



VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT — PLANNING AND PRACTICE

Team work in large scale protected areas

Nationale
Naturlandschaften



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Dear reader,

“Together we are strong” – that applies both for the network of Nationale Naturlandschaften (new family brand for the German national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves) and for their full-time employees. At the same time our team also includes volunteers – dedicated, creative, flexible, qualified and interested people who provide valuable support in the protected areas.

Through the project “Establishing a volunteer programme in German large scale protected areas” we have established structures in 15 model areas within two years in order to develop “team work” between the full-time staff and the volunteers, and to strengthen the parks. With the volunteer programme we are making protected areas more open to the public than in the past and demonstrating our ability to act as team players. This is a management strategy for large scale protected areas which has long been practiced elsewhere, and our experience has shown it offers many advantages. Within the framework of the project, we were able to draw on existing attempts at volunteer participation, and to promote and develop these through exchanges with specialists. Various types of work and projects in the parks can now be carried out with the support of volunteers more intensively or more extensively than would have been possible without such voluntary support. We received considerable feedback from volunteers who are active in the protected areas, and they confirm that the voluntary work is a fulfilling and enriching activity and that it represents a rewarding way to spend one's free time. In many cases it is possible to promote enthusiasm among the active participants for our national nature

heritage and thus gain valuable supporters for our interests – a win-win situation of the best sort!

The volunteer programme has proved its value in the direct cooperation with the volunteers. At the same time it is a successful instrument for lobbying and public relations work, as is demonstrated by the positive articles in the press and the reaction from politicians and opinion leaders. In this context the various cooperation projects, for example with companies and schools, have also shown positive effects.

Two outcomes of the project are particularly significant. The first is that the role of the full-time volunteer coordinator has turned out to be of key importance. Our experience shows that the deployment of full-time personnel is not only crucial for the management of large scale protected areas in general, but also acts as a “catalyst” for voluntary work. Secondly, our project work has also given rise to quality standards for volunteer work in large scale protected areas – a milestone on the way to the professional management of volunteers.

Now we are on the same footing with regard to volunteer management as, for example, social institutions, and this will have the significant advantage that our views will be heard and taken seriously in the political discussions on the promotion of voluntary activities (and thus also by the institutions promoting these).

With the volunteer programme in Germany's Nationale Naturlandschaften we have taken an important step forward!

But convince yourself: Here we present the results of two years of work and share with you the experience gathered in many protected areas over this period. We hope you can draw on these ideas and develop them for your own applications. Benefit from the opportunities offered by effective team work between full-time employees and volunteers.

We are grateful for the support given to this important project, in particular by the Heidehof Foundation (formerly SBB – Stiftung für Bildung und Behindertenförderung), the BINGO!-Umweltlotterie and the Norddeutsche Stiftung für Umwelt und Entwicklung (NUE), without which our work would not have been possible.

I hope you find this brochure interesting and informative.



Holger Wesemüller
Deputy Chair EUROPARC Germany
and project leader



Fig. 1: The volunteer coordinators in large scale protected areas¹ (basic qualification for volunteer management, Nov. 2004) from left to right;

Front row: Peter Körber (Hamburg Wadden See NLP), Roland Ertl (Bavarian Forest NLP);

Second row: Uwe Schneider (Schorfheide-Chorin BR), Anne Spiegel (Lower Saxony Wadden Sea NLP), Thomas Kegel (Academy for Volunteering Germany), Rae Lonsdale (Yorkshire Dales NLP/GB), Elfi Laack (Schorfheide-Chorin BR), Jürgen Herper (Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg BR);

Third row: Kerstin Barfod (Hainich NLP), Ulrike Walter (interpreter), Sibylle von Hoff (Müritzn NLP), Ingo Höhne (Nurhe-Nieplitz NRP), Uwe Ipsen (Lauenburgische Seen NRP), Anne Schierenberg (EUROPARC Germany);

Back row: Henning Ohmes (Harz NLP), Jürgen Herpin (TERRA.vita NRP), Silke Ahlborn (Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea NLP)

Not present: Pamela Clausius (Schaalsee BR), Timo Kluttig (TERRA.vita NRP), Dieter Mey/Uwe Müller (Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal NRP), Annett Rabe (Thuringian Forest NRP/Vessertal BR)

What is a voluntary activity? What are its particular qualities?

It is

- the personal choice of the individual
- unpaid
- of benefit to the community

What is volunteer management?

- planning, organising and coordinating the work of volunteers in an organisation
- harmonising the goals, duties and interests of the organisation with the motivations, expectations, interests and needs of the volunteers

Aiming for a goal

“If a man does not know to what port he is steering, no wind is favourable to him.”

Seneca, Roman philosopher

The project in key words

Project title:

“Establishing a volunteer programme in German large scale protected areas”

Duration:

02/2004 – 01/2006

Responsible for the project:

EUROPARC Germany e.V.

Head of project:

Holger Wesemüller

Project coordination:

Anne Schierenberg, Stefanie Sommer (intern 07–12/2005)

Project partners:

Protected area administrations / responsible organisations, Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Nationalparks Harz, Academy for Volunteering Germany, Alfred Toepfer Academy for Nature Conservation (NNA)

Finances:

Heidehof Foundation (formerly Stiftung für Bildung und Behindertenförderung/SBB), BINGO!-Umweltlotterie, Norddeutsche Stiftung für Umwelt und Entwicklung/NUE

Project goal:

Conceptional development of a programme for the involvement of volunteers in German large scale protected areas and trials in 15 model areas

Methods:

- Conceptional and structural preparation of volunteer work in the model areas
- Further and continuous training of park staff as volunteer coordinators
- Definition of scope of action and the development of job descriptions for volunteers
- Carrying out advertising measures to recruit volunteer workers
- Training and involvement of volunteers
- Evaluation of volunteer work and the programme organisation

Model areas:

Bavaria:

- Bavarian Forest National Park

Brandenburg:

- Flusslandschaft Elbe-Brandenburg Biosphere Reserve
- Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve
- Nuthe-Nieplitz Nature Park

Hamburg:

- Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park

Mecklenburg-West Pomerania:

- Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve
- Müritz National Park

Lower Saxony:

- Harz National Park
- Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park
- TERRA.vita Nature Park

Schleswig-Holstein:

- Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park (NationalparkService GmbH)
- Lauenburgische Seen Nature Park

Thuringia:

- Hainich National Park
- Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal Nature Park
- Thuringian Forest Nature Park / Vessertal Biosphere Reserve (responsible: Vessertal Biosphere Reserve administration)

¹ Large scale protected areas = national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves

The start – where do we begin?

If we look at the volunteer management in Germany's national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in an international comparison, then other countries are far ahead of us. The United States with their "Volunteers-in-Parks Programme", as well as Canada and Great Britain can look back on decades of very successful cooperation between full-time personnel and volunteers in the care and supervision of their protected areas. Germany is still a developing country in this respect. But the positive aspect of this is that although we have little experience of our own, we can benefit from the experience of others who have smoothed the way ahead for us. And this is precisely what has been happening over the past three years.

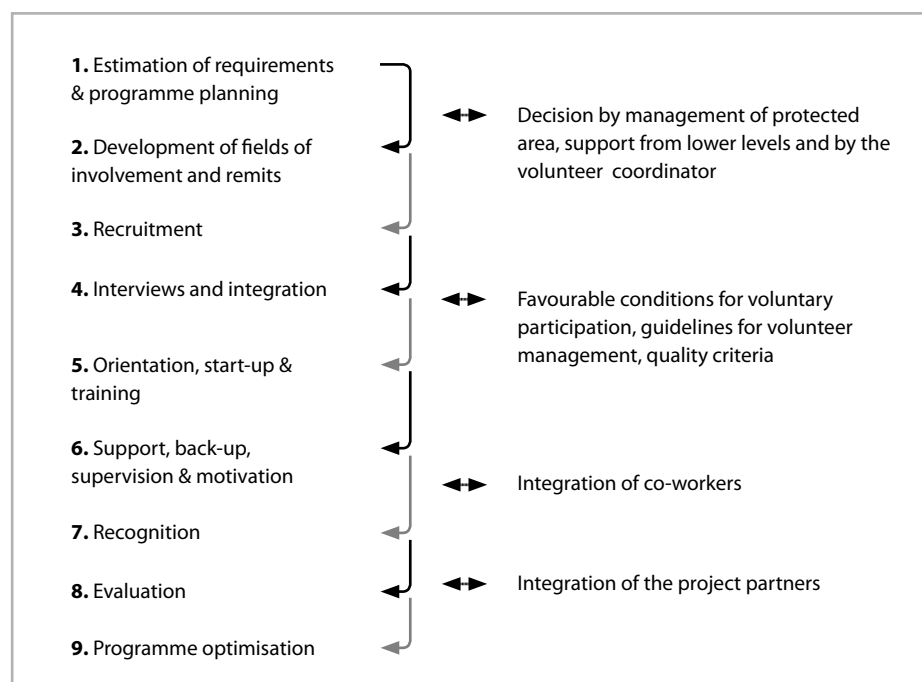
In 2003, EUROPARC Germany and the

Naturwacht Brandenburg² launched a pilot project with the goal of integrating volunteers systematically into the task of looking after large scale protected areas in Brandenburg. The experience gained was very positive, for example with the training and deployment of full-time volunteer coordinators or the development of remits for volunteers³. The Naturwacht Brandenburg was in effect a pioneer for professional volunteer management in German large scale protected areas. What then could have been more obvious than to extend the project to other parks in Germany? This was how the two-year project "Establishing a volunteer programme in German large scale protected areas" was born. Fifteen national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in seven federal states under the coordination of EUROPARC Germany began to develop their cooperation with volunteers in accordance with two principles: Identify

and appreciate existing voluntary contributions and optimise cooperation, as well as creating attractive new opportunities for volunteers.

The protected areas are in tune with recent developments with their activities in volunteer management. Public involvement has been attracting considerable social and political interest in particular since the "International Year of Volunteers" in 2001. All parliamentary parties in the 14th German Bundestag called for voluntary work to be further developed, for example in the report of the Enquête Commission "The future of civil participation" (Deutscher Bundestag 2002). And public opinion polls show that many people are very interested in volunteering to work in nature conservation and environmental protection. If people are indeed to become active then the appropriate conditions must be created, and those

Fig. 2: The process of volunteer management (after: Academy for Volunteering Germany 2004)



who are interested must be mobilised to take part. The large scale protected areas are meeting these requirements with the volunteer programme. The innovative volunteer programme calls for the appreciation of voluntary contributions and promotes contributions from volunteers at a qualitatively high level.

The goal – what do we want to achieve?

The goal of the volunteer programme is to generate a variety of benefits, both for the protected area and the full-time staff on the one hand, and for the volunteers and society in general on the other hand (see tab. 1).

Planning step by step

Volunteer coordination makes use of classic management techniques. These include the formulation of goals, implementing goal-oriented measures, acquiring and implementing resources, as well as evaluating results and optimising the management (see fig. 2). But while the approach has to be planned strategically, flexibility is also required. After all we are dealing here with human beings. And they will want to introduce their own ideas and have a say in what happens.

What challenges will we face?

Where ambitious goals are being pursued, obstacles may be encountered which threaten the success of the project. In a volunteer programme, as in other cases, it is often found that an awareness of the special challenges in combination with the sensitive handling of tricky situations is often enough

² Organisation of full-time rangers in Brandenburg's 15 large scale protected areas

³ Final publication of the pilot project see literature list (EUROPARC Deutschland 2003)

Table 1:

Benefits of the volunteer programme in large scale protected areas

BENEFITS FOR THE LARGE SCALE PROTECTED AREAS AND FOR THE FULL-TIME STAFF

The integration of volunteers makes it possible for large scale protected areas to make use of specific potentials. That means:

- a closer link to the local population and a better anchoring of the protected area in the region,
- new proponents and supporters when volunteers communicate their pleasure and their understanding for the park management to those around them,
- public attention and a higher profile – demonstrating that people who actively contribute to the park increase its importance,
- new opportunities for environmental education – through the involvement of volunteers, greater public understanding can be generated for the management of the protected area and thus a better contribution can be made towards educating for sustainable development,
- the possibility to carry out “special tasks” in addition to the usual duties.

Full-time park staff benefit from

- an increase in their importance as “full-timers”, because they are key contacts for the volunteers,
- the reduction in their work-load, e.g. at peak times (weekends, public and school holidays),
- additional “colleagues”, mostly highly motivated,
- enrichment of their work through the creativity, special skills and expertise of the volunteers.

In large scale protected areas the integration of volunteers makes it possible to achieve a higher level of effectiveness with the available resources than with the full-time personnel alone.

BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY AND FOR THE VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer programme offers

- opportunities for the public to participate in shaping their own surroundings,
- attractive offers for potential volunteers (a range of interesting activities to choose from, expert supervision from full-time staff, etc.),
- new opportunities for experiencing the protected areas: active, “meaningful” leisure activities.

to prevent risks becoming threats. What particular challenges do volunteer programmes face?

