

LAFs and Volunteers

In what ways can volunteers get involved?

- Surveys – wildlife, disease, visitor, condition of routes, community involvement,
- Education – visits to site, visits to schools
- Visitor Services – rangers, wardens, guides, visitor centres, information points, refreshments, activities and events(cycling, walking, play, health)
- Practical/conservation work
- Any More?

Where and how are volunteers getting involved ?

1. The Peak LAF view

- What is happening – the sort of work being done, how and by whom
- Mechanism for volunteer engagement – is through close working with The Peak National Park and DCC Authorities. Explain: the relationship; how it works; how volunteers are 'trained' and any guidance they may have; who else is involved
- How the LAF gets involved. Explain: What is the LAF does? Identify what could be done? Help set out areas of need? Monitor progress?

2. Derby City and Derbyshire LAF open access task

- What is happening – the sort of work being done, how and by whom
- Mechanism for volunteer engagement – is through close working with The Peak National Park and DCC Authorities. Explain: the relationship; how it works; how volunteers are 'trained' and any guidance they may have; who else is involved
- How the LAF gets involved. Explain: What is the LAF does? Identify what could be done? Help set out areas of need? Monitor progress?

3. What are other LAFs doing?

How might volunteering work best with within LAF responsibilities and duties?

- What roles are appropriate for volunteers to do and what roles are not?
- Why should we get involved?
- What support do volunteers need
- Who co-ordinates the activity
- Who provides the tools
- Through LA, National Park Authorities; District and Parish Councils
- Through landowners /service providers: LARSPB, Forestry Commission; Wildlife Trusts, NT, WT, the Conservation Volunteers, Charities, Trusts, members society, Friends of group etc.
- Through National bodies – e.g. NE, EA

What you need to think about - Health and Safety and legal

The health and safety implications of volunteers will depend on the nature of the volunteer group/individual and the nature of the work being undertaken. Volunteers can be split into 2 broad categories:

- volunteer(s) who are acting on their own initiative but with the permission of the landowner
- volunteer(s) who are acting at the request of or under direction of a landowner, organisation, society or charity

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974

Landowners and organisation will have responsibility under the above Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that volunteers and others who may be affected by the work of the volunteers are not exposed to risks to their health and safety from the activities. As the "person" in control of premises which are made available to persons as a place of work, or as a place where they may use plant or substances provided for their use, the organisation may have a duty to ensure that the premises, together with all means of access and egress and associated plant and substances are safe and without risk to health.

VOLUNTEER(S) ACTING ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE

Where volunteer(s) are acting on their own initiative but with the permission of the landowner they should be managed in accordance with any guidance for permitted activities activity. They should get information about the site and any other work or activity taking place on the site which might affect them, but they must manage their own activity. Where tools are being used or the group will alter the land, for example building a new path, a full permission should be issued and public liability insurance is required to protect themselves and the landowner, should their work or activity injure a third party. Where the activity is low risk such as a survey, sponsored walk or a club outing a permission may not be necessary and insurance is not required although it is still good practice for any group to have cover for their activities.

VOLUNTEER (S) ACTING ON REQUEST

Where volunteer(s) are acting at the request of an organisation and staff / others direct and control the voluntary work then a common law duty of care is owed which is greater than that owed either to volunteers working under a Permission. The volunteers must be covered by Health and Safety guidance and be competent for what they are undertaking – e.g. have appropriate guidance/training / supervision (this does not mean staff must be on site with the volunteers during the whole period of work activity). Where a volunteer(s) has been asked to carry out a specific task good practice is that the individual or group is informed in writing or through guidance and training about:

- the scope of the voluntary activities, including a description of the work/ task(s)
- any limitations, e.g. areas where the volunteer(s) must not go or work, any equipment which the volunteer(s) are not permitted to use
- any hazards on the premises or associated access and carrying out work
- the emergency procedure, e.g. what to do in the event of an accident;
- their responsibilities with regard to health and safety – including ensuring their own safety, provision of first aid and/or welfare equipment and accident reporting

- their responsibilities within any other codes of practice or specific guidance

Public liability or personal insurance will not always be appropriate if the volunteer is acting at the request of an organisation and usually the appointing Authority/organisation will be responsible. However it could be advisable for a volunteer group to gain their own cover and this should be clarified.

Resources:

Volunteering England:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice/information>

Also a publication: On the safe Side – Risk, risk management and Volunteering

Natural England:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/liability_tcm6-9802.pdf

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/land%20managers%20rights%20and%20responsibilities_tcm6-9796.pdf

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/ca%20150-1%20liability_tcm6-27731.pdf

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/communities/volunteering/volunteersdirectory/hands.aspx>

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/linkingpeople/communities/volunteering/default.aspx>

Wildlife Trust – Urban Greenspace Support Pack

http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/DATA/Insegnamenti/2_1931/materiale/urban%20greenspace%20support%20pack%20-%20reading%20for%20group%202.pdf

Naturally Active – Guidance

<http://www.naturallyactive.org/article.aspx?SectionID=20>

- Working with People, Groups and Communities

<http://www.naturallyactive.org/article.aspx?ArticleID=1424>

Nature Net

<http://www.naturenet.net/law/>

<http://www.naturenet.net/people/volunteers.html>

Visitor safety in the countryside

<http://vscg.co.uk>

For Examples

Countryside Jobs Service

<http://www.countryside-jobs.com/Focus/Current.htm>

Citizen Science

New publication - A practical guide on how to develop, implement and evaluate citizen science projects to monitor the UK's environment. The guide is based on conclusions from a

comprehensive report reviewing over 200 citizen science projects.

<http://bit.ly/CitizenScienceGuide> (download copies of the guide and report)