR) hoped to recruit more volunteers through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). With one existing RSVP volunteer, UTRR wanted to expand their pool of volunteers to assist with large mailings, creation of education kits, manning festival booths and other office tasks. Learning that RSVP favors regular volunteer activities on a consistent basis, UTRR aimed to create an "outreach team" to attend festival and events as representatives of the organization. These volunteers would also do environmental education in local schools and at events. UTRR's OSM/VISTA attended an RSVP luncheon and spoke about UTRR and opportunities for involvement. She also distributed custom-made invitations to a UTRR recruitment/orientation dinner to each person at the luncheon, but the dinner was cancelled due to the lack of responses. The existing RSVP volunteer initiated an outreach booth at the Virginia Highlands Festival. This would not have happened without her. Active RSVP members were already connected to certain sites and putting in their volunteer hours. UTRR recommends this trial practice to groups with the time to build their project as a legitimate RSVP site. A group needs to be established enough to have a supervisor with enough time to work with RSVP on the goals, schedule and description of the volunteer project, and then to supervise regular RSVP volunteers.

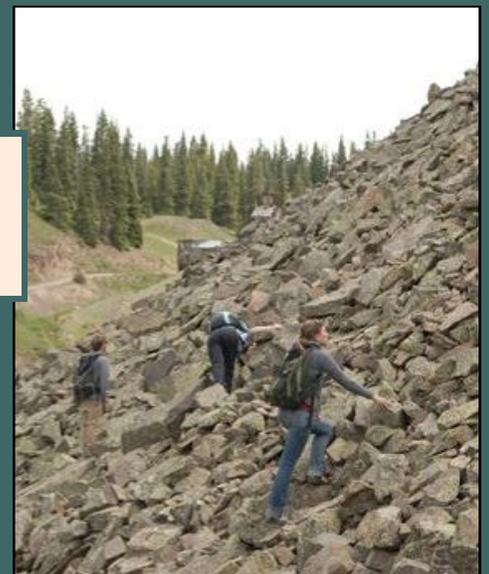
**"We found it very challenging and very frustrating continually trying to engage the RSVP volunteers, who were already committed to other volunteer projects and did not have time to work with us, too. People in the RSVP program here are already committed to definite programs."**

***-Upper Tennessee River Roundtable***

*Tested by*

**Mountain Studies Institute**  
*Southwestern Colorado*

Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) undertook the development and implementation of a long-term volunteer environmental monitoring project that seeks to record climate change impacts on specific sites in the San Juan Mountains. To do this, the organization decided to organize a citizen science program to monitor the American Pika, a small alpine mammal that serves as a figurative "canary in the coal mine" of global climate change. MSI launched PikaNET, a citizen science initiative that serves both education and research goals by directly involving the community in climate change research and stewardship. Though open to any and all volunteers, MSI wanted to recruit senior volunteers through RSVP. MSI's work with RSVP hinged on the implementation of PikaNET, the project for which these volunteers would be recruited. MSI made contact with RSVP and other senior outdoor organizations in the area, but no volunteer training workshops were held during the trial practice reporting period. So, they were unable to report on the success of this outreach. As the pilot year for this project, the outputs were mostly educational materials including the PikaNET Manual & Protocols, training, identification and outreach presentations, and the development of a species identification cheat sheet. These materials lay the foundation for volunteer training, the next step in the project.



**Read the full story:**  
#15 on disc



## #16 Providing or Organizing Transportation

Based on the work of

### Woodland Community Land Trust

Northeast Tennessee

Woodland Community Land Trust (WCLT) noticed that a significant number of their volunteers were having trouble making it to events. The group chose to provide transportation to volunteers who needed it. They advertised the service before events and based their pick-up schedule around those who requested transportation. Seniors who serve on committees and youth volunteers were among those who benefited most. This trial practice has a high success rate for groups in rural areas with events that require senior or youth volunteers in need transportation.



Tested by

### Friends of Deckers Creek

Northern West Virginia

The staff and volunteers of Friends of Deckers Creek (FODC) often need to work in rural and remote locations within the watershed to carry out tasks important to the organization's mission. FODC also had a need for their Youth Advisory Board (YAB) members to attend board meetings and community activities on a regular basis and in greater numbers in order to empower the next generation of watershed stewards. Volunteers that needed transportation were informed about the program by word of mouth, phone, website postings, online event calendar, electronic listserv and seasonal newsletters. Carpooling and FODC-provided transportation were used extensively in sampling, monitoring, and site assessment trips. Volunteers are always needed for this type of work. By providing transportation, FODC was able to bring volunteers—including YAB volunteers—on almost every trip. The cost of fuel is a major factor when considering transporting volunteers. This will play a role in the future use of this practice by FODC. FODC hopes to continue to provide transportation to YAB members for meetings, field work and events. They will continue to provide transportation to volunteers for monitoring and sampling as long as funding for mileage is available.

**"Events such as Skate Jam, Decker's Creek Adventure Day Race, and monitoring work had an increase in participants due to the transportation service. Members that had rarely attended events and meetings were now helping set up beforehand."**

**-Friends of Deckers Creek**

Tested by

### Rural Appalachian Improvement League

Southern West Virginia

Rural Appalachian Improvement League (RAIL) wanted to provide or coordinate transportation to convince more volunteers to attend the weekly meetings of the group's gardening club. "Farming for Health and Wealth" is a RAIL project that works to identify, motivate and organize small farmers and gardeners in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. One aspect of this project is the Mullens Growers Co-op, a group of local growers who meet weekly to learn and share information on growing vegetable gardens. Weekly meetings are informal with discussion centered on a topic such as specifics of growing vegetables, composting and canning. RAIL asked members that were already attending weekly co-op meetings to drive other interested volunteers to meetings and events. There were many older potential participants in the gardening co-op who did not want to drive in poor weather conditions or at night, so RAIL considered this practice a good solution to their problem. The trial practice did not have any success because the majority of volunteers that were interested in the workshops already had transportation. One possible explanation for the failure of this trial practice is that many of the participants did not decide until the last minute if they wanted to go to a workshop. Without deciding to attend far enough in advance, they could not take advantage of pre-planned carpooling.

Read the full story:  
#16 on disc



*Based on the work of*

**Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association (UGWA) needed a volunteer base to aid in water monitoring efforts across the watershed's large coverage area. To recruit these volunteers, UGWA partnered with several existing organizations— the local Trout Unlimited chapter, the Friends of the Earth Club at their local high school and visiting faith-based volunteer teams. UGWA makes the following recommendations to maintain success throughout the project: Partner with those most interested in being in the stream, be very clear about volunteer roles, assign someone to manage volunteers and paperwork (in their case, an OSM/VISTA), and work closely with any state agencies involved.

*Tested by*

**Morris Creek Watershed Association**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Morris Creek Watershed Association (MCWA) needed consistent water quality data in order to repair the passive acid mine drainage treatment (AMD) systems located in the watershed. MCWA suspected that two of the four passive treatment systems were beginning to fail. They wanted to collect water quality data on a monthly basis to track the systems' declining effectiveness. MCWA partnered with two colleges located within the watershed—West Virginia University Institute of Technology and Bridgemont Community College. They recruited students who were interested in water quality from both schools to become certified water monitors through the WV Department of Environmental Protection's "Save Our Streams" program. By having the students trained and certified as water monitors, MCWA hoped to create a database of people with the knowledge and skills to conduct water monitoring and to keep that group up-to-date on local water quality. Other partnerships included: South Charleston High School Biology Club, WVU Tech Biology Club, Bridgemont Biology Department, WV Department of Natural Resources, and the Nature Conservancy. As the project continued, the volunteer pool began to expand and the outcomes MCWA expected were visible. The data collected by the volunteers allowed MCWA to see whether or not the local AMD treatment systems were operating effectively. The data collection conducted by these volunteers has helped obtain various funding opportunities for MCWA.

