

Desk Guide for Volunteer Supervisors

I. Introduction

The Georgia Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) has a long history of partnering with volunteers to accomplish important work benefiting the natural resources of Georgia. In 2016 over 1500 committed volunteers helped serve more than 50,000 hours of work with WRD staff and partner organizations in a whole host of areas- prescribed burning; hunter education; conservation education; surveying rare animals and plants; hosting campgrounds at public fishing areas; staffing check stations; maintaining shooting ranges; removing invasive species; and hosting kid's fishing events.

The purpose of this desk guide is to provide WRD employees who supervise volunteers with a consolidated, easy to use guide for working with their volunteers. A variety of topics relevant to the effective management of a volunteer program are discussed in detail.

The WRD volunteer program is managed through the Director's Office by the Public Affairs Program. If additional information is needed, volunteer supervisors should contact Michael Sellers, WRD Volunteer Coordinator at 706-557-3101 or michael.sellers@dnr.ga.gov

II. Authority

The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources has broad authority to manage a volunteer program. GA law authorizes the commissioner to accept the services of volunteers for any activities related to the work of the department. The specifics regarding the WRD volunteer program are governed by the WRD volunteer policy¹ approved by the Division Director and Department Standard Operating Procedures.

III. Program Definitions

Volunteer- Individual who meets any one of the following criteria and receives no pay from WRD:

- Volunteers as an individual and is not being compensated
- Volunteers with an organization or agency and is not being compensated
- Volunteers as a paid employee of an outside business, organization, or agency

There are two broad categories of volunteers:

Affiliated Volunteer- Volunteer who meets any one of the following criteria:

- Volunteers on site at least once a month or forty hours per year
- Interacts with the public/visitors/customers without being directly supervised by a WRD employee
- Lodges in Department-owned housing
- Serves as campground host

Occasional Volunteer- Volunteer who does not meet any of the criteria for qualifying as an affiliated volunteer

Unpaid Intern- A student from an accredited college/university, technical college, or high school undergoing supervised practical training, and who serves as an apprentice or trainee in an occupation or profession to gain practical experience while receiving school credit. Internships that fall under the scope of the volunteer program are unpaid.

On-Boarding- The actions required to bring a volunteer on board for his/her assignment

Volunteer Supervisor- Any WRD employee who provides routine supervision of a volunteer in accordance with agency policies

Volunteer Coordinator- WRD employee who provides necessary support to volunteer supervisors in the administration of his/her volunteer program and provides overall program support to the program on a division-wide basis

IV. Program Roles and Responsibilities

Every volunteer must have a designated supervisor but the role of the supervisor may vary greatly depending on the assignment of the volunteer. A group of occasional volunteers who are part of a trout stocking bucket brigade will require minimal guidance, direction and supervision when compared to an affiliated volunteer working 20 hours/week at a wildlife education center. Volunteers are generally supervised by the staff member responsible for the work the volunteers are performing. When appropriate, a volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided the supervisory volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

The volunteer supervisor and volunteer coordinator each have a unique role to play in making the volunteer program a success. Like a successful garden - feeding, watering, weeding and caring for volunteers by the field staff is vital to each volunteer's success while the volunteer coordinator's job is to provide the volunteer supervisors with the tools and resources they need to be successful.

Volunteer Supervisor

- Recruits volunteers as needed
- Provides training and orientation
- Directly supervises volunteer or provide guidance to the employee who provides day-to-day supervision
- Monitors and evaluates the volunteer's performance
- Prepares job descriptions
- May trains subordinate staff members in proper management of volunteers
- Interviews and assigns dates to pending volunteer applicants submitted through system website

- Maintains contact with local site manager and volunteer coordinator to ensure that program procedures are followed
- Handles correspondence relating to the program
- Maintains up-to-date records

Volunteer Coordinator

- Develops guidelines and policies
- Provides training and technical assistance to the field
- Manages volunteer database
- Assists in recruiting volunteers and coordinating volunteer activities when needed
- Monitors program for training needs and compliance with guidelines
- Answers public inquiries about program and directs interested volunteers to appropriate work units
- Makes budget recommendations with regard to the volunteer program
- Evaluates the program and makes recommendations to division management for changes needed
- Manages volunteer incentive program
- Updates guidelines as needed
- Maintains contacts with outside organizations in the field of volunteerism

V. Recruitment

A successful volunteer program requires a robust recruitment program that matches volunteer interests and skills with agency needs. Recruitment is labor intensive and is best supported by simple and effective tools that enhance the likelihood of locating and attracting committed volunteers.

A recent volunteer survey showed that the two most common ways volunteers found WRD was ‘through their organization/agency’ and by being ‘personally invited by a WRD employee’. Volunteers can also be very effective recruiters--- 100 percent of the surveyed volunteers stated they would recommend to others that they volunteer with WRD.

Surveyed volunteers indicated several factors that motivate them to volunteer: enjoy the outdoors, work with like-minded people, contribute to wildlife conservation, have fun, help children learn about wildlife and nature, exercise, keep skills sharp, and keep up-to-date on conservation issues. Tapping into these factors facilitates recruitment and retention.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers generally contact the agency either through the WRD website or in person. The website is most effective as a portal for volunteers who are seeking general information concerning potential types of volunteer assignments. The website is also a very effective tool for attracting volunteers for special events such as kid’s fishing events and shooting sports competitions and for recruiting volunteers for recurring projects such as amphibian survey routes and bat monitoring.

