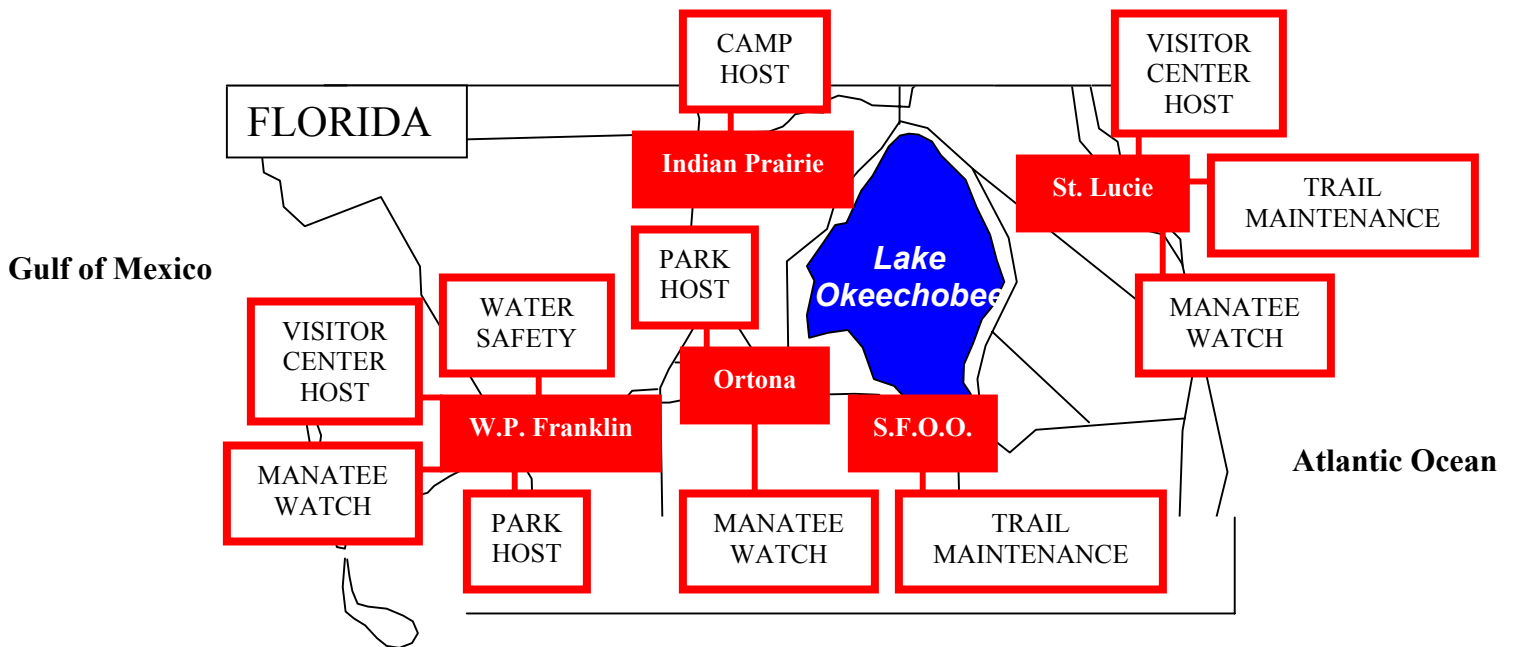




**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

# South Florida Operations Office Volunteer Program

## Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway Volunteer Handbook



### Volunteer Program Mission Statement:

The Volunteer Program at Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway will support all elements and functions of the SFOO, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District. Volunteers will provide services that enhance and expand the services being provided by SFOO team members and will be managed to provide high quality service and a rewarding experience for team members and volunteers.