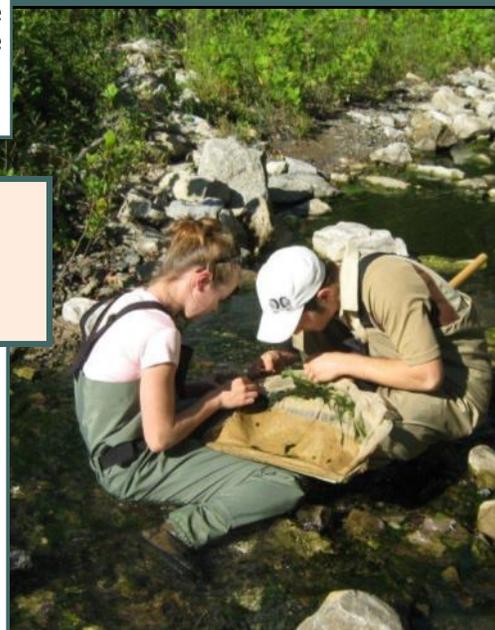
**"If a group wants to implement a program of this nature, they need to have a set goal in mind and focus on what the data will provide for the group. Some areas might test for various types of chemicals where others may not even have that issue. One way of handling this situation is to develop a list of priorities you want to solve or address through this process and move forward with it."**

**-Morris Creek Watershed Association**

*Tested by*

**Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation**  
*Northeast Ohio*

Little Beaver Creek Land Foundation (LBCLF) wanted to set up a volunteer-based water monitoring program. LBCLF staff performed water monitoring over the years, but had never developed a volunteer-driven monitoring program. The group felt that by creating a volunteer base to conduct monitoring, they would cover a larger area in a shorter amount of time. By teaming up with a local biology class, LBCLF was able to spend the majority of their time organizing on a group level by meeting with and training teachers in proper water monitoring methods. The teachers could then train their students, which saved time for LBCLF. In order for these classes to conduct water monitoring, LBCLF first had to procure the necessary equipment and supplies. They wrote and received a grant from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund to purchase water quality monitoring equipment for three classrooms to use. The partnership between LBCLF and local high schools enabled the collection of useful water quality information at sites in the watershed that were not already being sampled while helping teachers show their students the environmental impact of poor water quality. Six sites were sampled over the course of the semester by 11 groups of students. Three teachers trained 78 students on the necessary skills to complete the water monitoring.



**Read the full story:**  
#17 on disc



# #18 Volunteer Water Monitoring with Individuals

Based on the work of

## North Fork River Improvement Association Western Colorado

North Fork River Improvement Association (NFRIA) has a system of water monitoring that is particularly exciting and unique because it is self-sustaining and reliant on volunteers. A small core group acts as the machinery that mobilizes volunteers to conduct water monitoring throughout the area on a regular basis. Two individuals are responsible for organizing volunteers and one handles the supplies. One part-time paid staff person makes phone calls to local landowners to get permission to sample along streams. He also purchases supplies and contacts a local grocer for donated food. This core group is essential to the process because volunteers are less likely to drop out and more likely to return, if this structure is in place. It also needs some form of governmental funding and support to be successful.



**"I would recommend this practice to any watershed group. If you have even one set of sampling equipment, it is useful to engage people in water monitoring because they learn a lot about water quality and it becomes more meaningful for them."**

**-Friends of Lower Muskingum River**

Tested by

## Friends of Lower Muskingum River Southeast Ohio

Friends of Lower Muskingum River (FLMR) already had a handful of trained volunteer water monitors to call on for sampling as needed. FLMR works in a large watershed of approximately 600 square miles that contains four separate sub-watersheds. Therefore they needed a program that would create a broad volunteer base. The challenges that FLMR faced involved the time spent acquiring funding for equipment and recruiting attendees for training workshops. FLMR only had one set of monitoring equipment and supplies. They used this kit for volunteer training and for individual monitoring outings, but found it was insufficient to implement this trial practice without more equipment and supplies. FLMR wrote two grants for the equipment needed to successfully implement a wide-scale volunteer monitoring program. Only a portion of one grant request was awarded. They are still trying to secure funding for the additional necessary equipment to be able to send out multiple teams at one time to collect data. FLMR planned three training workshops in different areas of the watershed. One was canceled due to lack of interest, but two training events were held in the spring and one monitoring field event in the summer. This trial practice produced two new members and nine new volunteers to monitor more than 20 new sites within the watershed that had never been monitored before.



Tested by

## Lackawanna River Corridor Association Northeast Pennsylvania

Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA) had already developed a water monitoring program, but felt that this trial practice would offer new approaches to coordinate volunteer water sampling on a consistent basis and increase volunteer retention. They hoped to expand their water monitoring program from a biannual collection to a monthly or bimonthly program due to the increase in natural gas drilling within the watershed. Three individuals were recruited to help revitalize the River Watch program. LRCA also received a grant for approximately \$12,000 to create a water quality lab in their office by purchasing new sampling equipment, lab utensils and other necessary tools. With a core group of volunteers established and the equipment needed for monitoring, LRCA was able to lay the groundwork for volunteer monitoring program for many individuals. These benefits, however, were also the challenges that arose during the implementation of this practice. The one-year trial practice period was spent applying for grants and finding volunteers that were enthusiastic about the cause. They were unable to recruit volunteer water monitors to actually conduct monitoring until they had core volunteers to help plan and organize the program overall.

Read the full story:  
#18 on disc



*Based on the work of*

## **North Fork River Improvement Association**

*Western Colorado*

North Fork River Improvement Association's (NFRIA) volunteers have monitored streams in their watershed for many years (see page 29). NFRIA decided it was time to show the volunteers how valuable their service was to the group's efforts. They hosted a volunteer appreciation picnic and invited current and old volunteers and their families. Their idea was to schedule it around an already occurring event to reduce travel time. They recommend sharing a report based on recent accomplishments, but not giving big speeches at the event. It should be a time for the volunteers and their families to enjoy the festivities.

*Tested by*

## **Roaring Run Watershed Association**

*Western Pennsylvania*

Roaring Run Watershed Association (RRWA) wanted to host a volunteer picnic in order to recognize the many volunteers that had helped with various projects all year long. In previous years, RRWA held an annual banquet to recognize a single volunteer, but decided that a new tradition of recognizing many volunteers was necessary to increase volunteer retention. They hoped to hold a volunteer picnic every year to replace their annual banquet with a fun and interesting gathering. RRWA had made tremendous progress on a trail development project and wanted to show appreciation for their volunteers and reward them for their hard work and dedication. RRWA hosted the event on their own property to cut costs of renting a location. It was held near a rail trail developed by the group so it was also an opportunity to make the community aware of that recreational opportunity. The benefits of holding the picnic included the formation of approximately 10-12 new partnerships, increased membership, growth of the organization, and an increase in the number of projects the group is now able to complete. Challenges mainly involved the initial planning of the event because attendance of planning committee members was not consistent. Overall, RRWA's expectations were surpassed and they plan to hold the event every year.