Volunteers who make contact in person generally do so at a WRD office near their home. These more personal contacts provide the field staff an excellent opportunity for an initial conversation regarding the volunteer's personal interests and schedule of availability. The employee can give immediate feedback to the volunteer on priority projects that might be a good fit based on the volunteer's input.

Regardless of how a volunteer makes the initial contact, recruitment can be enhanced by an effective partnership between the volunteer supervisor and the volunteer coordinator.

Tips for recruiting volunteers at the field level:

- Focus your message- statement of need, brief description of how the volunteer can help/make a difference, and brief description of benefits to the volunteer
- Describe the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities
- If appropriate, prepare a job description
- Identify date and location where volunteer is needed. In general, recruitment should begin at least one month in advance of the scheduled project date.
- Identify potential candidates

The volunteer coordinator can assist with volunteer recruitment in the following ways:

- Based on information provided by volunteer supervisor, prepare and post recruitment announcements using appropriate media
- Refer potential volunteers to appropriate field units
- Provide volunteer supervisor with list of candidates
- Engage in on-going recruitment to meet routine agency needs

WRD has a contracted electronic system for licenses, boat registrations and other internal and external customer services called GoOutdoorsGeorgia that will include customer contact capabilities. The volunteer event feature includes the following capabilities:

- Ability for volunteers to register as generally available for work on projects and other opportunities
- Match registered volunteers to posted volunteer events
- Allow volunteers to register for posted volunteer events
- Allow volunteers to list interests, qualifications, geographic area or distance interest, available times, and match these to available opportunities.
- Allow email to be utilized to advertise matching volunteer interest/volunteer opportunities

Volunteer Application

The volunteer application is an essential screening tool for the volunteer supervisor. It facilitates placement of the volunteer into an assignment for which he/she has specific skills and interests.

Policy: Any volunteer who is likely to become an affiliated volunteer is required to complete the Volunteer Application.

If the volunteer is likely to make a long-term commitment, the information he/she provides on the application is critical to determining whether the volunteer is a good fit. Likewise, it provides the candidate volunteer important information to help them decide whether they are willing to make a serious commitment to the agency. The application is also helpful during the orientation session when the supervisor is outlining expectations for the volunteer’s assignment. Supervisors should also consider interviewing the potential volunteer prior to making the final decision to bring them on board.

For our one time or occasional volunteers are not required to have an application or a background check on file however every occasional volunteer needs to complete a liability waiver. Most of these occasional volunteers will come and help us with Jake’s Day, NASP Tournaments, Stream Team, and Trail Maintenance.

B. On-Boarding

After the volunteer has been recruited, a series of on-boarding actions are needed to get the volunteer started on his/her work assignment--- waiver release, medical/physical screening, registration, criminal background checks, uniforms, and weapons carry license.

Table 1. On-Boarding Requirements			
Requirement	Affiliated Volunteer	Occasional Volunteer	Required Form
Application	Required	Not Required	WRD Volunteer Application
Waiver Release- Adults	Required	Required	WRD Adult Waiver Release
Waiver Release- Minors	Required	Required	WRD Minor Waiver Release
Physical Fitness Test	Required for Prescribed Burning	Required for Prescribed Burning	None
Registration	Required	Required	None
Criminal Background Check	Required	Not Required	WRD Consent for Background Check
Uniform Component	Offered	May be offered	None
Handgun Carry	May carry a handgun	May carry a handgun	Weapons Carry License

Table 1 highlights the on-boarding requirements for affiliated versus occasional volunteers. Also shown is the required form, if any, for each on-boarding requirement. Each requirement cited in the table is described in more detail below.

Waiver Release

The Adult and Minor Waiver Release forms protect the assets of WRD by having the volunteer waive his/her right to claims for damages against WRD for injury or death or damage to property. It also includes permission to use any photographs taken of the volunteer.

Policy: Each adult volunteer will sign a waiver release form prior to starting his/her assignment. (B.1.a)

The volunteer supervisor will ensure the Volunteer Adult Waiver Release form is signed by the volunteer prior to the start of the assignment.

Policy: Minor volunteers, under age 18, are required to have the waiver release form signed by a parent or guardian. In lieu of the parent/guardian, an adult leader authorized by the parent may sign the form. (B.1.b)

The volunteer supervisor will ensure the Minor Waiver Release form is signed by the responsible adult prior to the start of the assignment. The form for minors can be used for one minor or a group of minors.

Both the signed Adult and Minor Waiver Release forms will be maintained in an on-site file for three years after the volunteer's final assignment. (Attachment 2- WRD Adult Waiver Release; and Attachment 3- WRD Minor Waiver Release)

Medical/Physical Fitness Screening

Volunteers are often engaged in strenuous work that may require some level of physical fitness for them to safely and effectively perform their assignment.

Policy: The waiver release form includes a statement regarding the volunteer's health and physical ability to perform the assignment. (B.2.a)

As noted above, a waiver release form is required of each adult and minor volunteer and will be maintained in an on-site file. Prior to starting their assignment, the volunteer supervisor should have a conversation with the volunteer to ensure they are physically able to perform their tasks.