Integrating volunteer work

Experience shows that volunteer management structures in large scale protected areas will only function well if they are integrated in the park management. This presupposes that the measures have the support of the main body of the full-time staff. Understandable reservations on the part of the full-time rangers (e.g. worries about competition) must be recognized and taken seriously. Co-workers who are critical should be given the opportunity to become acquainted with the objectives of the volunteer programme and should participate in the steps towards realisation (see also p. 29 f.) It is usually more fruitful to adopt a slow-and-steady approach which is transparent for all those involved, rather than to try to integrate many volunteers in the work of a protected area in one fell swoop. It is not necessary to have the full support of all co-workers right from the start. But it is important to develop the volunteer programme so that it is increa-

singly accepted internally and regarded as a sensible measure. In that way it is even possible to gain the support of those who were critical at the beginning.

Binding agreements

Care should be taken that voluntary activities do not develop their own dynamic. This could otherwise mean that the volunteers would increasingly be beyond the control of the administration of the protected area or the personnel supervising them. In the worst case, the result could be that their activities would no longer be in line with the goals of the protected area, and thus that the project would turn out to be counter-productive. In order to counter this risk, it is necessary to have clear internal structures (e.g. full-time supervisors for the volunteers), clear information about the conditions for the cooperation and binding agreements (e.g. in the form of a written agreement between the park and the volunteer).

Part-time employees

Conflicts are also possible where volunteers are involved in sectors in which

part-time workers are already active, e.g. as field guides. An important element of the responsible utilisation of volunteers is that their involvement should not reduce the opportunities for employment (full- or part-time) in the region. Correspondingly, suitable fields of application should be determined for volunteers for a specific area, and if appropriate certain activities should be excluded. There are enough fields in which volunteers can work without giving rise to any problems!

No replacement for full-timers

Short-sighted political decision-makers could be tempted to regard volunteers as a “cheap” alternative to full-time personnel in an effort to cut costs. In order to counter this, it must always be emphasised that full-time personnel and volunteers in protected areas have clearly different tasks and abilities and are not interchangeable (see also p. 11). Volunteers can only be recruited because there are full-time personnel who can instruct and supervise them and in particular can provide the continuous work in the protected areas which is the precondition for the integration of the volunteers.

Setting up the team

“Because you have responsibility for achieving something, it doesn’t mean you have to do all the work yourself.”

Rae Lonsdale, volunteer coordinator in the Yorkshire Dales National Park/GB

The structure of the volunteer programme

Clear organisational structures, unambiguous responsibilities, and clearly divided areas of work form the basis for successful team work. This ensures that the participants can work together effectively in the pursuit of their common objectives, and without “frictional losses”.

The structure of the volunteer programme and the areas of work are the result of the interactions between the various actors in the network of the programme. The main actors involved in the organisation of the programme are the project organiser EUROPARC Germany, and also the protected areas, each with one full-time volunteer coordinator and other full-time employees. At both levels, cooperation partners such as educational institutions, voluntary agencies, and sponsors can be integrated in the volunteer programme (see fig. 4).

EUROPARC Germany and the parks take on the organisational responsibility and the management tasks which are necessary in

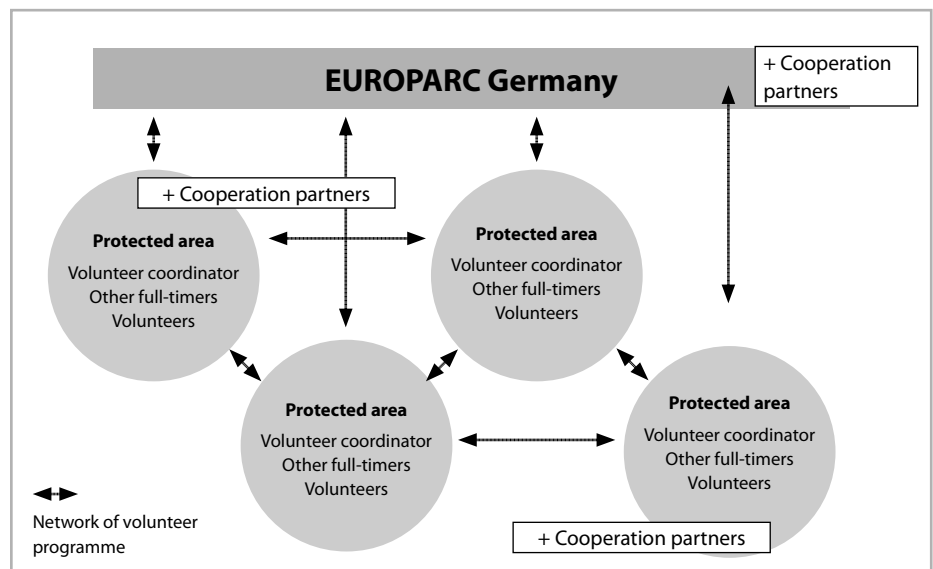


Fig. 4: Structure of the volunteer programme and the actors

order to develop and implement the programme. The responsibility for a task lies at one of the two levels (see tab. 2), depending on whether it is nationally relevant for the programme (EUROPARC Germany) or regionally relevant (protected area).

The key figure – the volunteer coordinator

Volunteer coordinators are the key figures for voluntary involvement in the large scale protected areas. This is demonstrated by the long experience of volunteer programmes in parks in other countries, as well as the experience already gained in German parks

Table 2:

Responsibilities for management tasks in the volunteer programme

EUROPARC GERMANY

Planning and coordination of the overall programme

Training of volunteer coordinators in cooperation with educational institutions

Specific advice for parks and the promotion of exchange of information and experience between protected areas

Overall public relations (PR) measures

Development of standard recognition measures for volunteers

Documentation and evaluation of the volunteer programme

Cooperation with national organisations, companies, etc.

Collection of information relating to political developments relating to voluntary work, funding opportunities, competitions, events, etc. and the acquisition of funds

PROTECTED AREAS

Volunteer coordinator

Planning and coordination of the programme within the protected area

Development of helpful internal framework conditions (information for park management and colleagues, clarification of insurance cover for volunteers, promoting the flow of communication between volunteers and full-timers, etc.)

Cooperation with regional organisations, companies, etc.

Exchange of information and experience with other large scale protected areas

Internal documentation and evaluation of the volunteer programme

Volunteer coordinator and/or other full-timer

Development of job descriptions for volunteers

Local PR work and recruiting volunteers

Instruction and qualification of volunteers in the protected area

Supervision of the volunteers in the protected area

Development of locally adapted acknowledgement measures for volunteers

regarding the systematic involvement of volunteers. The staff-member responsible for volunteer management acts as a link between the full-time staff and the volunteers. This person must have the necessary personal qualities and professional qualifications (see p. 21 ff). Another requirement is that the volunteer coordinator must be given a clear remit by those in charge of the protected area with a suitable time allowance for the work involved, and regular information must be passed on internally and externally about this function. It is also necessary to determine the specific duties and direct responsibilities of the volunteer coordinator – dependent on the availability of suitable personnel, the tasks carried out by volunteers, etc. – and which tasks can be carried out by colleagues (see tab. 2).

Full-time personnel and volunteers – their role in the team

In addition to the clear organisational structure and division of responsibilities in the volunteer programme it is also important to have a clear and transparent division of roles within the protected area between full-time personnel and volunteers (see tab. 3). This helps new volunteers to find “their place” quickly and to feel at ease in the team, and at the same time it avoids unnecessary conflicts about responsibilities and gives a clear political signal that volunteers do not replace full-time personnel.

The division of roles between full-timers and volunteers clearly shows that their functions are not interchangeable. This is underlined by other arguments (see p. 12).

Table 3:

The role of volunteers in large scale protected areas⁴

Volunteers and part-time employees in national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves differ in key respects from full-time personnel. They are a valuable addition to the full-time management of large scale protected areas – but not a replacement.

	Full-time staff	Temporary employee	Volunteer
DESIGNATION	e.g. nature guards, national park wardens, national park service, visitor service, rangers, park administrators	Guide, e.g. Certified Field Guide (BANU)	Park volunteer; conservation volunteer (volunteer appointed under state nature conservation legislation); guest guide, etc., e.g. Certified Field Guide (BANU)
STATUS	Permanent or limited employment, usually under a public service contract	Part-time employment, usually freelance, in some cases on behalf of an educational institution	Unpaid voluntary work (costs and expenses may be refunded) on the basis of a written agreement and an activity description
LEGAL FRAMEWORK	International and national directives, laws and ordinances	Commission to promote value creation in the region and environmental education in the large scale protected area	Commission to promote the value creation in the region and environmental education in the large scale protected area
SCOPE AND INTENSITY OF ACTIVITY	Continuous full-/part-time work	Usually seasonal, hours vary	Limited, project-related activity, and/or short hours
DUTIES	Responsibilities in the fields of information and PR work (environmental education), visitor care, scientific studies, monitoring and protection, maintenance and repair works, supervision of volunteers	Visitor related work (guided tours, talks, region-related contents)	Support and/or additional projects in the fields of information and PR work (environmental education), visitor care, scientific studies, monitoring and protection, maintenance and repair works; but not duties of the federal states, and independent area control (exception: additional official assignments, e.g. as conservation volunteer)
QUALIFICATION	Experience in “green” vocations, usually with nationally recognised training as Nature and Landscape Conservator (GNL; 640 hrs.), further training	E.g. certificate as Field Guide (BANU, 70 hrs.), further training	Varied vocational/professional qualifications, training for voluntary work, either internal or external; Certified Field Guide equivalent training (BANU, 70 hrs.), further training
RIGHTS	Usually legal entitlements	No legal entitlements	No legal entitlements
DUTIES	Vocational duties, obliged to act as instructed	No vocational duties	No vocational duties, binding agreement with place of deployment
CLOTHING / AUTHORISATION	Uniform (if prescribed)	Badge; Certified Field Guide: ID with yearly stamp	ID card (when working with public); conservation volunteer, etc.: card; Certified Field Guide: ID with yearly stamp

⁴ Recommendation of EUROPARC Germany, Association of German Nature Parks (VDN), German Ranger Association (Bundesverband Naturwacht),

Federal Working Group of Governmental Educational Facilities for the Conservation of Nature and Environment (BANU), Academy for Volunteering

Fig. 5: Volunteers in Brandenburg mowing meadows



The extensive and varied tasks in the large scale protected areas require continuous work by full-time staff.

Full-time personnel are essential, because volunteers will frequently only be able to work for a few hours, often oriented to a specific project and for limited periods in the year, usually they will take on very specific tasks, cannot be given “instructions” to carry out a task, do not represent an authorized contact partner for authorities or other institutions and organisations and can therefore not ensure full, continual operations.

The fulfilment of nature conservation duties at federal state level can only be ensured with full-time personnel.

In large scale protected areas, the länder (Federal States) are obliged to carry out certain duties in the field of nature conservation, for example those arising from EU directives. In order to fulfil these duties, the länder must, among other things, make available sufficient funds and sufficient numbers of full-time personnel.

Political demands to promote voluntary work also require the strengthening of the professional framework structures.

All the major political parties are calling for voluntary work to be promoted and extended. These demands can only be met if the appropriate framework structures are available to provide information, coordination, and organisational support. Such structures can only be established permanently with full-time personnel. Protected area supervisors are a part of the necessary framework structure for voluntary activities in large scale protected areas.

Volunteers need expert advice and organisational supervision. Studies of volunteer work clearly demonstrate that volunteers expect good supervision, direction and support.

When involving volunteers in large scale protected areas, the size and complexity of the areas mean that the necessary supervision can only be provided by full-time personnel. Full-time park staff, active for

example as volunteer coordinators, thus represent a necessary prerequisite for voluntary activities in large scale protected areas.

Volunteers do not want to help to cut costs, but are looking for meaningful activity in their spare time.

Volunteers do not come forward because they want to help an organisation or institution to save money, but rather in order to carry out a meaningful activity, to work to solve problems, and thus to find a fulfilling activity for their free time.

Experience in other countries shows the need for full-time employees

National parks in other countries, e.g. Great Britain and the USA, have a long tradition of cooperation between full-time staff and volunteers, and they regard the organisation and coordination of voluntary contributions by full-time staff as a necessary part of their volunteer programmes.

