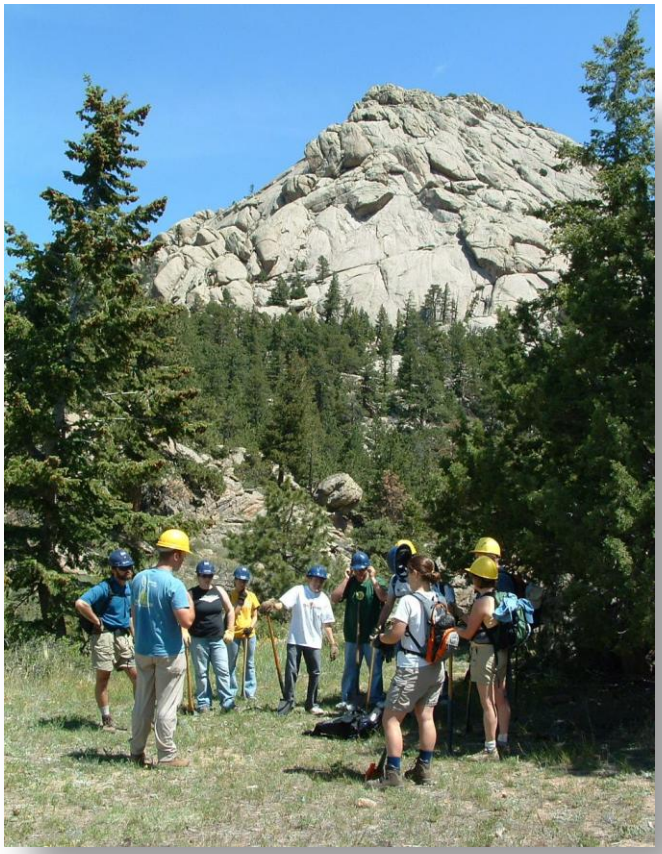
Volunteers & Service

Working Together, Preserving the Public Lands Legacy



A strategic plan to strengthen the foundation of the Forest Service Volunteers and Service program and build a culture throughout the agency that embraces, supports and provides resources for program initiatives, and our partners. With a customer-centric focus and emphasis on preserving the public lands legacy, the Volunteers and Service program will deliver high quality service to its partners and provide a safe, inclusive and developmental service experience for volunteers and service participants.

National Forest System, Recreation, Heritage & Volunteer Resources, Volunteers & Service, August 2011

"Our tradition of voluntary association is still vital. And its vitality is rooted in good soil – civic pride, compassion, spiritual commitments, a sense of individual responsibility and, whatever cynics may say, a commitment to the great shared effort to improve our life together and to ensure a good future for our children and our children's children." John Gardner, 1979

Introduction

The Forest Service seeks to leverage a growing national emphasis on volunteerism and President Obama's interest in America's Great Outdoors. Committed to developing a robust volunteer program since a Volunteer Summit was convened in April 2008 in Salt Lake City, the Office of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources (RHVR) has focused on hiring staff, addressing administrative procedures and collecting input about Agency-wide volunteer needs. Below is a brief overview of some of the more recent volunteer and youth highlights and activities, and the Forest Service priorities related to these issue areas.

- A number of research projects and surveys conducted by Forest Service staff have found, among other things, the Agency would benefit from "a national volunteer strategy to: 1) assess current program capacity; and 2) articulate a vision of the program."
- Team members from the Recreation Advisory Services IDIQ worked with volunteer coordinators to identify best practices for volunteer program management based upon our own experiences as well as external non-profit volunteer management models.
- RHVR launched the Framework for Sustainable Recreation with focus areas that support the need for a more robust Volunteers and Service program. They include Promote Citizen Stewardship; Forge Strategic Partnerships; and Enhance Communities.
- The America's Great Outdoors initiative has generated a national dialogue on how to reconnect Americans with the outdoors and the AGO report released February 2011 includes a major emphasis on volunteerism, youth and career pathways.
- The new Planning Rule will have an emphasis on recreation and collaboration with communities, both of which offer new exposure and meaning for the Volunteers and Service program.
- Volunteers contribute to all five of the Chief's focus areas: Safety, Inclusiveness, Restoration, Fire, and Community.