## FORWARD

This volunteer handbook was developed to provide volunteers with a broad understanding of the South Florida Operations Office (SFOO) Volunteer Program. Most volunteers are aware of the opportunities within their campgrounds but are unaware of the additional positions the SFOO offers. Also, as a volunteer you will be asked several questions concerning the program. The handbook will assist you in answering those questions. Although the information covered in this handbook is not all-inclusive, it will help you become oriented in your position and will provide the answers to many questions about your work and employment conditions.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	1
Forward	2
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
Qualifications	4
Supervisory Controls	4
Working Conditions	4
Code of Ethics	5
Rules & Regulations	5
Injuries	5
Emergency Information	6
Additional Duties	7
Government Equipment and Supplies	8
Disciplinary Actions	9
Suggestion Program	9
Recognition	9
Community Service Volunteer	10
Indian Prairie Campground Host	11
Manatee Watch	12
Park Host	13
Trail Maintenance	14
Visitor Center Host	15
Water Safety Presenter	16
St. Lucie Trail Days	17
Take Pride in Lake Okeechobee (TPILO)	18
Appendix A – SFOO Volunteer Program Supervisory Chart	19
Appendix B – Volunteer Service Record	20
Appendix C – Claim for Reimbursement	21
Appendix D – Interpretive Services Outreach Form	22
Appendix E – S.F.O.O. Volunteer Application	23
Appendix F – S.F.O.O. Extension List	27
Appendix G – St. Lucie Campground Information Sheet	28
Appendix H – Ortona Campground Information Sheet	30
Appendix I - W.P. Franklin Campground Information Sheet	32
Appendix J – Bomb Threat Card	34
Appendix K – Dead, Injured, Sick or Tagged Manatee Procedures	35
Appendix L – Take Pride in Lake Okeechobee Flyers	37

# SFOO Volunteer Program

**INTRODUCTION:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District, South Florida Operations Office (SFOO), would like to welcome you to the SFOO Volunteer Program. This handbook was designed to help you understand the entire SFOO Volunteer Program. The SFOO Volunteer Program consists of the following positions:

Community Service  
 Indian Prairie Campground Host  
 Manatee Watch  
 Park Host  
 Trail Maintenance  
 Visitor Center Host  
 Water Safety Presenter  
 Various Volunteer Events

As a volunteer you become a part of the Corps of Engineers. The general public will view you as a Corps Employee when you are wearing the volunteer uniform. Please be aware that you are apart of the entire volunteer program and not just a volunteer with a specific function. The program that you are volunteering for is a very worthwhile program. We want you to have fun with it. We also appreciate any input you may have towards improving the program. We think that you will find it a very rewarding experience. Keep in mind that the volunteer schedule can change and we all need to be flexible. If there is a reason that you cannot meet the times that you are scheduled for, we will do our best to accommodate you. Remember, have fun with the program and just be yourself. The Corps of Engineers greatly appreciates your volunteer efforts.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Anyone may apply to volunteer with the Corps of Engineers by completing a SFOO Volunteer Application (Appendix E). There is no age requirement. All volunteer positions however, require tact, courtesy, and the ability to deal with the general public. Some positions require volunteers to spend the majority of their time outside with a good deal of walking involved. Volunteers enable the USACE to provide additional services to the general public that may have been overlooked due to lack of employees.

**SUPERVISORY CONTROLS:** There is no doubt that you will encounter Corps Employees on a daily basis. The ranger staff may answer general questions that you may have concerning the recreation areas, rules and regulations, and the general area. Specific questions, comments, and/or concerns about the volunteer program should be directed towards your Volunteer Supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator. The Supervisory Park Ranger oversees the volunteer program. Appendix A illustrates the SFOO volunteer supervisory hierarchy.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:** Volunteers are required to volunteer 24 – 30 hours per week. Daily volunteer hours may change due to weather patterns and project goals. A volunteer schedule will be developed between the volunteer(s), the Corps, and any other supporting agencies prior to any volunteer efforts. A campsite located within a campground or day use area will be provided to the volunteer with water, electric hook-ups, and access to a dump station at no charge. Volunteers will furnish their own transportation and camping equipment. The volunteer campsite will be identified as volunteer for the benefit of the public. All members of a Volunteer's immediate family are welcome to accompany him or her while volunteering. Volunteers may volunteer from one month to one year.