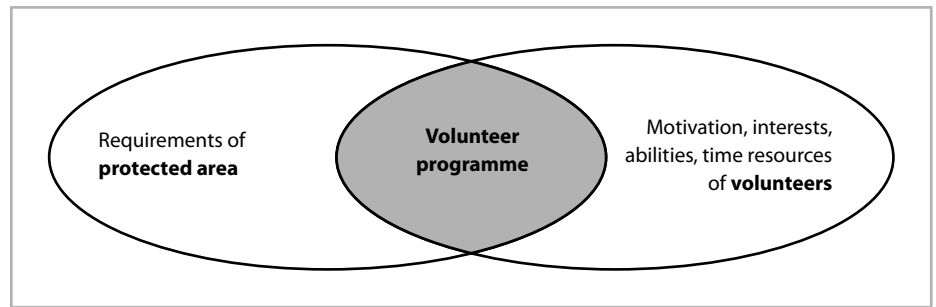


Fig. 6: The requirements of protected areas and the potential of volunteers overlap in the volunteer programme

Offers for volunteers

When planning a volunteer programme, two questions have to be addressed:

- Where does the protected area need support?
- What can volunteers offer in terms of motivation, interests, abilities, time resources, etc.?



Care of visitors' facilities: e.g. maintenance of nature trail stations, benches and picnic areas; "adopting" nature trails or pathways



Office work: e.g. data entries and evaluation, press work, archive maintenance

Volunteers also incur costs

The efforts to integrate volunteers in the work of large scale protected areas cannot be used as a front for ways to cut wage bills and other costs. In fact the integration of volunteers requires appreciable personnel and financial resources, e.g. for

- the internal planning and preparation of the volunteer work,
- the qualification of the full-time volunteer coordinators,
- the recruitment of volunteers,
- their supervision and training,
- the necessary insurance cover,
- the purchase of working materials and equipment for the volunteers and
- some system of rewards.

But establishing the volunteer management also makes it possible to access new resources and sources of finance.

If the requirements and expectations overlap, this is the best precondition for cooperation (see fig. 6).

Suitable tasks for volunteers

The protected areas require support in a variety of fields, so that there is a broad range of tasks which are suitable for volunteers. These tasks can be categorised in the following fields:



Practical protection of species and biotopes: e.g. maintaining amphibian fences, mowing meadows, planting and caring for trees



Monitoring areas: e.g. floristic mapping, monitoring fauna, contributing to research projects



Public relations work/environmental education: e.g. guiding excursions, advising visitors in information centres, programme planning and implementation for children's groups

Reasons for volunteering in environmental protection and nature conservation (ranked with most important first):

- love of nature
- because I like to take responsibility
- for the fun and enjoyment of it
- from a personal sense of obligation
- because I want to do something reasonable in my free time
- because I can contribute my skills
- in order to make social contacts
- in order to achieve something politically
- in order to gain something personally/for my occupation

(according to BMU 2004 – Federal Environment Ministry)

Job descriptions for volunteers

	Practical example 1: Helper for the National Park Centre Wilhelmshaven, Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park	Practical example 2: Caring for nest boxes, wild bees and wasps in the Lauenburgische Seen Nature Park
NAME OF ACTIVITY*	National Park Centre Wilhelmshaven “Wattenmeerhaus”	Carer for nest boxes, wild bees and wasps
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY*	Providing advice and information for guests, preparing and organising events	Regular care (examining, cleaning) of nest boxes in the woods of the nature park, including documentation, possible including installation and cartographic mapping
LOCATION*	National Park Centre (NLPC) Wilhelmshaven – Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park	Woods in the nature park and various section of the High Elbe riverside
NO. OF VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED	4	Approx. 4
DURATION: WORKING HOURS (HOURS PER WEEK OR MONTH)*	At least 5 months, all-year possible or 1-2 days / week, including weekends (hourly work possible if preferred)	Once a year in early winter approx. 2-3 days and possibly new installations (several days, with support by the forester)
KNOWLEDGE/ SKILLS REQUIRED, INTERESTS*	Open for contacts, knowledge about the national park, special fauna & flora, cycle ways, tourism infrastructure	Interest in ornithology, handy with tools, and safe on a ladder
AGE LIMITS (IF ANY)*	–	None
TRAINING OFFERS (CONTENTS, FORM, LOCATION)*	Introduction by NLPC-co-worker, opportunities to take part in courses for mud-flat guides, participate in tours and information material provided for home studies	Introduction by the nature park administration or the forester
NECESSARY INTRODUCTION, SUPERVISION PERIOD BY FULL-TIMER	50 hours	1 day
WHAT VOLUNTEERS REQUIRE*	Smart appearance	Working clothes, protective gloves, stout footwear
MATERIALS PROVIDED FOR VOLUNTEERS	Identification badge, information material	Nesting boxes, ladder, nails, light tools
POSSIBLE DETAILS OF FREE ACCOMMODATION*	–	–
COMMENTS*	Volunteers from Wilhelmshaven or vicinity preferred	Familiarity with the woods is an advantage

* Details to be included in public advertisements

Practical example 3: Attendant for the animal enclosures in the Bavarian Forest National Park

Attendant for animal enclosures

Visitor information, checks that paths and enclosures are clean and functional, minor repairs

Area of the information centre of the Bavarian Forest National Park (especially the animal enclosures)

1

Above all weekends and public holidays (but also weekdays) approx. 6 hours/day from 10 am to 4 pm (with a 30 minute break)

Communicable, some knowledge of animals and plants, do-it-yourself-skills, physically fit

18 or older

Introduction by national park personnel, possible internal training (guided tours, etc.), first aid course

Introduction period – several days
Supervision time approx. 1 hour per week

Stout shoes, weather-proof clothing, rucksack

Information material, binoculars, first aid set

No free accommodation

Long-term cooperation is favoured

Practical example 4: National park photographer in the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park

National park photographer

We would welcome your support in setting up a photo archive of the national park administration. We need in particular digital images from the national park area. We look forward to your images, which should be of the required motifs.

Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park

1

Decide for yourself how long you spend in the park. We would imagine about 4-6 days per month.

We are looking for someone who enjoys photography and has a feeling for interesting subjects. Experience with the digital storage of images would be desirable.

–

Provision of information material, joint site inspections

Introduction and instructions: 8 hours
Consultation between supervisor and volunteers: 2 hours/quarter

Camera equipment would be desirable.

Files can be downloaded onto PCs in the national park administration (national park station, Hamburg: Dep't of Urban Development and the Environment). Additional equipment, films and storage media can be provided by the national park administration, subject to agreement.

Accommodation only available in individual cases after agreement.

Free ferry trips arranged with Reederei Larsen Eils (Cuxhaven – Neuwerk).

Practical example 5: Checking signs in the Müritznational Park

Checking signs in the Müritznational Park

Checking signs against the current cycle and hiking maps

Throughout the national park

1

12 weeks overall
10 hours per week

Knowledge in the field of tourism and nature conservation, interested in nature and the environment, enjoys researching, able to work independently

None

Introduction to work area, tour, if interested participation in internal training courses

Initially one day; a discussion every 14 days about the current status of research – interim report, if necessary discussion of suggestions for changes

Car, bicycle

Maps, information materials, pen and paper

Not necessary

Compensation for trips with own car – up to EUR 300

Practical example 6: Cycle guide for
TERRA.trails in Terra.vita Nature Park

NAME OF ACTIVITY*	TERRA.trail cycle tour guide
DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY*	Each TERRA.trail is offered for visitors as a guided excursion
LOCATION*	The 17 TERRA.trails are spread over the nature park
NO. OF VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED	Up to 3 guides per trail
DURATION, TIME (HOURS/WEEKS PER MONTH)*	At least once annually per trail; duration between 3 and 8 hours
KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS REQUIRED, INTERESTS*	Knowledge of soil and geology, map reading, local knowledge, first aid, basics of cycle repairs
AGE LIMITS (IF ANY)*	18 or older
TRAINING AVAILABLE (CONTENTS, FORM, LOCATION)*	Specialist knowledge about the trails and about the topics of the nature park, information material
NECESSARY INTRODUCTION TIME, SUPERVISION BY COORDINATOR	Approx. 1 day per trail and volunteer
WHAT VOLUNTEERS REQUIRE*	Suitable mountain bike, cycle helmet, mobile phone, appropriate clothing and equipment
EQUIPMENT PROVIDED FOR VOLUNTEERS	Information material/literature, maps, first aid kit
POSSIBLE DETAILS OF FREE ACCOMMODATION*	Not necessary
COMMENTS*	Organisation of the event is responsibility of volunteer; support by nature park subject to agreement

"I am a 43-year-old family father and I came across the 'TERRA.trails' in an article in the newspaper in the spring. Because I was always out in the countryside as a child and youth, I thought this would be a good opportunity to combine my hobby of cycling (in particular mountain biking) with my interest in nature and the history of the region and to pass this knowledge on to others with the same interests."

**Thomas Stipp, volunteer
cycle-tour guide in Terra.vita
Nature Park**

* Details to be included in public advertisements



Fig. 7: Volunteer Christa Kugge leading a rambling group through the Nuthe-Nieplitz Nature Park

Written agreements with volunteers

A written agreement is recommended between the protected area and the volunteer about the planned cooperation (see practical example 7). This underlines the binding nature for both sides, defines the rights and obligations of the volunteer and is a helpful document in insurance cases (see p. 18).

Practical example 7: Written agreement between voluntary pathway inspector and the Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal Nature Park


Naturpark
Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal


Agreement on volunteer work

Between Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal Nature Park and Mr. XXX the following agreement is concluded about a voluntary activity:
Mr. XXX will be active as an inspector for nature park pathways for an indeterminate time on a voluntary basis without payment.

Mr. XXX will carry out the activities described in the annex.

From the nature park, Mr. XXX will receive:

- On request an information pack about the nature park and the field of activity,
- An introductory discussion or meeting and if possible further training,
- Support and instruction by the nature park personnel,
- Personal liability and accident insurance cover during the work for the nature park
 1. Personal accident insurance: Insurance cover is provided within the framework of Section 2.1.No. 10 SGB VII; for full cover of all risks, private accident insurance cover is recommended.
 2. Damage to private vehicles is not insured by the nature park.
- Protective measures are required for the activity, instructions in their use, and equipment/material,
- On request a certificate about the type and extent of the voluntary work,
- In the event of questions and difficulties, a confidential discussion.

Mr. XXX agrees:

- To comply with the general duty to take due care,
- To carry out the voluntary activities in accordance with the goals of the nature park,
- To take part in an introductory discussion and an introductory event,
- To observe the duty not to disclose any confidential data,
- To waive any repayments for expenses (receivable only after special agreement)
- To wear and visibly display an ID badge of the nature park during voluntary work involving contact with the public,
- To fulfil agreements reached about deployment times and duties and to give notice of any hindrance as early as possible,
- To inform the nature park at the earliest possible time about the intention to terminate the voluntary activity.

The agreement can be terminated at any time by either of the signatories.

Place, Date: _____

Signed for the

Nature Park Administration	Volunteer
----------------------------	-----------

Annex: Description of activity

Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal Nature Park, Dorfstrasse 40, 37318 Fürstentagen, Germany

Insurance cover – secure provisions for voluntary involvement

For voluntary involvement, two aspects of insurance cover are particularly relevant – personal liability insurance and accident insurance. As a “service”, the large scale protected areas should offer volunteers the appropriate insurance cover during their involvement. Alternatively, in individual cases the volunteer can examine whether an existing private liability insurance or accident insurance also covers the voluntary activity.

Insurance cover for volunteers in large scale protected areas⁵

PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE:

Case: Personal injuries suffered by the volunteer

- According to the German Social Code (i.e. by law) volunteers who are active for a corporation under public law, or a statutory body, or their associations, or who are taking part in a training event for this activity, are covered by the legal accident insurance of the employer's liability insurance association (Berufsgenossenschaft) for accidents at work, or on the way directly to and from work, and for vocational illnesses.
- Volunteers are only insured directly when carrying out an activity within the framework of the agreement concluded with the responsible institution, and on the direct route to and from this place. Route diversions taken for private reasons are excluded from the insurance cover.
- Under the legal accident insurance cover, if the capacity to work is diminished by an accident or by a vocational illness related to the voluntary activity by at least 20% then the affected party has a claim to an injured person's pension from the 26th week after the accident.
- To obtain more comprehensive accident cover, it is possible for the responsible institution to take out a private group accident insurance for its volunteers, or for the volunteer to take out private accident insurance cover.

Check list:

- Under which insurance company has the institution responsible for the voluntary activities taken out accident insurance cover?
- Do the volunteers have to be reported by name to the accident insurer (or the number of them)?
- Are minors who are volunteers (e.g. 14 – 18 years old) also covered by the accident insurance?
- How is the specified framework of activity of the volunteers defined exactly? (If appropriate sign a written agreement with a description of the activity)
- Has the responsible institution concluded an additional private (group) accident insurance for the volunteers (not compulsory)? If so, what are the levels of the insurance sum?
- Volunteers should be informed about the specific provisions of the accident insurance (so that they can decide whether to take out additional private accident insurance).

PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Case: Damages suffered by the volunteer

- If the responsible institution has organisational liability insurance cover, then as a rule this will only meet claims for damages suffered by the co-workers (and volunteers) themselves.

Case: Damages or injuries to others caused by the volunteer

- If the responsible institution has organisational liability insurance, then this covers liability claims by third parties against the institution. Volunteers must be expressly included.