The volunteer supervisor is responsible for ensuring the volunteer completes the WCT on an annual basis. Typically, the volunteer would be given the opportunity to complete the test each year along with WRD employees. The fire safety officer for the Section or the Region will maintain in an on-site file the list of volunteers who have passed the WCT.

Registration

The volunteer database is an essential tool to support the volunteer program and other WRD efforts. It will help achieve the following *objectives*:

- Recruitment for special events and on-going projects
- Marketing/communication tool for the division
- Announcements of training opportunities
- Invitation of volunteers to special volunteer appreciation events

Policy: Each volunteer should be registered in a division-wide database.

All on-boarding requirements should be completed prior to registering the volunteer. GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com will be used to register volunteers.

Volunteers must follow the below steps:

Step 1: Access the Go Outdoors Georgia Website by logging into <https://www.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com>

Step 2: Click on the box labeled “Volunteer”

Step 3: Follow instructions and prompts to login and fill out the volunteer application

Step 4: If the volunteer has an existing account, it will bring the account up and the volunteer can verify the account information. If not, the system will advise the volunteer that it could not locate a customer record using the information provided and ask if the volunteer would like to create a new customer account. They then need to create an account and follow the prompts for filling out the volunteer application via the Go System.

Some of this information may be more difficult to obtain for occasional volunteers so supervisors should gather at least the occasional volunteer’s name and e-mail address. Both the individual and group volunteer timesheets include a space for the volunteer to enter his/her e-mail address. Including the volunteer supervisor’s contact information enables a supervisor on another unit to do a reference check if the volunteer seeks an assignment on his/her unit. All of the contact information needs to be sent to the volunteer coordinator.

Criminal Background Checks

Occasional volunteers are not required to complete a criminal background check – affiliated volunteers are. Affiliated volunteers routinely come into contact with employees and members of the public. As such, WRD should ensure the volunteer does not have a serious criminal history that may put agency property or employees and members of the public at risk. Additionally, HR SOP #013, 11/1/2013 (Internships (Paid and Unpaid)) requires a criminal background check for interns.

During the on-boarding process, the volunteer supervisor will have the affiliated volunteer or intern sign the Consent for Background Check and send it to the volunteer coordinator who will process the criminal background check. After the receipt of the signed consent form, processing will generally take 5 to 7 business days to complete. Most volunteers start volunteering as an occasional volunteer therefore they don’t need a background check. Once a volunteer decides to become an affiliated volunteer or serve more than 40 hours in a year he/she must have a background check performed. (Attachment 4- WRD Consent for Background Check (Volunteers and Unpaid Interns))

Depending on the findings from the background check, one of two courses of action will be taken:

1. If the criminal background check reveals no criminal history, the volunteer coordinator will notify the volunteer supervisor.
2. If a criminal history is revealed, the volunteer coordinator will discuss the results with Assistant Director. They will consider the following factors: type of crime; frequency of crimes; and how recently the crime was committed. Typically, violent crimes, sex offenses, recent drug offenses, theft, and crimes of moral turpitude will disqualify someone from being approved. The decision is final unless the candidate can provide documentation that the revealed information is incorrect. The volunteer coordinator will notify the volunteer supervisor and the candidate volunteer.

Due to the confidential information on the consent form, the volunteer coordinator will keep the signed consent form in a secure location.

A criminal background check is not required if the volunteer's organization or employer has already conducted one.

Individuals commonly volunteer through either their organization or employer. If the volunteer's organization or employer has conducted a background check, the volunteer should provide to the volunteer supervisor proof that the check has been completed.

Policy: Criminal background checks will be renewed every 1-3 years depending on the nature of the volunteer's assignment. (B.4.c)

Uniforms

Volunteers appreciate being identified with the agency through some type of attire that includes the DNR/WRD logo. For many jobs where the volunteer is being seen by the public, a uniform component enhances their ability to be an ambassador and recruiter for the agency.

The WRD Uniform Policy (7/31/2007, amended 8/11/2008) notes the WRD is a uniformed division and provides guidance on the material, design, insignia, accessories, manner and occasion for wearing the uniform. Even though this policy is designed for uniforms worn by employees it provides guidelines that are useful to volunteer supervisors as they determine whether and how volunteers should wear uniform components.

Policy: Every affiliated volunteer will be offered a uniform component that includes the WRD/DNR logo with the word 'volunteer' clearly identified. Volunteer t-shirts and hats are available for all volunteer supervisors to hand out to volunteers via request to the volunteer coordinator. Occasional volunteers may be offered a uniform component or t-shirt at the discretion of the volunteer supervisor. (B.5.a)

Policy: If the volunteer has been issued a uniform or component, the following volunteer assignments will require the volunteer to wear it: Hunter Education Instructors; volunteers who greet the public outside an office setting; those volunteering on private land; and any other circumstance identified by the volunteer supervisor. In lieu of a uniform component the volunteer may be issued another form of WRD identification. (B.5.b)

The WRD Uniform Policy states, "Section personnel performing field duties that require them to be easily recognized as a division employee will wear the uniform." As applied to volunteers, those who are likely to encounter the public are expected to wear the uniform component approved by his/her supervisor. If the supervisor determines the volunteer will be required to wear a uniform or component, he/she will clearly explain why and how it should be worn. The Hunter Education Program requires their instructors, including volunteer instructors, to wear a uniform that includes a khaki shirt, name tag and slacks.