**"People still come up and say what a nice time they had and how wonderful it was to get together. Our board has also recommended we do something every year now."**

**-Woodland Community Land Trust**

*Tested by*

## **Woodland Community Land Trust**

*Northeast Tennessee*

Woodlands Community Land Trust (WCLT) wanted to hold a picnic to celebrate their volunteers' achievements. WCLT did not have a formal volunteer appreciation program and thought that holding a volunteer celebration would boost volunteer retention. They had noticed that volunteer turnout was low, possibly due to lack of appreciation and recognition. When volunteers do not realize or are not thanked for the impact they are making, they may eventually reduce their volunteer hours or stop volunteering completely. WCLT planned the picnic, generated a list of volunteers, sent invitations, and hosted a picnic that was considered a success by all who attended. WCLT invited all volunteers that had participated in the last two years. They were surprised when compiling the list of volunteers to invite to the picnic because it was an extensive list. It made them appreciate the large number of people that had helped over the years. They recommend, however, focusing on volunteers that have spent a certain amount of time volunteering because more people responded to the invitation than actually attended, so WCLT had purchased too much food. The final cost of the picnic was substantially higher than first anticipated. Volunteers appeared happy to be recognized and it helped increase reliability and recruitment of volunteers, so the picnic was a success.



**Read the full story:**  
#19 on disc



## #20 Working with Volunteers to Construct Rain Gardens

*Based on the work of*

**New River Gorge National Park Service**  
*Southern West Virginia*

Rain gardens can be excellent practical educational tools on proper stormwater management techniques. In addition to beautifying generally unused landscapes, rain gardens allow infiltration needed to recharge groundwater and prevent sediment and pollution carried by stormwater from entering surface waterways. The construction and planting of a rain garden, depending on its size, can often be completed in one afternoon, making it a good way to engage and educate volunteers. Many tasks, such as planting or mulching, are low impact and ideal for senior or youth volunteers. An OSM/VISTA serving with the National Park Service at the New River Gorge National River worked with a variety of organizations to construct rain gardens. He provided the expertise needed to assess where and what to plant in a rain garden, as well as taught associated principles of water conservation and environmental stewardship. It is necessary to seek advice and expertise on assessing locations, working with backhoe operators, recruiting and managing volunteers and the many other factors involved in constructing and maintaining a rain garden.



*Tested by*

**Woodland Community Land Trust**  
*Northeast Tennessee*

Woodland Community Land Trust (WCLT) has had issues with heavy runoff from several roads. They have tried several different methods of controlling the problem, such as using heavy machinery, but have been unsuccessful. By working with volunteers, WCLT wanted to teach residents the skills and knowledge to install rain gardens on their own property if they have the same issues. Much of the year was spent doing research on rain gardens and how they function. Without an individual with technical knowledge to lead the project, WCLT found it difficult to implement this trial practice. They did not have enough staff and time to organize the construction of a rain garden by volunteers in addition to learning and understanding what a rain garden is and how it functions. No one had training or experience with rain gardens, so a lot of time was spent discussing the work and, since no one was in charge, everyone had their own opinion of how things should be done. This delayed the process. WCLT was able to install one rain garden that has improved a drainage problem for one local family. Though only installing one rain garden, WCLT now has a better understanding of rain gardens that can benefit additional families in the future.

*Tested by*

**Friends of the Cheat**  
*Northern West Virginia*

Building a rain garden at the Doug Ferris Outdoor Classroom has long been a goal of Friends of the Cheat (FOC). The outdoor classroom is a watershed-focused, environmental study area for the residents of the Greater Preston County area, particularly schools, youth organizations and church groups. The ultimate goal of this trial practice was the creation of a stormwater learning station as part of the outdoor classroom. An onsite rain garden allows FOC to introduce groups to proper stormwater management techniques. The main difficulty for FOC was convincing teenagers to spend a Saturday morning digging and planting, and then to plan that event around both FOC's and the 4-H Club's schedules. The rain garden was installed on May 22, 2010, with eight volunteers from the Preston 4-H Club in Kingwood, WV. Ten volunteers contributed 33 hours of service to construct the rain garden that is approximately 250 sq. ft. and treats water from a 1,500 sq. ft. roof. Interpretive signs will help to educate users when FOC staff or volunteers are not present at the site. As other pieces of the outdoor classroom come together, FOC would like to host educational events at the outdoor classroom site. This will allow them to utilize the stormwater station and rain garden as a direct teaching tool.

**"The funny thing is if you were to ask those kids on a Saturday morning if they wanted to go out and learn about wetlands or rain gardens most would be pretty uninterested. But if you ask them during the school day, almost all would be like, 'Yes, yes, please can we?!' Never underestimate students' passion for getting outside of the classroom."**  
*-Friends of the Cheat*





*Based on the work of*  
**USDA Forest Service**  
**Center for Wetlands and Stream Restoration**  
*Eastern Kentucky*

Tom Biebighauser has built hundreds of wetland systems throughout Appalachia. Many of these projects involved partnering directly with volunteer groups for construction, including local conservation group chapters, such as the Izaak Walton League, and local schools. Tom's advice: You get the greatest involvement from volunteers when they see a direct benefit to themselves and their community; and when you tailor the outcomes of a wetland to the volunteers' goals.

*Tested by*  
**Clear Fork Watershed Council**  
*Northeast Tennessee*

Clear Fork Watershed Council (CFWC) wanted to educate the local community on the environmental and educational benefits provided by wetlands. CFWC's goal was to work with student and community volunteers to construct a wetland as an outdoor classroom at Jellico High School. Constructing a wetland would allow students to take part in hands-on learning without expensive field trips. With Tom Biebighauser on board to assist in designing and building a demonstration wetland, CFWC developed a partnership with Jellico High School. A biology teacher was recruited as a champion for the project and agreed to serve on CFWC's Technical and Scientific Advisory Council. With the logistics of the wetland project determined, CFWC held a special meeting on community wetlands with Biebighauser as the keynote speaker. They were able to explain the proposed project and its benefits. The project was derailed, however, when CFWC lost the support of the high school principal and biology teacher. Like many schools throughout the nation, the high school was undergoing major curriculum changes and facing pressure from the state to improve standardized test scores, adding to the already large workload for teachers. With wetland construction at the high school postponed indefinitely, CFWC chose an alternate site for the development of a wetland park and stream restoration project in downtown Jellico.

*Tested by*  
**McClure River Restoration Project**  
*Southwest Virginia*

McClure River Restoration Project (MRRP) wanted to build a wetland in the community. After learning about the services of Tom Biebighauser, a renowned wetland biologist, it became a real possibility. MRRP also knew that local Ervinton High School wanted to build an outdoor classroom to educate youth outside, but did not have the funds and resources. MRRP approached a science teacher at the high school with a proposal to build a wetland and she was ecstatic. With the help of Tom Biebighauser, MRRP planned to build two wetlands at Ervinton High School. After choosing sites, they were able to formulate a budget for the project. MRRP was then able to apply for a Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant to get the funds needed to construct these wetlands. MRRP was informed by a member of the school board that Ervinton High School was being consolidated within the next few years and would be moved, which hindered progress significantly. MRRP was able to find a new site for a wetland at The Learning Co-op, a project of Fourth World/Appalachia. MRRP's future goals are to construct the wetland and use it for educational activities. The Learning Co-op would be responsible for maintaining the wetland and using it for regular educational activities.

