

PARKS AND VISITOR SERVICES WORKSHOP
INFORMATION EXCHANGE
NOVEMBER 2002

CORPORATE WORK:

ACROSS GOVERNMENT AGENCY GROUPS

Volunteer Compact
Volunteer Policy Guidelines for Government Agencies
Volunteer Insurance and Public Liability
Ministry of Sport and Recreation (Risk Management Education -
not for profit groups)
Ministry of Justice

Keep Australia Beautiful Council
Fauna Rehabilitation Foundation Board
Volunteering WA
Aust Association of National Park Support Groups

VOLUNTEER REWARD SYSTEM:

The volunteer reward system is working extremely well. With over 2300 volunteers contributing 217,000 hours to work programs throughout the State, the Department and volunteers alike are reaping the rewards.

After Auditors checked the figures for the Annual Report, letters were sent out to all volunteers providing contributions to departmental projects.

Those contributing:

1-49 hours received a general letter thanking them from the A/Executive Director

50-499 hours received a letter with volunteer pass thanking them from the A/Executive Director

500+ hours received a letter with volunteer pass and Landscape subscription thanking them from the A/Executive Director.

REVIEW OF RATIS VOLUNTEER DATABASE:

Due to the large number of applicants on the database (5,900) and only 2300 known volunteers completing projects it was essential to carry out a review. Letters were sent out to all volunteers on the database who had not contributed in the previous 12 months, with information attached regarding the Departments and similar environmental agencies volunteer projects, with a request to complete the new volunteer registration form, if they wished to remain on the database. The information has been collated and we are now looking for a volunteer input the changes.

VOLUNTEER WEBSITE:

Development of this website has commenced, although not all information sent to Corporate Affairs has been input. The site is listed under About Us, employment opportunities, volunteer program.

VOLUNTEER VIDEO:

Capital funds last financial year saw the production of the "Volunteers in Action" video. It showcases the Campground host project, wildlife carers, with Regional Parks, Friends of Yellagonga 's plant nursery and their community partnership with Bennett Brook Catchment group. 2 copies of the video have been placed on a loop providing one-hour usage before rewinding. The video was recently used at the Landcare display at the Royal Agriculture Society show.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AND OUTSTANDING SERVICE FUNCTION:

The annual function celebrating the Volunteer of the Year and Outstanding Service awards has been arranged for the 5th December (International Volunteer day) at 10:30am at Matilda Bay Restaurant for 100 volunteers, Departmental staff and the Minister of the Environment.

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INTRODUCTORY VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT COURSE FOR STAFF:

This course will be held on the 27, 28 and 29 November. A much stronger emphasis on the Department's duty of care and safety requirements to volunteers will be added to this year's course.

HONORARY CALM OFFICERS MANUAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM:

The manual for the Honorary CALM Officers training needed to be reviewed and upgraded. Due to the interest shown by 4WD clubs and the wider community, becoming involved with the Department I am hoping to have the first course in place for March/April 2003.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER 2001:

For the International Year of the Volunteer the Department produced a special certificate for all contributing volunteers. The certificate and a badge were sent to approximately 2000 Departmental volunteers at the end of 2001 thanking them for their involvement.

PROJECT NOTIFICATIONS:

Please ensure all new volunteer projects have been through a consultative process in the relevant workplace and the Project Notification CLM 206 has all representatives sign off the notification.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE WORK GROUPS:

Not much has been achieved regarding this group to date, although, I have had some discussions with Departmental and MOJ staff.

EXTERNAL EVENTS:

The 4WD and Adventure Show, Caravan, Camping and Park Home Show, the Royal Show, along with training days and open days have been attended to showcase volunteer program and support the Department's volunteers. Next year this unit will be more involved with the Royal Show display and roster.

STATEWIDE VOLUNTEER GROUPS: (Volunteer coordinators responsibility)

CAMPGROUND HOST PROJECT

The number of campground host volunteers contributing to the project has risen from 29 in 1998/99 to 67 in the 2001/02 financial year. This dramatic increase has also been noticeable by the recognition by park staff of the importance of campground hosts at campsites, with an increase of 9 new sites last year bringing sites available to 40, There were 15 sites requiring volunteers in 1998/99.

The campground host volunteers now provide their services in visitor centres, ex-pastoral stations/leases, national parks and forest campgrounds.

CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURE:

Substantial changes have been made to the paperwork for this project this season.

A SUMMARY SHEET in table form similar to the National Parks and Forest brochure has been developed to show the campsites and facilities available and requiring campground hosts, in an easy to read format.

CAMPGROUND HOST TIMEHEET has also been developed to standardise contributions across the State. Park staff have been advised to allow a 12 hour day when volunteers are working in parks, unless they are away on days off, etc. as volunteers are "on call" to park visitors at any time of the day and night

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Park staff also receive a legend with personal details of the campground hosts, including known medical conditions, emergency contact numbers, and previous host duties, to ensure the Department's duty of care requirements to volunteers is fulfilled and carried out in a professional manner.

Park managers have been encouraged to use this detailed information to choose the most suitable applicant for the position, and contact the volunteer direct to discuss their preferred options. Park staff was advised of the need to inform this office of their decisions, with written confirmation of the placements, sent from this office.

CAMPGROUND HOST INFORMATION DAY:

Last year we held the inaugural information/training day and, in line with the Department's duty of care and the popularity with the volunteers have made it a yearly event. There were 35 participants last year, this year we had 55 attend.

All participants received manuals; those who attended last year will have new information and brochures to add, and certificates for attending the day.

