

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
South Permits Branch
4400 PGA Boulevard, Suite 500
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 33410

CESAJ-RD-S (1130)

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Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for
Volunteer Program Administration and Management

1. **Purpose.** The following SOP establishes procedures to ensure that the South Permits Branch Volunteer Program is administered and managed in accordance with established guidelines, policies, and regulations.
2. **Applicability.** These procedures are applicable to all personnel assigned to the South Permits Branch, Stuart, Palm Beach Gardens, Miami and Marathon.
3. **Intent.** The Branch Chief's intent in promulgating this SOP is to provide a guide for South Branch staff to: facilitate implementation of the Corps volunteer program; assign responsibilities, and; provide programmatic understanding. Implementation of a volunteer program is not free of costs in time and effort. However, these programs, if properly implemented may: expedite permit review; enhance effectiveness overall; conserve fiscal/personnel resources; provide quality service to the regulated public, and; assist us in protecting the aquatic environment. It is each employee's duty to foster an atmosphere allowing volunteers to achieve maximum job satisfaction and value to the Corps.
4. **General.** Public Law 98-63 authorizes the Chief of Engineers to accept the services of volunteers and provide for incidental expenses. Close coordination with the District Volunteer Coordinator (Heather Burke, (904-232-2815) is required. Voluntary service may include work that would not otherwise be accomplished because of funding or personnel limitations. Volunteers may produce work for the Corps at off-site locations. Prior to implementation of a volunteer program at the various South Branch locations several actions must be accomplished. The Team Leader, (and volunteer supervisor), is to: assess needs; develop a plan to accomplish those needs, and; once implemented evaluate program success. The volunteer program should be tailored to the talents available in the local area. Implementation of a volunteer program has both costs and benefits. It will require staff time and administrative support. One significant benefit is providing an opportunity for non-

supervisory staff to become proficient in supervisory skills. Task descriptions, replacement cost classification determinations, recruitment and selection functions, orientation training and record keeping will provide paid employees with important skills. The collateral duty of volunteer coordinator/supervisor is viewed as a career enhancing developmental assignment. The Corps' "Volunteer Coordinator's Handbook (EP-1130-2-429) should be consulted for assistance in the formulation of the volunteer plan and overall operation of the volunteer program. Volunteers will not be used to displace any personnel of the Corps of Engineers. They may, however, perform duties which once were, or are presently, performed by Corps personnel or contractors. Voluntary Service may be accepted by any official designated by the District Commander or their representatives.

6. **Qualifications.** Most individuals can qualify to become volunteers for the Corps. It doesn't matter if the person is receiving pay, academic credit, or other types of compensation from sources other than the Corps; if the Corps is not paying for the work that is done, the person can be considered a volunteer. No person convicted of any violent crime, crime against person, or crime involving the use of a weapon shall be utilized in the Corps of Engineers volunteer program. No hazardous work will be assigned to volunteers and the accepting official shall request the volunteer to complete a SF 256, Self-Identification of Handicap. A medical exam may be required if there is a question regarding the volunteer's ability to perform the work involved. Voluntary service may be accepted from individuals or from members of organized groups. Volunteers will be recruited and service accepted without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, color, national origin or handicap.

5. **References.**

- a. ER/EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 10, The Corps Of Engineers Volunteer Program
- b. ER 1130-2-550 Chapter 9 Recreation Use Fees
- c. EP 1130-2-429 Volunteer Coordinators Handbook
- d. EM 385-1-1 Safety and Health Requirements Manual
- e. South Florida Operations Office Volunteer Management Plan
- f. Reference appropriate forms for volunteers (ENG form 4882-R, Parental Consent forms, etc.
- g. Reference volunteer clearinghouse weblink.
<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/volunteer/volunteer.html>

7. Requirements/Prohibitions.

a. Volunteers, whenever possible, will be provided a work environment which is equivalent to that provided for Corps personnel performing similar duties.

b. Hazardous assignments will not be assigned.

c. Policy making, legal or regulatory enforcement duties will not be assigned.