Policy: The volunteer uniform program will be administered and funded at the division level. (B.5.c)

The supervisor will request uniform components as needed from the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for procuring uniform components and sending them to the volunteer supervisor.

Handgun Carry

Policy: Any volunteer who chooses to carry a handgun while performing his/her volunteer assignment is required to provide a copy of their weapons carry license. (B.7)

This WRD policy clarifies that SOP #022 applies to volunteers as well as employees. HR SOP #022, 7/1/2014 (Handgun Carry) states in part, "The Department likewise does not prohibit employees with a valid weapons carry license from carrying a handgun, in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, in the Department's parks, historic sites, and recreational areas, including Wildlife Management Areas, and in all publicly owned buildings located in such parks, historic sites, and recreational areas. . . Applicable employees who choose to carry a handgun in areas authorized by state law while performing duties for the Department must present a copy of their valid weapons carry license to the Division Director/HR Director, or that individual's designated representative."

In addition to this SOP, WRD has determined that any employee meeting the requirements to carry a concealed weapon may not do so while interacting with organized school groups visiting a WRD facility or any other facility. In these instances, weapons should be secured and locked within offices or vehicles, whereby they are not accessible to anyone other than the owner. In the event that a weapon cannot be adequately secured as described, weapons should remain at home on the day of the school visit(s). This additional WRD restriction will also apply to volunteers.

During the on-boarding process, the volunteer supervisor should make it clear that the volunteer is responsible for informing the supervisor if he/she intends to carry a handgun while performing their assignment. When informed, the supervisor will secure a copy of their weapons carry license and maintain it in an on-site file.

C. On-Site Management

After the volunteer has been on-boarded, the local unit should be guided by a number of policies and procedures that ensure a successful assignment for the volunteer--- general orientation and training; safety; minor volunteers; vehicle operation; private lands access; computers; on-site fees; and dismissal. Each is described below.

General Orientation and Training

The general orientation session is an excellent opportunity for the volunteer supervisor to establish a good working relationship with a new affiliated volunteer. Volunteers appreciate opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge through training. Effective and periodic training also benefits the agency by ensuring volunteers can safely and effectively perform their assigned task.

Policy: Each affiliated volunteer will be offered a general orientation session when he/she starts the assignment. The purpose of the session will be to establish clear expectations for the volunteer and inform the volunteer of his/her rights and responsibilities as outlined in the WRD Volunteer Policy. (C.1.a)

The WRD Volunteer Policy describes agency expectations of the volunteer as well as features of the program that will benefit the volunteer. Clearly communicating these to the volunteer during an initial orientation session will lay the groundwork for a rewarding and successful assignment.

The session provides an opportunity for the volunteer to ask any general questions and to clarify the supervisor's expectation for them with regards to job duties and overall conduct while on the work site. There are a variety of forms the volunteer has been required to sign and going over each one helps them see the purpose of each. Table 1 lists these required forms.

Policy: Each volunteer will be provided appropriate training specific to the assignment. (C.1.b)

In a survey conducted of 75 WRD volunteers in 2014, 31 percent identified the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through training/workshops as something that would improve the quality of their volunteer experience.

Most training is conducted on site and is very specific to the assigned task. Sometimes, a specific training course that is normally offered to employees can be made available to volunteers at no cost if space permits. Examples include first aid/CPR, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) courses for prescribed burning, and chainsaw certification.

Safety

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in the workplace to minimize risks to themselves and others. Volunteers should be guided by that same expectation. If an accident does occur, prompt action and reporting is essential.

Policy: Volunteer supervisors should provide safety orientation to volunteers specific to the assigned task. (C.2.a)

The on-site safety orientation provides the opportunity to describe the hazards and safe operating procedures for the volunteer's assignments. Additionally, volunteer supervisors may choose to make appropriate sections of the DNR Safety Manual available to their volunteers. This manual provides a general safety section, a summary of commonly used safety procedures within DNR, and safety procedures for commonly used equipment within DNR. (HR SOP #021A, 11/1/2013 (Workplace Safety), GA DNR Safety Manual)

Policy: To encourage safe work habits, volunteers are required to obtain the same certifications/training as employees before engaging in the activity. (C.2.b)

As noted above, some training routinely offered to employees can be made available to volunteers. Some examples of these are ATV, chainsaw, firearms, and scuba. The volunteer supervisor should maintain on-site proof of the volunteer's completion of any required certification or training.

Policy: If a volunteer is injured or property is damaged, the volunteer supervisor should report it to his/her supervisor and the Department of Administrative Services/Risk Management Services. This is required even though the volunteer has signed the waiver release form. (C.2.c)

Since a volunteer accident/injury may result in a tort claim against the state, it must be reported using the General Liability Incident Report form. The form states, "If a non-state employee is injured or property of others is damaged (or alleged) as a result of the State's operations, whether negligent or not, report the claim directly to DOAS/Rick Management Services. . ." This form is required even though the volunteer has signed the waiver release. The injury reporting procedure outlined in the DNR Safety Manual does not apply to non-employees. (Attachment 5- General Liability Incident Report Form)

Volunteers Under Age 18 (Minors)

Young people are often attracted to being in the outdoors and can accomplish a wide array of assignments. However, there are limitations and requirements that guide the agency's use of minors as volunteers.