Figure 1: Strategic Planning Session Participants

Bill Anthony, R6
Andrea Bedell-Loucks, WO
Chris Brown, WO
Helene Cleveland, WO
Liz Close, R4
Nancy Coyote, WO
Frances Enkoji, R5
Nathaniel Gillespie, WO
Ken Karkula, WO
Steve Kratville, R1
Linda Kruger, R10
Sarah Levy, R6
Bill Lyons, R4
Lisa Machnik, R4
Jeremiah Martinez, R2
Merlene Mazyck, WO
Heidi McAllister, WO
Dawn Meier, R9
Crystal Merica, WO
Claudia Mielke, R9
Jeff Miller, R10
Michelle Mitchell, R8
Rebecca Oreskes, R9
Margaret Petersen, R6
Heidi Schewel, R3
Nancy Stremple, WO
Robert West, R6
Chor Yang, R5

Building on this work, RHVR convened a group of 27 Forest Service staff (Figure 1) in November 2010 to develop a framework for a Volunteer Strategy that has relevance across the Forest Service and will nurture a new generation of conservation stewards.

Background

Volunteerism became a formal and organized program component of the Forest Service with the passing of the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972.1 This act allowed the Forest Service to legally accept the services of volunteers as individuals or groups. Volunteers are not considered federal employees except for purposes of tort claims and work related injuries.

Through the years the Volunteer program has expanded and contracted as it has weathered restructuring and reorganizing as noted in Figure 2. The Volunteer program was managed as a component of the Office of Human Resources for several decades. The positioning of the program in Human Resources likely resulted in the integration of volunteers in departments and units throughout the Agency. Since 2006, the Volunteers and Service 2 program of work has operated within the Office of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources.

Figure 2: Volunteer Program Major Events Timeline

> **We need a sea-change in how volunteers are seen by leadership that includes an intentional, strategic use of volunteers and dedicated staff positions to coordinate volunteer program before we see significant increases in the quality or quantity of our volunteer program ~ Volunteer Webinar Feedback, January 2010**

The transition to Recreation was proposed as one of several options by a team of Forest Service staff that was convened in January 2005 to recommend Strategic Realignment of the Senior, Youth, Volunteer and Hosted Programs (SYVP); it was also necessitated by the Human Resources Process Re-engineering that reorganized and relocated the newly named Human Capital Office to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Recreation was considered the most ideal new home for the Volunteer program for a number of reasons: 1) about 70% of volunteer accomplishments were in Recreation and Heritage Management; 2) substantial volunteer program staff were already in Recreation; 3) the focus on people aligned well with the SYVP mission; and 4) the emphasis on community and partnerships in RHVR are essential requirements for an effective volunteer program. Also,

[1] Public Law 92–300; Approved May 18, 1972

[2] Previously titled Senior, Youth and Volunteer Programs (SYVP) and Youth, Volunteers and Hosted (YVH) Programs

Managing volunteers requires financial, administrative, staff, supervisory and equipment resources. The FS must realistically assess and plan for the costs of a volunteer program. ~ 11/2010 Strategic Planning Session Participant Input

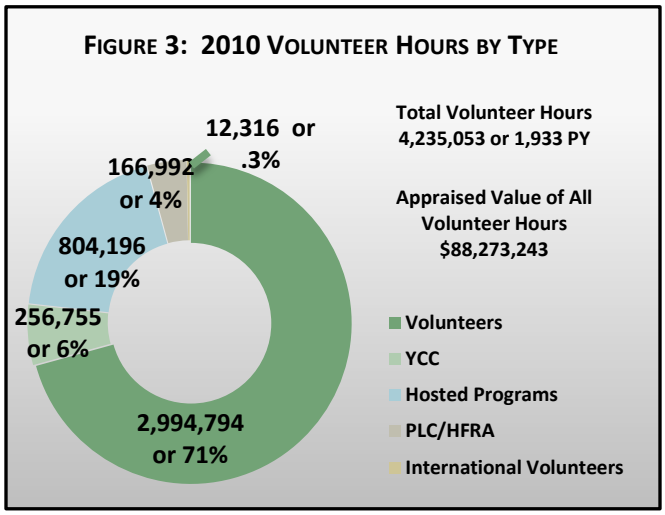
during approximately the same time frame, the $20 million Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Department of Labor partnership with the Forest Service was discontinued. Many SCSEP employees had longstanding volunteer agreements through this program on the national forests and grasslands.