**"Educating the youth outside with a wetland will be more informative than any textbook."**  
**- McClure River Restoration Project**



Read the full story:  
#21 on disc



## #22 Hosting a Duck Race

*Based on the work of*

### **Lackawanna River Corridor Association** *Northeast Pennsylvania*

Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA) established an entertaining fundraiser to connect their organization with the community by holding a different type of duck race. Instead of wrangling hundreds of tiny rubber ducks, LRCA's fundraiser uses 10 large hunting decoy ducks that were decorated by local schools before the race. Tickets were sold to the public with the last digit of their ticket number corresponding to one of the ducks. Prize winners were drawn from the ticket number pools corresponding to the first, second and third place ducks. The tasks involved in planning and executing the duck race are also senior-friendly, such as recruiting sponsors to paint each duck and selling tickets.



*Tested by*

### **Redbank Watershed Association** *Western Pennsylvania*

Redbank Watershed Association (RWA) wanted to hold a duck race to push their young organization to reach out to the community and try something new. This trial practice was eagerly chosen by RWA members due to its high level of fun and the potential for community involvement. RWA formed an enthusiastic committee that participated in the process of obtaining the duck decoys and collaborating with local partners. They coordinated with local businesses to donate raffle prizes to supplement the cash prizes that were given out for the first, second and third place ducks. One RWA member constructed a "duck release gate" to simultaneously launch the ducks at the beginning of the race. RWA successfully held their first duck race during the 2010 New Bethlehem Peanut Butter Festival organized by the Borough of New Bethlehem. The large duck decoys were more beneficial than smaller rubber ducks because the duck decoys were each painted by the sponsor of that duck. RWA sold numbered tickets with the last digit (1-10) corresponding with a duck. First, second and third place winners were drawn from the pool of raffle tickets corresponding to the winning ducks. For example, duck #10 won RWA's race, so first prize was drawn from a pool containing any ticket ending with 0 (10, 40, 130, etc).



**"The group has really taken charge of the activity. This is one of the group's first major projects and it has been taken on with such excitement. This is a fun, easy practice that can be a success for most any group."**

***-Redbank Watershed Association***

*Tested by*

### **Crooked Creek Watershed Association** *Western Pennsylvania*

Crooked Creek Watershed Association (CrCWA) wanted to host a duck race as a fun and interactive event that could be held during the group's annual Fish Fry picnic. The Annual Fish Fry Picnic has been hosted by CrCWA since 1985 and they hoped a duck race would attract younger individuals to their organization. The duck race seemed like a cohesive and inexpensive addition to their already successful fish fry event. During the planning stages of this trial practice, CrCWA found it difficult to recruit volunteers to help plan or hold the event. They also found that several other local organizations hold duck races. CrCWA and Redbank Watershed Association (RWA) are located in the same county and draw supporters from the same general community. RWA's duck race was their first major fundraising event, while CrCWA already had an established annual fundraiser. Repetition of this event would conflict with RWA's event, which didn't align with CrCWA's goals for the area. Due to conflicts of interest with other organizations holding duck races, CrCWA did not hold a duck race. CrCWA's 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Fish Fry already had a canoe, rod and reel, and dollar raffle in place. CrCWA decided that the time and effort of holding a duck race would not bring in enough additional income to make it a worthwhile undertaking.

**Read the full story:**  
#22 on disc



*Based on the work of*  
**George's Creek Watershed Association**  
*Western Maryland*

George's Creek Watershed Association (GCWA) found a unique and healthy way to get potential volunteers' attention. By hosting a 5k race event, the organization can obtain entrants' information and entry fees during the registration period. Running events are a great way to get people interested in an organization and provides the opportunity to spread your message, engage volunteers and solicit membership. It can also be effective in boosting the number of small donors contributing to your organization. GCWA estimates that it took 15-20 volunteers several weeks to plan and put on the event.

*Tested by*  
**Friends of Lower Muskingum River**  
*Southeast Ohio*

Friends of Lower Muskingum River (FLMR) wanted to hold a 5k run/walk event in order to attract a younger segment of the population and boost their name recognition within the community. A large majority of FLMR's membership is retired, senior citizens and FLMR wanted to expand and diversify their membership and volunteer base. FLMR planned a family-oriented walk/run aimed at less serious walkers, joggers, runners and community members. Challenges that arose during the planning phase of this event involved obtaining permits and event insurance. Event insurance, in particular, was very expensive. FLMR did not have general liability insurance before the run/walk, so they had to purchase it. FLMR organized and put on their first "Earth Day 5k: Run/Walk for the River" in the evening of April 22, 2010. It was the largest event of the year with 131 participants and 50 volunteers. Almost all of the participants in the event had never been involved with FLMR. After the event was completed, FLMR created a how-to guide explaining how to put on this type of event in the future. FLMR's 5k, though very successful, took several months of planning and was very time consuming. It also required a large initial investment. FLMR considers this event worth repeating because it was one of the largest events their organization has ever held.

**"I think that a 5K is a good event to get people of all ages and abilities together to celebrate heritage, learn about AMD and watershed groups. It will also be a good event to hold annually if we choose to do so."**  
**-Schuylkill Headwaters Association**

*Tested by*  
**Schuylkill Headwaters Association**  
*Northeast Pennsylvania*

Schuylkill Headwaters Association (SHA) hoped to raise money for their organization and spread awareness in the community about abandoned mine drainage (AMD) by holding a 5k race. This trial practice was entirely new to SHA, not only because of the nature of the event, but because of the type of volunteers it involved. SHA aimed for a younger audience than their usual volunteers. The race was named "The Wabash Dash" since the race route paralleled Wabash Creek. The route passed the Reevesdale AMD treatment system and ended near a historic mine tunnel with an AMD treatment system. SHA decided on this route because the Tamaqua Historical Society planned to hold the Tamaqua Heritage Festival on the same day and agreed to allow the 5k race to be a part of the festival. The Tamaqua Historical Society also helped promote the event in conjunction with their press releases about the Tamaqua Heritage Festival. Twelve volunteers helped work the event and there were 39 registered walkers and runners. After the race took place, participants went to the Newkirk Mine Tunnel for the awards ceremony. The Tunnel is a historic mining site where the PA Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation maintains an AMD treatment system. The participants were given a tour of the tunnel and a description of SHA's work.



Read the full story:  
 #23 on disc 

## #24 “Adopt-a-Stream” Fundraiser and Outreach Event

*Based on the work of*

### **McClure River Restoration Project** *Southwest Virginia*

McClure River Restoration Project (MRRP) found a way to connect with local businesses, elected officials and citizens through an “Adopt-a-Stream” program. Their “Miles for McClure” program resembled “Adopt-a-Highway,” but for the local river. MRRP was also able to make it a fundraiser, going person-to-person in their community selling “miles” of the stream for sponsorship. Individuals, businesses and organizations that donated were rewarded with public recognition and certificates.



**“We would recommend the Riverkeeper Program. It is a great way to raise awareness, improve the environment and bring in additional funds. I think it has been both successful and encouraging. The Upper Pecos Watershed has needed help for a long time and just seeing the Riverkeeper signs gives people hope.”**

**-Upper Pecos**

**Watershed Association**

*Tested by*

### **Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association** *Southern West Virginia*

Upper Guyandotte Watershed Association (UGWA) faces ongoing problems with trash dumped in and along local streams. Most community members already know about and support the organization, but volunteerism and tangible support is low. UGWA hoped that implementing a practice comparable to “Adopt-a-Highway” would increase volunteer involvement in stream clean-ups. UGWA wanted to focus on partnering with organizations to organize regular stream clean-ups on the section of stream they adopt. Partners would be recognized with plaques and possibly an annual dinner. This would also be a way to bring volunteerism into the center of the program with outreach as a secondary benefit. There was little progress or success by board members in contacting community members on UGWA’s behalf. Without the manpower to work person-to-person, UGWA decided to host public meetings in each subwatershed as a way to talk to many residents at once and inform them of volunteer opportunities. This gives the communities a contact when they have questions and UGWA a contact when they have projects to implement. UGWA has seen a huge increase in local partners who help with contacts and volunteers for future projects, staying updated on other organizations activities and maintaining contact with all communities in the watershed.