Policy: Minors Less than 16 years old will be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or responsible adult while engaged in his/her assignment. (C.3.a)

Younger volunteers are particularly at risk and need closer supervision. WRD employees should not be expected to provide this supervision. As noted above, the volunteer supervisor will ensure the Volunteer Minor Waiver Release form is signed by the responsible adult prior to the start of the assignment.

Policy: Minors are not allowed to operate a state-owned motorized vehicle nor vessel. Nor are they allowed to serve as a Hunter Education Instructor. In general, a minor should not be allowed to use inherently dangerous tools or equipment. Any additional restrictions are at the discretion of the volunteer supervisor. (C.3.b)

ADMIN SOP #030, 9/1/2013 (Operation of Vehicles on Department Business) states that a volunteer must be at least 18 years of age to operate a vehicle on Department business. The Georgia Hunter Education Instructor's Self-Study Guide requires the instructor to be at least 18 years old. The additional restrictions stated in WRD Volunteer Policy B.3.b. help to ensure a safe work experience for the minor volunteer.

Policy: A work permit is not required if the minor is not getting paid or receiving compensation for services. (C.3.c)

The Georgia Department of Labor website states that a work permit is not required if the minor is not getting paid. (www.dol.state.ga.us/js/faq_js.htmfaq_05_11)

Operation of Vehicles

To facilitate the accomplishment of their assignments, some volunteers may be authorized to operate vehicles and are required to follow the same policies and procedures as employees.

Policy: Volunteers may be authorized to drive a Department owned, rental, or privately owned vehicle while accomplishing Department business. If authorized, the volunteer will follow all guidance outlined in Admin SOP #030. (C.4.a)

Specific guidance is provided in Admin SOP #030, 9/1/2013 (Operation of Vehicles on Department Business). This SOP applies to all DNR employees/volunteers/ unpaid interns that drive on Department business regardless of frequency of driving and whether in a Department owned, rental, or privately owned vehicle. Listed below are some highlights from Admin SOP #030 for ease of reference.

Before driving on Department business, the volunteer must certify he/she can safely operate the vehicle by reviewing and signing the Driver Acknowledgment form and the Driver's Safety Tips. The Driver Acknowledgment form requires the volunteer to certify they have reviewed the driver safety video titled 'The 3 Dimensions of Safe Driving'. Directions for accessing the video are an attachment to Admin SOP #030. Volunteer supervisors will need to accommodate volunteers who do not have access to computers and do not have employee IDs by scheduling time for them to view the video. (Attachment 6- Driver Acknowledgment form; Attachment 7- Driver's Safety Tips)

If a volunteer receives a citation/warning while driving on Department business, he/she needs to notify the volunteer supervisor on the following workday and complete the Driver Notification form. (Attachment 8- Driver Notification)

There are several circumstances that may result in the volunteer losing his/her driving privileges regardless of whether the volunteer is driving on Department business: driver's license is expired, suspended, or revoked; arrested/cited for DUI; or arrested/cited for leaving the scene of an accident. If any of these occur, the volunteer should immediately notify his/her supervisor and complete the Driver Notification form.

Policy: If a volunteer is involved in an accident while operating a vehicle on Department business, the volunteer and volunteer supervisor will follow the reporting procedures in Admin SOP #030. (C.4.b)

Policy: While driving, the volunteer is treated just like an employee for the purposes of liability coverage. The coverage only applies once the volunteer is on the work site, not during his/her commute. (C.4.c)

The work site is usually a discrete location such as a fish hatchery or WMA but can also be an entire survey route where the volunteer drives between survey points. If a volunteer is involved in an accident while operating a vehicle on Department business, he/she will follow the procedure outlined in ADMIN SOP #030 including the completion of the Driver Notification form. The volunteer supervisor should also complete the Supervisor's Accident Follow-Up Checklist. If the volunteer is injured in the vehicular accident, WRD Volunteer Policy B.2.c. describes the additional form that needs to be submitted. (Attachment 9- Supervisor's Accident Follow-Up Checklist)

Private Lands Access

Most individuals are volunteering on state land but in some cases they perform tasks on private land and waterways. This policy addresses the specific requirements stated in Section (b) (5) of O.C.G.A. § 12-2-6 (2013) with regards to volunteers entering private land.

Policy: Prior written permission from the landowner or operator is required if a volunteer is working on either private land or a non-navigable waterway. This only applies if the volunteer is not working under the direct supervision of a WRD employee. (C.5)

The volunteer supervisor will ensure that the Private Lands Access Agreement is signed by the landowner and the WRD representative. The original signed agreement will be maintained in an on-site file and a copy provided to the volunteer and landowner. This agreement is not needed if the volunteer is working on lands, facilities, or properties leased to the State of Georgia. (Attachment 10- Private Lands Access Agreement)

Computer Access

Some assignments may require access to the agency computer system to facilitate the volunteer's ability to conduct their assignment and communicate with WRD employees.

Policy: Volunteers may be given access to the DNR computer network. (C.6)

If the volunteer supervisor authorizes the volunteer to use a DNR computer, he/she should counsel the volunteer regarding appropriate use. The volunteer may be provided copies of the two relevant SOP's- HR SOP #005, 4/1/2013 (Appropriate use of Information Technology Resources); and HR SOP #005-A, 11/1/2013 (Use of Personal Electronic Devices to Access the Agency Network).

On-site Fees

Volunteers are often engaged in assignments in areas that require the public to pay a fee. This policy provides the local manager the authority to waive that fee.

