

Administrative Volunteers

Many land trusts and watershed groups use volunteers for hands-on outdoor projects, but volunteers can also be a great asset to your organization in an administrative capacity.

Types of Administrative volunteer jobs:

- Mailing assistance
- Newsletter writing/editing
- Data entry and filing for membership management
- Grant writing and reporting
- Writing thank you notes or calls to donors
- Website assistance

Tips:

Recruitment -

It can often be challenging to find volunteers who have the skills and interest to complete the jobs you need, but with the right volunteers, it can be a great time and money saver for your organization.

- Start with your current volunteers who are familiar with your organization
 - o Publicize the projects in your newsletter, website, and other places that you recruit for your larger scale projects – who knows what untapped energies and skills you may have in your membership!
- College students often work well for short term administrative and technical projects
 - o Contact the Service Learning office or specific school departments to inquire about engaging students in volunteer internships
- Contact professional groups that may be able to connect you with volunteers for higher level pro-bono work
- Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVPs) – most of the local RSVP groups have an impressive team of experienced mailing volunteers that work with a variety of organizations

Avoid Volunteer Burnout

- Divide the job into smaller, more manageable parts among several volunteers
 - o For example: give the volunteer a monthly or project-based, short-term period of the project, have the volunteer write one or two articles or grant sections, or other ways of making the task seem less overwhelming to the volunteer

Common Concerns about Administrative Volunteers:

- “It takes more time to train them than if I just did it myself”
 - o Assess the task and the level of volunteer you would need to complete the task
 - o Interview your volunteers to get an idea of their skill and experience level as well as their interests – it is okay to say “no thank you” or give an

alternate project to a volunteer if you get the sense that they cannot handle the task or will not follow through with it

- Confidentiality
 - o Many groups are concerned about having volunteers work on data entry or other tasks associated with financial information
 - o In your interview, get a feel for the volunteer's experience with financial matters
 - o Include the importance of confidentiality in your orientation and training and possibly consider having volunteers sign a confidentiality waiver
 - o Larger organizations may even consider running background checks on volunteers

- Supervision issues
 - o Make sure your volunteers are given an orientation and clearly understand expectations
 - o If your volunteers are working off-site, encourage them to contact you or the project contact if they have questions or concerns and check in with them to make sure things are going well
 - o Engage other more experienced volunteers to act as supervisors/mentors with new volunteers