*Tested by*

### **Upper Pecos Watershed Association** *Northern New Mexico*

The Village of Pecos, NM, relies on recreational tourism to augment its economy. By implementing an “Adopt-a-Stream” Riverkeeper Program, Upper Pecos Watershed Association (UPWA) hoped to further protect the area's natural scenic beauty, thereby enhancing the community's quality of life. UPWA planned to launch a Pecos Riverkeeper program to encourage volunteers to take ownership and pride in the river. It was also designed to reduce their dependence on UPWA to organize biannual clean-ups. This program was implemented to encourage residents to be active in cleaning up the river and canyon on their own. UPWA’s community doesn’t have a lot of businesses, however, so they decided to focus more on individual donors or organizations that want to take care of the portion of the river through clean-ups and monitoring. UPWA also wanted to post Riverkeeper signs along the road to take advantage of the close proximity of the river to the road. As UPWA worked to recruit Riverkeepers, they found it difficult to involve individuals because those wealthy enough to donate are generally non-permanent residents that cannot do regular clean-ups and monitoring. UPWA began trying to pair individual donors unable to commit to year-round upkeep with local groups and organizations willing to volunteer. However, they were not successful. The Truchas Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TCTU) became UPWA’s first Riverkeeper, adopting a stretch of river from Windy Bridge to Brush Ranch in the Pecos River Canyon. Signs were posted at each end of their stretch of river to inspire future Riverkeepers.



*Based on the work of*

**Crooked Creek Watershed Association**  
*Western Pennsylvania*

For over 25 years, Crooked Creek Watershed Association (CrCWA) has been celebrating the assets of the watershed with its members by hosting an annual "Fish Fry" picnic. Originally, CrCWA depended on fish caught by members and local fishermen to feed the event, but in recent years have turned to purchasing fish due to the growing popularity of catch-and-release angling. The event, which also features a canoe/kayak raffle, is a great way to raise money and open the doors to new community members.

*Tested by*

**Lackawanna River Corridor Association**  
*Northeast Pennsylvania*

Lackawanna River Corridor Association (LRCA) wanted to recruit volunteers on a more personal level, so they decided to host a fish fry to entice residents to participate in the organization. They anticipated that the event would enable them to raise money, introduce the recreational aspects of the river and spread awareness throughout the community about local environmental issues. LRCA had a slow start with difficulty engaging a committee to organize a fish fry event. They planned to hold the event at a location in a community near the river, but were unable to secure such a location. With these setbacks, LRCA ultimately decided to host a bus tour of the watershed. It enabled LRCA to achieve the goals of the fish fry--conduct community outreach, recruit volunteers and fundraise--while staying within their time and resource limits. The tour allowed participants to experience local areas of interest and LRCA--implemented projects along the Lackawanna River. LRCA provided lunch at Mellow Park and conducted a demonstration of water sampling and explained how the health of the river is determined. The challenges of this trial practice involved complications in planning the original fish fry event, such as soliciting donations and recruiting dedicated volunteers to plan the event. Despite these setbacks, LRCA was able to transform this trial practice into a useful and feasible event.

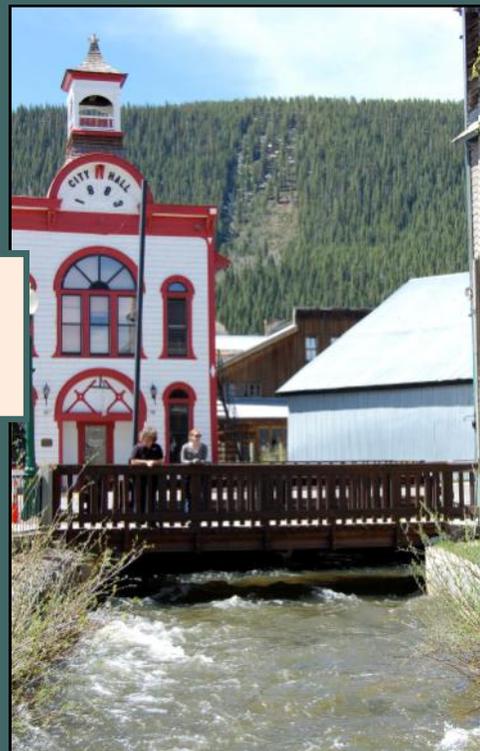
**"Ideally the fish fry will become an annual fundraiser and celebration for the CCWC. We hope that the planning process will give us relationships and strategies for event planning and fundraising that will be helpful in the future."**

**-Coal Creek Watershed Coalition**

*Tested by*

**Coal Creek Watershed Coalition**  
*Western Colorado*

Coal Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) was looking for a way to share their work in the community--along with thanking members and volunteers, raising money and recruiting new volunteers. CCWC hoped to educate a wider audience about the condition of the Coal Creek Watershed, the benefits of its remediation, and CCWC's work. A fish fry would also be an opportunity to celebrate their work as an organization and thank their existing volunteer base. This event was CCWC's first fundraiser and first volunteer appreciation event. CCWC decided to serve local organic beef instead of fish because of the large role ranching plays in the community and the late availability of salmon harvested by a local fish hatchery. To maintain a link between the meal and the river, CCWC added a Dutch Oven cook-off, which many river recreationalists enjoy when cooking meals on raft trips. Approximately 40 guests attended despite the rainy weather. Event activities included two Dutch Oven competitors and a discussion with a local historian and author about the historical impact of mining on the Crested Butte community. CCWC raised about \$700 from donations and the silent auction. This trial practice provided a great basis for an annual fundraising cookout, generating a new activity for the community to look forward to every year.



Read the full story:  
#25 on disc



# Working with Rural Volunteers



*With greater knowledge of rural volunteers and how they are managed, the next step is to build a no-frills volunteer management infrastructure. The tools in this section are a guide through the larger process of bringing volunteers into an organization and keeping them there—with the least amount of time, people, and money.*

The staff or volunteers of rural organizations are already buried under the many details of holding events, conducting projects and raising money. As a result, key elements of volunteer management are often pushed to the end of an organization's long to-do list. New volunteers are not informed of what they can do next or how they can become more involved, and consequently begin donating their time elsewhere. Participation of existing volunteers is often driven by deep devotion to the cause or the simple fact that if they don't do something, there's no one else who will.

In rural communities—where a small population also means a small volunteer pool—organizations cannot afford to lose volunteers as a result of poor management. Furthermore, our volunteer survey data shows that most rural volunteers were

recruited by friends and family involved in the organization. If not managed properly, your organization is losing both an individual volunteer and the potential to recruit that individual's friends and family.

Given this extra pressure for proper volunteer management, this section contains the tools needed to build a sustainable volunteer management infrastructure. It outlines a simple process that can be repeated for every event and task. It is focused specifically on volunteer management and does not include other elements such as event planning, outreach or fundraising. These tools serve as a guide through volunteer management from preparation and orientation to tracking and appreciation.



