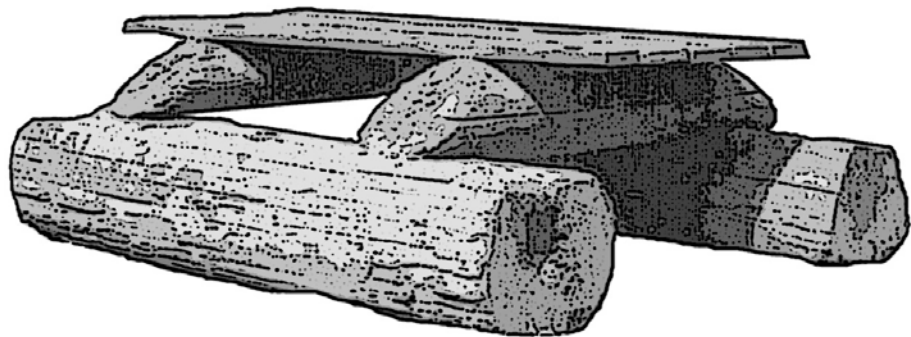


**British Columbia
Recreation Sites and Trails Branch**

Volunteer Handbook

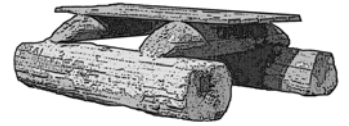
Volunteering for the Recreation Program



June 2007

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1.

Introduction

Through the help of individual volunteers and service groups, many outdoor recreation opportunities are available to the public.

The trails and recreation facilities that are managed by the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts require regular maintenance, and it is largely due to your hard work that they continue to exist.

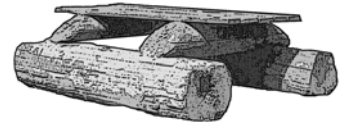
Your interest in volunteering is appreciated, and will be well worth your while! As a volunteer you will have the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, and learn more about the Recreation Sites and Trails program.

This handbook is yours to keep. It will give you some guidelines for volunteering and may answer many of your questions. The purpose of this handbook is to address the general responsibilities and objectives associated with volunteering. It will supplement the orientation and training you will receive from your coordinator. This handbook is yours to use as a reference during your volunteer placement as well as to record additional information as needed.

This handbook **does not** contain standards and guidelines for the construction and maintenance of recreation trails and facilities. Information concerning construction and maintenance standards can be found in the Recreation Manual and should be understood before work begins.

**We are certain that your time, effort, and
enthusiasm will contribute a great deal to the
Recreation Sites and Trails program
Thank you for your participation.**

We wish you the best of luck!



2.

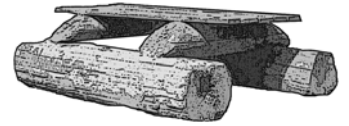
Recreation Program

B.C. is renowned for its outdoor recreation opportunities. Its unparalleled scenic landscapes, vast tracts of wilderness, rugged mountains and extensive freshwater and marine waterways are known world-wide.

While some of the province's most spectacular recreation features are in parks, many more can be found on provincial forest lands. The Recreation program is responsible for recreation management on these provincial forest lands, and other provincial Crown lands outside of parks and settlements. Provincial forest lands represent roughly 85% of BC.

| |
|--|
| <p>The purpose of the Recreation program is to protect recreation resources and to manage the public's use of Crown lands.</p> |
|--|

Every year over 53 million recreation visits are made to provincial forests. The Recreation Program maintains "rustic and simple" recreation sites, trails and interpretive sites to accommodate the more than 41% of BC residents who regularly use the recreation sites and trails on Crown land.



3.

Volunteer Opportunities

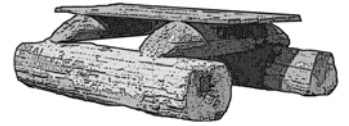
The Recreation program offers you the opportunity to become part of the 'team'. Even though you are not a paid employee, the benefits of knowledge and experience are yours to keep. Your contribution can provide you with:

- a new and challenging experience
- the opportunity to learn new skills or improve upon old ones
- the opportunity to generate work references
- recognition and/or responsibility
- the opportunity to belong and to feel part of the community.

