

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ALUMNI VOLUNTEER ASSESSMENT STUDY

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Consultant's Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Shared Services Board initiated and funded the following project. The research team expresses sincere gratitude to:

- Renée Vail, Volunteer Programs and State Fair Project Manager
- Colleen Coyne, Assistant Bureau Manager, Office of Communication and Outreach
- DNR alumni who participated in the preliminary interviews and the online survey
- DNR staff who participated in the preliminary focus groups and interviews and the online survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the state's natural resources including minerals, wildlife, and forestry. The DNR's goal is to balance the interdependent principles of maintaining a healthy environment, sustainable economy, and livable communities. In 2013 the DNR engaged in a year-long effort to determine the feasibility of establishing an Alumni Association for former DNR employees. The goal of the project was to answer three interrelated questions:

- Was there an interest among DNR alumni (staff who had separated from the DNR) to participate in an Alumni Association?
- Was there an interest among DNR alumni to volunteer with the DNR?
- Was there an interest among current DNR staff to utilize volunteers who had separated from the DNR?

Preliminary interviews and focus groups with current and former DNR staff held in the fall informed development of an online survey for both groups, which were administered in the winter. In addition, alumni association volunteer programs were researched for identifiable best practices and federal, state, and local groups were interviewed to better understand their work with Alumni Associations, especially those associations with a volunteer program. The key findings are as follows:

- **Preliminary Focus Groups and Interviews**
 - While half of the alumni were interested in maintaining contact with other alumni through social events, alumni were also concerned about association logistics, sufficient interest, and costs to both the alumni and the DNR. Alumni were also concerned about the relationship that would exist between the Alumni Association and the DNR. Alumni expressed an interest in fun and social volunteer projects, but were also concerned about staff time to manage alumni volunteers.
 - DNR staff reported mostly positive experiences working with volunteers, but also felt that challenges occurred when volunteers overstepped their boundaries and/or did not follow DNR protocols. Although DNR staff identified a number of potential projects for alumni volunteers, they were also concerned about keeping alumni engaged with the DNR and potential infringement on the collective bargaining agreement.
- **DNR Staff Survey**
 - Survey respondents were mostly likely to be professional staff, employed in the Fish and Wildlife division, located at the Central Office, and had been with the DNR for 10 or more years.
 - Staff felt that a DNR Alumni Association should include opportunities to share information and for social gatherings and news from the DNR.
 - Although most staff responding to the survey had worked or were currently working with volunteers in the past, they found the amount of time required to manage and train volunteers and inconsistent participation by volunteers to be challenging. Staff had worked with volunteers on a wide variety of events.
 - Although more than half of the staff responding to the survey may be willing to work with alumni volunteers in the future, a lack of available time and concerns over the DNR establishing an alumni volunteer program were cited as reasons some staff would be unwilling to work with volunteers in the future.
 - When asked about ways alumni volunteers could support the DNR, more than half of the staff suggested hunting or fishing mentor, mentoring new staff,

connecting the DNR with community groups, volunteering at the State Fair, and being campground hosts. Staff also recommended that alumni volunteers be matched to projects, that expectations for alumni volunteers be carefully defined, volunteers be trained, and that an online website of volunteer opportunities be made available.

- More than half of the staff were concerned over the demands on their time to manage alumni volunteers and inconsistent participation by volunteers. Staff also felt that keeping alumni engaged in the DNR and potential conflicts with union bargaining agreements were potential challenges. In addition, staff were concerned that alumni may not be current on DNR protocols and training and that bureaucracy and red tape would interfere with the volunteer program.
 - Staff were asked for additional comments which were equally positive and negative. Staff expressed some concerns that utilizing alumni volunteers was an attempt to reduce operating costs by not filling full-time positions. Staff also recognized that the DNR currently does not have an infrastructure to support a state-wide alumni volunteer program and encouraged the DNR to develop such an infrastructure. Last, staff strongly recommended that alumni volunteer's skills be carefully matched to volunteer opportunities.
- **Alumni Survey**
 - The majority of alumni respondents were male, had separated from the DNR within 5 years, and lived in counties of DNR's Central region.
 - Although more than half of the alumni respondents felt it was important to stay in contact with other DNR alumni, only one-quarter were unequivocally interested in participating in an Alumni Association; the remainder might be interested in participation. Alumni would like to receive news from the DNR and opportunities to share information with other alumni and social gatherings from the associations. Few alumni were willing to commit to a role as an officer of the Alumni Association, although more than half would be willing to assist with association activities.
 - One-quarter of the alumni respondents indicated an interest in volunteering and more than half of the alumni respondents may be interested depending on the project or role. Alumni frequently indicated an interest in mentoring new employees and doing 'hands on' work as a volunteer. Few alumni were interested in participating in a Speaker's Bureau. Alumni would be willing to volunteer for 1-4 hours per week for 1-4 weeks and the Fish and Wildlife division was most frequently preferred for volunteer efforts.
 - **Alumni Volunteering Best Practices** in the literature were reviewed and the following 10 best practices were identified:
 - Develop written policies and job descriptions for volunteer and paid staff and clearly defined roles and outcomes of volunteer involvement.
 - Provide training and professional development for paid staff who work with and/or supervise volunteers.
 - Actively recruit volunteers through working for an organization and using volunteers to recruit other volunteers.
 - Actively retain volunteers through effective and efficient use of volunteers, reward volunteers with intangibles (knowledge, social importance, improved social standing), and train staff to promote retention of volunteers.
 - Align volunteer's interests with possible positions through interviewing, screening, and matching volunteers.
 - Provide liability coverage and/or insurance protection for volunteers and clients.
 - Provide orientation and training for volunteers including ongoing or in-service

- training and professional development.
 - Supervise volunteers to allow feedback from staff and volunteers and communicate with volunteers regularly.
 - Actively develop positive relationships between paid and volunteer staff.
 - Evaluate the impact of volunteer staff including periodic assessment of volunteer staff performance and/or contribution.
 - Recognize the contributions of volunteers through formal (e.g. plaque or certificate) and informal means (e.g. verbal “thank you”) and make the recognition meaningful to the volunteer.
- **Alumni Associations in Other States**
 - Only a handful of interviewees reported having a formal association for their alumni or retirees although some interviewees involved alumni through announcements, get-togethers via a ‘friends’ group, and invitations to join current employees at annual meetings. The events were primarily social and allowed alumni to network rather than engage in a service to the agency.
 - Interviewees identified a number of factors that contributed to the success of Alumni Associations including:
 - Recruiting members who developed the infrastructure for the association and continued to be engaged over the years;
 - Being strategically focused and having a clear mission for the association, its purpose, and by-laws;
 - Knowing the needs of the organization for short- and long-term projects;
 - Coming from an organization with a long history of civic engagement;
 - Using multiple communication strategies to involve members;
 - Knowing the volunteer population;
 - Incorporating social components into service-oriented projects; and
 - Recognizing member contributions through meetings, events, and social media.
 - Interviewees suggested the DNR also offered suggestions for the DNR in setting up an alumni association.
 - Develop a structure independent of state parks;
 - Incorporate both service and social elements at events;
 - Build a strong culture of service within the DNR;
 - Obtain feedback from volunteers to be more aware of the volunteer population; and
 - Consider the timeframe for capturing prospective volunteers.
- **Recommendations**
 - The evaluators recommend the DNR suspend preparations for a DNR Alumni Association because: a) both DNR alumni and current staff expressed reservations about establishing an Alumni Association; b) only one-quarter of the alumni were interested in participating in an association; c) staff were concerned about diverting funds to establish the association; and d) few other states have successfully developed and maintained similar groups.
 - The evaluators recommend that the DNR consider developing an alumni mentoring program. In all areas of the state and across all job types, DNR staff agreed that current staff and the DNR would benefit from alumni mentoring.
 - To maximize the likelihood of an Alumni Association’s success, the DNR should: a) identify a reason that the DNR should be responsible for organizing and maintaining an Alumni Association; b) get buy-in from staff outside of the Central Office; and c) if the proposed association will include volunteering, improve the existing volunteer program using the best practices outlined in this report.