**CODE OF ETHICS:** To avoid misunderstanding and conflicts of interest that could arise, all volunteers shall adhere to the following policy:

No volunteer shall use or attempt to use his or her position to secure special privileges or exemptions for his or her benefit, or the benefit of others.

No volunteer shall disclose confidential information gained by reason of his/her official position, nor shall he or she otherwise use such information for his/her personal gain or benefit.

No volunteer shall transact any business in his or her official capacity.

**RULES/REGULATIONS:** All regulations contained within Title 36 will be enforced by the ranger staff. State and local laws will be enforced by the local law enforcement agencies. Volunteers are required to obey the rules.

#### Campground Fees

Ortona South Campground	
October 01 – 30 April	\$16.00/night with water/electric hook-ups
May 01 – 30 September	\$8.00/night with water/electric hook-ups
W.P. Franklin North Campground	\$16.00/night with water/electric hook-ups
St. Lucie Campground	\$16.00/night with water/electric hook-ups
Indian Prairie Campground	No Charge
Group Camping Reservation Fee	\$35.00

#### Day Use Fees

Swim Fee	\$1.00 per person
	\$4.00 maximum per vehicle
	Children 12 and under swim free
Boat Launch	\$3.00 per vehicle
Annual Pass	\$30.00
	\$15.00 duplicate pass is available
Golden Age Passports	Individual must be 62 years or older
Golden Access Passports	No charge with proof of disability
Golden Passports provide 50% discount of recreation fees to the cardholder	
Pavilion Reservations	\$35.00 per pavilion, No discounts apply to this fee

**INJURIES:** All on the job injuries need to be reported immediately to your volunteer supervisor. If your supervisor is unreachable please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Supervisory Park Ranger. Worker Compensation Procedures will need to be implemented. Please try to remember or document as many details as possible. Please don't delay in documenting times and events because they may be harder to recall later.

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION:** For all life-threatening emergencies please dial 9 – 1 – 1 to contact the local law enforcement agency, fire department, and ambulance.

After contacting 9 – 1 – 1, please contact the ranger staff concerning the accident/incident.

Please note that when using government phones that you may have to deal with bomb threats. A bomb threat card is located in Appendix J to assist you. Please report any bomb threats immediately to your supervisor.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

South Florida Operations Office	W.P. Franklin Visitor Center
525 Ridgelawn Road	1660 South Franklin Lock Road
Clewiston, FL 33440	Alva, FL 33920
(863) 983 – 8101 Tele	(239) 694 – 2582 Tele
(863) 983 – 8579 Fax	(239) 694 – 2204 Fax
(Extension List Appendix F)	

Okeechobee Management Office	St. Lucie Visitor Center
205 N Parrott Ave Suite 201	2170 SW Canal St.
Okeechobee, FL 34972	Stuart, FL 34997
(863) 462 – 5260 Tele	(772) 219 – 4575 Tele
(863) 462 – 5269 Fax	(772) 219 – 9162 Fax

Moore Haven Lock	(863) 946 – 0414	
Ortona Campground	(863) 675 – 8400	Campground Map – Appendix H
Ortona Lock	(863) 675 - 0616	
Port Mayaca Lock	(772) 924 - 2858	
St. Lucie Campground	(772) 287 – 1382	Campground Map – Appendix G
St. Lucie Lock	(772) 287 – 2665	
W.P. Franklin Campground	(239) 694 – 8770	Campground Map – Appendix I
W.P. Franklin Lock	(239) 694 - 5451	

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida Marine Research Institute

Kari Higgs, Biological Scientist	Lucy Keith, Charlotte Harbor Field Lab
100 Eighth Avenue S.E.	1481 Market Circle, Unit 1
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5095	Port Charlotte, FL 33953
(727) 896 – 8626 Tele	(239) 255 – 7402 Tele
(727) 893 – 9176 Fax	(239) 994 – 5622 Cell

Standard Operating Procedures for reporting dead, injured, sick, newly calved, or tagged manatees are located in Appendix K.