Some of our volunteers' past services have included:

- recreation site hosts
- trail construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation
- facility construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation
- special projects, such as education program leaders or developing trail brochures
- cross country ski trail track setting
- wilderness/backcountry patrols
- collecting recreation information
- assisting in river or lake clean-ups

Without the help of volunteers like yourself, many of the recreation opportunities offered by Recreation program would not be possible.



4.

Volunteer Duties

Your role will be based on a description of duties which should define and clarify your specific assignments and responsibilities. During your orientation and training your coordinator will outline these responsibilities and the support you can expect from the Recreation program.

The list of duties also establishes timelines and manageable projects. It should outline provisions to be made by the Recreation program, any limitations to the assignment and typical hours of service. Volunteer duties may utilize the combination of your outdoor, recreation, interpersonal and physical skills.

For your safety, there are some limitations to what you can do:

- You cannot be involved in fee collection or law enforcement, as you do not legally represent the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts.
- You will not perform any hazardous duties. You have the right to refuse any work you consider to have a high risk of injury.
- There may be other restrictions specific to your placement. Be sure to check with your coordinator for details.

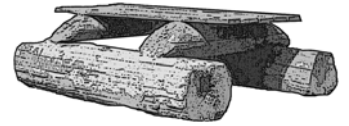
**Perform your duties to the best of your ability.
The public relies on you!**

4.1 - Recreation Site Host Duties

For recreation site hosts, hours of work typically range from four to five hours a day. These hours should correspond to the most active period on the site, with visitors arriving or departing. You should make yourself available to the visitors to answer questions and provide information regarding the site and surrounding area.

Your main duties include:

1. **Welcoming visitors and assisting them in obtaining information about the surrounding area, as well as site facilities, services, and activities.** As a part of the team you must be aware of the site's rules and



regulations which are listed on the Recreation Site and Trail Rules poster (FS191 & FRRS0179-04/96)).

2. **No law enforcement measures**, other than being observant and advising users of unintentional infractions, are to be taken by a site host. Report violations to either the Recreation Officer or appropriate enforcement officers (e.g., RCMP, Conservation Officer). Questions regarding legislation or policy should be referred to your coordinator .
3. **Informing your coordinator of any maintenance concerns.**
4. **Assisting campers during emergency situations** by contacting the proper staff and providing aid and comfort as required. First aid training is not necessary, though it is recommended. For emergency procedures refer to Section 10 - Safety.
5. **Recording personal contacts and visitor feedback.** Record the number of visitors you had contact with and the total number of visitors to the site.
6. **Distributing Forest Service publications upon request.** Be sure to have a copy of the Recreation Site and Trail Rules poster.

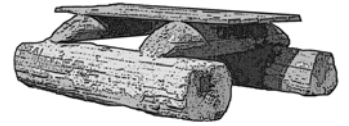
4.2 - Trail and Site Construction and Maintenance Duties

Specific hours of work and a date of completion for the project are to be agreed upon between yourself and your coordinator .

Standards, guidelines and procedures for the construction and maintenance of trails and recreation facilities are available to guide you in your volunteer work.

Chapter 10 of the Recreation Manual is a good source of information for the management of Recreation trails. Ask your coordinator for a copy to read. There may be requirements that are site-specific; these are to be developed between yourself and your coordinator.

The long-standing objectives of recreation trail and site construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation is to build safe, sanitary, socially acceptable and environmentally sound recreation trails and sites for the public to enjoy.



5.

Your Coordinator

Your coordinator will play an important role during your time as a volunteer with the Recreation program by providing support, direction, feedback and evaluation.

Be sure you know your coordinator's name, phone number and where he or she can be contacted. Record this information in the space provided below. Also be sure to have an alternate contact in case your direct coordinator cannot be reached.

Making each volunteer's experience a positive one is among our goals. Your coordinator will be discussing your responsibilities with you during your orientation. Take this opportunity to discuss any problems or questions you may have. Ongoing supervision is an important aspect of your coordinator's duties; you will not be left to fend for yourself.

If you have any problems, questions, or suggestions, don't hesitate to contact your coordinator.