Worksheet	Volunteer Management Inventory	p. 38
Worksheet	Event-based Volunteer Management	p. 39
Worksheet	Task-based Volunteer Management	p. 41
Template	Volunteer Timesheet	Disc
Checklist	Volunteer Supply List	p. 43
Worksheet	Volunteer Task Assignments	p. 44
Template	Volunteer Information Sheet	p. 45
Template	Volunteer Information Database	Disc
Template	Volunteer Release of Liability: Adult	p. 46
Template	Volunteer Release of Liability: Youth	p. 47
Worksheet	Volunteer Position Description	p. 48
Template	Event Record	p. 49
Template	Volunteer Evaluation	p. 51
Template	Volunteer Evaluation Database	Disc
Worksheet	Volunteer Recognition Planning	p. 52

**"Appreciated volunteers will be happy volunteers  
and happy volunteers will be hardworking, reliable volunteers."**

*—Woodland Community Land Trust*



*There is a lot of work to be done and you would like volunteers to help. Get started by taking an inventory of what you have, what you want, and what needs to be done.*

1. What types of activities are your volunteers participating in already?
2. Are your volunteers usually from the local area? Visiting?
3. What are some of their personal characteristics? *Consider age, family, occupation, skills, interests, etc.*
4. In what other organizations are they involved?
5. Do you usually recruit individuals or groups?
6. Do you use existing partnerships to recruit volunteers?
7. How does your organization advertise its events and projects?
8. How do you contact your volunteers? How often?
9. How do you orient and/or train volunteers? Is it focused on a specific task or event? Do you inform them about the organization overall?
10. In what ways do you show appreciation for your volunteers?
11. Why does your organization need volunteers?
12. What are your organization's priorities?
13. What are specific tasks that can be done to meet these goals?
14. What skills/experiences does your organization need?
15. What might motivate people to volunteer with your organization?



Event:

Event Date:

<b>General Considerations</b>
Who is assigned to complete each task? By what deadline?
Does your organization have or need proper liability insurance for this event or project?
What are the safety concerns? Are you working with minors, seniors, etc?
What can volunteers do <i>next</i> ? What are your upcoming events, projects, meetings, individual or ongoing tasks?
Where will you store volunteer information, both electronic and physical?
Will volunteers be reimbursed for mileage, expenses, etc?
Will this event be repeated? Have you considered documenting the whole process in a "how-to" guide for your organization?
How can volunteers be involved in each aspect of this event, from planning to post-event?

<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Choose event <i>See "Documenting Rural Volunteer Practices" p. 9-36 for ideas.</i>		
2. Identify "real" work needed to be done for event <i>Use WORKSHEET: Volunteer Task Assignments on p. 44.</i>		
3. Identify possible individuals and groups suitable for tasks <i>Use WORKSHEET: Volunteer Management Inventory on p. 38.</i>		
4. Contact potential volunteers <i>How will they benefit from their involvement? Who is the best person to contact them? Does anyone know these potential volunteers personally?</i>		
<i>If no,</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank them for their time.</li> <li>• Inform them of any other events that are happening soon that may interest them.</li> <li>• Offer to add them to your mailing list to learn about upcoming events.</li> </ul>	
<i>If yes,</i>	Contact individuals or group leaders before event with necessary logistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What time should they arrive? Where? Provide time, location, directions, and carpool information if possible. Is the event rain or shine? What is the rain date?</li> <li>• What do they need to wear? What is the weather forecast? Inform them of proper clothing and gear.</li> <li>• What will be provided? Will food be provided and what is it (consider dietary restrictions)? Will you have gloves, tools, sunscreen, insect repellent, first aid kit, etc? Is there cell phone service?</li> <li>• Based on what can be provided, what should they bring? Do they need to bring food? Can they buy food at or near the event? Are certain tools needed?</li> <li>• What are the risks and safety concerns? Who is allergic to bees, etc? Are they under 18 and need parental consent? <i>See TEMPLATE: Volunteer Information Sheet (p. 45) and TEMPLATE: Volunteer Liability Release (p.46-47).</i></li> <li>• For visiting volunteers, will they need lodging? Is there cell phone service, internet access, etc?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are they familiar with the physical and cultural climate? How will you acclimate them?</li> <li>○ Have you informed the local community about the visiting volunteers? How can they be involved to foster local "buy-in" to project?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<b>DURING</b>		<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Completed?</b>
<i>Before you start working:</i>			
Conduct brief orientation.			
	Give an overview of your organization's history, mission, goals, programs, services and where to get more information		
	Explain how volunteers are helping the "big picture"		
	For visiting volunteers: Give an orientation to the area/community, involve local residents		
	Distribute and collect Volunteer Information Sheet (p. 45) and Volunteer Liability Release (p. 46-47) forms. <i>If volunteers are under 18, these must be signed by a parent/guardian in advance.</i>		
	What are they doing today? Identify safety concerns. <i>Be aware of any medical conditions or allergies noted on Volunteer Information Sheets.</i>		
	Distribute needed gear, supplies, etc.		
	Identify location of things needed throughout work day: Restrooms, refreshments, sunscreen, insect repellent, safe place for personal belongings, individual(s) to alert in emergency...		
<i>When you are finished or taking a break:</i>			
	Have materials available with information about upcoming events, membership application forms and general information about organization		
	Conclude the project or event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reiterate what was accomplished and how it helps on a larger scale</li> <li>• Thank everyone for their time and effort</li> <li>• Remind them of upcoming events and other volunteer opportunities</li> <li>• Distribute and collect Volunteer Evaluation (p. 51)</li> </ul>		

<b>AFTER</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Add information given on Volunteer Information Sheets to database. <i>Use TEMPLATE: Volunteer Information Database included on workbook disc.</i>		
Add new volunteers to mailing list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send them a message welcoming them to the mailing list</li> </ul>		
Send everyone involved a "thank you" note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate what was accomplished</li> <li>• Give any information about future progress of that project</li> <li>• Share any news coverage or photos</li> <li>• Include upcoming events and membership information</li> <li>• If not completed on day of event, send Volunteer Evaluation (p. 51)</li> </ul>		
File Volunteer Information Sheets and Volunteer Liability Release forms in central known location.		
Add Volunteer Evaluation responses to database. <i>Use TEMPLATE: Volunteer Evaluation Database included on workbook disc.</i>		
Inform entire organization of accomplishments (at a meeting, in newsletter, or special email). Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who was involved</li> <li>• What was accomplished</li> <li>• Feedback gathered from Volunteer Evaluations</li> </ul>		

NOTES:

Task:

Task Date(s):

<b>General Considerations</b>
Who will supervise the volunteer(s)? Who is assigned to complete each task? By what deadline?
Does your organization have or need proper liability insurance for this project?
What are the safety concerns? Are you working with minors, seniors, etc?
What can volunteers do <i>next</i> ? What are your upcoming events, projects, meetings, individual or ongoing tasks?
Where will you store volunteer information, both electronic and physical?
Will volunteers be reimbursed for mileage, expenses, etc?
Have you prepared a job description for potential volunteers? <i>Use WORKSHEET: Volunteer Position Description on p. 48.</i>
Should you conduct interviews for this task/position?