Florida Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission/

Bureau of Marine Enforcement	1-800-342-5367
Florida Highway Patrol	1-800-701-3212, * FHP
Poison Information Center	1-800-282-3171
U.S. Coast Guard	1-800-368-5647
Hazardous Material Spills	1-800-424-8802

Sheriff

Glades	(863) 946 - 0100
Hendry	(863) 674 - 4060
Lee	(239) 477 - 1200
Martin	(772) 220 – 7000
Palm Beach	(772) 688 - 3000

**ADDITIONAL DUTIES:** Be familiar with and abide by all USACE rules and regulations (EP 1165-2-316).

Alcohol and pets are not permitted within the W.P. Franklin South Day Use Area.

Littering is prohibited within the recreation areas and should be discouraged among visitors.

Report safety hazards/maintenance concerns, compliance problems, vandalism, speeding, and similar disturbances to the ranger staff or park attendants. Examples: report a stopped up commode, lack of supplies, broken night-light, water leaks, missing or damaged signs.

Assist in emergency situations such as electrical black outs, weather alerts, life threatening emergencies, etc.

The Volunteer Coordinator may request additional duties to be performed contrary to the above listed duties/responsibilities at any time, for example: general maintenance items, limited physical labor, assisting within the visitor center and/or campground, rangers, and/or lock tenders, etc.

All regulations contained within Title 36 pertain to the recreation areas and will be enforced by the ranger staff. State and local laws will also be enforced by the local law enforcement agencies.

Provide visitors with information concerning the Corps Recreation Areas. Answer information requests to the best of your knowledge. Some information is provided within this handbook to assist you with those answers. When in doubt refer the visitor to the ranger staff.

Report all personal injury accidents and/or incidents to the Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteer Supervisor, or ranger staff.

Wear the Volunteer Shirt and/or Volunteer Hat when volunteering with the USACE to identify yourself as a USACE Representative.

A little common sense goes a long way, so treat others, as you would like to be treated.

Volunteer campsites will be maintained in a neat and respectable manner.

All recreation areas will be evacuated during a hurricane. All volunteer items should be mobile and ready to move in case of a hurricane.

Please do not engage in any physical or verbal confrontations with the public.

Volunteer hours need to be recorded on the Volunteer Service Record (ENG Form 4882-R) and submitted to the Volunteer Supervisor by the end of each month. A blank form is located in Appendix B.

All incidental expenses should be recorded on the Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business Form and submitted to the Volunteer Supervisor for authorization by the end of each month with your Volunteer Service Record. A blank form is located in Appendix C.

All interpretive programs need to be recorded on Interpretive Services Outreach Program Form and submitted to your supervisor by the end of the month. Blank form is located in Appendix D.

## Government Equipment and Supplies

**Vehicles:** For a volunteer to operate a government vehicle, they must provide a copy of their current driver's license to the volunteer coordinator. Please use the attached credit card to refuel a vehicle. You will need to know the odometer reading and the code for the vehicle. Please contact your Volunteer Supervisor for the vehicle code. Please use the lowest grade possible when refueling. Engine oil may be purchased on the vehicle card if necessary. Ensure vehicle log sheet has been completed after using the vehicle. All passengers must wear seat belts.

**Vessels:** Only volunteers that possess a U.S. Government Motor Vehicle Operator's Identification Card, Motorboat Class A1 will be allowed to operate government vessels. Refueling is identical to vehicles. Please check oil levels after operating a vessel. Ensure vessel log sheet has been completed after using the vehicle.

**Miscellaneous Equipment:** All other equipment is not supposed to be used for personal gain. The equipment that is provided to you accompanies a specific task. Please use the equipment for that task and return the equipment.