⁵ Legal opinion by J. Rumpeltes, Berlin (Lawyer), 05/2004; EUROPARC Germany offers no guarantee that the facts expressed here are correct.

- In some cases, private liability insurance policies exclude from cover the damages caused during voluntary activities.
- Organisational liability insurance policies exclude acts of gross negligence (failing to take very simple and obvious measures in consideration of possible resultant damages) and acts of intent (intentionally causing damages). In these cases the volunteer is liable personally. However, according to the “Principles of possibly dangerous work” developed by the labour courts, the responsible institution can meet a part of the damages.

Case: Damages to the institution caused by the volunteer

- The responsible institution can take out cover for damages caused to it by volunteers, e.g. insurance cover against damages by fire, the piped water supplies, or storms, as well as cover for electronic equipment. If no such insurance cover exists, then damages to the institution caused by volunteers are operational risks, i.e. the institution must pay for any damages. (Except in cases of intent or gross negligence, for which the volunteer would be liable).

Check list:

- What operator’s liability insurance cover has been taken out by the institution responsible for the voluntary activities?
- Are volunteers explicitly included under the insurance cover?
- Are minors who are volunteers (e.g. 14 – 18 years old) also covered by the institution’s liability insurance?
- Are volunteers also insured during the training sessions for their activity?
- Does the liability insurance require a written agreement between the institution and the volunteer in order to be effective?

- What does the operator’s liability insurance offer the institution responsible for the voluntary activities regarding material damages suffered by the volunteer personally?
- If the operator’s liability insurance does not include volunteers, they should be informed that their own liability insurance may not cover damages incurred in the course of the voluntary work.

OFFICIAL TRIP FRAMEWORK INSURANCE (OFFICIAL TRIP COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE, INSURANCE AGAINST LOSS OF NO-CLAIMS BONUS)

Case: Damages suffered by the volunteer as the result of a traffic accident

- If a volunteer using their own car is involved in an accident, the private comprehensive vehicle insurance covers damages to the vehicle. In order that a volunteer does not have to pay the agreed excess or bear the loss of the no-claims bonus within the framework of the private comprehensive insurance, the institution responsible can take out an official trip framework insurance (applies also if the volunteer does not have fully comprehensive insurance).
- Alternative: The responsible institution can take out fully comprehensive insurance for official trips (including for volunteers) which covers costs for the accident damage to the volunteer’s vehicle.

Case: Damages caused to others by the volunteer as the result of a traffic accident

- The vehicle-owner’s car insurance covers damages caused by the volunteer to the vehicles of others where the accident is not covered by comprehensive insurance taken out by the responsible institution.

Check list:

- Should volunteers use private cars in the course of their voluntary work?
- Has the institution responsible for the voluntary work taken out comprehensive insurance cover for official trips?
- Are volunteers included under the official trip comprehensive insurance, and what conditions apply for the insurance cover (written trip assignment, etc.)?
- If volunteers are not covered by comprehensive insurance for official trips, can they receive compensation through official trip framework insurance for excess payments or loss of no-claims bonuses on their own private car insurance?



Fig. 8: Volunteer coordinator advising colleagues



Fig. 9: Volunteer coordinator and seminar mediator in a course on volunteer management



Fig. 10: Group work during the course on volunteer management

Training the team

“Qualification (...) makes use of the needs of those involved to express themselves, develop their personality and to be involved in shaping things. (...) Training strategies should not only concentrate on those who are actively involved in civil society, but also on the full-time workers and on the organisations.”

Deutscher Bundestag 2002

If cooperation in a volunteer programme is to be successful, those involved must have appropriate skills and abilities. This applies for both the full-time staff and the volunteers.

Training of volunteer coordinators

“Volunteer management” is usually a new topic for personnel in protected areas in Germany. The first step within the framework of the EUROPARC Germany project was therefore to train the prospective volunteer coordinators in the large scale protected areas in preparation for the tasks facing them. A two-stage training programme was provided under the guidance of the Academy for Volunteering Germany. This consisted of an “Introduction to volunteer management” (two courses, five-days in total; see figs. 9 and 10) and the “Further training in volunteer management” (three workshops, six days in total). The introductory stage provides an overview of the components of volunteer management and covers the following points:

- basics of volunteer management
- conditions for volunteer participation: politics, insurance, etc.
- organisational development: appropriate internal structures (see fig. 11)
- planning and deploying resources for voluntary participation
- identifying suitable activities for volunteers
- developing job descriptions for volunteers
- planning PR work
- written agreements between responsible institution and volunteers
- carrying out initial discussion with volunteers
- accompanying and supervising volunteers (see fig. 12)
- training volunteers
- motivating volunteers
- acknowledging the dedication of volunteers
- giving volunteers the opportunity to participate
- integrating special target groups, e.g. young people
- evaluating volunteer work and the organisation
- securing the quality of the volunteer work and the organisation

Why train full-time volunteer coordinators?

- Knowledge and experience in volunteer management are essential for the quality of volunteer programmes.
- Discussion with colleagues and best-practice discussions promote the specific implementation of volunteer management in the individual protected areas.
- During the training sessions, the volunteer coordinators can contribute to developing strategies for the volunteer programme and thus help to make it more suitable for practical applications.

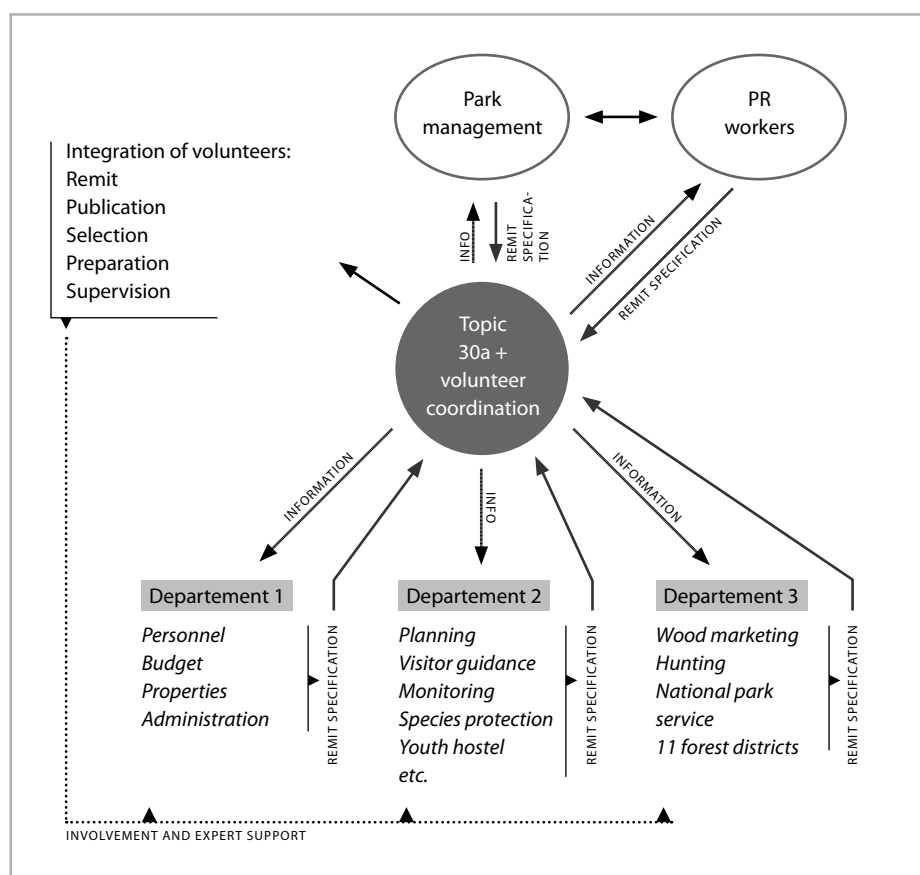


Fig. 11: An overview of the organisational structure (produced by a participant in the introductory course to volunteer management)

After the introductory stage, the volunteer coordinators began to set up their own volunteer management structures. The subsequent workshops which were offered as further training had the goal of encouraging the exchange of experience between the coordinators. They offered the opportunity to consider practical questions which arose in the course of the volunteer management, and to discuss problems with colleagues (see fig. 8) as well as to present best-practice examples – including from other countries. This helped the participants to reflect on their own work with volunteers and to introduce improvements. The workshops included the following points:

- extending the range of activities offered to volunteers
- avoiding conflicts between full-timers and volunteers and coping with these if they arise
- planning public relations work for specific target groups
- ways of acknowledging the work of volunteers
- improving internal conditions for volunteer workers (e.g. accommodation, repayment of expenses)
- discuss best-practice examples from model areas and compare experience
- define quality standards for volunteer management in protected areas
- using ways to promote voluntary work (politics, forums, networks, events)
- transfer experience in the volunteer programme of the Yorkshire Dales National Park/GB to German parks; presentation by the volunteer coordinator there

- transfer experience in the “Volunteers-in-Parks-Programme”/USA to German parks; presentation by former participant in the programme
- transfer experience in the volunteer programme of the Friends of Nature Society/Czech Republic to German parks; presentation by the volunteer coordinator of the society

The evaluation of the introductory training course and the workshops clearly showed that the volunteer coordinators were encouraged and motivated by directly sharing experience and personal contacts with one another. A further effect was that the joint training of the full-time staff helps the large scale protected areas to develop a shared understanding of volunteer work – which is very important for the implementation of a national volunteer programme.

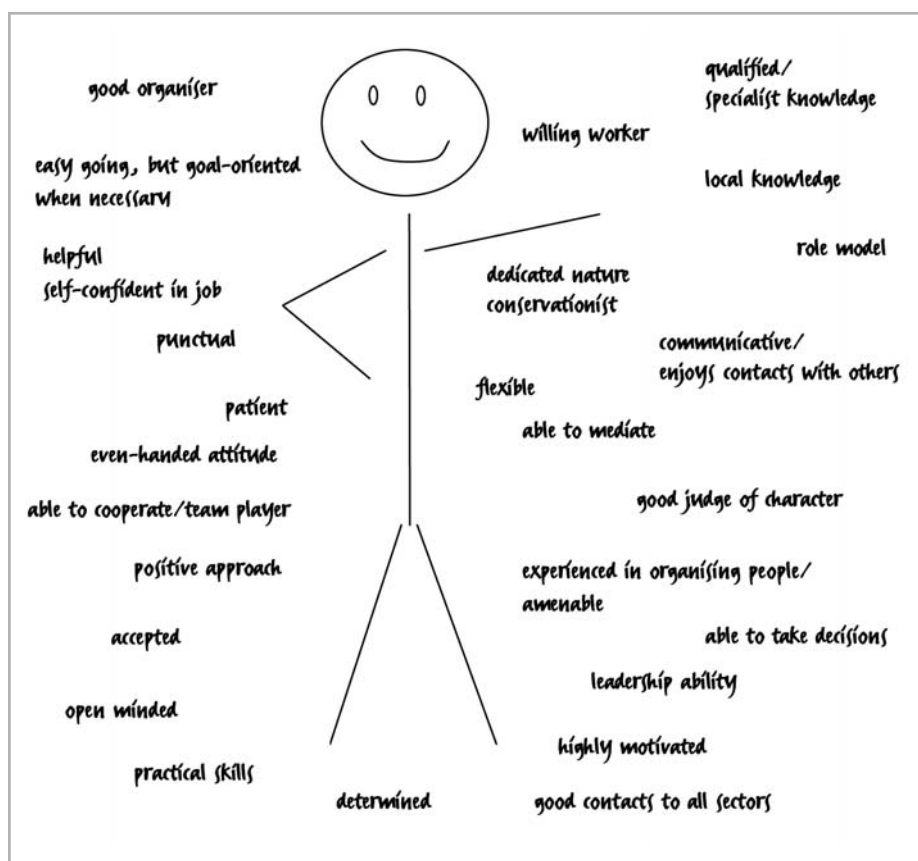


Fig. 12: The “perfect” volunteer coordinator (generated in an introductory training course on volunteer management)

Training of volunteers – fit for commitment

Further training opportunities for volunteers can improve the quality of their work and help to avoid conflicts that can arise due to a lack of suitability or different understanding of the role. This is in the direct interest of the protected areas. At the same time, many volunteers are keen to develop skills and expand their knowledge and experience. This means that training opportunities can also represent a way of acknowledging voluntary contributions. Introduction programmes can help volunteers in the early stages and also provide an opportunity to check their suitability for the task at hand and their commitment.

When planning training courses it should be borne in mind that some volunteers will already be qualified to a greater or lesser extent. It is therefore necessary to determine suitable forms of instruction and to be able to adapt the training to the skills and abilities of an individual volunteer, rather than obliging them to attend a “one-size-fits-all” course.