d. Conformance with all Federal, State and local laws and standards will be followed regarding the employment of minors.

e. The agreement for voluntary services may be terminated at any time by the accepting official or the volunteer.

f. Volunteers receive the same benefits and protection as federal employees under the Federal Employees Compensation Act (5 USC, Chapter 81). Volunteers are entitled to first aid and medical treatment for on-the-job injuries, as well as hospital care when necessary. Transportation may be furnished or travel expenses reimbursed.

g. Volunteers receive the same benefits and protection as federal employees under the Tort Claims Act. They are considered the same as paid personnel for the purpose of the Act for personal liability as long as the volunteer is within the scope of his/her responsibilities.

h. PL 98-63 grants the Corps authority to provide for the incidental expenses of volunteers. Reimbursement is not to be understood as salary. Reimbursement should be handled on a case by case basis. Only actual out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed.

i. Individual volunteers who may come in contact with the public must be recognizable as volunteers. A 3"x 1" name tag with the individual's name and the word volunteer is appropriate.

j. Volunteer coordinators/supervisors will complete the web-based Basic Civilian Supervisor's Course within 90 days of assignment of the collateral duty.

8. Reporting Requirements

a. District Volunteer Coordinator Report. A report will be made as required for inclusion in the District Volunteer Statistics.

b. Branch Chief Annual Report. A yearly report to the branch chief is required for the purpose of determining the value of volunteer services. An additional report via the natural Resources Management System may be required annually (RC: CECW-0-39). This will be memorandum format. For the purpose of estimating value to the Corps the following rates will be used as the comparable base rate: Student Clerical GS-4; Technical Specialist GS-7 or GS-9; Consultant GS-11 or GS-13.

c. Forms.

(1) Optional Form 301, Volunteer Application for Natural Resource Agencies. Provided to potential volunteers and used to gather data on a potential volunteers background.

(2) ENG Form 4880-R, Agreement for Individual/Group Voluntary Services. This must be completed and signed prior to commencement of work by both the volunteer or organized group representative and the accepting official for all volunteers, even if the work involved is only a few hours in duration. This document may be modified at anytime by mutual consent but, must accurately reflect the duties of the volunteers at all times.

(3) ENG Form 4881-R, Parental Approval. This form must be signed and attached to all volunteer agreements for volunteers under the age of 18.

(4) ENG Form 4882-R, Volunteer Service Record. This form may be used to record information regarding the service of individual volunteers.

(5) ENG Form 4883-R, Certificate of Appreciation. This form may be used to recognize the efforts of volunteers.

(6) SF 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business. A volunteer's incidental expenses should be submitted on SF 1164 and when practicable paid from impress funds. Claims for travel expenses such as per diem, lodging should be submitted on DD Form 1351-2 Travel Voucher or Subvoucher.

9. **Volunteer Coordinator's Handbook.** The handbook is attached to this SOP and provided as a detailed guide for the coordinator and branch staff (attachment B).

10. **Training.** Proper training is a must for any worker, paid or volunteer. Regardless of the amount of experience a worker may have in a particular area, some degree of training will still be

necessary. A volunteer training plan will be used to insure adequate training is afforded. This should be a simple frame work. Volunteers should be included in on-site professional development training as appropriate. Many volunteers will view this as a reward for their contributions to the Corps. Training is considered a necessity to ensure that the Corps receives maximum benefits from its volunteers.

11. **Supervision.** Volunteers are under no financial pressure to work for the Corps. The satisfaction of work is different for each employee. All staff members and especially the volunteer's supervisor needs to make the volunteer experience rewarding. Enthusiasm is an important principle. Working for an enthusiastic supervisor is always more fulfilling than working for a supervisor who isn't. Volunteers will feel much better about accomplishing something important than a meaningless task not worthy of supervisory interest or praise. Communication is vital to any supervisory relationship. It is important employees get substantial feedback from the supervisor. This is especially true of volunteers. A good supervisor coaches volunteers to do their best, just as he/she does with other team members. Keep volunteer coaching focused on the positive and word constructive criticism carefully.