OVERVIEW

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the state's natural resources including minerals, wildlife, and forestry. The DNR provides a wide range of support and resources for Minnesota and non-Minnesota residents, including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, camping, motorized and non-motorized boating, and education. The DNR also maintains an Enforcement Division to ensure that all who use Minnesota's natural resources comply with all laws and regulations. The DNR's goal is to balance the interdependent principles of maintaining a healthy environment, sustainable economy, and livable communities.

In 2013 the DNR contracted with ACET, Inc. to determine the feasibility of establishing an Alumni Association for former DNR employees. The goal of the project was to answer three interrelated questions:

- Was there an interest among DNR alumni (staff who had separated from the DNR) to participate in an Alumni Association?
- Was there an interest among DNR alumni to volunteer with the DNR?
- Was there an interest among current DNR staff to utilize volunteers who had separated from the DNR?

ACET, Inc., a small, minority- and woman-owned evaluation firm in Minneapolis, used multiple approaches to answer the above questions. As specified in the contract, ACET conducted focus groups and interviews with DNR staff and alumni. The results of the focus groups and interviews informed surveys, also to DNR staff and alumni, but on a much larger scale. Concurrent with the focus groups, interviews, and surveys, ACET reviewed the literature to identify best practices for setting up and maintaining a volunteer network. ACET also interviewed staff from local and national volunteer organizations to determine the efficacy of their alumni programs.

Established in 1998, ACET is an independent research company specializing in the evaluation of educational and community-based programs. ACET's staff and consultants have provided direct services to several postsecondary educational institutions, K-12 schools and districts, professional associations, public policy groups, state and federal agencies, and organizations that empower individuals to establish outreach efforts to parents and community members. ACET's mission is to provide *"a wide range of evaluation services and solutions to local, regional, and national clients. ACET's collaborative, flexible, and transparent approach helps programs achieve outcomes to promote maximum potential for current and prospective generations."* ACET's staff have an extensive background working with diverse communities including communities of color, individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, English Language Learners, urban students at risk of academic failure, and individuals who are transgendered, in treatment for chemical dependency, or have special needs.

FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Background/Method

Prior to widespread data collection, exploratory focus groups and interviews were conducted. Multiple focus groups were held with DNR staff: one focus group with the DNR's Naturalists and four focus groups with Regional Managers (one in each of the four DNR regions). The five focus groups were coordinated by the DNR Volunteer Programs Manager and held during regularly

scheduled Regional Manager meetings at DNR regional offices.¹ In addition, ACET conducted phone interviews with Operations Managers at their convenience. A total of 61 DNR staff participated in the focus groups or interviews between November and December of 2013.

Because of concerns over sharing private/non-DNR email addresses without alumni permission, the DNR Volunteer Programs Manager emailed DNR alumni about the opportunity to be interviewed. Interested alumni shared contact information with ACET, who then coordinated interviews with alumni. Seventeen alumni provided their contact information and interviews were completed with 8 of them.

All focus group and interview scripts included questions about a DNR Alumni Association and alumni volunteers. The focus group and interview scripts are appended to this report as are the original memos summarizing the findings. (Please see Appendices A - D.)

Findings

Alumni Association. About half of the interviewed alumni expressed an interest in maintaining contact with other DNR alumni. Interviewees were particularly interested in face-to-face fun or social interactions with other alumni and meeting 1 or 2 times per year. In addition, interviewees expressed an interest in receiving communications from DNR.

Both alumni and Regional Managers shared concerns about establishing an Alumni Association. Interviewed alumni's concerns were primarily about the logistics of the Alumni Association. For instance, interviewees were concerned about who would be responsible for organizing and maintaining the Alumni Association, whether or not there would be sufficient interest in the Alumni Association to form or maintain the Association, and the relationship between the Alumni Association and the DNR. Interviewees were also concerned about the financial and time commitment the Alumni Association could require. Interviewees were concerned that, being on a fixed income, participation in the Alumni Association might require more investment in either time or money (e.g., amount of time to get to a meeting, cost for joining the Alumni Association, cost for gas to get to a meeting) that would be outside of their budget. Interviewees were also concerned for security of any online presence the Alumni Association might have, including, but not limited to, email addresses. Regional Managers expressed concerns that the primary goal of an Alumni Association should be to keep alumni engaged with the activities of the DNR.

Alumni Volunteers. DNR staff commented on current volunteer efforts and reported largely positive experiences with volunteers. DNR staff find volunteers to be helpful, committed, and a rich source of information that they share with others. Currently, the DNR has volunteers contributing on a wide variety of projects including lakeshore monitoring, maintaining parks and trails, park hosting, and leading safety instruction workshops. Although staff experiences have been largely positive, they also experienced some challenges. Regional Managers felt that managing volunteers consumed a large amount of staff time (e.g., identifying appropriate projects especially for last minute volunteers or large groups, training, and supervising volunteers). The amount of time spent on preparing for volunteers was particularly frustrating when the volunteer did not show for their volunteer opportunity.

In addition, Operations Managers and Naturalists both described challenges with volunteers overstepping the boundaries of their volunteer position. Operations Managers and Naturalists also explained that volunteers often do not follow established DNR protocols, including participating in training and recording their time. Naturalists in particular felt it was important

¹ Bemidji (n=13), Grand Rapids (n=12), New Ulm (n=10), and Saint Paul (n=10).

that volunteers complete the same training that DNR staff were required to complete. Staff were also concerned that some volunteers did not fit within the culture of the DNR or behaved in such a way that was not aligned with the DNR or its mission.