Policy: While volunteering on areas requiring a public fee, the volunteer is not obligated to pay the fee. (C.7)

The Program Manager or Regional Supervisor is authorized to waive public fees for volunteers while they are engaged in their work assignments. Members of the general public may challenge non-paying volunteers in fee areas, so the manager may choose to provide written permission to the volunteer. Examples of these public fees include WMA stamps, visitor center entry fees, and ferry fees.

Dismissal

As noted above, the orientation session provides an excellent opportunity for the volunteer supervisor to communicate to the volunteer his/her expectations regarding job duties and conduct. Establishing clear expectations is also useful later in the unlikely event that a volunteer needs to be counseled or removed for unacceptable performance or conduct.

Policy: The volunteer supervisor is authorized to dismiss a volunteer in consultation with his/her Regional Supervisor or Program Manager. The volunteer has no appeal rights if dismissed. (C.8)

Volunteer supervisors should provide periodic feedback to the volunteer about his/her performance and conduct. It is very important that the volunteer understands how well he/she is performing their assigned

tasks. It is equally important that the supervisor communicates his/her evaluation of the volunteer's conduct. Issues of conduct can be very diverse but generally refer to how the volunteer behaves at the work site. Does the volunteer get along with others? Does the volunteer represent WRD in a professional manner? Is the volunteer following WRD policies and procedures?

The feedback provided by the volunteer supervisor is usually all that is needed for the volunteer to make improvements in either their performance or conduct. However, sometimes the volunteer does not make significant improvements in response to repeated counseling sessions. In this case, the supervisor may elect to dismiss the volunteer. Due to the sensitivity of taking such an action, the supervisor should consult with his/her Regional Supervisor or Program Manager before making the final decision to dismiss. When dismissed, the volunteer should be informed of the reasons for his/her dismissal and that he/she has no appeal rights. In case the volunteer challenges the dismissal, the supervisor should document the reasons for dismissal in a written note put in the volunteer's folder.

D. Program Management

An effective volunteer program includes several program components and responsibilities at the regional/program and division level--- retention and incentives; tracking volunteer contributions; meals, lodging, and transportation; and employee development and accountability. The policies and procedures for each are described below.

Retention and Incentives

Retaining committed volunteers is essential to a successful volunteer program. The purpose of the incentive program is to encourage trained and skilled volunteers to continue to provide service to WRD in the future. In a survey conducted of 75 WRD volunteers in 2014, 31 percent had been volunteering 3-5 years, 14 percent 6-10 years, and 22 percent had been volunteering more than ten years. This is a good indication that those currently volunteering with WRD generally have made a long-term commitment. An effective retention and incentive program should build on the actions WRD employees are already taking to ensure continued good volunteer retention.

Policy: Volunteer retention will be enhanced through a division-wide tiered incentive program where incentives are commensurate with levels of contribution. (D.1.a)

The Georgia Constitution prohibits awarding volunteers a gratuity for services already rendered. However, the prohibition against a gratuity is satisfied if WRD receives a substantial benefit as a result of the volunteer's continued service. These benefits will be measured by tracking each volunteer's contributed hours. (See section below on timesheets and valuing contributions.)

Policy: The incentive program will be administered and funded at the division level. (D.1.b)

Volunteer supervisors will periodically report volunteer contributions to the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator will determine the incentive levels based on volunteer contributions and procure incentives that will be distributed to the volunteers at either local, regional, or state-wide events.

Tracking Volunteer Contributions (Timesheets)

Tracking all volunteer contributions is essential for three reasons. It allows the agency to measure the effectiveness of their volunteer program over time, enables the agency to match federal funds, and supports a meaningful incentive program.

Policy: All volunteer hours and miles traveled will be tracked using the standard timesheet for individuals or for groups. (D.2.a)

All volunteer hours and miles traveled, not just those that qualify as a federal match, will be recorded using one of the two standard timesheets.

The individual timesheet is designed for an affiliated volunteer who volunteers on a recurring basis, perhaps several times each week or each month. The volunteer can choose to keep track of his/her hours in a journal or diary and then fill out the timesheet and submit to his/her supervisor either bi-weekly or monthly. (Attachment 11- Volunteer Timesheet (Individual))

The group timesheet is designed for one-day events that use several occasional volunteers for just the day. It should be filled out on the day of the event. As noted below, to meet federal in-kind match requirements, each volunteer must still sign it. (Attachment 12- Volunteer Timesheet (Group))

Both the individual and group timesheets are designed to meet federal requirements for recording hours that serve as an in-kind match for federal funds received under the Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, and State Wildlife Grant programs. As such, certain components are required: date, start/stop time, total number of hours and miles, signature of each volunteer, project code, pay grade, and signature of attesting project supervisor.

In addition to the federal requirements, both timesheets include information that will be used internally by WRD to properly track and recognize the contributions of both groups and individuals- volunteer's e-mail address, group name, group leader's name, and description of project. Requiring the volunteer to enter his/her e-mail address facilitates the registration process described in WRD Volunteer Policy B.3.

Just like employee timesheets, volunteer timesheets should be retained for three years. Requirements for summarizing and reporting volunteer contributions are described below in the 'Record Keeping and Reporting' section.