Richard McAlinden presented information on the Departments duty of care, inductions, and hazard reporting, with Denise Hamilton presenting the Departments fees and charges structure.

This year we will be providing sunglasses, as part of the Departments OH&S requirements along with the shirts, hats and badges. A Customer Focus workshop will take all afternoon, and is directed towards conflict resolution.

I am seeking funds to provide 1st Aid courses either here at Kensington, or a country town near their longest serving position. Opportunities for "in house" training for \$55 per person is available to departmental staff and volunteers with a minimum of 10 per course. Several campground host volunteers completed the course at Tom Price this camping season, at the Community Involvement Units expense.

A possibility for next years Information Day may be Bob Cooper with an Outback and Bushcraft survival course.

BROCHURE:

I would like to develop a brochure for the campground host programme this financial year. At the present time we have an A4 flyer with the contact details we distribute at the 4WD and Adventure Show, Caravan, Camping and Park Homes Show, and the Royal Agricultural Society Show.

WAIVER OF CAMPING FEES:

This year the Director of Parks and Visitor Services approved a waiver of camping fees for campground host volunteers for 12 months free camping after their initial contribution to the project. The Campground Host volunteers have greatly appreciated this gesture from the Department.

An identification card similar to the Volunteer Pass will be developed before the next camping season.

WILDLIFE CARERS

We currently have 231 registered wildlife carers, and 754 volunteers with wildlife caring as their interest across the State.

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- (1) Registered wildlife carers have attended the 3-day wildlife carer's course, and
- (2) volunteered under the umbrella of a registered carer or rehabilitation centre until they are proficient at caring for injured wildlife.
- (3) The last requirement is for a Wildlife Officer to assess their facilities and knowledge.

Volunteers with wildlife as their interest, may or may not have completed the wildlife carer's course, and prefer help out in rehabilitation centres or care for wildlife at home, and do not accept calls from the public.

WILDCARE HELPLINE:

The WILDCARE helpline has 17 volunteers, and is available to the public on a 24 hour 7 day roster. It is working extremely well. During office hours the service is from this office, with after hour's calls being called forwarded to private homes. From 5:00pm Friday a rostered weekend volunteer takes calls at their home or mobile phones until 8:00am Monday morning. On long weekends, they take the extra day also. **(Absolutely amazing)**. The number of weekend calls received is quite phenomenal up to 89 one weekend, with 50 something about the norm.

Volunteers have been provided with training session and manual with after hour's response procedures for large animals such as emus and kangaroos and Wildlife Officer's mobile numbers they also have my contact number if unable to raise a Wildlife Officer.

WILDCARE NEWSLETTER:

The second newsletter is currently at the printers, and this time it is A4x12 pages. Filled with great information, two stories written from the volunteers, and the Senior Veterinarian at Perth Zoo has contributed, with a zoonosis article. Although I did promise 4 newsletters per year, this year I've managed only 2. The Chamber of Minerals and Energy is distributing this newsletter electronically, to environmental officers on mine sites, across the State. It is sent to local government offices, registered wildlife carers and volunteers with an interest in wildlife, and departmental staff. Gregg Thorn, a volunteer put it together for us.

WILDLIFE CARERS CONSULTATION GROUP:

We have held 11 meetings to date, with the wildlife carer representatives now finished their two-year placement. A call for nominations has been advertised in the WILDCARE newsletter. This time we will accept country representatives and tele-conference two meetings per year.

WILDLIFE CARERS COURSE:

There has been three of the above course, in May, August and November. Currently we have 400 people on a database, hoping to attend. As only 50 participants can attend the course, next year we hope to hold the course 5 times during the year.

Sue Smith is the course presenter and has notified me of her intention to sever all links with wildlife caring after the November course. Although I am a little disappointed about this, it is a challenge and a great opportunity to create another course. I have many ideas, one is for Wildlife Officers to take a more interactive approach to wildlife carers and present the Department's policies and standards. I have been concerned the course in its present form is actually at a higher level than required, and an on more hands on approach for participants to learn very basic feeding requirements, husbandry etc.

Zoonosis is a real concern, and needs much more information regarding safety and health issues.

WILDLIFE CARERS IDENTIFICATION CARD:

This card is for registered wildlife carers only and will have a passport photo, name and signature on it to identify them as volunteers. This is due mainly to members of the public challenging them when capturing or relocating native wildlife. The ID card has a zoonoses alert and telephone number for accessing information when a carer presents with generalised symptoms to their G P.

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WILDLIFE CARERS LIST:

The new Wildlife Carers list has been published and paid for by Nature Conservation. The Wildlife Carers List is for registered wildlife carers, local government offices, and DCLM offices and Wildlife officers. It will be distributed with the WILDCARE Newsletter.

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION GRANTS:

Copies of the criteria and application will be mailed out to all registered wildlife carers and wildlife rehabilitation centres throughout the State when available.

PAYMENT FOR WILDLIFE PUBLICATIONS:

Nature Conservation has provided funding for:

The WILDCARE newsletter

The Wildlife Carers List

Wildlife Carers Identification Card

WILDCARE helpline bumper stickers

WESTWHALES:

This project has not been reviewed since 1998; however, I have been in touch with the group's spokesperson and we've discussed a holding a workshop.

I am aware of the need to have a more organised approach to a major disaster (oil spill, cetacean strandings, etc) and will work with departmental staff to implement or produce a plan incorporating volunteers.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

(1) Look at the possibilities of Tour operators becoming Honorary CALM officers as part of their licence requirements.

(2) A Departmental policy to allow paid staff to volunteer during work hours.