<b>BEFORE</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Choose task(s) <i>See "Documenting Rural Volunteer Practices" p. 9-36 for ideas.</i>		
2. Identify "real" work needed to be done <i>Use WORKSHEET: Volunteer Task Assignments on p. 44.</i>		
3. Identify possible individuals and groups suitable for tasks <i>Use WORKSHEET: Volunteer Management Inventory on p. 38.</i>		
4. Contact potential volunteers <i>How will they benefit from their involvement? Who is the best person to contact them? Does anyone know these potential volunteers personally?</i>		
<i>If no,</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank them for their time.</li> <li>• Inform them of any other events that are happening soon that may interest them.</li> <li>• Offer to add them to your mailing list to learn about upcoming events.</li> </ul>	
<i>If yes,</i>	Provide individual(s) with necessary logistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What time should they arrive? Where? Provide time, location, directions, where to park, etc.</li> <li>• What do they need to wear? What are your standards of conduct?</li> <li>• What will be provided? Is a computer, phone, desk, chair, coffee mug, etc. available for them? Do they need to obtain permission or clearance to use equipment or facilities?</li> <li>• Based on what can be provided, what should they bring? Do they need to bring lunch? Can they buy food at or near site? Are certain supplies or tools needed?</li> <li>• Are the office staff/other volunteers prepared for the incoming volunteer? Do they know what the volunteer will be doing and for whom?</li> </ul>	

<b>DURING</b>		<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Completed?</b>
<i>Before you start working:</i>			
Conduct brief orientation.			
	Give an overview of your organization's history, mission, goals, programs, services and organizational structure		
	Explain how volunteer is helping the "big picture"		
	Review office policies and procedures such as dress code, conduct, attendance and who to contact if volunteer will be late/absent <i>Create timesheet using TEMPLATE: Volunteer Timesheet on disc.</i>		
	Distribute and collect Volunteer Information Sheet (p. 45) and Volunteer Liability Release (p. 46-47) forms. <i>If volunteers are under 18, these must be signed by a parent/guardian in advance.</i>		
	What are they doing today? Identify safety concerns. <i>Be aware of any medical conditions or allergies noted on Volunteer Information Sheets.</i>		
	Give tour of office and introduce coworkers		
	Identify location of things needed throughout work day: Restrooms, refreshments, office supplies, safe place for personal belongings, individual(s) to alert in emergency...		
	Set up and review function of phone, email, fax machine, etc.		
<i>Throughout task or project:</i>			
	Conduct regular check-ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give positive and constructive feedback</li> <li>Provide and receive updates</li> </ul>		
	Determine next assignment as necessary		
<i>When finished:</i>			
	Conclude task or project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reiterate what was accomplished and how it helps on a larger scale</li> <li>Thank volunteer for time and effort</li> <li>Remind them of upcoming events and other volunteer opportunities</li> <li>Distribute and collect Volunteer Evaluation (p. 51)</li> </ul>		

<b>AFTER</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Add information given on Volunteer Information Sheets to database. <i>Use TEMPLATE: Volunteer Information Database included on workbook disc.</i>		
Add new volunteer(s) to mailing list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send them a message welcoming them to the mailing list</li> </ul>		
Send a "thank you" note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate what was accomplished</li> <li>Give any information about future progress of that project</li> <li>Include upcoming events and membership information</li> <li>If not already completed, send Volunteer Evaluation (p. 51)</li> </ul>		
File Volunteer Information Sheet and Volunteer Liability Release in central known location.		
Add Volunteer Evaluation responses to database. <i>Use TEMPLATE: Volunteer Evaluation Database included on workbook disc.</i>		
Inform entire organization of accomplishments (at a meeting, in newsletter, or special email). Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who was involved</li> <li>What was accomplished</li> <li>Feedback gathered from Volunteer Evaluation</li> </ul>		

NOTES:

## CHECKLIST

## Volunteer Supply List

Event:

Event Date:

- \_\_\_ Event Record
- \_\_\_ Volunteer Information Sheet (\_\_\_ copies)
- \_\_\_ Volunteer Liability Release (\_\_\_ copies)
- \_\_\_ Volunteer Evaluation (\_\_\_ copies)
- \_\_\_ Information about organization, upcoming events
- \_\_\_ Membership application forms
- \_\_\_ Business cards
- \_\_\_ Camera
- \_\_\_ Pencils/pens
- \_\_\_ Clipboards
- \_\_\_ Table(s)
- \_\_\_ Chairs
- \_\_\_ Tent/canopy
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen
- \_\_\_ Insect repellent
- \_\_\_ First aid kit
- \_\_\_ Restrooms
- \_\_\_ Hand wash station/hand sanitizer
- \_\_\_ Garbage bags
- \_\_\_ Gloves
- \_\_\_ Waders/boots
- \_\_\_ Volunteer appreciation items (t-shirts, water bottles, etc)
- \_\_\_ Water
- \_\_\_ Cooler
- \_\_\_ Food/snacks:

\_\_\_ Tools:

\_\_\_ Equipment:



**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone (home):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone (work/cell):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best time to be reached by phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer group/team (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current/past employer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Education:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Special skills (circle):**

Public Relations	Volunteer Management	Research	Business
Legal	Website/Tech Support	Writing/Editing	Budget/Finance
Fundraising	Event Planning	Volunteer Recruitment	Marketing
		Other: _____	

**How did you hear about this event/organization?**

I would like to receive updates from this organization. YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
 If YES, by mail \_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_

I would like to receive more information about becoming a member of this organization. YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

**Allergies, medications, medical conditions:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency contact:** Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_ Work

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Home \_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_ Work

**Important:** Volunteer information is kept confidential and used for the purposes of this organization only. Personally identifiable information is not sold or shared with others except as may be required by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<i>OFFICE USE ONLY</i>		Notes:
Liability release	Y N	
Photo consent	Y N	



*Disclaimer: This template is offered for educational purposes only. Please consult licensed legal counsel in your state to determine if this template is appropriate for use by your organization.*

{INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME and LOGO}

**VOLUNTEER WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY**  
 For volunteers over 18 years of age

**1. Voluntary Participation:** I acknowledge that I am age 18 or older and that I have voluntarily applied to assist {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}. I understand as a volunteer that I will not be paid for my services, that I will not be covered by any medical or other insurance coverage provided by {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}, and that I will not be eligible for any Workers Compensation benefits.

**2. Release:** In consideration of the opportunity afforded me to assist in this Project, I hereby agree that I, my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}, or any of its affiliated organizations, or either of their officers or directors collectively or individually, or the supplier of any materials or equipment that is used by the Project, or any of the volunteer workers, for the injury or death to me or damage to my property, however caused, arising from my participation in the Project. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I hereby waive and release any rights, actions, or causes of action resulting from personal injury or death to me, or damage to my property, sustained in connection with my participation in the Project. I further release and forever discharge {NAME OF ORGANIZATION} from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid treatment or other medical service rendered in connection with an emergency during participation as a volunteer with {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}.

**3. Photographic Release:** I \_\_\_ **DO** \_\_\_ **DO NOT** consent to the unrestricted use by {NAME OF ORGANIZATION} and/or person(s) authorized by them of any photographs, recordings, interviews, videotapes, motion pictures, or similar visual recording of me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name (Please print)

*For more information on volunteer liability and risk management:*  
 Public Entity Risk Institute Resource Library  
**www.riskinstitute.org**  
 Nonprofit Risk Management Center  
**www.nonprofitrisk.org**



Disclaimer: This template is offered for educational purposes only. Please consult licensed legal counsel in your state to determine if this template is appropriate for use by your organization.

{INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME and LOGO}

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY
For volunteers under 18 years of age

1. Voluntary Participation: I acknowledge that my child \_\_\_\_\_ has voluntarily applied to assist {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}. I understand as a volunteer that my child will not be paid for his/her services, that he/she will not be covered by any medical or other insurance coverage provided by {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}, and that he/she will not be eligible for any Workers Compensation benefits.