**Telephones:** Visitor Center, Fee Booth, and Office Telephones are to be used for official business only. No personal calls should be dialed out on a government phone. Phone cards may be used to dial out on a government phone. Please remember that these phones are at a place of business and try to limit the time spent on the phone.

**Storage of Personal Items:** Personal items should only be stored on the volunteer campsite. Items should be stored with office or storage buildings.

**Mail:** Volunteer mail should not be received at the project. Mail should be setup at the local post office for general delivery.

**Mileage:** Particular volunteers may be allowed to claim mileage. The claim form is attached and the rate is \$0.36 per mile.

**Tobacco:** Smoking and smokeless tobacco is prohibited in all buildings and vehicles. Please be courteous to others by not smoking around entrance/exit doors. Please remain 20 to 30 feet away from those doors. All tobacco products should be disposed of properly.

**Computers:** Computers are to be used for official business only. Local libraries have computers to check emails and account information.

**Kitchen Equipment:** Kitchens may be used for meals when coordinated with volunteer duties.

**Pets:** Pets are welcomed in areas where pets are permitted. Please note that no matter how friendly your pet may be some people are not fond of animals. Respect other people's space by having your pet on a leash. Pets should remain at your campsite or within your personal vehicle. For safety reasons, pets are not allowed in Government Vehicles or on Government Vessels due to potential distractions they may cause, vehicle/vessels injuries or illness' that may develop and or other problems associated with pets.

***Please do not take advantage of the government because an offense of this nature maybe grounds to terminate your volunteer agreement.***



**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS:** The Agreement For individual/Group Volunteer Services, ENG Form 4880-R, Feb 92 states that a volunteer may “cancel this agreement at any time by notifying the other party.” The Corps will in return work with the volunteer to try and resolve any issues. If problems arise with a volunteer’s performance or conduct, a meeting will be setup with the volunteer supervisor and or volunteer coordinator to discuss the issues. At the end of the meeting actions will be developed to correct the problem. A volunteer maybe placed on probationary status until the issues have been corrected. If after several meetings, the issues have not been resolved. The Corps may terminate the volunteer agreement.

**SUGGESTION PROGRAM:** Suggestions are always welcomed either positive or negative. Feedback from volunteers is required to continually improve the program. Please provide comments in writing with a thorough explanation of the situation to your volunteer supervisor or the volunteer coordinator.

**RECOGNITION:** Volunteers are recognized annually. A criterion for recognition is based on the number of seasons that a volunteer has provided to the Corps. A season is marked from November to April or April to November. Volunteering within one of those time frames allocates a season. Awards for the various seasons are as follows:

One	Certificate
Two	Volunteer Lapel Pin
Three	License Plate Holder
Four	Coffee Mug
Fifth	Certificate
Six	Travel Mug
Seven	Certificate
Eight	Umbrella
Ninth	Certificate
Tenth	Plaque

## Community Service Volunteer

Duties/Responsibilities will change daily due to recreation maintenance concerns. These duties will be provide to the volunteer at the beginning of their shift. Below is a list of duties that may be required to be completed:

Clean sprinkler heads  
Weed landscape beds  
Replace picnic table boards  
Litter pickup  
Gate repairs  
Painting

Prune trees and shrubs  
Clean out drainage ditches  
Maintenance of recreational equipment  
Washing vehicles and vessels  
Beach cleanup of floating debri and weeds  
General Lock maintenance

W.P. Franklin Recreation Areas: Park Ranger's Robert Schnell, Phillip Hart, and Tim Thompson are authorized to sign the court time record. St. Lucie Recreation Areas: Park Ranger Brian Older is authorized to sign the court time record. The court will accept no other signatures. Community service hours and record keeping is the responsibility of the volunteer and not the Corps. Please ensure that appropriate measures are taken to complete the total number of community service hours provided by the court.