When asked what new projects alumni volunteers would prefer, alumni interviewees responded that the preference would vary greatly across volunteers depending on their background, personality, and physical stamina. Some alumni interviewees expressed their own, personal preference for volunteer activities. Example projects included office work, wildlife surveys, interacting with the public, and assisting with safety programs. In general, interviewees expressed a preference for “*fun*” and “*social*” volunteer activities and ones that resulted in tangible, positive outcomes for the DNR. After they have completed their volunteer activity, interviewees want to feel that they “*made a difference here.*” In addition, most interviewees would like to use skills they already have in their volunteer work rather than learning a new set of skills, although some interviewees would like to use both.

Current DNR employees, however, quickly identified a number of projects and roles for prospective alumni volunteers, including mentoring new hires, hands-on volunteering (e.g., major survey events, invasive species management, campground hosts, “Adopt-A-Park”²), coordinating volunteers, and fundraising. DNR staff participating in the interviews and focus groups very often indicated outreach and public education as an activity for alumni volunteers. This would include participation in a DNR speaker’s bureau, outreach to community groups (e.g., Ducks Unlimited, local nature groups), and interpretive work in the state parks. DNR’s Managers and Naturalists felt that, by educating the public and sharing DNR’s mission with them, the DNR could capitalize on the wealth of knowledge held by alumni volunteers.

Alumni interviewees and DNR staff also shared their concerns for establishing an alumni volunteer network. One concern was the amount of DNR staff time that would be required to manage or supervise alumni volunteers. Staff and alumni interviewees were also concerned over alumni availability and willingness to volunteer with the DNR. As one interviewee stated, alumni will ask themselves if volunteering with the DNR is worth their time, especially with the competing demands of aging parents, children or grandchildren, opportunities for travel or pursuing hobbies, and other volunteer opportunities. Staff were also concerned about the way(s) in which an alumni volunteer program could impact the collective bargaining agreement. Less frequently mentioned concerns included that alumni volunteers might ‘stray’ from the DNR’s mission, relationships among alumni volunteers, especially when mixing alumni who were managerial and non-managerial staff, and staff time needed to successfully manage an alumni volunteer program. Alumni interviewees also mentioned wanting to have clearly defined roles for volunteers. Last, Naturalists suggested that an alumni volunteer program would be more successful if it included coordination, training, communication, and recognition for all volunteers and if coordination, training, communication, and recognition for DNR staff were included. In particular, the Naturalists would like training to better understand protocols and processes of an alumni volunteer program and to effectively work with alumni volunteers so that the Naturalists can maintain or grow alumni volunteer engagement. Naturalists would also like recognition from the DNR for their work with alumni volunteers because alumni volunteers are an “*unpaid employee.*”

Findings from the focus groups and interviews were used to develop surveys for both current DNR staff and DNR alumni.

² Note that the DNR does not currently have an ‘Adopt-A-Park’ program, although individuals or groups can adopt Rivers, Trails, or Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).

DNR STAFF SURVEY

Summary of Findings

Of the 2,622 staff who were invited to complete the online survey, 537 individuals responded to the survey, a response rate of 20.5%. The key findings from the staff online survey were:

- Survey respondents were mostly likely to be professional staff, employed in the Fish and Wildlife division, located at the Central Office, and have been with the DNR for 10 or more years.
- More than half of the staff felt that a DNR alumni association should include opportunities to share information with other alumni, news from the DNR, and opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in the alumni's local community.
- When asked their experiences working with volunteers, more than half of the staff are currently working with volunteers or had worked with volunteers in the past. Staff worked with volunteers on a very wide variety of tasks including events, office work, and monitoring natural resources. Although staff described their current or past work with volunteers as positive, they were also challenged by the amount of time required to manage and train volunteers and inconsistent participation by volunteers.
- More than half of the staff may be willing to work with volunteers in the future. Staff who were unwilling to work with volunteers cited lack of time and concerns over establishing an alumni volunteer program.
- When asked about ways alumni volunteers could support the DNR, more than half of the staff suggested: hunting or fishing mentor, mentoring new staff, connecting the DNR with community groups, volunteering at the State Fair, and being campground hosts.
- Staff recommended that alumni volunteers be matched to projects, roles and expectations for alumni volunteers be carefully defined, volunteers be trained, and that an online website of volunteer opportunities be developed.
- When asked about challenges to establishing an alumni volunteer network, more than half of the staff were concerned over the demands on their time to manage alumni volunteers and inconsistent participation by volunteers. Staff also felt that keeping alumni engaged in the DNR and potential conflicts with union bargaining agreements were potential challenges. In addition, staff were concerned that alumni may not be current on DNR protocols and training and that bureaucracy and red tape would interfere with the volunteer program.
- Staff were asked for additional comments which were equally positive and negative. In particular, staff expressed some concerns that utilizing alumni volunteers was an attempt to reduce operating costs by not filling full-time positions. Staff also recognized that the DNR currently does not have an infrastructure to support a state-wide alumni volunteer program and encouraged the DNR to develop such an infrastructure. Last, staff strongly recommended that alumni volunteer's skills be carefully matched to volunteer opportunities.

Description and Staff Profile

The DNR staff survey included 16 items, 14 closed- and 2 open-ended. The closed-ended items include a combination of single response, ranking, and check-all-that-apply. Four of the closed-ended items were demographic (region, division, position, and length of time with the DNR). A copy of the DNR staff survey can be found in Appendix E.

A total of 2,622 staff were invited to complete the survey via email (staff email addresses are a

matter of public record and were available to the evaluator). The survey was open for 21 days and two reminder emails were sent, one on day 10 and one on day 17. A total of 537 individuals responded to the online survey by the close date, a 20.5% response rate. (See also Table 1 below.)

Table 1. Response Rate for the DNR Staff Survey

Emails	Opt-Outs*	Viable Invites	Completions	Response Rate
2,653	32	2,622	537	20.5%

*Includes 15 individuals who opted out of the survey prior to its initiation and 17 individuals who opted out of the survey during administration.

Table 2 below shows the demographics of the survey respondents. More than one-third of the respondents (44%) indicated they were professional staff, one-quarter were from Fish and Wildlife (25%), more than one-quarter worked at the Central Office (28%), and more than half of the survey respondents (56%) had worked for DNR for 10 or more years. Please note, however, that 10% of the respondents, or more, declined to answer the demographic items on the staff survey. In fact, 60 survey respondents (11%) declined to answer *any* of the demographic items on the survey.

Table 2. Staff Respondent Demographics

		N	%
Position at DNR	Professional Staff	236	44%
	Supervisor	77	14%
	Technical Staff	60	11%
	Manager	53	10%
	Office Assistants	39	7%
	Other*	6	1%
	Declined to respond	66	12%
Division ³	Fish and Wildlife	132	25%
	Ecological and Water Resources	88	16%
	Parks and Trails	79	15%
	Operation Services	71	13%
	Forestry	56	10%
	Lands and Minerals	20	4%
	Enforcement	17	3%
	Declined to respond	74	14%
Region	Central Office	153	28%
	Northeastern	98	18%
	Northwestern	81	15%
	Central	78	15%
	Southern	55	10%
	Declined to respond	72	13%
Longevity	Less than 1 year	20	4%
	1 to 3 years	53	10%
	3 to 6 years	38	7%
	6 to 9 years	68	13%
	10 or more years	298	56%
	Declined to respond	60	11%

* Lead worker, contract staff, and assistant manager.