12. **Awards and recognition.** Other than intangible benefits, the receipt of awards and other forms of recognition can substantially enhance the effectiveness of the volunteer program. The volunteer supervisor will take full advantage of this motivational potential whenever appropriate. Both the quality and quantity of service is to be considered and recognition may vary. Articles in local media, Corps publications, bulletins, radio and television may be appropriate. Several nation-wide award programs are available.

6. **Procedures.** The following procedures are in effect:

a. **The Branch Chief will:**

- (1) Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator (Accepting Official) to be responsible for accepting the services of volunteers and abiding by all established volunteer guidelines, policies, and regulations.
- (2) Ensure that the volunteer program procedures are in accordance with all mandated guidelines, policies, and regulations.

b. **The Volunteer Coordinator will:**

- (1) Review and update the Volunteer Program Administration and Management SOP, Appendixes, and Volunteer Descriptions.
- (2) Designate a Volunteer Supervisor at the Field Offices who are authorized to sign-up volunteers (Appendix A).
- (3) Ensure that all Volunteer Supervisors have a copy of the Volunteer Program Administration and Management SOP and the South Branch Volunteer Management Plan.
- (4) Recruit volunteers and provide recruiting assistance project wide. The South Branch Volunteer Application will be used to gather pertinent information on potential volunteer's background and skills. The following are established recruitment techniques:
 - (a) Mail a Volunteer Application package to individuals who submit a Volunteer Application for Natural Resources Agencies through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Volunteer Program Nationwide Volunteer Clearinghouse.
 - (b) Mention recruitment during in-house training to expand outreach for volunteer positions.
 - (c) Update website information used by the Volunteer Clearinghouse.
 - (d) Post volunteer positions within the local college campuses, military bases, bulletin boards, and local newspapers.
 - (e) Post vacant volunteer positions within the local newspapers. Maintain a volunteer applicant referral file.
- (5) Provide necessary correspondence and the monthly report to the Volunteer Supervisors, Branch Chief, and the District Volunteer Coordinator as required. The Volunteer Monthly Report contains:
 - (a) Volunteer/Group Hours
 - (b) Value of Volunteer Service
 - (c) Incidental Expenses will consist of monthly meals, tools, parking, fees and any other claimed incidental expenses.
 - (1) Receipts are required.
 - (2) Expected incidental expenses that may be claimed by each volunteer position:

Volunteer Position	Incidental Expenses
Clerks	Mileage to/from site locations During authorized travel.
Biologist Assistant	Mileage to/from site locations During authorized travel.

NOTE: The Branch Chief may authorize additional incidental expenses.

(d) Number of New Volunteers

- (6) Maintain up-to-date files for all documentation pertaining to the volunteer program for three years.
- (7) Provide annual training and/or updates for all volunteer supervisors.
- (8) Order volunteer name tags and maintain an inventory of volunteer shirts and hats.

c. The Volunteer Supervisors will:

- (1) Coordinate all volunteer activities and submitted incidental expenses with the Branch Chief and/or Volunteer Coordinator before approval or initiation of volunteers.
- (2) Ensure that all volunteer services are conducted in accordance with established volunteer guidelines, policies, and regulations.
- (3) Ensure that the proper documentation as outlined in the Volunteer Management Plan is completed and reviewed by each volunteer and/or group prior to initiation of any services provided by the volunteer(s). All forms containing original signatures will be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- (4) Ensure that all volunteers are qualified, able, and properly and thoroughly oriented to complete the required tasks. The Volunteer Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator may request a medical examination be completed if there is a question regarding the volunteer's ability to perform the required tasks.
- (5) Ensure that all injuries to volunteers are reported and documented to the Volunteer Coordinator and the Branch Chief as outlined in the Volunteer Management Plan.
- (6) Ensure that the Volunteer Service Record, ENG Form 4882-R is completed by each volunteer daily and reported to the Volunteer Coordinator on a monthly basis.
- (7) Ensure that the utilization of government equipment and supplies by volunteers are for official government business only.

d. **Community Service Volunteers.** Community Service Volunteers are individuals that have committed a crime and have been sentenced by a federal, state, or local court to complete a set number of community service hours within a specified amount of time. This type of volunteer will not be considered for employment in the South Permits Branch volunteer program.