Policy: Contributed time will be valued based on comparable employee salary levels. Contributed mileage will be valued based on approved reimbursement rates for employees (D.2.b)

Additionally, the miles a volunteer drives to and from the work site is an important contribution and should be recorded on the timesheet. If a group of volunteer carpools to the work site, only the mileage for the group should be recorded, not for each volunteer in the vehicle. In order to put a value on this, mileage rates will be based on the current state employee reimbursement rate.¹

¹ The January 1, 2014 memo from the State Accounting Office (SAO) states the mileage rates for calendar year 2014. As noted in the memo, O.C.G.A. § 50-19-7 requires the use of the United States General Services Administration (GSA) rates for mileage when State employees are reimbursed for use of a privately owned vehicle on official travel. The reimbursement rates are as follows: automobile- \$.56/mile; motorcycle- \$.53/mile; and

Policy: The timesheet will identify whether the volunteer's contribution is eligible to serve as a federal match. (D.2.c)

In the 'WRD Use Only' section of the timesheet, Block 4 requires the volunteer supervisor to determine whether the volunteer's contribution in the form of salary and mileage may be considered in-kind contributions toward the federal match.²

The federal match determination is based on the following conditions:

- *Individual is volunteering on a federally funded project.* Attachment 14 lists the federally funded project codes for fisheries and game management. For instance, a hunter education volunteer instructor working under project code 916 is assisting with a program funded by federal dollars so Block 4 would be filled in with 'yes'. Nongame federally funded project codes are provided periodically throughout the year. (Attachment 14- Fisheries and Game Management Project Codes and Descriptions)
- *Volunteer is not a federal employee.* For instance, if a US Forest Service employee assists with a prescribed burn, Block 4 would be filled in with 'no'.
- *Volunteer is a non-federal employee of an agency/organization NOT being funded by federal dollars.* For instance, a North Carolina state employee may assist on a WRD stream survey but if they are being funded by federal dollars then Block 4 would be filled in with 'no'.
- *Volunteer is not working on a project being claimed by another entity for a federal match.* For instance, if an employee with the Nature Conservancy is assisting on an invasive species removal project on a WRD WMA but they are logging their time and mileage as an in-kind match for a federal grant, then Block 4 would be filled in with 'no'.

Even if the volunteer's contribution does not qualify for the federal match, his/her time and mileage should still be recorded using one of the two standard timesheets. If the volunteer supervisor is unclear whether the volunteer's time/mileage qualifies for a federal match, he/she should consult the federal aid coordinator for his/her section.

Record Keeping and Reporting

A well-run volunteer program requires a certain amount of record keeping. Keeping the information up to date allows the supervisor to ensure they follow current policies and procedures and facilitates management of the program. Routine and accurate reporting allows WRD to track accomplishments on a Division-wide basis.

airplane- \$1.31/mile. Since most volunteers will be commuting by automobile, WRD will use that rate. These rates are periodically updated by the SAO.

² A volunteer can claim as a tax deduction their mileage if they use their personal vehicle. Nothing in IRS regulations addresses whether using the volunteer's mileage for a federal match disqualifies the volunteer from claiming it as a deduction. (IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions)

Policy: The volunteer supervisor is responsible for maintaining up-to-date records to support his/her volunteer program. (D.3.a)

In general, a folder (or electronic folder) should be set up for each affiliated volunteer. Each year, the volunteer supervisor should review each volunteer’s folder to ensure the required information is on file and up-to-date. Supervisors may also elect to keep a folder for their annual events that includes forms for multiple volunteers who typically participate in the event.

Table 2 summarizes the information that should be included in the volunteer’s folder. Supervisors may choose to develop a checklist based on this table and any other required information specific to their work unit.

Table 2: Summary of Volunteer Folder Contents		
Requirement	Policy Reference	Record Keeping Action
WRD Volunteer Application	Required for affiliated volunteers. (A.2)	Ensure information is up-to-date, particularly contact information. This can be maintained by the volunteer at GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com
WRD Adult Waiver Release	Required for all adult volunteers. (B.1.a)	Retain for 3 years after completion of volunteer assignment.
WRD Minor Waiver Release	Required for all minor volunteers. (B.1.b)	Retain for 3 years after completion of volunteer assignment.
Prescribed Burn Training	Required for all volunteers engaged in prescribed burning. (B.2.b)	Ensure that the annual Work Capacity Test has been completed.
Criminal Background Check	Required for each affiliated volunteer. (B.4.a and B.4.c)	Must be renewed every 1-3 years depending on the volunteer’s assignment.
Handgun Carry	Weapons carry license required if volunteer carries handgun on assignment. (B.7)	Ensure copy of valid weapons carry license is on file. License is valid for 5 years.
Training	Training/certification that is required. (C.2.b)	Ensure that any required training or certification is up to date.
Operation of Vehicle	Requirements for driving a vehicle. (C.4.a)	Admin SOP #030 specifies the renewal schedule for these requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver Acknowledgement Form • Driver’s Safety Tips • Safe Driving Video Completion
Private Lands Access	Required of volunteers working on private land. (C.5)	Ensure a signed copy is on file.
Timesheets	Timesheets are required for all volunteers. (D.2.a)	Retain timesheets for three years.