³ Current distribution of DNR staff across division is: Fish and Wildlife 22%; Ecological and Water Resources 21%; Parks and Trails 15%; Operation Services 19%; Forestry 12%; Lands and Minerals 20%; and Enforcement 8%. Compared to distribution of staff at the DNR, a larger proportion of Fish and Wildlife and smaller proportion of Lands and Minerals and Enforcement staff responded to the survey than would be expected.

Survey Findings

DNR staff identified those features they felt would be important to a successful alumni association and the results are shown in the table below. More than half of the staff who responded to the survey felt that it was important the alumni association included an opportunity to share information with other alumni (61%), news from the DNR (60%), and opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in their local community (59%). Less than two-thirds of the staff (43%) felt that an online presence (e.g., website, social media) would be important and one-quarter (24%) felt formal face-to-face meetings with speakers in their local community would be important. In addition, 8% of staff provided their own response, which included suggestions for social opportunities (e.g., “*opportunity for face-to-face gatherings with alumni and current DNR employees,*” “*group cohesion, pride, motivation*”), coordination of the association (e.g., “*coordination and organization to make contributions by alumni a valued resource,*” “*regular notice of opportunities to volunteer or where their services may be useful*”), mentoring current DNR employees, and other association features (e.g., “*newsletter that Alumni can contribute to,*” “*not being directed by the DNR but rather their own association with input/suggestions from DNR*”). Several staff also commented that, in their opinion, an Alumni Association was not needed or expressed concern that current DNR staff would be taken away from their other duties to administer or oversee the Alumni Association. A full list of the ‘Other’ responses received can be found in Appendix F.

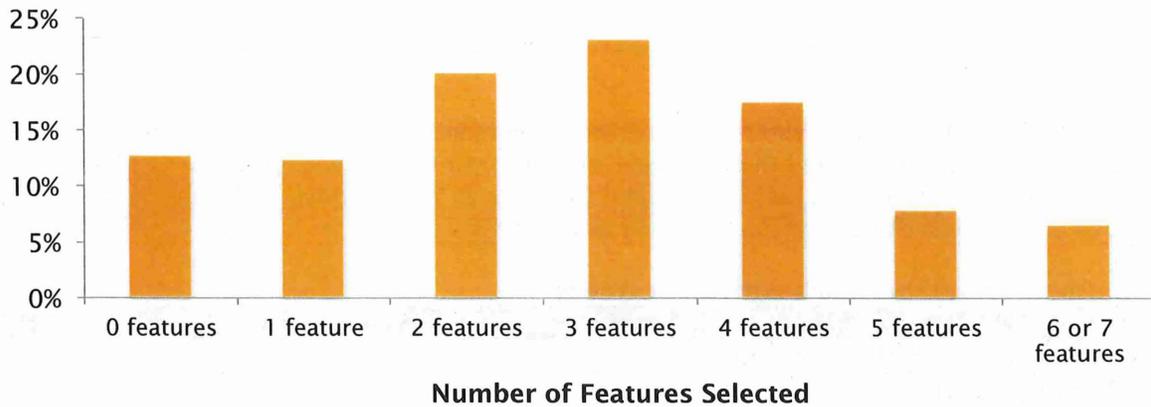
Table 3. Features Important to a Successful Alumni Association

	N	%*
Opportunity to share information with other alumni	325	61%
News from the DNR	322	60%
Opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in their local community	315	59%
Online presence (e.g., website, social media)	231	43%
Formal face-to-face meetings with speakers in their local community	128	24%
Association officers	85	16%
Other	45	8%

*The total is greater than 100% because staff could ‘check all that apply.’

On average, staff selected 2.7 features that are needed for a successful alumni network. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the number of features selected by responding staff. As shown in the figure, more than half of the staff (61%) selected 3 to 5 important features, but 13% of the staff selected 0 features.

Figure 1: Total Features Selected for “Successful Alumni Network”



More than half of the DNR staff responding to the survey (56%) indicated they had worked with volunteers in the past (39%) or are currently working with volunteers (18%). Another one-third of staff (32%) had neither worked with volunteers or supervised staff that worked with volunteers. The remaining staff (12%) supervised staff who worked with volunteers currently (5%) or in the past (7%). (See Table 4 below.)

Table 4. Current and Past Experience with Volunteers

	N	%
Currently I work directly with volunteers.	85	18%
In the past I worked directly with volunteers.	189	39%
Currently I supervise staff that work with volunteers.	24	5%
In the past I supervised staff that worked with volunteers.	32	7%
I have not worked with volunteers nor have I supervised staff that worked with volunteers.	156	32%

Staff also shared the ways in which they have worked with volunteers in the past and the results are shown in the table below. More than one-quarter of the staff worked with volunteers on events (30%) and one-fifth of staff have worked with volunteers to complete office work (21%) or monitoring natural resources (20%). Staff also shared other ways they have worked with volunteers, which included volunteers serving as campground hosts, performing office work (e.g., stuffing packets, stamping envelopes), serving as fire wardens or on advisory committees, sharing highly specialized skills (e.g., GIS work, legal research, computer programming), educating the public, and managing databases. A complete list of ‘Other’ responses can be found in Appendix F.

Table 5. Ways that DNR Staff Have Worked with Volunteers

	N	%
Events	159	30%
Office work (e.g., filing, scanning)	110	21%
Monitoring natural resources (e.g., frog counting, loon monitoring)	106	20%
Natural Resource project assistance	102	19%
Habitat improvement	96	18%
Surveys	74	14%
Maintaining parks and trails	68	13%
Safety instructors (e.g., firearms, ATV)	51	10%

	N	%
Research	36	7%
Other	52	10%

In general, staff described their work with volunteers as positive (see the table below). One-quarter of the staff reported the work was *'always or almost always positive'* (24%) and more than one-third of the staff (46%) described the work as *'mostly positive.'* Only 1% of the survey respondents described working with staff as negative.

Table 6. Describe Work with Volunteers

	N	%
Always or almost always positive	78	24%
Mostly positive	147	46%
A mix of both positive and negative	92	29%
Mostly negative	4	1%
Always or almost always negative	0	0%

Staff were also asked to rank order the top three challenges (out of 10) they have experienced when working with volunteers and the results are shown in the table below. Rankings were weighted⁴ to create a total ranking for comparison and analysis. Staff ranked *'time to manage volunteers'* as the most challenging aspect of working with volunteers; this challenge received the greatest number of #1 and #2 challenges by staff. *'Time to train volunteers'* and *'inconsistent participation'* were the second and third most challenging aspects of working with volunteers. And while the remaining 7 challenges were ranked by staff, they had far lower weighted scores than the top 3.