The organizational restructuring and elimination of a large funding stream resulted in significant changes to the program's mission, visibility and effectiveness. Additionally, during this period, long-term program staff retired or accepted new assignments within the agency. In the Washington office, volunteer positions decreased to two full time equivalents for a period of approximately two years, and the Regions struggled to find new resources and strategies to support regional volunteer coordinating functions.

Washington Office Recreation staff, working with the Recreation Advisory Service IDIQ team, organized a dialogue about the future of the volunteer program in 2008 and hosted a nationwide webinar in 2009 to share research data, best practices and continue the discussion on the future of the Volunteer program. A program manager was hired in the spring 2010 and directed by leadership to develop a comprehensive strategy for the Forest Service Youth, Volunteer and Hosted programs. The Recreation Advisory Service IDIQ team was engaged to help plan and facilitate the strategic planning session. Throughout this period and despite the challenges, volunteers continued to make significant contributions to the Forest Service mission.

Volunteers & Service Contributions & Accomplishments

Volunteers contribute significant and diverse services on the national forests and grasslands in diverse programs in every department in every Region, Station and Area. The largest numbers of volunteers are engaged in programs that are managed through the Office of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources (RHVR).



Every summer the Youth Conservation Corps actively engages hundreds of young people on a variety of projects. In FY 2010, the Forest Service reported ***nearly 100,000 volunteers that contributed 4,235,000 hours or 1,933 person years valued at $88,275,000*** [3]. By far, most Forest Service volunteers are enrolled on volunteer agreements and are reported under the "Volunteers" program in general. Volunteer outcomes also include Passport in Time, trail organizations and Back Country Horsemen of America – all programs that are managed by other RHVR units, as well as many other program areas such as Fisheries, Wildlife, Plants, Watershed Management, etc. Since volunteer programs were established by the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972, the numbers of volunteers that serve annually have been substantial. ***From 2000 to 2010, hundreds of thousands of volunteers contributed more than 46 million***

[3] Independent Sector valuation of volunteer hour in 2009 is $20.85.

volunteer hours averaging about 4.1 million hours annually in most Forest Service Resource areas. It is highly likely these accomplishments are gross underestimates of volunteer engagement. Volunteers serve throughout the agency on a wide range of programs, but unfortunately, accountability is uneven and not all programs report their accomplishments and activities through the central reporting database. Subsequently, outcomes are not systematically or comprehensively captured.

Figure 4: Clayton State University Volunteers

Although volunteer engagement has remained steady over the past two years, there are notable exceptions. Since 2006, volunteer participation in the Trails and Back Country Horsemen of America programs increased an average of 33 percent. Both programs support trail maintenance and restoration projects primarily.

Today, volunteer interest remains high and volunteer contributions are impressive. The Forest Service would be unable to meet many of its critical priorities without the involvement of tens of thousands volunteers annually. The America's Great Outdoors initiative has generated enormous interest in volunteering on public lands. Coupled with diminishing budget resources, the Forest Service has a unique opportunity to expand volunteerism and service opportunities for Americans and safeguard the public lands legacy for future generations.

Situational Analysis

Figure 5: Volunteer Program Management Capacity Assessment Key Findings

- **Current FS infrastructure for managing the volunteer program is inconsistent across the agency.**
- **Volunteering provides opportunities for educational and recreational citizen stewardship, and supports relationships between the forest service and communities.**
- **The management of volunteers requires financial, administrative, staff, supervisory and equipment resources; the FS must realistically asses and plan for the costs of a volunteer program.**
- **Investment of resources and dedicated staff time for volunteer management is directly related to the success of a volunteer program.**

In preparation for the strategic planning session, several sources of data were reviewed and summarized to create a situational analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Data sources included key findings from the April 2008 Volunteer Summit in Salt Lake, a Forest Service Volunteer Program Management Capacity Assessment completed in February 2009, research on Volunteer Management Models completed in September 2009, interviews with Forest Service personnel and comprehensive queries of planning session participants. A survey conducted by James Absher, Ph.D. in 2007 found that "USFS's reliance on volunteers and partnerships-based arrangements is substantial" and that by "developing accountability mechanisms and ongoing training and evaluation practices, the USFS will sustain and improve volunteer management capacity, and the agency will achieve more from voluntary service."[4]

Following the 2008 Building Capacity workshop, Lisa Machnik, Ph.D. was tasked with compiling data that would support and

