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SNOHOMISH COUNTY DEPARTMENT CONSERVATION AND NATRUAL RECOURCES VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

POLICY/PROCEDURE

The demand for Parks Department services and facilities is growing rapidly with our county's population growth. Citizens expect government to manage public assets and resources with a high degree of efficiency.

During the past few years, the department has purchased a large amount of land for open space parks. However, money to provide ongoing maintenance of these open space parcels has not been forthcoming. Resources for maintaining these new parklands are now stretched to the limit. A strong volunteer program would greatly assist the department by proving the necessary labor for maintaining these vast open spaces.

In general, the use of volunteers demonstrates the department's commitment to become more efficient. Volunteers donating their time and talents could provide many benefits to our department. Information from other parks and recreation departments show that volunteer programs provide the following benefits:

- a pool of general labor for projects and tasks that are not able to be completed by regular staff
- a resource, for skills, talents, special abilities
- creating a partnership between the community and the departments which furthers the improvement of parks and the community's relationship to them
- volunteerism creates a by product where volunteers begin to assume some shared ownership of parks
- a means for the Parks Department to gain recognition and support in the community.

The volunteer program is divided into the following elements:

1. Recruitment and selection of volunteers.
2. Development of projects, tasks and events for volunteers.
3. Coordination of volunteer work parties and or events.
4. Volunteer recognition
5. Training of volunteers

Recruitment of Volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers shall be an ongoing process. We must examine every possible source for volunteers. A general Job Description provides: Direction, Scope in view of the Departments Mission/Vision and the overall Park Preferred Plan. Interested

parties who are identified as a good “fit” within these facets can become eligible to participate. Selected Volunteers would also need to possess/demonstrate or obtain the required training, certification, etc to participate in specific volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Liability

All volunteers must apply [on-line] and participate in a selection process and required training before their work begins. Volunteers who work independently or who work in a leadership role must successfully pass a criminal background check.

It will be the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to process and review the results of all criminal background checks.

Development of Projects, Tasks and Events

Volunteers will not be targeted to do tasks, which are simply unpleasant for the regular staff.

Suggestions for volunteer projects, tasks and events may come from various sources such as, staff, volunteers, citizens, scouting groups, businesses, etc.

Staff members from all divisions, must make a concerted effort to regularly submit volunteer projects to the Volunteer Coordinator. All requests for volunteer projects will go through the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will compile the requests and present them at the next scheduled Volunteer Project Review Committee.

The Volunteer Project Review Committee must approve all volunteer work projects before the work begins. The Volunteer Project Review Committee shall be made up of members, representing the following:

1. Administration
2. Maintenance (union representative)
3. Rangers (union representative)
4. Planning
5. Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Project Review Committee shall review all volunteer projects:

1. to ensure that volunteer projects meet established safety standards and requirements.
2. for any required permits
3. for code requirements
4. for environmental impacts
5. for possible impacts to future maintenance and operations
6. to propose scheduling of volunteer projects
7. to ensure that volunteer projects do not conflict with union labor issues.

After reviewing all proposed volunteer projects, the Volunteer Project Review Committee shall give final approval of the proposed volunteer projects. The Volunteer Project Review Committee shall meet to review all volunteer projects during the first week of February, May and September. The project review committee meetings will be scheduled by the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Volunteer Coordinator will create a master list of all approved volunteer projects. All volunteer assignments and requests to perform volunteer work for our department will come from the master list.

The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible to assign the volunteers, work projects from the master list. In order to schedule volunteer projects, a Volunteer Project Calendar may be published on a semiannual basis.

On Site Management and Supervision

Once a volunteer assignment has been given, the Volunteer Coordinator will contact the appropriate Park staff to plan and coordinate the volunteer project. A minimum two weeks notice must be given to Park staff before the scheduled volunteer project begins.

When planning and coordinating the volunteer project the following must be addressed:

1. time schedule
2. needed tools
3. delivery of materials/tools
4. hauling away (disposal) of debris
5. supervision of volunteer project
6. possible impacts on staff
7. possible impacts on park visitors
8. safety issues relating to volunteers, staff and public
9. social time for the participating volunteers

The method chosen to supervise the volunteer work project, will be the primary responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator. Depending on the circumstances, the Volunteer Coordinator may assign a volunteer crew leader (a volunteer who is experienced) to supervise. With approval, a regular staff member may also supervise.

The Volunteer Coordinator, Park staff and volunteer(s) must make every effort to clearly communicate with each other. In all cases the Volunteer Coordinator is to be appraised of the progress of all work being done by volunteers. It is important that the Volunteer Coordinator be appraised of any changes to the original project or of any problems that arise.

Volunteers must be treated with respect and patience, the same qualities that are expected of them. The Department embraces a policy of inclusion, which requires that volunteers of every age level or ethnic background be welcomed. The work of

volunteers is not to be rigidly evaluated, but when problems are identified, the volunteer should be more closely, carefully, and patiently guided.

If volunteers are found to be uncooperative and blatantly ignoring guidance and recommendations from their supervisors, the Volunteer Coordinator will have the authority to terminate their volunteer service.

Volunteer Program Annual Review

The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible to schedule an annual "Volunteer Program" review [approx Nov/Dec] with the Volunteer Project Review Committee.

Program review elements include:

1. Volunteer Policy #046B
2. Program Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
3. Completed work parties and or events
4. Future Training Needs
5. Cervis (online Volunteer Management System)
6. Other