Table 7. Rank Ordered Challenges for Working with Volunteers

	Selected Rank			W.
	#1	#2	#3	Total
Time to manage volunteers	89	84	41	476
Time to train volunteers	81	54	42	393
Inconsistent participation by volunteers	62	47	53	333
Volunteers not following protocols	20	23	24	130
Volunteer safety concerns	12	26	33	121
Insufficient numbers of volunteers to complete the work	15	22	23	112
Requiring background checks	17	12	21	96
Physical limitations	6	16	24	74
Objections raised by union employees about volunteers	7	11	7	50
Volunteers not willing to complete forms, record activities	5	5	15	40

Staff also indicated their willingness to work with volunteers in the future and the results are shown in Table 8 below. Although one-third of staff (32%) indicated they were willing to work with volunteers in the future, half of the staff (55%) responded *'perhaps'* and 14% responded *'no.'*

⁴ Each ranking of #1 was weighted by 3, each ranking of #2 was weighted by 2, and each ranking of #3 was weighted by 1. So an item with 5-#1 rankings, 3-#2 rankings, and 10-#3 rankings would have a weighted score of 31 ($[5 \times 3] + [3 \times 2] + [10 \times 1] = 31$), while an item with 5-#1 rankings, 8-#2 rankings, and 5-#3 rankings would have a weighted score of 36 ($[5 \times 3] + [8 \times 2] + [5 \times 1]$).

Table 8. Willingness to Work with Volunteers in Future

	N	%
Yes	169	32%
Perhaps	293	55%
No	75	14%

Staff who responded ‘no’ were asked to share why they would be unwilling to supervise volunteers. The most frequently cited reason for not wanting to supervise volunteers was insufficient time. Staff shared, “I’m overworked as it is” and “managing my workload with current employees and new volunteers keeps me busy.” And another staff member shared, “too busy; volunteers need a lot of instruction/supervision. My past experiences with having volunteers have proven to be counterproductive.” A full list of staff explanations can be found in Appendix F. The second most frequently cited reason for not wanting to supervise volunteers were concerns about establishing an alumni volunteer program. For instance, one staff member shared, in “my experience with those that have retired is that they either want to be retired and out of the circle of things, or they NEED to retire, and are no longer a functional part of our Division.” Another staff member shared, “I worry about with my work is trusting a volunteer to do the work accurately; maybe ridiculous, but the effort it takes to train someone in is extensive, and I worry that a volunteer might not be as objective/invested/committed as someone whose career/livelihood is ‘on the line’.” And some staff felt that workers – any worker – should be paid a wage for using their skills for the DNR. Staff also cited burn-out or being “disgruntled” as reasons for not wanting to supervise volunteers. Last, staff also commented that supervising volunteers would be a “bad fit” for the type of work they do with the DNR (e.g., volunteer’s willingness to “crunch statistics” or work in IT/developing computer programs).

DNR staff were also asked to identify ways in which alumni volunteers could support the work of the DNR; staff selected as many responses as they wanted from a list of 22 items. The results from this question are shown in Table 9 below. As can be seen in the table, more than half of the staff felt that alumni volunteers could support the DNR by acting as a hunting or fishing mentor (61%), mentoring new employees (58%), liaising between the DNR and community groups (56%), serving as a State Fair volunteer (56%), or being a host at campgrounds (54%). Some staff suggested additional activities such as: canoe or boating volunteer or mentor, national database data entry, meeting facilitation, land owner outreach and education, and converting paper documents to digital ones (see Appendix F for additional comments from staff). On average, staff identified 9.1 volunteer activities each.

Table 9. Ways Alumni Volunteers Could Support DNR

	N	%
Hunting or Fishing mentor	327	61%
Transferring knowledge learned on the job to new employees	313	58%
Connecting the DNR with community groups (e.g., conservation clubs)	303	56%
State Fair volunteer	300	56%
Campground hosts	290	54%
Working with students and school forests	262	49%
Non-game wildlife surveys	259	48%
Fishing clinics	251	47%
Lake level monitoring	253	47%
Becoming a Master Naturalist Volunteer	248	46%
Public outreach and education	240	45%
Precipitation observers	231	43%
Naturalist assistance	224	42%
Safety instructor	223	42%

	N	%
Planting native plants and trees	222	41%
Monitoring easements	153	29%
Removing invasive species	149	28%
Watercraft inspection program	149	28%
Habitat development	146	27%
Trail management	138	26%
Grant writing	127	24%
Other (please describe)	80	15%

DNR staff also identified important features for a successful alumni volunteer network and the results are shown in the table below. Three-quarters of the staff (76%) felt that matching alumni volunteers to projects was important and more than half of the staff felt it was important for alumni volunteers to have clearly defined roles (60%) and for staff to have clearly defined expectations (57%). In addition, more than half of the staff felt that alumni volunteer training (56%) and an online website of potential opportunities (51%) were important. Staff also had the opportunity to share additional features and suggested that socialization for alumni volunteers and coordination of volunteer activities (e.g., efficiently sharing volunteer opportunities with potential volunteers; knowledgeable staff working with alumni volunteers) would be essential. On average, staff identified 4.2 features each. (Additional comments from staff can be found in Appendix F.)

Table 10. Features Important for Successful Alumni Volunteer Network

	N	%
Matching volunteers to projects (e.g., skills, location, areas of interest)	408	76%
Clearly defined roles for alumni volunteers	321	60%
Clearly defined expectations for alumni volunteers	306	57%
Training volunteers, when needed, for their projects or activities	302	56%
Online website of volunteer opportunities	271	51%
Recognizing volunteers for their participation (e.g., coffee mugs, patches)	253	47%
Training DNR staff to manage and supervise volunteers	208	39%
Recognizing DNR staff for managing and supervising volunteers	144	27%
Other	32	6%

Staff also shared their perceived challenges for an alumni volunteer network and the results are shown in Table 11 below. On average, staff identified 3.6 challenges each. More than two-thirds of the staff felt that the demands of managing alumni volunteers would be burdensome for current DNR staff (67%) and more than half of the staff were concerned about inconsistent participation by alumni volunteers (54%).