Community Service Volunteers will be working primarily outside. Please dress accordingly to deal with outside conditions. Safety equipment will be provided: safety glasses, sunscreen, gloves, etc. Please bring ample amount of water and a lunch if you plan on an 8-hour+ day. If you are running late please phone ahead to let us know. If you arrive 15 minutes or more late you will not volunteer on that day.



## Indian Prairie Campground Host

Volunteer duties for a park host position is as follows:

Have campers sign the camper logbook when they arrive. Monitor campers 14-day camping limit.

Instruct campers that Indian Prairie Campground does not have any water or electricity. Port-o-lets will be provided along with a dumpster.

Provide directions to local gas stations, convenience stores, supermarkets, dump stations, water refueling areas, etc.

Monitor dumpster and campground for cleanliness and report full or overflowing dumpster to the ranger staff.



## Manatee Watch

Monitor the lock and dam area for manatees. The lock chamber will be monitored for manatees during lockages.

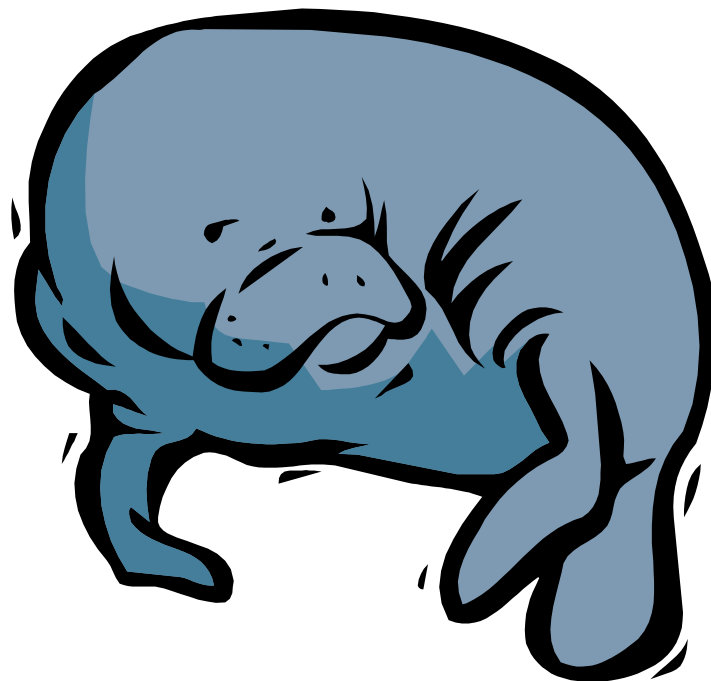
Manatee sightings will be documented on the provided data sheets. Sightings near the dam must include distance and exact location in relation to the dam.

The FWC camera and film will be utilized in photographing manatees.

Manatee related photographic, geo-spatial, biological, behavioral, and environmental data would be recorded on the data sheets provided by FWC.

All data sheets will be submitted to the Corps Manatee Program Coordinator for processing. Photographic documentation should be obtained during primary photographing hours and during appropriate weather events. Completed rolls of film should be turned into the Program Coordinator.

Dead or injured manatees will be reported to the lock tender on duty. The lock tender will report the manatee to the FWC following USACE protocol.



## Park Host

Open Day Use Gate and Restrooms 8:00 A.M.

Close Day Use Gate and Restrooms Sunset

Please inform any visitors remaining within the picnic and swimming area 15 - 30 minutes before sunset that the park closes at sunset and you will be closing the gate.

Inform visitors of the Day Use Area Rules and Regulations and explain the permitting system. Instruct visitors where the day use vaults are and insure adequate amounts of day use permits are within the vaults (beach and boat launch vaults). The volunteer will provide envelopes upon request from the Ranger Staff.

Operate and maintain the sprinkler system. Sprinkler heads need to be periodically check and occasionally cleaned. Sprinklers should be operated every other day for 30 minutes. One section of sprinklers needs to be operated manually. Training will be provided on the sprinkler controls and heads.