2. Release: In consideration of the opportunity afforded my child to assist in this Project, I hereby agree that I, my child, my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}, or any of its affiliated organizations, or either of their officers or directors collectively or individually, or the supplier of any materials or equipment that is used by the Project, or any of the volunteer workers, for the injury or death of my child or damage to his/her property, however caused, arising from his/her participation in the Project. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I hereby waive and release any rights, actions, or causes of action resulting from personal injury or death to my child, or damage to his/her property, sustained in connection with my participation in the Project. I further release and forever discharge {NAME OF ORGANIZATION} from any claim whatsoever which arises or may hereafter arise on account of any first aid treatment or other medical service rendered in connection with an emergency during participation as a volunteer with {NAME OF ORGANIZATION}.

3. Photographic Release: I \_\_\_ DO \_\_\_ DO NOT consent to the unrestricted use by {NAME OF ORGANIZATION} and/or person(s) authorized by them of any photographs, recordings, interviews, videotapes, motion pictures, or similar visual recording of my child.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Name (Please print)

For more information on volunteer liability and risk management:
Public Entity Risk Institute Resource Library
www.riskinstitute.org
Nonprofit Risk Management Center
www.nonprofitrisk.org

Volunteer(s) needed for:

Event/task description and purpose:

Primary responsibilities:

Time commitment:

Location:

Reimbursement for relevant expenses? Other benefits?

Supervised by/reports to:

Qualification needed and possible recruits:



EVENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITATOR(S) \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS**

*Groups/individuals involved, affiliations, etc:*

55+ \_\_\_\_\_ Hours contributed \_\_\_\_\_

18-54 \_\_\_\_\_ Hours contributed \_\_\_\_\_

<18 \_\_\_\_\_ Hours contributed \_\_\_\_\_

**EVENT DESCRIPTION**

Cost of event and source of funds \_\_\_\_\_

What occurred at this event? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the motivation and background of this event? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you advertise the event and recruit volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_

Impact? (e.g. number of trees planted, tons of garbage collected, length of stream renovated, # of students that have adopted environmental stewardship, economic improvements, etc.)

Do you feel this event was a success? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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Would it be beneficial to repeat it? Where are the resources and contacts to replicate the event in the future?

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What could be done to improve this event if repeated?

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How did attendees hear about this event and why did they come? Why is it important to them? What will it do for the community?

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**PHOTO CAPTION NOTES**

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**ADDITIONAL NOTES OR STORIES**

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	<u>Disagree</u>				<u>Agree</u>
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I understand the mission and work of this organization. <i>Comments:</i>					
2. My work as a volunteer furthered the mission of this organization. <i>Comments:</i>					
3. My role and responsibilities were clear and well-explained. <i>Comments:</i>					
4. Staff/volunteers were accessible and helpful. <i>Comments:</i>					
5. My expectations were met for this event. <i>Comments:</i>					
6. My needs were met for this event. <i>Comments:</i>					
7. I would volunteer again with this organization. <i>Comments:</i>					
8. I would encourage others to volunteer with this organization. <i>Comments:</i>					
9. What was the best part of your volunteer experience?					
10. What could be done to improve your volunteer experience?					

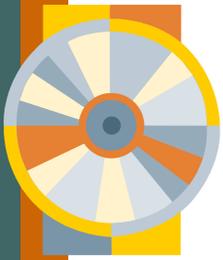
Additional comments:





# Disc Contents

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## Rural Volunteer Statistics

CHART: Extended Rural Volunteer Survey Analysis (PDF)

## Documenting Rural Volunteer Practices

QUIZ: Identify Volunteer Practices (PDF)

#1 Board member recruitment spreadsheet (PDF)

#2 Partnerships with off-road and 4x4 groups (PDF)

#3 Partnerships with church and faith-based groups (PDF)

#4 Partnerships with businesses (PDF)

#5 Support from mandatory service volunteers (PDF)

#6 Support from community service volunteers (PDF)

#7 Support from student athlete volunteers (PDF)

#8 Bi-monthly outreach meetings (PDF)

#9 One-hour board meetings (PDF)

#10 Volunteer contributions to group's newsletter (PDF)

#11 Developing a Youth Advisory Board (PDF)

#12 Forming a youth helper organization (PDF)

#13 Hosting a Wild & Scenic Film Festival (PDF)

#14 Engaging students in service-learning (PDF)

#15 Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (PDF)

#16 Providing or organizing transportation (PDF)

#17 Volunteer water monitoring through partnerships (PDF)

#18 Volunteer water monitoring with individuals (PDF)

#19 Hosting a volunteer appreciation picnic (PDF)

#20 Working with volunteers to construct rain gardens (PDF)

#21 Working with volunteers to construct wetlands (PDF)

#22 Hosting a duck race (PDF)

#23 Hosting a 5k race (PDF)

#24 "Adopt-a-Stream" fundraiser & outreach event (PDF)

#25 Fish fry fundraiser and outreach event (PDF)

## Working with Rural Volunteers

WORKSHEET: Volunteer Management Inventory (PDF)

WORKSHEET: Event-based Volunteer Management (PDF)

WORKSHEET: Task-based Volunteer Management (PDF)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Timesheet (XLS)

CHECKLIST Volunteer Supply List (DOC)

WORKSHEET: Volunteer Task Assignments (PDF)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Information Sheet (DOC)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Information Database (XLS)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Waiver and Release of Liability: Adults (DOC)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Waiver and Release of Liability: Youth (DOC)

WORKSHEET: Volunteer Position Description (PDF)

TEMPLATE: Event Record (DOC)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Evaluation (DOC)

TEMPLATE: Volunteer Evaluation Database (XLS)

WORKSHEET: Volunteer Recognition Planning (PDF)

Full workbook (PDF)

This material is also available online at  
**[www.ruralvolunteer.org](http://www.ruralvolunteer.org)**

## Message from OSM/VISTA Teams Coordinator

This is a toolkit for little places, the ones that don't have a Volunteer Coordinator or a Development Officer or even a full-time Director, the ones that depend almost exclusively on volunteers. These communities are the sum and substance of both the Appalachian Coal Country Team and the Western Hardrock Watershed Team and it was these rural communities that provided the research base for this project.

You will find three basic sections, each of which can provide significant insight and ideas for rural volunteers. The first is an extensive survey of the volunteers themselves—see that to learn just who our rural volunteers are, what they do, where they associate and how best they can be reached. The second summarizes 25 different volunteer practices that work. We know they work because we first identified practices that were working well in a rural community, transplanted those practices to 50 other places and then watched them for a year to see how they worked in a different context. Think of this section as a “good idea catalogue,” a collection of approaches to volunteer management that have been tested and documented, whether successful or unsuccessful. Third, we've created a dozen worksheets, templates and checklists that any small community will find useful as they begin a project or as they carry that project out to success. Finally, the extensive research that lies behind this Toolkit is on the enclosed disc—go there for deeper knowledge and insight as you move forward with any effort.

You are not likely to find more useful, tested information for rural community volunteers. I'm proud of the great work Joe and Jenna did over nearly four years to bring this idea to a useful reality and deliver to your hands a product I know you will find useful, not just now but for years to come.

*T. Allan Comp, Ph.D.*

*Project Director and Coordinator: OSM/VISTA Teams*

### The OSM/VISTA Teams

Appalachian Coal Country Team

2795 Robert C. Byrd Drive

Beckley, WV 25801

(304) 252-4848

[www.coalcountryteam.org](http://www.coalcountryteam.org)

Western Hardrock Watershed Team

701 Camino del Rio Suite 101

Durango, CO 81301

(970) 403-0136

[www.hardrockteam.org](http://www.hardrockteam.org)

[www.ruralvolunteer.org](http://www.ruralvolunteer.org)