Table 11. Perceived Challenges for Alumni Volunteer Network

	N	%
Demands on current staff time to manage alumni volunteers	360	67%
Inconsistent participation by volunteers	289	54%
Difficulty keeping alumni engaged in the DNR	226	42%
Possible conflicts with union bargaining agreements	220	41%
Insufficient number of volunteers to complete the work	197	37%
Volunteers not willing to complete training, new/changed protocols	154	29%
Ensuring alumni follow the mission and goals of the DNR	148	28%
Physical limitations	205	28%

	N	%
Volunteers not willing to complete forms or records	97	18%
Other	44	8%

Staff could also share other perceived challenges and a full list of their comments can be found in Appendix F. Staff responses were themed and the most frequently mentioned themes are shown in Table 12 below. Staff emphasized that, if staff and alumni have different agendas or methods, potential conflicts might arise between DNR staff and alumni volunteering in the same or similar position in which they were employed. For example, one staff member shared, *“conflict or unclear role between a replacement employee and the ‘alumni’ who previously held the position. It is hard enough for DNR customers to accept the ‘new kid’ after someone held a DNR position for 30+ plus retires.”* Staff were also concerned that alumni may not be current on new DNR methods or protocols. One staff member commented, *“volunteers keeping up on the latest scientific info, state of the landscape, etc.”* while another shared, *“alumni volunteers doing things their way – which may not be the way we do things now.”* Staff also expressed concern over the amount of time managing alumni volunteers would require. As one staff member shared, although they can be a great supplement – but not substitute – for full time staff because *“volunteers aren’t free.”* Some staff were concerned that the development of an alumni volunteer program will also create additional bureaucratic work for themselves. One staff commented, *“I hate filling out forms”* and another shared, *“red tape and bureaucracy driving volunteers off.”* Last, staff were concerned about their perceptions that the DNR is seeking to replace paid, full-time positions with volunteers. As one staff member shared, *“with decreasing budgets [sic] and more dedicated funding, it [seems] like DNR alumni may be used to continue to run programs that the DNR no longer prioritises [sic] as important to pay someone to do. Alumni should not be used this way.”*

Table 12. Other Perceived Challenges to Alumni Volunteering

Theme	Example Comment(s)
Current staff and alumni conflicts	<i>“Retired DNR employees (alumni) need to be able to step back and let current DNR employees do the job”</i> <i>“Volunteers thinking their way is the best and not wanting to take direction from newer staff”</i>
Alumni not current	<i>“Most processes are outdated. Typically retirees were stuck at a certain point in their career to entertain new methodologies.”</i>
Managing alumni volunteers	<i>“Volunteers aren’t free.”</i> <i>“They take up SO much time. They have a lot of demands, do not understand DNR limitations/policies and I do not have a budget to adequately appreciate them.”</i>
Bureaucratic interference	<i>“Implementing an excess of policies and forms and administrative ‘red-tape’ to comply with.”</i>
Future of DNR	<i>“Displacement of opportunities for paid positions by volunteer work.”</i>

At the end of the survey, staff had the opportunity to provide any other thoughts or comments about the alumni association or alumni volunteering. Overall, 84 staff offered comments that were a combination of negative (n=33), positive (n=32), and a mix of positive and negative (n=19). Comments were themed and the most frequently mentioned themes are shown in the table below (a full list of comments can be found in Appendix F). One of the most frequently mentioned themes was a concern that implementing an alumni volunteer program would limit

the DNR’s workforce. Staff comments included, *“I believe that an alumni assoc. would be good for retirees [sic] but to have the main reason to create a volunteer base isn’t”* and *“my concern is this isn’t something DNR Alumni are requesting or engaged with creating, but a money saving strategy that management and the administration is considering to shore up labor costs and plug holes in the work force. And for the agency’s long-term it’s just as critical to invest in the professional development and strength of the current workforce... as it is to pad your workforce with volunteers. When you create an environment in which employees and their ‘jobs’ are regarded more like ‘investments,’ employees will show up with passion, productivity, and focus, and deliver about and beyond expectations.”* Many comments reflected this dichotomy: although staff appreciated the workforce that volunteers represent, staff were also concerned that it was, ultimately, a money saving strategy intended to reduce operating costs. Staff also acknowledged that engaging volunteers is not “free” labor because recruiting, training, and managing volunteers costs staff time.

Table 13. Additional Comments about Alumni Association or Alumni Volunteering

Theme	Example Comments
Limit workforce	<p><i>“I think it is important that work done with volunteers does not reduce job opportunities for folks just starting their career in natural resources.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not to mention also the impact of displacing current seasonal employees who struggle to make a living.”</i></p>
DNR Infrastructure and support	<p><i>“For a volunteer program to be successful, I think we need an established/solid work team/unit.”</i></p>
Matched skills	<p><i>“DNR alumni are not typical volunteers. An alumni network should be able to change and develop organically based on the skill set and interests of active members at any given time. If it becomes too much like working for the DNR, people will loose [sic] interest.”</i></p>

Staff were also concerned that the DNR might not have the infrastructure to support a state-wide alumni volunteer program. Staff acknowledged that a volunteer workforce needs consistent, tangible appreciation from the parent organization to succeed and thrive, but that the DNR does not currently have mechanisms to consistently show appreciation to volunteers. As one staff member shared, *“I haven’t seen consistent appreciation of existing volunteer contributions by our management. Often there is none. Division management appear uninterested. Managers do not actively encourage staff to work with volunteers of any kind. Endorsement by DNR managers and supervisors are the biggest hurdle to having a successful DNR Alumni program.”* Another staff member shared their excitement for an alumni volunteer program, but wanted to streamline DNR’s pre-volunteering protocols to make the volunteer’s time more impactful. This staff member shared, *“I love the idea of tapping into alumni for volunteer options. Currently, with the volunteers I work with we run into so many safety concerns and paperwork required that it almost becomes counterproductive to have volunteers (I spend more time coordinating that than volunteers actually spend volunteering). I hope we can address some of those hurdles in working with alumni.”* Other staff emphasized the role that training for DNR staff could play in a successful volunteer alumni program. As one staff member commented, *“I would like to see some good training courses for employees who decide to work with volunteers. If this already exists, I’d like to see it better advertised.”* And multiple staff commented on the importance of swift, accurate, electronic method to advertise volunteer opportunities with interested parties, whether they be alumni or other volunteers. One staff member commented, *“I have several current and former DNR/State employees currently volunteering for my survey, and they tend to be more consistent and easier to manage than*

volunteers from the general public. If there were a better forum to convey volunteering opportunities directly to retirees, I think it would be beneficial for the volunteer programs and the potential volunteers.”

In addition, staff suggested that the skills of alumni volunteers be carefully matched to volunteer opportunities. One of the staff shared, *“projects must be evaluated on most efficient way to accomplish. Some projects are better and more efficiently accomplished by trained employees and are not good volunteer projects. Matching the project to the workforce, including volunteers, is essential.”* Another staff member commented, *“I view the alumni volunteer program as a way for former employees to stay engaged in the DNR mission once retired. Mentoring new hires is one area I see potential for this program. [The alumni volunteering] program should focus on projects that tap their unique skill sets.”* Some staff expressed a desire to engage alumni volunteers because of the knowledge alumni would bring back to the DNR. As one staff shared, *“the tone of this survey leaves me with the impression that the alumni would be considered to be inexperienced, an almost condescending tone. That would not be the case. The alumni volunteers will likely be more experienced than the ‘supervisor’ [sic] (the alumni may have actually hired the supervisor) so level of oversight should not be given careful consideration. Too much supervision will send the volunteer away. Alumni volunteers would not be the same as volunteers with other life experiences. The employee/supervisor [sic] might be better off to consider working with the volunteer as good training for themselves.”*