Policy: The volunteer supervisor is responsible for providing timely reports to the volunteer coordinator. (D.3.b)

As noted above, timesheets are required for each volunteer or group of volunteers. Timesheets will be retained on site and only quarterly summaries of volunteer contributions will be provided to the volunteer

coordinator. To make reporting easier, the volunteer coordinator will provide a spreadsheet that includes the following information:

- Section
- Region or Program
- Reporting Period
- Project Code
- Total Number of Volunteers
- Total Number of Hours
- Total Mileage

On the first business day of October, January, April, and July, the volunteer supervisor should submit their completed spreadsheet to the volunteer coordinator.

In addition to reporting volunteer contributions on a quarterly basis, additional information may be requested throughout the year to support various features of the program such as uniform components, insurance, and incentives.

Meals, Lodging, and Transportation

Volunteers may be offered reimbursement for the cost of meals, lodging, and transportation if prior approval is received from the Director's Office and in accordance with the statewide travel policy. However, Volunteer Supervisors should avoid placing volunteers into assignments that will place them in travel status. When placing a volunteer in travel status seems unavoidable, Volunteer Supervisors should request travel approval for the volunteer from the Director's Office through their Regional Supervisor or Program Manager prior to placing the volunteer in travel status

Policy: Volunteers may be offered reimbursement for the costs of meals, lodging, and transportation. (D.4.a)

O.C.G.A. § 12-2-6 authorizes WRD to "provide for reimbursement of volunteers for incidental expenses such as transportation, uniforms, lodging, and subsistence." The Statewide Travel Policy provides guidance for these payments in Section 7.8 (Provisions for Authorized Non-State Individuals Including Volunteers) as follows: "Agencies may authorize payment, either directly or indirectly, for costs of meals, lodging and transportation for authorized non-state individuals, including volunteers, even when there is no overnight stay. Payments for travel expenses must be authorized in advance in writing. . . Authorized non-state individuals are usually paid based on per diem. . ."

Requests for travel approval and expense reimbursement for a volunteer's travel should follow the same process used for employees (use attachment 15). When the travel is approved, the volunteer supervisor should work through his/her AOC to obtain a Vendor Identification Number (VIN) for the volunteer. This VIN will be used when the voucher is submitted.

Policy: A meal may be provided to groups at state-wide or local volunteer events. (D.4.b)

The Statewide Travel Policy (7/1/2013) provides guidance for the provision of ‘non-employee group meals’ in Section 4.8 as follows:

Meals may be provided to individuals who are not employed by the State under the following circumstances (**all** criteria must be met):

- Such individuals are serving in an advisory capacity or providing pro bono service to a State organization.
- A meal is required because the timing of the meeting/service is such to allow for adequate travel time to the meeting site in the morning, and return to residence in the afternoon, to avoid unnecessary travel expenses (overnight stay) on the part of the participants.
- The meal is approved by a higher-level approving authority prior to the date of the event. Such expenditures are limited to the purchase of meals and necessary beverages only (does not include snacks). Meal limits outlined in the *State of Georgia Statewide Travel Policy* must be adhered to.

The travel policy also states, “This account will be subject to special audit scrutiny to ensure that such expenditures are infrequent, rather than routine.”

The volunteer supervisor must submit in advance of the event any request for the provision of a group meal through his/her Program Manager or Regional Supervisor to the Director for his approval.

Policy: Department owned residences and facilities may be made available to volunteers at the discretion of the volunteer supervisor. (D.4.c)

HR SOP 027, 4/1/2014 (Department Owned Housing) provides guidance regarding the temporary use of a residential facility. Volunteer supervisors may choose to have the volunteer sign the Use Agreement referenced in the SOP.

Employee Development and Accountability

Employees can only effectively manage a volunteer program if they have the appropriate tools and support at their disposal. These generally include training, effective policies and procedures, organizational support, and accountability structures.

Policy: Volunteer program management training will be offered to all employees. It will include basic components of recruitment, supervision, incentives, and retention. (D.5.a)

Training will generally include but not be limited to the following components:

- Topics such as recruitment, recognition, and retention.
- Specialized training such as first aid/CPR
- Offered in-person or as a webinar

- Required in the first year for all employees currently working with volunteers and recommended for other employees
- To facilitate attendance, offer several sessions throughout the state where each session is open to any employee.
- 1-2 hour executive briefing for leadership and encourage Program Managers and Regional Supervisors to attend.

Policy: Supervisors should include volunteer management in the Performance Management Plans of those employees who work with volunteers. (D.5.b)

Including components of volunteer management in an employee's performance management plan facilitates the conversation with the employee and permits the supervisor to set measurable expectations for the employee.

VI. Attachments

1. WRD Volunteer Application
2. WRD Adult Waiver Release
3. WRD Minor Waiver Release
4. WRD Consent for Background Check (Volunteers and Unpaid Interns)
5. State of Georgia General Liability Incident Report Form – Reference Intranet
6. Driver Acknowledgement Form (Admin SOP#030) – Reference Intranet
7. Driver's Safety Tips (Admin SOP#030) – Reference Intranet
8. Driver Notification (Admin SOP#030) – Reference Intranet
9. Supervisor's Accident Follow-up Checklist (Admin SOP#030) – Reference Intranet
10. WRD Private Lands Access Agreement
11. WRD Volunteer Timesheet (Individual)
12. WRD Volunteer Timesheet (Group)
13. Volunteer Travel Approval Form
14. Use Agreement for Housing (HR SOP #027) – Reference Intranet
15. WRD Policy and Procedures