The following forms of training have proved valuable in the volunteer programme:

- provision of information material about the protected area and specific literature about the activity
- theoretical introduction to specialist topics for groups of volunteers from various areas by full-timers and/or by colleagues on specialist topics
- specific, individual introduction on-site by full-timers and/or volunteers with appropriate working materials
- learning by doing in the course of activities with supervision by full-timers and/or experienced volunteers
- participation in relevant internal further training events for full-time personnel
- participation in relevant further training courses by external providers (possibly together with full-time personnel) – for example from nature conservation academies, nature conservation stations, first aid courses, etc.



Fig. 13: Regional training for volunteers by Naturwacht Brandenburg

Why train volunteers?

- Training courses make it easier for newcomers to start their voluntary work.
- Appropriately qualified volunteers can make more valuable contributions and work more effectively for the protected area.
- Information about roles and allocations of tasks can help to avoid conflicts.
- Volunteers often want to increase their knowledge and gain experience, and they find training opportunities interesting and a sign of recognition (motivational and promoting identification).

The contents of the available training courses will vary widely in accordance with the area of activity of the volunteer and can range from the identification of different species and handicrafts through environmental training methods and legal questions to natural and landscape history.

In volunteer management the large scale protected areas make use of principles such as “learning by doing”. This is possible because full-time staff working in the protected area can “take volunteers by the hand”, and introduce them to field work techniques, e.g. showing how cranes are counted, introducing the geological, botanical or historical specialties of the region, and teaching how this knowledge can be presented in an interesting way to others.

Joint training of full-timers and volunteers is a particularly interesting form of formal qualification. In addition to the main

purpose – training the participants – it is also possible to promote understanding and cooperation between volunteers and full-time personnel.

A new form of volunteer training has been tested in Brandenburg. Regional training events for volunteers of the Naturwacht Brandenburg, which is active in the 15 large scale protection areas in the federal state, were organised by the Naturwacht Brandenburg, the Brandenburg Environmental Ministry, and EUROPARC Germany (see fig. 13). The focus of the events was on legal questions concerning the dos and don'ts in protected areas and their importance for the work of the volunteers. The reports of the participants show that the joint training of volunteers from various areas provides an effective combination which allows volunteers to learn more about their area of activity and at the same time to establish personal contacts with others with the same



Fig. 14: Volunteers of Naturwacht Brandenburg erecting an amphibian fence

interests and to exchange views. In this way, volunteers of all ages and from a wide range of areas are brought together. Another advantage of this is that it gives the “old hands” the opportunity to pass on the fruits of their experience to the new recruits to volunteer nature conservation.

“I enjoyed learning about this region in the course of my volunteer work and passing it on to others, for example holiday-makers. You learn more and more if you tell other people about the things you have read or heard. And it is also fun to have to respond to the questions that people ask you, because you have to have to think more intensely about a topic.”

Astrid Weissbach, student volunteer in an information hut on Norderney in the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park

Strengthening the team spirit

*“No one can whistle a symphony.
It takes an orchestra to play it.”*

Halford E. Luccock, Author (USA)

The volunteer programme of the large scale protected areas thrives on the cooperative and constructive cooperation between full-time personnel and voluntary activists. It is therefore important that the protected areas adopt measures in order to strengthen the team spirit of all those involved. These measures could include offering volunteers opportunities to become more involved, extending recognition to both them and to full-timers, supporting the volunteers, and dealing professionally with any conflicts that arise between full-time personnel and volunteers.

Participation and identification

The participation of volunteers – their involvement in the voluntary programme – means that they do more than just helping out. Volunteers should be given more opportunities to contribute and to help in appropriate areas, their views should be heard and they should represent their interests and be able to assume responsibilities. As a part of professional volunteer management, every protected area faces the task of reviewing internal structures, action procedures and decision-making processes in order to identify where volunteers can be integrated. This is also a form of acknowledging voluntary involvement, because it shows that the protected area authority takes the volunteers seriously and appreciates their contribution. In addition, the participation of the volunteers increases their ties to the protected area in question. The more ways that volunteers can be involved in organisational structures, the more they will identify with their place of activity. The more opportunities they have to influence their activities and the more

their interests can be taken into consideration in this way, the better they will feel and the more likely it is that the cooperation will be long-lasting.

Specific ways of promoting the participation of volunteers include:

- involvement in official communication processes (e.g. taking part in consultations, inclusion on the mailing list for internal information, extranet or newsletter)
- participation in working groups of full-timers
- involvement in informal discussions about matters affecting them
- joint (further-) development of their activity description, (tasks, responsibilities, etc.), personal responsibility for implementation
- participation in developing new fields of activity for volunteers and then their introduction and supervision
- involvement in the evaluation of the volunteer programme

Recognition – the reward for volunteering

Voluntary contributions are by definition provided without monetary reward in the classic sense. Against this background, an important element of professional volunteer management is ensuring that volunteers receive other forms of recognition and demonstrations of gratitude.

This requires that full-time personnel of the protected area should adopt a positive and appreciative attitude towards the volunteers, and in particular those in charge should act as a model for others to follow. In practical terms this means firstly that structures must be created so that the recognition of volunteers has a fixed, formal place in the management of the protected area and becomes a standard procedure. A “culture of recognition” in the large scale protected areas means that volunteers are also made to feel that they are appreciated personally. This is the case in particular with measures which take into account the individual preferences, interests and activities of the volunteers and their personal motivation for being active as a volunteer (see p. 13).

It is frequently possible to combine these two aspects, namely establishing a standard procedure and providing individual forms of recognising voluntary contribution. Suitable forms of acknowledging voluntary work are e.g.:

- friendly contacts
- informal acknowledgment and praise by full-timers as the situation arises
- taking time for a conversation
- exchanging experience with other volunteers and full-timers
- transferring responsibility
- food for volunteers on assignments
- joint visits to see the results of the work, e.g. flowering orchid meadows the year after mowing activities
- get-togethers, joint actions, e.g. a picnic, a campfire, participation in

(12.12.05)

Menschen Natur nahebringen

PROJEKT Erste Freiwilligen-Saison verlief erfolgreich



Willi Luers begleitet als freiwilliger Helfer im Nationalpark Besucher durch die Ausstellung des Wattmeerhauses.

Der Wilhelmshavener Willi Luers liebt die Natur. Und er hat Spaß daran, mit Menschen zu arbeiten.

WILHELMSHAVEN/LB – Ein an seinen Neigungen passendes Betätigungsfeld fand Willi Luers – bündlich betriebslos – vor der Haustür: Als er hörte, dass freiwillige Helfer für den Nationalpark „Niederrheinische Wattmeere“ gesucht werden, meldete er sich sofort für ein Projekt im Wattmeerhaus.

„Ich finde es spannend, mir Wissen über den Nationalpark anzueignen und an Interessierte weiterzugeben“, beschreibt Luers seine Motivation. Nachdem er sich in die vielseitigen Ausstellungsbereiche des Wattmeerhauses eingearbeitet hat, wird er – standardisiert – die Besucher beim Erleben der Ausstellung begleiten.

Eine Kontrolle seines Wissens zeigte er jetzt schon einigen Mitarbeitern der Nationalparkverwaltung und des Wattmeerhauses. Eppens aus Berlin angereist wie Anne Schierberg, die – beim Schutzgebiet-Nachwuchs – Europäer Deutschland das bundesweite Freiwilligen-Programm leitet.

Wenige Freiwillige waren in der Saison universell einsetzbar auf den Inseln tätig. So kartierte Claudia Thorenstein die Vegetation auf Borkum und auf Nordseeinsel bewachte Astrid Weidlich die Besucher an einer Informationsleiste im Nationalpark.

Auch in der nächsten Saison gibt es für interessierte wieder zahlreiche Möglichkeiten, sich im Nationalpark als Freiwilliger zu engagieren. Voraussetzung: Nebenbei die Nationalparkverwaltung an der Wurster Eilande, in Dattgeln, Carolinensiel, Nordden-Norddeich, Grentzel und Jule wie auch der Mellumer auf Wangerooge und die Nationalparkwache auf Nordseeinsel.

Wie Luers hat, kann sich mit der Freiwilligenkoordinatorin der Nationalparkverwaltung, Anne Spiegel, in Verbindung setzen. (Frei nach 12.12.2005, Niederdeutschland, E-Mail: Mariann.Spiegel@npk-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de).

Die Initiative, mit Freiwilligen in deutschen Großschutzgebieten zu arbeiten, ging ursprünglich vom Europaparc Deutschland aus, der Dachorganisation der deutschen Nationalparks, Naturparks und Biosphärenreservate. In einem Modellprojekt wurden in 15 deutschen Großschutzgebieten Freiwilligenkoordinatoren ausgebildet, um die Freiwilligen vor Ort zu betreuen.

Als Freiwilliger im Nationalpark

Nähere Informationen zu den Einsatzstellen im Nationalpark Niedersächsisches Wattmeer sind zu finden unter www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.niedersachsen.de sowie – in allen Einsatzstellen – in deutschen Großschutzgebieten – auf der Internet-Deutschland – Seite www.bewilligt.de.

Practical example 8:
Presentation of active volunteers in the regional press, Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park (Wilhelmshavener Zeitung, 2.12.2005)

- unusual monitoring excursions, joint rambles
- compensation for expenses
- regular information about current developments in the protected area (see also “participation”)
- opportunities to express personal opinions and introduce ideas (see also “participation”)
- possibilities to present the results of the voluntary work, e.g. at internal meetings, on information displays in the protected area

- mentioning volunteers by name when the results of work are published
- public relation and press work, e.g. articles about the involvement of volunteers in regional newspapers (see practical example 8), in annual reports, presentation of volunteers on websites (see practical example 9) and in the park newsletter
- thank-you letters e.g. on birthdays or at Christmas / New Year
- small presents, e.g. at the end of the season or as a farewell gift (see practical example 9)



Practical example 9: Presentation of volunteers on the volunteer programme website www.freiwillige-in-parks.de

teers also deserve suitable recognition. Very often, measures organised to express recognition for volunteers also offer a good opportunity to praise full-timers for their contribution. Among other things, this promotes the team feeling between full-timers and volunteers and strengthens awareness of the fact that they are successful when they work together as a team.

Dealing with conflicts

In organisations in which full-time personnel work together with volunteers, problems and conflicts can arise in the course of the activities. The reasons can include the fact that full-timers and volunteers have different motivations (motivation of volunteers, see p. 13) and thus different ways of working, or there may be different ideas about the rights and obligation of the personnel. Conflicts also arise if full-time employees fear that volunteers might “steal” the attractive tasks away from them, that they might replace them or they could be impeded in their work. In the volunteer programme, it is the responsibility of the head of the protected area, and possibly also of the heads of section, as well as of the volunteer coordinator, to encourage sceptical and critical full-time personnel to adopt a constructive attitude to cooperation with the volunteers.

- diploma, certificate or letter of recognition showing the scope and nature of the voluntary activity
 - special event, e.g. at the end of the season, with acknowledgement expressed by a regional dignitary (politician) (see practical example 12)
 - invitation to celebrations organised by the protected areas, possible with vouchers for food and drink, or similar
 - free or reduced entrance to institutions in the protected area, such as visitor centres, zoos, etc.
 - possibilities to present personal hobbies with a link to nature conservation, e.g. slide shows, photograph exhibitions in the rooms of the park
 - use of the equipment and facilities of the protected area
- Full-time personnel who have contributed to the success of a volunteer programme or have supervised and supported volun-



Practical examples 10 and 11: Rucksack and pocket knife – reward for participation in the volunteers in parks programme of the protected areas



Practical example 12: CDU-Bundestag deputy Georg Schirmbeck (front row, centre, with Anne Schierenberg, EUROPARC Germany, and Hartmut Escher, Director of the nature park) presents volunteers in the TERRA.vita Nature Park with rucksacks as an acknowledgement of their dedication

It makes sense to present the objectives and the measures of the volunteer programme as clearly as possible through internal information channels and to integrate full-time personnel as far as possible into the project planning and implementation (see p. 31).

As part of the training courses for the volunteer coordinators, participants had the opportunity to discuss specific conflicts relating to the volunteer programme in their own park and to develop solution strategies (see fig. 15).

Some of the most common objections put forward by full-time personnel to working together with volunteers are presented on the following pages with appropriate ways of dealing with these arguments.