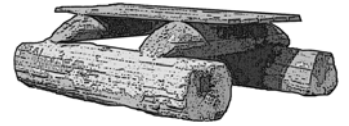
Coordinator's name _____

Coordinator's phone number _____

Where your coordinator can be contacted _____

Alternate contact's name _____

Alternate contact's phone number _____



6.

Orientation & Training

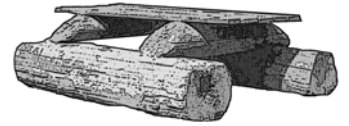
Orientation and training are vital. Your orientation should be comprehensive enough to get you started on a comfortable level. Training is additional, specialized instruction required for your specific project and should provide an opportunity for individual growth.

It is your coordinator's responsibility to ensure that you receive the necessary orientation and training to carry out your duties. Your orientation should introduce you to Recreation team members, facilities, and ministry practices. Further information provided may include:

- How your project relates to the overall recreation program objectives
- A review of your duties, timelines, identification, and supervision schedule
- Introduction to the Promissory Agreement and information on insurance coverage
- Orientation to work site safety, directions for handling emergencies, and accident reporting procedures
- Specific project details

Training may provide *in depth* information on:

- skill development
- specific project knowledge or background information and research
- team work
- public relations
- emergency procedures and safety relevant to the project
- trail building and facility construction



7.

Promissory Agreement

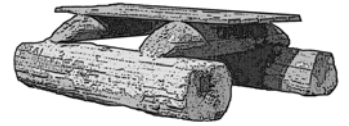
The promissory agreement **must** be filled out and signed by both you and your coordinator .

The promissory agreement outlines your basic responsibilities and your coordinator's expectations. Once signed, you will be provided with two types of insurance:

- general liability insurance that protects you should legal action be brought against you by another party.
- accident insurance that protects you should you be injured while performing assigned duties for the Recreation program.

Review the promissory agreement with your coordinator and complete the details.

For cooperating groups each individual volunteer should sign a promissory agreement. The primary contact within the group should provide a list of volunteers to their coordinator, who can then confirm that every volunteer will have insurance coverage.



8.

Identification

During your time as a volunteer you will undoubtedly have contact with the public. To distinguish your role as a volunteer for the Recreation program your coordinator will provide you with identification.

8.1 - Recreation Site Hosts

As a Recreation Site Host volunteer, you are representing the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts when making contact with the public.

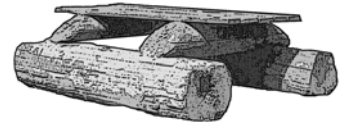
- dress appropriately to reflect the positive image of the recreation program.
- Recreation Site Host Signs should be:
 - displayed at your campsite when you are available to visitors
 - visible from both directions on the road

A larger sign that designates the site as a host site may be installed along the entrance road.

8.2 - Trail and Facility Maintenance & Construction Workers

Signs will likely include:

- a Recreation trail or recreation site sign
- a temporary sign - "Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts: Volunteers At Work"



9.

Public Contact

In most cases, your volunteer work involves some public contact. As a representative of the Recreation program, the image you portray to the public is very important

Be visible

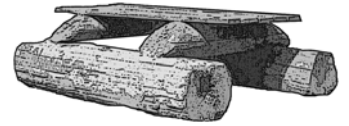
- Make sure that you and your group are identified as Recreation program volunteers
- Be helpful
- Go that “extra step”
- Give accurate, concise information
- Answer all questions as best you can
- Remember that team members can assist you

Be friendly and courteous

- Smile, make the visitor feel welcome.
- Enthusiasm and friendliness are contagious
- How you react to the public, influences how they will react to you.

9.1 - Handling Complaints

- **As a volunteer, you should not be handling complaints.**
- Staff are trained and available to handle problem situations.
- If you **do** find yourself in a situation where a member of the public is complaining, please follow these steps:
 1. Attempt to refer the individual to your coordinator at the nearest district or regional office.
 2. Provide the phone number and address of the Recreation Officer.
 3. If this is not successful, listen carefully to the individual.



4. Do not take sides by defending or degrading the Recreation program or the project area.
5. Ask the person to write down the details of their complaint. Obtain the individual's name, address, and telephone number.
6. Indicate that you understand the complaint. Inform the individual of your volunteer status and give assurances that you will notify the appropriate team member.
7. Thank the individual for bringing the problem to your attention.
8. Report the incident to your coordinator at the first available opportunity.