[4] Partnerships and Volunteers in the U.S. Forest Service, Proceedings of the 2008 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, James D. Absher, Ph.D., Pacific Southwest Research Station, U.S. Forest Service, 2008

> **There's a ton of volunteers involved with Fire and this is a critical part of the Agency mission. We have folks involved as fire lookouts, in fire prevention, in fire information. We don't do a good job of quantifying this. ~ Program Director Interview, November 2010**

complement the volunteer strategy effort. An online survey of FS staff at district, forest and regional offices yielded 272 responses, and interviews with other key FS staff and selected partners and volunteers organizations culminated in a report, titled Forest Service Volunteer Program Management—Capacity Assessment. The report provided an overview of current volunteer program management and capacity, summarized issues, challenges and concerns identified by FS staff, described effective volunteer program management requirements; and presented FS staff futuring perspectives for the program.[5] Key findings are listed in Figure 4.

In general, FS staff at all levels agreed that ***"volunteers are one of the agency's strong points",*** however responses from FS staff including program directors mirrored the data outcomes from both of the aforementioned studies. Organizational capacity and administrative coherency, dedicated staff at the unit level, and training were repeatedly identified as essential to a successful volunteer program. Figure 5 summarizes the situational analysis compiled from multiple data sources.

Strengths focus primarily on staff, partners, and volunteers as critical assets. The collaborative esprit de corps and cooperative organizational culture also featured prominently as strengths. **Weaknesses** that targeted capacity issues related to organization infrastructure, accountability and reporting and allocation of scarce resources were most pervasive.

Figure 6: Situational Analysis--SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Partners Passionate people Collaborative spirit Agency-wide focus Internal research resources	Inconsistent program infrastructure Diminishing resources Bureaucracy Communication and outreach Data management and accountability
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
Large market for public service America's Great Outdoors 40th (2012) and 50th (2022) anniversaries of authorizing legislation Baby boomer retirements Increasing emphasis on youth engagement	Federal budget challenges Aging workforce Changing American demographic Interest may overwhelm capacity Employee perceptions of the impact of volunteers on job stability

Threats also focused on human assets including a high volume of staff retirements and lack of diversity among volunteers, as well as eroding fiscal resources and concerns about job stability. The **opportunities** are driven almost exclusively by external factors such as escalating public interest in the outdoors, service and volunteerism, a federal priority to expand youth service and employment programs, and the Administration's interest in expanding public participation and engagement on public lands. Despite these challenges, the American public is the most supportive it has ever been.

[5] Forest Service Volunteer Program Management—Capacity Assessment Report, Lisa Machnik, Ph.D., Region 4, March 2009.

Strategic planning is worthless - unless there is first a strategic vision. John Naisbitt

Forging a Strategic Identity: Volunteers & Service

An agency-wide strategic identity and plan for the Volunteers and Service program is critical for the program's success and sustainability. Following a great deal of discussion at the strategic planning session about the various groups and individuals that are engaged, the ways that people are engaged on the national forests and grasslands and in Research, and how the program is perceived by non-RHVR resource areas, it was agreed that identity is an issue. To build an agency-wide focus it was determined that the ***program's identity must be recognized as integral to the agency's mission and must clearly communicate the strategic connection between the agency's future and sustained engagement of individuals and groups in mutually beneficial relationships***.

The goals are to create broad based identity for Volunteers and Service that is embraced throughout every unit of the agency regardless, promote a culture that supports volunteerism and service, and create a broader arc of inclusion while acknowledging the service contributions of our Corps partners and participants. Youth, volunteers and hosted programs are key tools in the delivery of agency Volunteers and Service objectives. Shifting our nomenclature, however, from a focus on the tools we use to a focus on who we are in the context of the Forest Service mission will position the program to engage agency-wide resources and support. Administrative and infrastructure challenges will be addressed that will result in increased accountability and visibility. Staffing requirements to accomplish the program of work will be defined and practices and procedures will be clarified. These changes will result in increased alignment with the Chief's five focus points of safety, inclusiveness, restoration, fire and community to the greatest extent possible.

The approaching ***40th anniversary in 2012 of the Volunteers in the National Forests Act of 1972*** presents a stellar opportunity to promote our newly established strategic identity and align programs in the decade leading up to the 50th anniversary in 2022. This will further strengthen the visibility and viability of the Volunteers and Service program leading up to the 50th anniversary in 2022 while simultaneously assuring its sustainability.