Monitor dumpster and trash receptacle areas for cleanliness and walk through the park picking up litter periodically.



## Trail Maintenance

Trail Maintenance Volunteer(s) maintain 110 mile Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) rest shelters, rustic campsites and information kiosks. Maintenance consists of mowing, trimming and cleaning of trail facilities. Mowing and trimming is accomplished with common yard type mowers and weed eaters. Work is equivalent to mowing a residential yard. About 50% of the time is spent driving to sites at various locations around Lake Okeechobee with excellent opportunities to view wildlife. Occasionally volunteers are asked to assist with other jobs. The Corps provides maintenance vehicle and equipment.



## Visitor Center Host

Be familiar with the water safety program and lock tour materials.

Assist ranger and biology staff in interpretive outreach services.

All government equipment/property shall be used for official government business only! Government equipment/property should never be used for personal gain.


Monitor the brochure rack and storage area for adequate amounts of brochures and tidiness. Restock the brochure rack when necessary and report low amounts of brochures and/or supplies to the volunteer supervisor.

Monitor all USA and USACE flags, outside lights, and flag poles for deficiencies.

Be familiar with Project Security Plan. Note any breaches within the security plan and report them to the ranger staff. Conduct daily vehicle/vessel inspections to note any deficiencies to the frame and undercarriage. Report any damage or leaks to the ranger staff.

Be familiar with Golden Age/Access Passports, Annual Passes, Pavilion Reservations, and Day Use Fees.

Assist visitors in acquiring a Golden Age Passports, Annual Passes, and Pavilion Reservations.

 Assist with Take Pride in Lake Okeechobee by conducting the following duties:

Answer general questions concerning the event, mailing letters and calling people/companies concerning attendance and donations, attend Take Pride meetings at WPFV, and assist with typing, faxing, and photocopying of materials.

Ensure all visitors sign the guest logbook.



## Water Safety Presenter

Training will be provided to all volunteers on the duties listed below. A program guide has been developed to assist volunteers in pre and actual water safety presentations. This guide is an extension of this volunteer description. Volunteers are required to follow the direction provided by the guide in developing and presenting water safety programs.

A water safety program will be devised by the volunteer based on personal experience and creativity with the use of information and materials that have been provided by the Coordinator. Also, if possible, the volunteer will accompany another presenter to observe a presentation. Please be creative with your program! What you see is not necessarily the way you need to present. Your main concern is to get the point across of being safe around the water! **Your presentation should be ready for review by the coordinator within the first week of arrival. Please be prepared to present in front of the Coordinator and possibly other volunteers.** The Coordinator will approve all programs before presenting to the students or general public.

The volunteer may wish to utilize, or may be required to operate audio visual equipment in the presentations of videos, slide shows, etc. and should have some knowledge in these areas.

**Paperwork** - there will be a folder for each school that will contain the following items:

- Previous years information
- A map of the schools location
- A current Program Appointment Sheet (number of students presented to, see below)
- An Evaluation Sheet (to be given to the teacher, see below)

Each school visited must have a Program Appointment Sheet. The number of students will need to be filled in along with any comments on the back. There will also be an evaluation form for the teacher to fill out. This should be given to the teacher at the beginning of the program so they can comment while they are observing. The teacher may give this to you to bring back, or they may keep it and fax it back to us. Either way is acceptable. The Appointment and Evaluation sheets must be turned in to the first arrival each week so they can be faxed to the Water Safety Coordinator.

Upon request by the Volunteer Coordinator provide interpretive programs within the Campgrounds and conducting Lock Tours.



## Additional Volunteer Activities

**St. Lucie Trail Days** are held to maintain a nature trail by clearing trail routes, repairing bridges, pruning trees, shrubs, and roots, and laying mulch.

**Take Pride In Lake Okeechobee** is an environmental day to promote safe environmental awareness through practices such as planting trees, constructing bird houses, project tours, and various displays and exhibits.