9.2 -For Site Hosts

Initiating contacts

- Specific recreation site information is available from your coordinator.
- This information will prepare you for the questions that visitors may have.
- Generally, visitors will appreciate it when you approach them.
- A friendly wave along with your Recreation name tag are often enough to start up a conversation.
- If visitors appear interested or have questions, you may want to spend extra time with them.
- If visitors are occupied, respect their privacy.

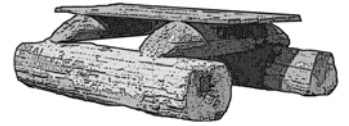
Two approaches you may use to initiate contacts are:

1. Roving

- walking around the recreation site with identification
- giving a friendly greeting
- only entering an individual's campsite if you have been invited.

2. Remaining at your campsite

- Post signs at your campsite when you are available.
- Be ready to answer questions if visitors stop by.



10.

Safety

Accident prevention is an essential component of safety. It calls for a combination of safe conditions and common sense. Both you and your coordinator have important responsibilities in this area:

The Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

- provides safe working conditions
- informs you of safety procedures applicable to your project.
- provides appropriate and adequate orientation and training

Volunteers must

- complete a safety orientation
- observe all safety procedures (based on the guidelines set in the Ministry of Forest's [Accident Prevention Manual](#))
- wear appropriate footwear
- use special protective equipment as required
- report accidents or potential hazards to the Forest Service coordinator as they occur.

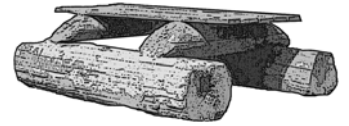
You have the right to refuse work if you consider the risk of accident or injury to be high. You will not be placed in hazardous situations. A hazardous situation depends on the project, the individual skills of the workers, and the environment.

10.1 Emergency Procedures

Most volunteer positions involve being in isolated environments far from immediate help. It is extremely important to resolve any emergency situation as quickly as possible. You and your coordinator should develop emergency procedures as part of your orientation and training.

Any accident involving either a volunteer or Recreation team member must be reported. In the case of an injury:

- inform the person directly in charge (coordinator, first aid attendant or other representative of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts)



- name of the person involved
- time and place of the occurrence
- nature and cause of the injury.
- complete necessary forms as soon as possible
- consult your coordinator for details.

IMPORTANT EMERGENCY INFORMATION

First aid equipment location(s)

Emergency procedures (e.g. fire)

Important phone numbers (e.g. fire, hospital)

Nearest phone

Directions to nearest hospital/first aid station

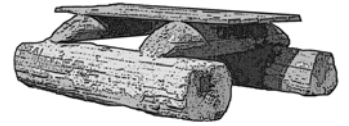
Basic Emergency Plan

10.2 - Trail and Facility Crews

Orientation and training should include safe and appropriate use of tools and equipment

- Do not do anything that you feel could be hazardous
- You have the right to refuse the work.
- Be sure to discuss any concerns directly with your coordinator

The Recreation program may provide equipment for certain work sites. The following is a list of general safety requirements that are specific to volunteer trail and recreation construction and maintenance workers:



START WITH A "SAFETY FIRST" COMMITMENT

- Think "safety first" in how you work and how you safeguard others.
- If it's not safe, don't do it!
- **Never** use equipment you have not been trained for or do not feel comfortable with.

USE PROTECTIVE PERSONAL GEAR

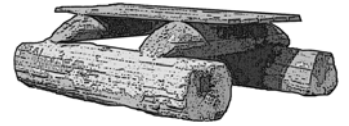
- Have and USE gloves, boots, hard hat and pants, and long-sleeved shirts; and when appropriate, use goggles or other protective gear.
- Wet or muddy gloves may cause a tool to slip and strike someone.
- Take a complete first aid kit and know how to use it.

CARRY TOOLS SAFELY

- Always carry tools in your hands and down at your side, not over the shoulder.
- For long distances, strap unused tools to your pack.
- Use blade guards whenever possible.
- On slopes, carry the tool on the downhill side of your body.
- When carrying two tools, have the more dangerous one down slope.
- Balance heavy weights, especially when repeating tasks such as carrying buckets of water.