ALUMNI SURVEY

Summary of Findings

Staff who had separated from the DNR received a mail invitation to complete an online survey. Of the 1,421 invitations that were sent, 130 individuals completed the survey, a 9% response rate. The key findings from the alumni online survey were:

- The majority of alumni respondents were male, had separated from the DNR within 5 years, and lived in counties of DNR’s Central region.
- Although more than half of the alumni respondents felt it was important to stay in contact with other DNR alumni, only one-quarter of the respondents were unequivocally interested in participating in an Alumni Association; the remainder might be interested in participation.
 - When asked which features should be included in an Alumni Association, alumni most frequently identified news from the DNR, opportunity to share information with other alumni, and opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in their local community.
 - Alumni respondents would prefer that social gatherings occur twice per year and formal meetings occur once per year. Alumni would like to receive news updates from the DNR monthly.
 - Few alumni were willing to commit to a role as an officer of the Alumni Association, although more than half may be willing to take on another, less prominent role such as greeting others or planning social gatherings and contributing to a DNR Alumni Association webpage.
- When asked about volunteering with the DNR, one-quarter of the alumni respondents indicated an interest and more than half of the alumni respondents may be interested depending on the project or role.
 - Alumni respondents most frequently indicated an interest in transferring their knowledge learned on the job to new employees and doing the ‘hands on’ work as a volunteer.

- Few alumni respondents expressed an interest in participating in the DNR’s Speaker’s Bureau and only one-quarter of respondents felt that volunteer opportunities should include socialization.
- Alumni respondents most frequently indicated they would be willing to volunteer for 1-4 hours per week for 1-4 weeks. Some alumni commented that the number of hours/weeks would depend on the project.
- Alumni respondents most frequently preferred volunteering with the Fish and Wildlife division.

Background and Alumni Respondent Profile

The alumni survey included 25 items, 22 closed- and 3 open-ended. The closed-ended survey items included check-all-that-apply and single response questions and 4 of the closed-ended items were demographic (division in which the respondent last worked, years since separation from the DNR, current county of residence, and respondent gender). The alumni survey can be found in Appendix G.

Because alumni contact information (physical address and email address) were private, alumni received invitations to complete the survey from the DNR through the postal service. A total of 1,783 letters were mailed to DNR alumni. The letter outlined the purpose of the survey and included a URL so that interested alumni could complete the survey. The letter also specified the closing date of the survey. Because alumni received invitations through the postal service, alumni did not receive a reminder to complete the survey. Overall, 9% of the alumni who were sent an invitation to complete the survey did so. This response rate is below observed response rates for mailed surveys (25% to 30%).⁵

Table 14. Response Rate for the DNR Alumni Survey

Letters	Returns	Viable Invites	Completions	Response Rate
1,783	362	1,421	130	9%

A total of 130 alumni completed the online survey. The majority of respondents (72%) were male, 16% were female, and 10% indicated they preferred to not specify their gender or did not respond to the survey item. In addition, nearly half of the alumni (48%) responding to the survey had separated from the DNR within 5 years and another one-quarter of the alumni (28%) had separated within 6 to 10 years. (See also Figure 2 below.)

⁵ See Smith, R. A., & Davis, S. F. (2010). *The psychologist as detective: An introduction to conducting research in psychology* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Figure 2. Years of Separation from DNR for Alumni Respondents

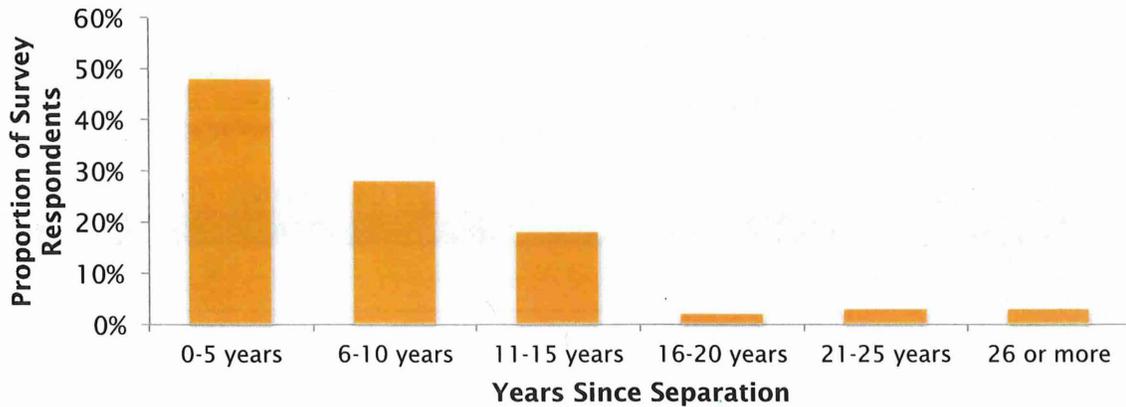


Table 15 below shows the last division of alumni employment for the alumni respondents. Nearly one-quarter of respondents (24%) were last employed within Fish and Wildlife and one-fifth of respondents (21%) were employed with Parks and Trails. The fewest number of alumni respondents were employed with Enforcement (9%) and Lands and Minerals (3%).

Table 15. Last Division of Alumni Employment

	N	%
Fish and Wildlife	28	24%
Parks and Trails	25	21%
Forestry	19	16%
Operation Services	19	16%
Ecological and Water Resources	13	11%
Enforcement	10	9%
Lands and Minerals	3	3%

Survey respondents provided their county of residence and aggregated responses are shown in Table 16 below. (A map of Minnesota, and number of survey respondents from each county, can be found in Appendix H.) One-third of the alumni respondents (37%) were living in the Central region, one-fifth living in the Northeast (21%), and one-tenth each in the Southern (12%) and Northwest (11%) regions. It should be noted that 5% of the alumni respondents are currently living outside of Minnesota and 14% of the alumni respondents declined to indicate their current location.

Table 16. Respondent's Current County of Residence

	N	%
Central (23 counties)	48	37%
Northeast (9 counties)	27	21%
Southern (32 counties)	16	12%
Northwest (23 counties)	14	11%
Not a Minnesota resident	7	5%
Declined to respond	18	14%

Alumni Survey Findings

More than one-half of the alumni respondents (59%) indicated it was important to them to maintain contact with other DNR alumni (see the table below). One-third of the respondents (39%) felt it was neither important nor unimportant to maintain contact, and 2% of the alumni respondents felt it was unimportant to maintain contact with other DNR alumni.