5. **Changes.** Refer all discrepancies, comments or questions regarding this SOP to the Volunteer Coordinator, currently Paul Kruger, Miami Regulatory Field Office at 305-526-7185.

John F. Studt
Chief, South Permits Branch

Appendix A

Chief, South Permits Branch	John Studt
Volunteer Coordinator	Paul Kruger
Volunteer Supervisors	
Field Office:	
Miami	Robert Kirby
Marathon	Victor Anderson

POSITION TITLE: Clerk/Typist/Computer Aides

JOB DESCRIPTION/DUTIES:

Performs general office duties including routine typing, filing, opening and date stamping mail, preparing mail for transmittal, making copies of documents, purging project files, answering telephones, answering visitor's questions, data coding, and editing.

DESIRED SKILLS/ABILITIES:

Individual needs to be able to meet and deal with people well. The appearance should be neat and a positive reflection of the organization. Individual should have the ability to remain calm in busy situations. Public speaking skills are desirable but not mandatory.

Typing, understanding of office organization, prioritization of work actions.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION NEEDED:

Job hazard and safety training, MARKS and computer program orientation.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT UTILIZED:

Computers, postage machine, facsimile machine, copy machine, typewriter, etc.

SCHEDULE:

Anytime between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday excluding Federal holidays.

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to develop programs, skills and inter-personal skills.
- Opportunity to meet new people and interact with the public.
- Work in a clean, safe and professional atmosphere.
- Opportunity for additional training and skill development
- Growth in natural, cultural and human resources.
- Develop an understanding of the Corps' Regulatory program.

POSITION TITLE: Project Manager/Environmental Specialist

JOB DESCRIPTION/DUTIES:

Participates in wildlife studies, analyzes wetland functions and values, records observed data, computes mitigation work sheets, operates government vehicles, takes photographs, prepares reports.

DESIRED SKILLS/ABILITIES:

Individual needs to be able to meet and deal with people well. Computer and word processing skills desired. The appearance should be neat and a positive reflection of the organization. Individual should have the ability to remain calm in busy situations. Public speaking skills are desirable but not mandatory.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION NEEDED:

Safety training & Job Hazard Analysis. Training in WRAP and Key MIG Analyses. Computer program skills, including RAMS, MS Word, Excel, MS Outlook.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT UTILIZED:

Computer, GPS, Laser rangefinder, various measuring instruments.

SCHEDULE:

Anytime between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday excluding Federal holidays.

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to develop programs, skills and inter-personal skills.
- Opportunity to meet new people and interact with the public.
- Work in a clean, safe and professional atmosphere.
- Opportunity for additional training and skill development
- Growth in natural, cultural and human resources.
- Develop an understanding of the Corps' Regulatory program.

POSITION TITLE: Writer/Editor

JOB DESCRIPTION/DUTIES:

Work on public service announcements and special events message. Maintain a public information program on Corps activities and insure recurring press announcements are provided to the public affairs office to inform the public on the Corps' regulatory program. Write scripts for slide presentations, edit plans, and write press releases.

DESIRED SKILLS/ABILITIES:

Individual needs to be able to meet and deal with people well. The appearance should be neat and a positive reflection of the organization. Individual should have the ability to remain calm in busy situations. Public speaking skills and accomplished writing skills are required.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION NEEDED:

Job hazard analysis and safety orientation. Powerpoint, MS Word, Excel, MS Outlook and other computer programs as required.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT UTILIZED:

Computer, facsimile, copier, typewriter, scanner, etc.

SCHEDULE:

Anytime between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday excluding Federal holidays.

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to develop programs, skills and inter-personal skills.
- Opportunity to meet new people and interact with the public.
- Work in a clean, safe and professional atmosphere.
- Opportunity for additional training and skill development
- Growth in natural, cultural and human resources.
- Develop an understanding of the Corps' Regulatory program.