ELIMINATE AREA HAZARDS

- Be extra cautious on hazardous footing such as loose rock, branches, vines, slippery moss and clay surfaces.
- Before starting to work, remove obstacles and debris from your working space overhead, underfoot, and in tool swinging areas.



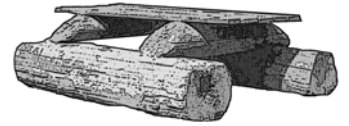
- Place tools and materials safely aside where they don't present a hazard.
- Under no circumstances should the tool be placed in an upright position.
- Take a firm balanced and comfortable stance before using a tool.

USE BODY MOTION WISELY

- Conserve motion and effort; use short chops, not long swings.
- Protect your back by bending at the knees; with pulaskis and hoes, use your knee as an arm support wherever possible.
- Change tasks as needed to avoid repetitive motion syndrome (e.g. tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome).

PROTECT OTHERS

- Ensure others are always outside the combined length of your arm and tool.
- Make sure there's no one downhill who may be struck by materials from your work.
- Watch for trail users or other work crews who may try to walk around you without getting your attention.
- When someone comes, stop work, notify your co-workers, and wait for them to pass.



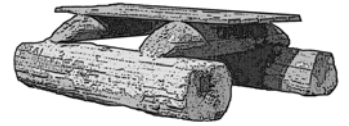
11.

Record Keeping

Keeping track of your hours, activities and duties helps us to evaluate the volunteer project as well as ensure that your contribution is recognized. We would appreciate your assistance in filling out:

- Volunteer Record Form. (See Appendix A).
- Volunteer Feedback Form (at the end of your placement)

This information helps us evaluate the volunteer programs and find ways to improve future placements and projects.



12.

Team Work

Team work is essential to coordinate all of the Forest Service duties within the project.

As a valuable part of the Forest Service Team you:

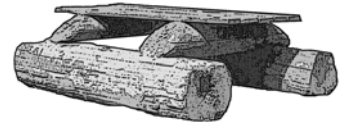
- complement the services provided by staff
- help the public have an enjoyable recreation experience
- set an example for all visitors

Your interactions with visitors will be a reflection on the positive image of the Forest Service:

- Spend some time with other team members.
- Become familiar with your working environment, the area's recreational opportunities and resources.
- Take time to enjoy yourself.
- Make this volunteer experience rewarding and fun for you as well as for the visitors in your project area.

Thank you for your time, effort and enthusiasm. Your contribution to the BC Forest Service is sincerely appreciated. We hope that your volunteer experience will be a positive one and hope to see you involved again.

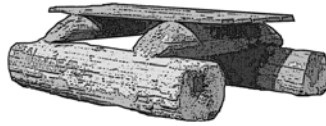
Your volunteer contribution is appreciated!



Appendix

Sample Forms

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Form | # |
| Volunteer Record..... | 5 |
| Volunteer Feedback | 7 |

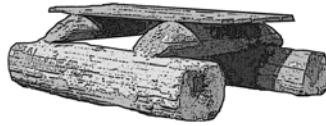


Volunteer Record

Starting Date _____ Ending Date _____
Name/Group _____ Location/Site _____
Project Name _____

| Date | From-To (Hours) | Total Hours | Location Area | Summary of Activities | Comments |
|------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|
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Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____



Volunteer Feedback Form

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Not Sure |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Training and orientation was sufficient and helpful for performing duties. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Supervision was helpful and informative. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Increased awareness about the BC Forest Service. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Enjoyed the clients and personal contacts. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Project allowed me to work independently. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Gained a sense of accomplishment. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Made new friends and increased social contacts. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Volunteering aided in career development, references, or feeling of satisfaction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Felt that duties performed met original volunteering expectation. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Had a clear understanding of being recognized and felt rewarded. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Felt appreciated by visitors and/or paid staff. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. The site supplied the agreed upon resources in a timely manner, and in a way to permit successful completion of my duties. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I support the program in other district's recreation sites. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I would recommend being a part of this volunteer program to friends and family. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Comments, Suggestions or Recommendations:

How did you hear about this program?:

Signature _____ Date _____