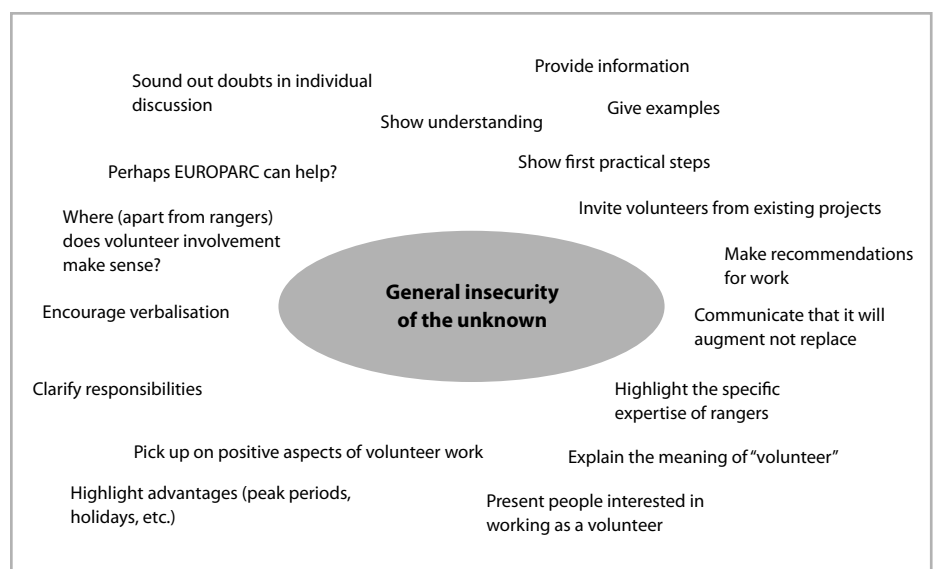


Fig. 15: Responding to full-timers with reservations about the volunteer programme (produced by participants in the introductory course for volunteer coordinators)

Objections by full-timers to working together with volunteers

ARGUMENT

Volunteers will take up too much of our time; they are an additional burden rather than support

HOW TO RESPOND

- Firstly, accept that volunteers can indeed take up time of the full-time personnel, particular in the initial stages
- Draw attention to experience. Experts say that once the volunteer has been given an introduction, full-timers only have to invest 1 hour for the volunteer to be able to work for at least 10-15 hours
- Give examples of “specialist volunteers” whose activities could never be carried out by full-time personnel, however long they took about it
- Improve the relationship between inputs and benefits:
 - Recruit volunteers for activities which require relatively little supervision by full-timers rather than requiring considerable additional work
 - Give volunteers tasks for which they have the ability and the motivation, so that they can work independently for most of the time
 - Give volunteers a thorough introduction to their task – the time invested in the introduction avoids wasting time later in dealing with unnecessary misunderstandings
 - Train several volunteers together (if organisationally possible)
 - Establish volunteer networks and volunteer support structures. Volunteers can often support and inform

one another, rather than having to bother a full-timer with every question. This can be in the form of a mentoring system (experienced + new volunteers)

- Consider releasing certain volunteers; frequently it is only individual volunteers who require time-intensive supervision. If a volunteer persistently takes up excessive amounts of time, and this problem does not arise with other volunteers: release volunteers, assign them to different activities. Have them supervised by different full-timers if the difficulties lie in the existing supervisor-volunteer combination and would probably not occur in the new constellation

ARGUMENT

You cannot tell volunteers what they should do, and can never get rid of them again even if they cannot do the work or do not want to

HOW TO RESPOND

- Ensure sceptics that volunteers can be “dismissed”
- Implement preventive measures that reduce the numbers of dismissals that may become necessary:
 - Recruit or contact appropriate potential volunteers, select them carefully and assign them to activities that suit them, rather than working on the principle “the more the better”
 - Explain the regulations about the “dismissal” of volunteers in the introductory information, training course and during the supervision
 - Make sure that the information sessions for volunteers and the introductory phases are realistic so that volunteers can themselves recognise at an early stage if an activity is not suitable for them (rather than having to be dismissed later on)
 - Agree on a trial period

- Give volunteers regular feedback: this can not only motivate them to further involvement (positive feedback), but also gives volunteers the opportunity to make the required changes (negative feedback)
- Develop clear guidelines and procedures to be adopted in the event of a “dismissal”:
 - Decide on “dismissals” if possible in consensus with the responsible bodies (e.g. a volunteer working group) which includes representatives of the volunteers
 - Have discussions with the volunteer; where possible suggest other activities (if the volunteer rejects these then the separation is HIS / HER decision)
 - Consider passing them on to another, more appropriate organisation
 - Provide volunteers with the opportunity to give feedback

ARGUMENT

Volunteers are a risk when it comes to the confidential handling of internal information

HOW TO RESPOND

- Make it clear that handling confidential information is a normal thing in many occupations, and that most people will be familiar with this
- In addition make sure that volunteers are trained in handling confidential data in the course of the introductory period and their supervision
- Check whether so-called confidential data could in fact be made publicly available
- Only allow volunteers access to confidential information if this is absolutely necessary for their activity
- Demonstrate to sceptics that volunteers may also be collecting confidential information in the course of their activity, and it will be desirable that they pass this on in trust to the full-timers

ARGUMENT

Volunteers will take jobs away from the full-time employees and/or they will be misused as an argument for cutting budgets for full-time employment

HOW TO RESPOND

- Questions to decision-makers:
 - ✦ Is it legal to transfer to volunteers the duties, responsibilities, etc. associated with an activity?
 - ✦ Would the appropriate support and supervision of volunteers be possible without a sufficient number of full-time personnel?
 - ✦ The motivation of volunteers and the effectiveness of their activities depends on good supervision and support. Full-time personnel cannot supervise any number of volunteers; experience shows that the number of volunteers in an organisation rises or falls proportionally to the number of full-timers
- Call on the supporters of cuts in budgets for full-time personnel to say clearly that they are prepared to “sacrifice” the quality and intensity of the work; make it plain that the expectations placed on volunteers are too high if they are supposed to replace full-time personnel
- Show sceptics that satisfied volunteers can generate interest and support and can speak out on behalf of the goals of the protected area and the full-time personnel who are supervising them. (Volunteers become involved because they support the goals of an organisation and not because they want to weaken the organisation and its full-time staff)

ARGUMENT

Volunteers only want to do the attractive activities, and they leave the boring things for the full-timers to do

HOW TO RESPOND

- Call on sceptics to formulate the job descriptions for volunteers and in this way make clear their power to shape how things develop
 - ✦ Let them “reserve” activities for themselves
 - ✦ What attractive activities can be carried out in team work with full-timers and volunteers?
- Point out to sceptics that they are getting paid for the work they do
- Draw attention to the fact that volunteers are often willing to take on “boring” tasks (manning infrequently visited information stalls, keying in data, preparing mail-shots, etc.), if the task is for a limited period and has other attractions, e.g. working together in a nice team, official recognition of the work, etc.

(after: SCHEIER 1996)

Internal information work

A key factor for the successful cooperation with volunteers in large scale protected areas is that as far as possible all those involved within the institution must have a positive attitude towards the volunteer programme (see also p. 8). Only convinced full-timers will make efforts to recruit volunteers, to provide them with the necessary support and also contribute towards the qualitative improvement of the project. The greatest possible commitment to the volunteer programme by the personnel working in the protected area is dependent above all on two factors:

1. The personnel must be sufficiently well informed about the objectives of the programme and the current status of the implementation. Then they will not experience the implementation as a secretive affair and will be able to provide anybody who is interested with adequate information.
2. The personnel are integrated in the planning for the volunteer programme, can make their own proposals and introduce ideas, as well as participate in the implementation and evaluation of the project.

In order to inform full-timers about the volunteer programme and to enable them to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation, it might be suitable to organise meetings, personal discussions of the volunteer coordinator with colleagues, regular reports on the state of the project in personnel newsletters or on the intranet, or also the participation in events with volunteers. A key element of successful internal information work is also that the park management should regularly highlight the importance of the project and provide arguments to support the personnel who are working on the implementation.

Planning publicity and winning project partners

“If you want to put a dollar into your company, then you have to keep a second dollar ready in order to announce it.”

Henry Ford

PR work and recruiting volunteers

Finding a good name

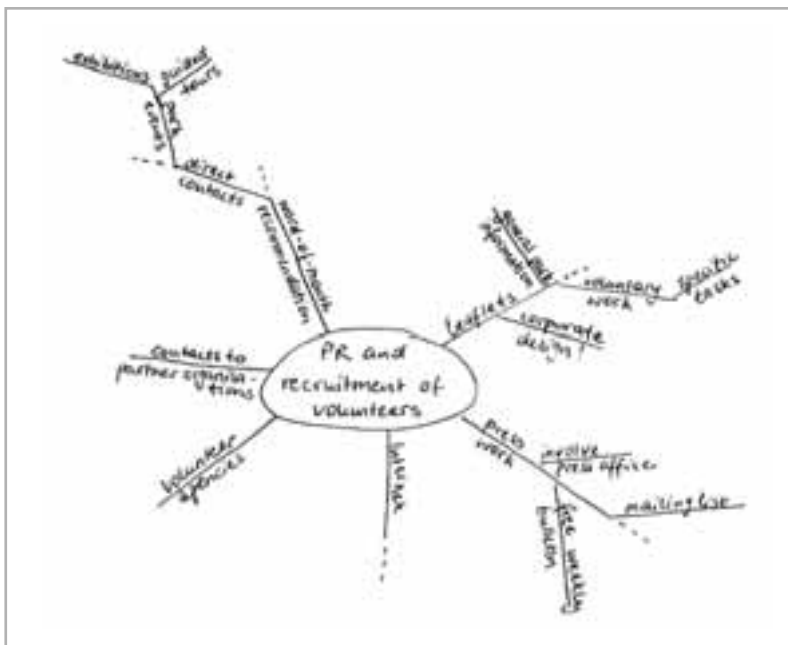
The basis for effective public relations work is provided by names and concepts that can be easily remembered and recognised. It is important to have striking words and slogans. A combination of words such as

“Freiwillige in Parks” (volunteers in parks) fulfils these requirements. The idea behind this is that the word “Freiwillige” (volunteers) is the modern wording for voluntary active people and has been accepted by a majority of those involved in voluntary work (cf. Rosenblatt 2001). “Parks” links to the US-american “Volunteers-in-Parks Programme” and refers to the categories of national parks and nature parks.

Strategies for PR work

Public relations work and advertising to recruit volunteers requires strategic planning and a methodical approach, in order to make the best possible use of the available resources and potential and to reach the desired target groups. The following steps lead to effective PR work in a volunteer programme:

1. Create the right internal conditions
 - create good conditions for the voluntary work
 - develop descriptions for the activities of volunteers (see pp. 14–16)
2. Plan and implement a strategic approach
 - define target groups: deduce who would be appropriate for an activity from the description
 - collect ideas about how to find interested people, or how to reach the target group
 - develop a media strategy and suitable measures (see following sections)
 - make use of media presentations
 - evaluate the effects and the success of the media activities and adjust the media strategy appropriately



Practical example 13: Mindmap planning forms the basis for applying media measures in PR work

“I discovered my love of cranes two years ago. Here I have the opportunity to do some bird-watching and to learn more about these fascinating animals. I often spend my free time here and I am glad to contribute to research and the protection of these wonderful birds.”

Moana Nischan, volunteer in the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve, is active in crane conservation



Fig. 16: A volunteer observes cranes in the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve

Developing a media strategy

A suitable way to develop a media strategy for the volunteer programme is to use a “mindmap” (see practical example 13). This involves mapping out how the various media can be used to attract and recruit volunteers and to advertise various activity locations.

Developing suitable media measures

On the basis of the media strategy it is possible to derive individual measures for the various media (see practical examples 14–20), each of which contributes in particular ways towards achieving the goals that have been defined the PR goals.

Implementing media measures

Media measures offer various advantages for PR work and should be used in a selective fashion depending on the project phase, the specific requirement, target groups, etc. It is often effective to combine various measures.

What is press and PR work?

Public relations work involves the intentional, planned, systematic, targeted and long-term activities of an organisation to shape their communicative relationships internally and externally (Kegel 2001).

What are the goals of PR work in a volunteer programme?

Primarily it should

- show potential volunteers what activities they could carry out and persuade them to get into contact,
- activate “friends” to spread a positive image of “volunteers in parks” and about the protected areas in general, and
- address potential project partners who are willing to support the volunteer programme in spirit, as well as providing material or financial backing.



Practical example 14: An advertising leaflet contains basic information for potential volunteers

Nationalpark
Hamburgisches Wattenmeer

Freiwillige in Parks gesucht!

Sie möchten sich ehrenamtlich für Naturschutz engagieren? Dann sind Sie bei uns genau richtig.

Die Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer arbeitet mit engagierten BürgerInnen zusammen, die sie in ihren vielfältigen Aufgaben unterstützen.

Tätigkeitsbereich:
Öffentlichkeitsarbeit/Umweltbildung

Für Tätigkeiten in der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit suchen wir einen **Nationalpark-FotografIn**.

Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Unterstützung beim Ausbau des Bildarchivs der Nationalpark-Verwaltung. Es werden vorzugsweise digitale Bilder aus dem Gebiet des Nationalparks benötigt. Wir sind gespannt auf Ihre Aufnahmen, wobei es auch um die gestellte Fotografie benötigter Motive geht.

geforderte Kenntnisse/Fähigkeiten/Eigenschaften/Interessen	Gesucht wird eine Person, die Lust an der Fotografie und ein Gefühl für interessante Motive hat. Kenntnisse oder Interesse bezüglich der digitalen Sicherung der Aufnahmen sind wünschenswert.
Altersbeschränkungen	Keine
vom Träger gestellte Ausrüstung/Materialien	Für die Abspeicherung von Bilddateien können PCs der Nationalpark-Verwaltung (Neuerwerb: Nationalpark-Station, Hamburg; Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt) genutzt werden. Fotoausrüstung, Filmmaterial und Speichermedien - sofern nicht vorhanden - können von der Nationalpark-Verwaltung nach Absprache gestellt werden.
von Freiwillig geforderte Ausrüstung	Die Verwendung einer eigenen Foto-Ausrüstung wäre wünschenswert.
Unserkunft	Eine Unterkunft im Gebiet kann leider nur in Einzelfällen nach Absprache gestellt werden.

Noch Fragen? Haben Sie Interesse? Bitte wenden Sie sich an:

Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Hamburg
Nationalpark-Verwaltung Hamburgisches Wattenmeer
Peter Körber
Stadthausbrücke 8, 20055 Hamburg
Tel.: 040 / 42840 - 2169
Fax: 040 / 42840 - 3552
Mail: peter.koerber@bau.hamburg.de
www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de

Weitere Projektinfos unter: www.freiwillige-in-parks.de

Info zum Projektträger: www.europarc-deutschland.de

Zetaufwand:
Einsatzzeiten,
Einsatzdauer

Bestimmen Sie selbst Ihre Aufenthaltszeiten im Gebiet. Wünschenswert wären im Schnitt 4-6 Einsatztage im Monat.

Practical example 15: A supplement shows specific activities which might come into question



Practical example 16: The website www.freiwillige-in-parks.de offers a lot of information for potential volunteers



Practical example 17: The poster about the project can for example be displayed in visitor centres in the protected areas



Practical example 18: Press articles in TERRA.vita Nature Park (Teuto-Express, 24.9.2005)



Practical example 19: Project presentation as part of an information evening in the Eichsfeld-Hainich-Werratal Nature Park



Practical example 20: Newspaper article on the annual evaluation with volunteers in the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve (Märkische Oderzeitung, 28.2.2005)

Cooperating with opinion leaders

In recent years, a number of promotional institutions and service centres have been established in Germany which are linked to voluntary work in various ways. Their objectives include, for example, supporting organizations working actively with volunteers by providing backing for their press and public relations activities. Within the framework of the volunteer programme, a number of forms of cooperation with opinion leaders have been found to be effective. In order to attract volunteers, protected areas can benefit from the support of the regional and local volunteer agencies, can participate in well-publicised events such as the “Berlin Volunteers Day” (organised by Treffpunkt Hilfsbereitschaft – the Berlin Volunteer Agency; see practical example 21) and use volunteer portals on websites of the German Länder (see practical example 22).



Practical example 21: Public relations activities within the framework of the Berlin Volunteer Day 2005 for voluntary work in the Nuthe-Nieplitz Nature Park (www.berliner-freiwilligentag.de)



Practical example 22: The volunteer programme presents itself on the internet on the Voluntary Work Portal Lower Saxony www.freiwilligenserver.de

Table 4:

Possibilities for cooperating with project partners in the volunteer programme

Cooperating with project partners – using synergies

The involvement of partners in the volunteer programme opens up opportunities to access additional resources – material and immaterial – and to benefit from synergy effects. Cooperation with appropriate project partners is possible for the various sub-sections of the programme (see tab. 4).

Successful cooperation projects with schools (see practical examples 25 and 26) show that there is a wide-range of possibilities for school students to be introduced to responsible activities in large scale protected areas.

SUB-SECTION OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME	POSSIBLE PROJECT PARTNER	PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE PROJECT
Strategic project development	Associations, clubs and institutions who operate in the large scale protected area and in the voluntary sector	Definition of the role of volunteers in the large scale protected areas together with the Association of German Nature Parks (VDN), German Ranger Association (Bundesverband Naturwacht), Federal Working Group of Governmental Educational Facilities for the Conservation of Nature and Environment (BANU), Academy for Volunteering Germany; development of key points for the promotion of voluntary involvement in nature conservation and environmental protection with German League for Nature and Environment (DNR) and its members
Training of volunteer coordinators	Training and education institutions	Training by the Academy for Volunteering Germany and Alfred Toepfer Academy for Nature Conservation (NNA)
Training of volunteers	Educational institutions, cooperation between institutions	Training by Landeslehrstätte für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege Lebus (Brandenburg), Environmental Ministry Brandenburg/Forestry and Nature Conservation Dept., District Osnabrück/Lower Nature Conservancy Council and Archaeology, District Office Schmalkalden-Meiningen/Specialist Services Veterinary and Foodstuff Monitoring and Water Authorities
Deployment and supervision of volunteers	Nature conservation societies/-associations with projects or institutions in parks, schools	Cooperation with friends association of National Park Centre Wilhelmshaven (Lower Saxony Wadden Sea NLP), Friends of the Earth (BUND) Thuringia and Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Senior School Großgottorn (link of volunteer programme with project "Save the Wild Cat" in Hainich NLP), School at Friedensring in Wittenburg (Schaalsee BR)
Recruiting volunteers, general PR work	Nature conservation societies/associations, volunteer agencies, sponsors	Joint public information event with BirdLife International (NABU) and Schutzstation Wattenmeer (Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea NLP), advertising volunteer positions of Naturwacht Brandenburg by Treffpunkt Hilfsbereitschaft – the Berlin Volunteer Agency and Volunteer Agency Wittenberge, free provision of graphics material by Zeiss Optik
Financial and other support	Park's friends associations for large scale protected areas, sponsors	Financing of project participation by parks' friends associations (Schaalsee BR), free transport of volunteers by Cassen Eils ferries (Hamburg Wadden Sea NLP)
Exchange of experience (national and international)	Protected areas and organisations with experience in volunteer management	Exchange of experience with the members of the German League for Nature and Environment (DNR), integration of volunteer coordinator of Yorkshire Dales NLP/GB and the volunteer coordinator of Friends of the Earth/CZ in the training of volunteer coordinators

Practical example 23: Cooperation with a school as project partner in the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

top: Certificate for school partnership

bottom: Julian Klimaschka plants trees on the water's edge



"It's important to get children interested in nature and to motivate them to do something about it. The students were always interested and were willing helpers with the planting despite the bad weather. Some visited the site after class with their parents to have their photographs taken, and parents and grandparents helped with the planting. This will certainly give the children a lasting memory of the end of their primary schooling."

Ilona Rassmann, Teacher of class 4b / "Schule am Friedensring", Wittenburg; supervisor of the project in the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

"I didn't like the dam because the fish couldn't get past it. It was fun to see how that all changed. The stones and plants made the water cleaner. I enjoyed planting the trees and bushes."

Richard Puis, member of class 4b / "Schule am Friedensring", Wittenburg

TA 03.04.2005

Wo die wilden Katzen wohnen

Schüler des Gymnasiums Großengottern helfen ehrenamtlich beim Projekt „Rettungsnetz Wildkatze“

In einem bundesweit einmaligen Freiwilligenprojekt starteten gestern 18 Schüler des Gymnasiums Großengottern ihre Suche nach Wildkatzen im Nationalpark Hainich.

Von Malte WICKING

LANDKREIS. Erst müssen die Schüler das Röhrchen mit Baldrian in dem Pflock befestigen, dann rauhen sie mit einer Bürste das Holz auf. Denn wenn der Baldrian-Geruch die Wildkatze anlockt, und sie sich am Pflock reibt, sollen einige ihrer Haare darin hängen bleiben.

„All das erklärt der Biologe Thomas Mölich geduldig den Schülern der fünften bis sechsten Klasse. Mölich leitet das Projekt



en mehr Lebensraum zu geben. Die Haare an den Pfählen verraten, wie weit die Wildkatzen bereits gewandert sind. Ließe man die Haare von Biologen einsammeln, wäre das viel zu teuer. Darum heißen nun die Schüler beim Forschen. Freiwillig, und in ihrer Freizeit.

„In Großbritannien und den USA gibt es seit Jahrzehnten freiwillige Helfer in Nationalparks“, erklärt der Leiter der Parkverwaltung, Walter Kemkes. Deshalb läuft an 15 Modellstandorten das Projekt „Freiwillige in Parks“ zur Förderung ehrenamtlichen Engagements im Umweltbereich. „Dass Kinder sich dabei engagieren ist allerdings einmalig“, betont Projektleiterin Anne Schierberg. Sie war extra aus Berlin angereist, um beim ersten Einsatz der Schüler dabei zu sein.

VERLOCKEND: Das Baldrian-Röhrchen zieht Wildkatzen an. TA-Peter: Autor

„Rettungsnetz Wildkatze“ des Bundes für Umwelt und Naturschutz in Deutschland (BUND). Wildkatzen halten sich fast nur in Waldgebieten auf. Wenn zwischen diesen große Ackerflächen liegen, wie in Thüringen, können die Wildkatzen nicht weiterwandern. Mit dem Projekt soll ein Grünkorridor zwischen Nationalpark und Thüringer Wald entstehen, um den Tieren

Practical example 24: Pupils of the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn Grammar School Grossengottern start work on the cooperation project "Save the Wild Cat" of Friends of the Earth (BUND) and the Hainich National Park (Thüringer Allgemeine, 8.9.2005)

Drawing on experience

“Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort.”

John Ruskin, English essayist and critic

Documentation, evaluation and quality management

With the volunteer programme of the large scale protected areas, the integration of volunteers in the park work has developed into a management sector in its own right for the protected areas. Good management not only involves planning and implementing the goals and measures, but also documenting and regularly evaluating these. This makes it possible to monitor own activities and the results both quantitatively and qualitatively, and to develop the programme further in a targeted fashion on the basis of the evaluation (see fig. 17). Evaluation helps to achieve the programme goals and to realise the targeted benefits (see p. 7).

The evaluation of the experience in the course of the project so far has led to the formulation of quality standards (see pp. 42–44). These are intended to function as guidelines for EUROPARC Germany and the large scale protected areas which make use of volunteers in their operations. The quality standards relate to the internal park structures and the processes of the volunteer programme. They are supplemented by additional quality management measures. These include an annual evaluation of the programme in the form of a written questionnaire sent to the volunteer coordinators and the volunteers (see practical example 25). On the basis of the survey it is possible

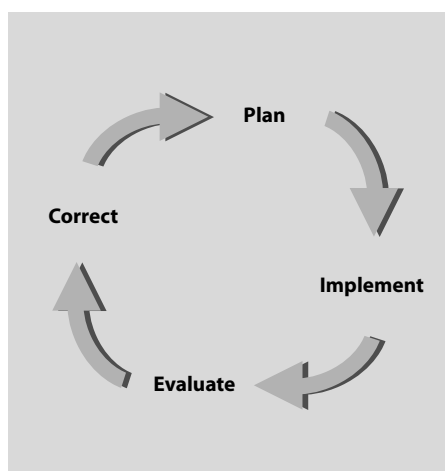


Fig. 17: The quality management cycle

to check the progress of the programme, e.g. the type and the extent of the voluntary activities and the satisfaction of the volunteers and of the full-timers. It is also important for the quality management of the volunteer programme that the resonance in the media is documented and evaluated. Among other things, this can indicate which forms of public relations work are most effective.

Evaluation and quality assurance should not only be used in order to regularly adjust the internal organisation of the programme to suit the programme goals. They can also be employed effectively in order to provide positive feedback to volunteers and full-time

What are the goals of quality management in volunteer programmes?

Quality management helps,

- to improve structures, processes and the results of volunteer programmes and
- to do justice to the interests and needs of all participants.

personnel about their work and to express praise and recognition for their contributions.

Positive and negative influences on the volunteer programme

The evaluation of the experience gained in the course of the project shows that there are various factors which influence the volunteer management in the large scale protected areas either positively or negatively.