In forging a new, improved, and more results-oriented strategic identify for Volunteers and Service in the Forest Service, we will take full advantage of opportunities while we simultaneously strengthen the program's foundation and build a culture throughout the agency that embraces, supports and provides resources for Volunteers and Service, and our partners. With ***a customer-centric approach, the Volunteers and Service program will deliver high quality service to its partners and provide a safe, inclusive and developmental service experience for volunteers and service participants***.

Vision: Together, engaged in stewardship of the national forests and grasslands for the future of communities and ecosystems.

Mission: Inspire and engage volunteers and service participants to conserve our nation's natural and cultural resources and ensure the sustainability of the public lands legacy.

Values & Principles

- Volunteerism is integral to the Forest Service mission and enriches the Agency.
- People want to give back something of value to their public lands.
- Volunteers will be provided a safe, respectful and meaningful experience.
- Volunteers will be trained and fully supported to successfully accomplish projects.
- By working together, all parties will benefit.
- Lasting memories and relationships are created through meaningful volunteer experiences.

Goals & Objectives

I. MISSION CRITICAL: Establish Volunteers and Service program as a critical contributor to mission accomplishment that is recognized throughout the Agency.

A. Build support among agency leadership for program of work.

i. Define three to five strategies to promote Volunteers and Service contributions agency-wide.
ii. Include a minimum of one major volunteer/service activity in People, Places and Things.
iii. Highlight a volunteer and service outcome and/or activity on the Home page of the internet site and on the Chief's intranet page.
iv. Align Volunteers and Service with the Chief's Guiding Principles and Agency's and Department's strategic priorities, to the extent possible.
v. Provide regular updates on the Volunteers and Service Program to the Executive Leadership Council and the National Leadership Team.
vi. Seek out opportunities to integrate the Forest Service's Volunteer and Service Program as part of the USDA Strategic Plan.

B. Integrate Volunteers and Service more deeply and broadly across all Agency program areas.

i. Organize quarterly meetings with staff across the agency involved with volunteers and service to share best practices, announcements and updates, and address challenges and issues; include G&A staff.
ii. Convene a training/webinar for WO and other staff to build increase awareness and understanding about Volunteers and Service.
iii. Regularly recognize agency employees and program areas utilizing volunteers, youth and hosted programs. (Part of service-wide awards program.)
iv. Seek out opportunities at regional, forest/grassland, area and station levels to include the Volunteers and Service program goals and objectives (e.g., Regional Forester annual expectations, strategic planning, etc.).

C. Define Volunteers and Service functional responsibilities and performance outcomes that can be integrated into Forest Service work plans and budgets, position descriptions and individual performance plans as appropriate.

i. Coordinate with Office of Human Capital to define process for developing and implementing common performance goals related to the Volunteers and Service program of work.
ii. Educate and seek support from program directors to use shared performance goals on individual performance plans.
iii. Collaborate with the budget office to integrate performance outcomes as a standard stand-alone reporting component.
iv. Provide professional development and training to facilitate and support outstanding performance.

D. Establish and report common metrics for all Forest Service volunteer and service activities.

i. Create a workgroup of staff across the agency to propose two to four volunteer metrics that can be applied to all volunteer programs in the agency.
ii. Deploy the Volunteers and Partners database; ensure capability to capture comprehensive data about volunteers and service members and project outcomes and that the database is functional (glitches have been resolved before deployment) and is easy to understand and use by employees.
iii. Seek consensus to implement one reporting system for all volunteer and service activities.
iv. Roll-up and widely report accomplishments for all volunteer and service activities annually for internal and external audiences.
v. Create a reporting section on the annual budget submission and performance accountability report (PAR) for volunteer activities.

E. Promote a culture throughout the Forest Service that values and celebrates citizen stewardship and community engagement on the national forests and grasslands.

i. Strengthen and institutionalize the Volunteers and Service awards program; secure the participation of the Chief in the recognition of an annual Volunteer award.
ii. Implement the President's Volunteer Service Awards programs as a standard recognition practice for high performing volunteers.
iii. Expand the awards program to provide special recognition for volunteers who provide unique skills and support.
iv. Implement a Forest Service volunteer day that widely engages Forest Service staff and volunteers serving side by side and focuses on an agency priority.
v. Promote a culture throughout the Forest Service that values and celebrates employee coordination, collaboration and positive engagement with volunteers and service groups.

II. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS: Implement consistently high performing, customer-centric and sustainable systems, processes and procedures.

A. Define, implement and monitor minimum standards for effective management and engagement of volunteers and service participants; focus on excellence.

i. Achieve consensus among Region, Station, and Area staff to adhere to common processes, templates and reporting systems that address safety and training requirements for volunteers.

ii. Develop a cadre of specialists that can help develop and train local level agency staff to meet management excellence objectives.
iii. Establish minimum interdisciplinary training standards for staff that support and coordinate volunteer programming.
iv. Establish a national training program for volunteers to include national certification and skill development opportunities.
v. Ensure alignment of practices and procedures to the extent possible with the public lands agencies that are members of Federal Interagency Team on Volunteers.
vi. Recognize and award management excellence at the R/S/A levels.

B. Promote continuous improvement of the Volunteers and Service program.

i. Implement quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures from volunteers and service participants; consider participation in the annual American Customer Satisfaction Index.
ii. Encourage more frequent reporting of volunteer accomplishments; train staff on value-added of quantitative and qualitative data as a management tool.
iii. Increase collaboration and cooperation among staff affiliated with the various volunteer programs in the agency.
iv. Conduct program, staff, customer and stakeholder assessments utilizing climate and other surveys, focus groups, and/or one on one interviews.

C. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the resources that are required to deliver a variety of program models, including budget and other resources.

i. Define the most prevalent and effective Volunteer and Service program models and map their management and operational structure.
ii. Create a comparative analysis of prevalent and effective program models to inform long term planning and growth; roll up data from CHM about effective program models.
iii. Integrate program models with other agency programs of work; look for "nodes" to be a part of, versus separate from, the agency's programs of work.

D. Leverage organizational assets and collaboration with public land partner agencies.

i. Promote alignment and integration of program operations among the public land agencies through membership on the Federal Inter-agency Team on Volunteers (FITV).
ii. Coordinate policy development and implementation, to the extent practicable in cooperation with public land partners performing similar work.
iii. Present an increasingly united front with public land partner agencies as it relates to policy, Administrative priorities, and public appearances in other arenas that build awareness about our efforts, streamlines systems and procedures and promotes the value of all public lands and stewardship across agencies.

III. LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS: Increase citizen stewardship by leveraging strengths and resources of stakeholders, partners and collaborators.

A. Strengthen collaborations and engagement of Volunteer groups and other stakeholders such as Friends organizations, Leave No Trace, trails organizations, NFF, NFWF, etc. and special events to increase capacity and leverage resources.

i. Conduct an assessment of existing Forest Service partnerships that leverage external resources in support of Volunteers and Service.

ii. Leverage the 40th (2012) and 50th (2022) anniversaries of the authorizing legislation for volunteering on national forests to increase partnerships and capacity; use the leverage gained from those anniversaries to continue to build momentum.

i. Define activities, functions and timeframes that partners can implement to strengthen volunteer programs and leverage external support; integrate activities, so that awareness/synergies can be leveraged on a sustainable, long term basis.

ii. Collaborate with the National Forest Foundation and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation; utilize their services as conveners, facilitators, and trainers.

B. Provide increased opportunities for partners and stakeholders to inform programming and policy making, and respond to emerging opportunities to inform program development and policy making.

I. Establish a Youth Advisory Council (YAO).

II. Coordinate an intra-agency working group of OGC, Ethics, Grants and Agreements, Partnership, RHVR and other staff representatives as appropriate to advise and monitor partners and stakeholder engagement.

III. Conduct outreach to the field to determine existing partnerships that perform this function locally; compile best practices and define opportunities.

C. Leverage private sector (philanthropic and corporate) funding and in-kind resources to support appropriate program activities.

i. Promote partnerships between corporate and non-profit partners that leverage resources to support service events for corporate employees.

ii. Identify a process for working with the National Forest Foundation that meets the needs of the NFF Board and staff, Forest Service leadership and the Volunteers and Service program.

IV. SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP: Engage a diverse spectrum of the public in service that provides pathways to employment and service learning opportunities.