Practical example 25:
Assessment sheet for
volunteers

Assessment Voluntary programme (name of park) 2005					
Thank you very much for your voluntary work in (name of park)!					
We want to develop the volunteer programme so that you and many other volunteers enjoy working with us. Please let us know about your experience, wishes, comments and ideas – we are very interested in your opinion. Thank you!					
Name (optional): _____					
You can also return this form anonymously to EUOPARC Germany (address below).					
I had the following activity, at the following location (optional): _____ _____					
Please tick the appropriate boxes!					
	Fully agree	Agree	Devided	Disagree	Completely disagree
I had the feeling I was doing something meaningful					
My expectations about voluntary work were fulfilled					
I felt well supervised					
I had enough opportunities to introduce my own ideas					
I was well informed about matters relating to my activity					
I always knew who to contact if I had questions/problems/requests					
The relationship with the full-time park personnel was positive					
I have learnt a lot about the work of the park					
Overall I was satisfied with my voluntary activity					
I found out about the volunteer programme through: _____					
I would wish the following for my further activity in (name of park)/					
I have the following idea to make the volunteer programme more attractive for volunteers: _____ _____					
Other remarks: _____ _____					
Please return to: (Name of park) (Name of volunteer coordinator) (Address) (Tel./Fax) (E-mail)			or: EUOPARC Deutschland Anne Schierenberg Friedrichstr. 60, 10117 Berlin, Germany Tel.: 030/2887882-15, Fax: 030/2887882-16 E-mail: anne.schierenberg@europarc-deutschland.de		

Positive factors include:

- a recognised and qualified volunteer coordinator
- support for the volunteer coordinator by park management and other full-timers
- clear activities for volunteers in specific fields
- regular contact with the volunteer
- exchange of experience between parks
- individual support of the parks in terms of content and organization, step-by-step guidance and coordination by the programme executing organization

Negative factors (constraints) include:

- obscure legal and financial framework
- unclear responsibilities of the volunteer coordinators
- lack of support for the volunteer coordinator from the management of the protected area and other full-timers
- time pressures on the volunteer coordinators

Quality standards for volunteer management in large scale protected areas

On the basis of the experience in the project and the evaluation of the results, quality standards for volunteer management in parks were formulated in consultation with the volunteer coordinators of the model areas (see tabs. 5–7). These are intended to act as guidelines for the parks and EUOPARC Germany in the further development of the volunteer programme.

Table 5:

Activities in the large scale protected areas

Internal preparation

STANDARD	ALTERNATIVE (A) OR ADDITIONAL (+)
1 Protected areas direction and heads of the competent department explicitly approve the promotion of volunteer management in the park	
2 A technical and personal apt full-timer is appointed volunteer coordinator and given responsibility for volunteer management, with an appropriate time budget and responsibilities; all protected area personnel are informed about this	
3 For the protected area, the goals of the volunteer management are formulated by the director of the protected area, the heads of department and the volunteer coordinator	+: The goals of the volunteer management were formulated with the participation of other personnel
4 Other park personnel are regularly informed by the volunteer coordinator about the volunteer programme (e.g. goals of the volunteer programme, rights and duties of volunteers)	+: Other park personnel are regularly involved in the volunteer management, e.g. definition of rights and duties of volunteers, recruiting of volunteers
5 The volunteer coordinator has been trained in volunteer management, and appropriate materials are available (check lists, best-practice examples, etc.)	
6 Volunteer management forms (agreements with volunteers, evaluation sheets, certificates for volunteers, etc.) are available, adapted to the large protected area	
7 Fields of operation for volunteers and appropriate target groups are agreed between volunteer coordinator and relevant park personnel (on-going)	+: Park personnel have proposed fields of operation for volunteers independently (on-going)
8 The volunteer coordinator has prepared appropriate job descriptions for volunteers (on-going)	+: Park personnel have prepared their own job descriptions for their volunteers in consultation with the volunteer coordinator (on-going)
9 A resource planning is developed for the volunteer management	
10 The park provides liability insurance cover for volunteers	a: Volunteers are insured under private personal liability insurance
11 The park provides accidental damages insurance cover for volunteers	a, +: Volunteers are insured under private accidental damages insurance
12 In collaboration with the responsible PR department and in coordination with the park's direction the volunteer coordinator develops an advertising strategy depending on the chosen fields of volunteer involvement, the target groups and the job descriptions for volunteers (on-going)	+: Further full-timers are integrated in the development and implementation of the advertising strategy (on-going)

Table 6:

Activities in the large scale protected areas

Involvement of volunteers

STANDARD	ALTERNATIVE (A) OR ADDITIONAL (+)
13 The volunteer coordinator is available to discuss with prospective volunteers and to advise and support active volunteers	a: The information, advice and support are also available to potential and active volunteers from other technical and personal apt full-timers depending on the field of activity
14 People enquiring about volunteer work receive an information pack about the opportunities in the park and the framework conditions	
15 The volunteer coordinator conducts an introductory interview with prospective volunteers in order to discuss the expectations and interests, as well as the rights and obligations	a: Other technical and personal apt full-timers carry out an introductory meeting with potential volunteers after consulting with the volunteer coordinator
16 Volunteers are deployed in accordance with their interests, their skills, their suitability, the goals of volunteer management and the needs of the park	
17 A written agreement is drawn up between the volunteer and the park about the cooperation (to strengthen ties and for insurance reasons)	a: For short-term or one-off assignments, a verbal agreement is reached unless insurance cover demands other procedures
18 Volunteers with whom a long-term agreement has been reached begin with a taster or trial phase, followed by an informal talk with a full-time supervisor	
19 Volunteers are introduced by the volunteer coordinator to their assignment area and the team, and during their activity they are advised by specialists and if necessary trained	a: Volunteers are introduced, supervised and trained by other technical and personal apt full-timers after consulting with the volunteer coordinator
20 According to the interests, skills and aptitude of the volunteers and according to the conditions within the park the volunteers are offered a "volunteer career" (increasingly responsible tasks, training possibilities, etc.)	
21 Volunteers are informed about matters affecting them and involved as far as possible (e.g. relevant alterations to their field, the introduction of new volunteers)	
22 Volunteers can consult the volunteer coordinator in confidence	a, +: Volunteers can consult other technical and personal apt full-timers in confidence
23 The volunteer coordinator promotes good cooperation between volunteers and full-timers (possibilities for exchanges, mediation of conflicts, etc.)	+: Other full-timers promote good cooperation between volunteers and full-timers
24 If interested volunteers are offered contact and exchange opportunities with other volunteers	
25 The park highlights the importance of voluntary involvement, the results of voluntary work etc. in its PR activities	
26 Volunteers are requested at a suitable time (e.g. at the end of the season or of their project) to provide feedback about their satisfaction with their activity, the supervision, etc.	
27 Volunteers are given recognition and are thanked for their dedication	
28 Volunteers can receive a certificate about the type and extent of their work	
29 The park director publicly supports the volunteer programme (public statements, expressions of gratitude, etc.)	
30 The volunteer coordinator documents the deployment of volunteers, feedback from volunteers, etc., informs the park director, heads of department and park personnel about the results and draws the consequences	+: Other full-timers are involved in the evaluation of the volunteer management

Table 7:

Activities of EUROPARC Germany

STANDARD

- | | |
|----|---|
| 31 | The contact to the protected areas is maintained in order to identify risks and opportunities in good time and provide appropriate advice |
| 32 | The parks are informed about relevant political developments, funding programmes, competitions, etc. |
| 33 | The bi-lateral and multi-lateral exchange of experience between the protected areas is encouraged in the form of transfers of best-practice examples, support for the provision of mutual advice and the further training of volunteer coordinators |
| 34 | Relevant work aids are made available to the parks (volunteer management forms, notification of insurance regulations, etc.) |
| 35 | In consultation with the parks, a general strategy is developed for PR work and advertising |
| 36 | Relevant measures are organised and implemented e.g. a standard form of recognition for volunteers |
| 37 | On the basis of the park specific documentation and evaluation of the volunteer management the overall volunteer programme is evaluated and appropriate conclusions derived |
| 38 | People interested in volunteer work are advised about possibilities and introduced to appropriate protected areas |
| 39 | Contacts are promoted between protected areas and potential cooperation partners in the field of volunteer management (volunteer agencies, educational institutions, partner protected areas, etc.) e.g. by information transfer and organisation of meetings |

Reaching the goals and setting new ones

“I am particularly interested in the ‘future’ because that is the time I shall live in.”

Albert Einstein

Summary

After completion of the two-year project “Establishing a volunteer programme in German large scale protected areas”, the national network of parks in Germany has gained valuable experience in volunteer management. As a result of the project and the experience gained in volunteer management in the protected areas of Brandenburg since 2003, it has been possible to initiate programmes in parks in six other German federal states for the coordinated and systematic integration of volunteers. The model areas, with their various organisational and staff structures, levels of equipment, special fields and geographic features now illustrate the many different ways volunteers can be integrated in the work of the large scale protected areas. And they can therefore act as models for other parks in Germany.

The following results were achieved in the course of the project:

- The volunteer coordinators from the 15 large scale protected areas involved went through basic training and received a certificate as “Volunteer Coordinator – Basic skills in volunteer management” from the Academy for Volunteering Germany and extended their knowledge and their abilities in an additional training course in volunteer management,
- applicants interested in working as a volunteer could be offered a wide range of possible assignments to suit varying personal interests, abilities, individual time budgets, etc.,
- the large scale protected areas can make use of various ways of advertising for new volunteers, e.g. brochures with inlays for specific areas, posters and the project website,
- volunteers were active seasonally in 2004 and 2005 within the framework of the volunteer programme, working in a broad spectrum of nature conservation and environmental education projects and they were trained appropriately for their activities,
- the public relations and lobby work in the large scale protected areas were

able to achieve new successes with the help of the volunteer programme, e.g. in addressing political decision makers and attracting project partners,

- the quality standards developed for the volunteer management in large scale protected areas combine the experience of the model areas and provide conditions for a professional approach to volunteers as well as for the qualitative assurance and further development of the volunteer programme; they also give valuable guidelines for parks which wish to integrate volunteers in their work,
- the volunteer programme as national network brought together the large scale protected areas involved and enabled them through joint work and by exchanging experience to benefit from a range of synergy effects.

Prospects

The way forward is to integrate the public in the management of large scale protected areas. The report of the German federal government on the State of the Nature 2005 (Lage der Natur 2005) says: “Modern nature conservation also needs the commitment of the individual to be environmentally aware and to be active for nature conservation” (BMU 2005). Promoting modern nature conservation is the duty and responsibility of Germany’s large scale protected areas, and is also in their vital interests.

A network of parks has already been established which are working together in the volunteer programme for more public participation. This opens up all sorts of linkages, and opportunities for inputs from other protected areas, prospective volunteers, and project partners such as schools and colleges, volunteer agencies, sponsors, or the media. The protected areas offer the opportunity to conclude new, mutually beneficial alliances.

In this modern nature conservation strategy of the large scale protected areas, some aspects will be of particular importance:

- Against the background of the current discussion about educational reforms, the large scale protected areas and their volunteer programme can emerge as particularly attractive partners for schools, and as locations for extra-mural education and training. They can offer students the opportunity to take on responsible duties in nature conservation. In this way they promote the skills and motivation of future decision makers to work independently and responsibly for a sound environment.
- Nature does not recognise boundaries. In view of this, the volunteer programme offers an ideal opportunity to combine nature conservation and international understanding. Volunteers from other countries can enrich the nature conservation and environmental protection activities of the German large scale protected areas and add new aspects. Equally, the German protected areas can act as a starting base for people who are interested in working for parks in other countries. The practical cooperation, shared interests and the successes achieved bring together people from various nations. The parks have the opportunity to present themselves through an international volunteer programme as a driving force in Europe.
- Voluntary activities are not only limited to the efforts of individuals. Companies are also increasingly discovering how they can “profit” from activities for the general good, and they are supporting community institutions or staff members who are engaged in voluntary activities. Large scale protected areas can be attractive partners for the business sector. The volunteer programme provides an appropriate framework for demonstrating “corporate social responsibility”, and future strategies should aim to expand this cooperation.

The volunteer programme of the large scale protected areas demonstrates a promising approach for the future. EUROPARC Germany is happy to strengthen education for sustainable development by promoting involvement of the society and supporting personal competencies of active citizens – for the benefit of all.

REFERENCE SECTION

ABBREVIATIONS

BANU	Bundesweiter Arbeitskreis der staatlich getragenen Bildungsstätten im Natur- und Umweltschutz (Federal Working Group of Governmental Educational Facilities for the Conservation of Nature and Environment)
BR	Biosphere reserve
BUND	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (Friends of the Earth)
FFH	Flora-Fauna Habitat (EU Directive)
GNL	Geprüfter Natur- und Landschaftspfleger (approved Nature and Landscape Conservator)
NABU	Naturschutzbund Deutschland (BirdLife International)
NLP	National park
NRP	Nature park
PR	Public relations

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DNR (Deutscher Naturschutzring) (Ed.) 2005: Eckpunkte zur Stärkung des ehrenamtlichen Engagements im Natur- und Umweltschutz, Bonn.

LINKS

www.freiwillige-in-parks.de
(Service site for the volunteer programme in German parks)

www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de
(site for German national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves)

www.europarc-deutschland.de
(EUROPARC Germany)

www.naturwacht.de
(NaturSchutzFonds Brandenburg/Naturwacht Brandenburg)

www.nps.gov/volunteer
(Volunteers-in-parks Program, National Park Service/USA)

www.freiwilligen-kultur.de
(Internet magazine for voluntary work)

www.ehrenamt.de
(Academy for Volunteering Germany)

www.bagfa.de
(Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freiwilligenagenturen: provides addresses of volunteer agencies in Germany)

www.mitarbeit.de
(Stiftung Mitarbeit: Service centre for public participation outside of political parties and large associations)

PHOTOS

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