A. Integrate youth feedback, recommendations and input into Forest Service youth programming and policy development activities.

i. Establish a Youth Advisory Council (YAO) inclusive of charter and rotating leadership roles.

ii. Identify Forest Service staff to support and mentor YAO members.

iii. Identify opportunities and needs, from youth's perspective, for meaningful and consequential engagement.

iv. Collaborate with the Partnership Office and Conservation Education (or Youth Alliance) to implement YAO.

B. Define multi-year performance goals for the engagement of underserved communities and populations in the Volunteers and Service program.

i. Establish a baseline of current participant demographics; identify gaps of underserved populations and communities.

ii. Identify existing programs with good diversity and define promising practices for replication.

iii. Establish an Advisory Council or a network of community practitioners that could assist with understanding needs and in developing an array of "best practices" to engage a wide diversity of underserved communities and populations.

C. Develop and expand model programs that will increase participation of veterans and under-represented populations and provide pathways to employment.

i. Expand senior volunteer and older workers programs that leverage skills and experiences of retirees.
ii. Strengthen collaborations with existing partners that work with young adults who are seeking alternative career paths and increased understanding about environmental and conservation priorities.
iii. Establish partnerships with organizations that target veterans such as the Wounded Warrior program and the Veterans Green Corps.
iv. Establish immersion learning volunteer experiences on the forests and grasslands that have residential facilities for young adults through partnerships with organizations that have expertise in this area.
v. Identify existing Forest Service career pathways and map the steps, process and procedures for young people to acquire employment beginning with entry level volunteer and/or service experiences.
vi. Identify current staff, in coordination with Office of Human Resources Management who began their career as a volunteer, YCC or other Corps program participant; implement ongoing tracking of this benchmark.
vii. Train, encourage, support and work with Forest Service employees to be successful working with veterans, underrepresented populations and youth.
viii. Establish minimum standards for service learning in YCC programs and as appropriate in youth and conservation corps agreements.

D. Implement outreach strategies that will result in expanded participation of communities and underserved participants.

i. Utilize FS research and evaluation resources to inform the development and implementation of outreach strategies to address defined gaps.
ii. Develop partnerships with key organizations that will result in increased participation from underserved populations.
iii. Coordinate outreach through the Youth Alliance and other Forest Service working groups that are invested in this priority.
iv. Promote Volun-tourism opportunities for international and domestic volunteer groups, i.e. Spring Break Service trips.
v. Work with communities to explore a common vision for a sustainable future and promote collective volunteer actions toward the vision.

V. NEW MEDIA: Employ progressive communication strategies and tools to promote opportunities and improve collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

A. Educate and integrate Volunteers and Service program of work with Sustainable Recreation priorities.

i. Clearly articulate and communicate alignment with the Framework for Sustainable Recreation.
ii. Integrate the Framework for Sustainable Recreation language and objectives in the Volunteers and Service lexicon.
iii. Report annually on the Volunteers and Service accomplishments aligned with the Framework for Sustainable Recreation.

B. Indoctrinate the use of RecLink as a communication tool for stakeholders and SharePoint for FS staff.

i. Post announcements, meeting notices and minutes, documents, photos and other project management Volunteers & Service documents to the SharePoint site; utilize RecLink to communicate.
ii. Convene regular discussions about program priorities and issues with Volunteers and Service Group members.
iii. Build out the membership for the Gens Y and Z group to support the development of new and expansion of existing effective programming that will engage underserved groups and enhance Forest Service career pathways for young people.
iv. Regularly assess and evaluate the effectiveness of RecLink as a communications tools and adapt and adjust accordingly.

C. Refine and revise the intranet and internet presence of the Volunteers and Service program.

i. Review and update all information on the intranet site.
ii. Query WO and regional staff regarding their needs and requirements for the Volunteers and Service page.
iii. Collaborate with the Office of Communications to improve internet access to Volunteers and Service and create a dynamic internet and social media presence.
iv. Evaluate presence on volunteers.gov/gov and define strategies for how best to utilize this resource to support outreach and recruitment.

D. Integrate social media tools to generate enthusiasm for Volunteers and Service and promote the program to the range of internal and external audiences.

i. Leverage expertise in social media in the public and non-profit sectors and an in-depth understanding of how social media can be used to support program priorities.
ii. Develop and maintain profiles and links on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Flicker, etc. that will result in increased participation by the general public and underserved populations and communities.
iii. Build on the Discover the Forest website to increase awareness and linkages among Forest Service programs.