Table 17. Importance of Maintaining Contact with Other DNR Alumni

	N	%
Important	75	59%
Neither important nor unimportant	50	39%
Unimportant	3	2%

Although more than half of the alumni found it important to maintain contact with other DNR alumni, one-quarter of the alumni (25%) were interested in participating in a DNR Alumni Association. More than half of the alumni (62%) may be interested in participating in the association, and 12% of alumni indicated they were not interested in participating. Those who were not interested in an Alumni Association were asked ‘why not?’ The most frequently mentioned reason for no interest was that alumni had other mechanisms for maintaining contact with other alumni. For example, one alumnus shared, “*I already maintain contact with the people that are important to me,*” and another commented, “*I have a couple of lunch groups of retired folks that meet and that's enough.*” Other alumni commented that an alumni association would be a “*waste of time and money*” or that tax dollars would be used to support the association. Other comments included that the association would be “*too big,*” that the intent of the association has not been defined, and that the respondent was “*too old*” and had difficulty operating a computer. A full list of alumni respondent comments can be found in Appendix I.

Table 18. Interested in Participating in DNR Alumni Association

	N	%
Yes	33	25%
Perhaps	81	62%
No	16	12%

Alumni also identified those features they desired in an Alumni Association and the results are shown in Table 19. The majority of alumni would like to receive news from the DNR (79%) and half of the alumni would like the opportunity to share information with other alumni (62%) and the opportunity for face-to-face social gatherings in their local community (50%). Only one-third of alumni wanted an online presence (38%) for the association, and less than one-quarter wanted formal face-to-face meetings in their community. A small number of alumni shared their own suggestions, which included DNR speakers who could give updates on their divisions, history of personnel and the DNR, and when alumni pass away. A full list of alumni comments can be found in Appendix I.

Table 19. Desired Features in a DNR Alumni Association

	N	%
News from DNR	103	79%
Opportunity to share information with other alumni	81	62%
Opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in your local community	65	50%
Online presence (e.g., website, social media)	49	38%
Formal face-to-face meetings with speakers in your local community	26	20%
Association officers	5	4%
Other	7	5%

Alumni also shared their thoughts on the frequency of social gatherings and formal meetings and the results are shown in the table below. One-third of alumni respondents (32%) felt that twice per year would be optimum for face-to-face social gatherings, although one-quarter of the alumni (27%) suggested once per year would be sufficient and one-fifth of alumni (21%) felt that quarterly meetings would be optimum. When asked the desired frequency of face-to-face formal meetings, one-third of alumni indicated that twice per year (30%) or once per year (32%) would be ideal.

Table 20. Desired Frequency of Social Gatherings and Formal Meetings

	Social Gatherings		Formal Meetings	
	N	%	N	%
Monthly	3	3%	NA	NA
Four times per year (quarterly)	26	21%	19	16%
Twice per year (biannually)	39	32%	36	30%
Once per year (annually)	33	27%	39	32%
Not at all	16	13%	18	15%
Other	5	4%	9	7%

Alumni also indicated their preference(s) for the frequency of DNR news or updates; the results are shown in Table 21 below. More than half of the alumni respondents (53%) would prefer news or updates from the DNR on a monthly basis, although some alumni felt that less frequent updates would be ideal: every other month (13%) or quarterly (18%). And one-tenth of alumni would like to receive updates on a weekly basis. Two alumni pointed out that DNR news and updates are currently available online.

Table 21. Desired Frequency of DNR News or Updates

	N	%
Weekly	12	10%
Monthly	66	53%
Six times per year (every other month)	16	13%
Four times per year (quarterly)	22	18%
Twice per year (biannually)	4	3%
Once per year (annually)	0	0%
Not at all	2	2%
Other	3	2%

Alumni also shared whether they would be willing to serve in the DNR Alumni Association, either as an officer or in another role, and the results are shown in Table 22. Few alumni were willing to commit to serving as an officer (1%) or in another role (4%), although many more alumni indicated they might be willing to serve as an officer (29%) or in another role (61%).

Table 22. Alumni Willing to Serve in DNR Alumni Association

		N	%
As an Officer	Yes	1	1%
	Perhaps	36	29%
	No	88	70%
Other Role	Yes	5	4%
	Perhaps	79	61%
	No	45	35%

When asked what other Alumni Association roles they might be willing to take on, one-quarter of the alumni respondents reported they would be willing to greet others (27%) or plan/help plan at face-to-face social gatherings (23%). Less than one-fifth of alumni indicated they would be willing to contribute to an association webpage (19%), greet (17%) or help plan (15%) formal meetings, or serve as an association officer (4%). Some alumni suggested they would be willing to bring a dish to pass (at a meeting) or author historical notes. (See also Table 23 below.)

Table 23. Serve in Other Role(s)

	N	%
Greet others at face-to-face social gatherings	35	27%
Plan/Help plan face-to-face social gatherings	30	23%
Contribute to DNR Alumni Association webpage	25	19%
Greet others at face-to-face formal meetings	22	17%
Plan/Help plan face-to-face formal meetings	19	15%
Serve as an Association Officer	5	4%
Other	7	5%

Alumni were also asked for their thoughts on volunteering with the DNR (see the table below). One-quarter (25%) of the alumni respondents indicated they were interested in volunteering with the DNR and more than one-half (62%) might be interested in volunteering. A small number of alumni (12%) indicated they were not interested in volunteering. When asked why they were not interested, alumni responses varied. Some alumni pointed out they lived out of state, were too busy to take on volunteer projects, or already volunteer with the DNR or other organizations. Other alumni expressed concerns about their health and the necessity to travel to volunteer opportunities, they had not yet retired (although they had separated from the DNR), a general non-interest in more natural resource work after their career, and concerns that volunteering would mean fewer jobs for new staff. A complete list of alumni respondent comments can be found in Appendix I.

Table 24. Interested in Volunteering with DNR

	N	%
Yes	33	25%
Perhaps	81	62%
No	16	12%

Alumni respondents also had the opportunity to identify any projects in which they have an interest, and those results are shared in Table 25 below. As can be seen in the table, one-quarter of the alumni (24%) were interested in sharing their knowledge learned on the job to new employees. And one-tenth of alumni were interested in a number of volunteer projects from habitat development and non-game wildlife surveys (16% each) to public outreach and education (11%) and working with students and school forests (10%). Alumni also suggested project such as

lake level monitoring, archaeology digs, clerical assistance, collective native prairie seeds, and growing trees from seed. On average, alumni selected 2.2 projects each, although the number of projects selected ranged from 0 (none) to 12. A comprehensive list of the 'other' responses can be found in Appendix I.

Table 25. Potential Volunteer Projects

	N	%
Transferring knowledge learned on the job to new employees	31	24%
Habitat development	21	16%
Non-game wildlife surveys	21	16%
Planting native plants or trees	20	15%
Precipitation observers	18	14%
State Fair volunteer	18	14%
Hunting or Fishing mentor	16	12%
Connecting DNR with community groups (e.g., clubs)	15	12%
Monitoring easements	15	12%
Public outreach and education	14	11%
Working with students and school forests	13	10%
Lake level monitoring	9	7%
Safety instructor (e.g., firearms, ATV)	9	7%
Volunteer naturalist assistant in state park	9	7%
Campground host	8	6%
Fishing clinics	8	6%
Master Naturalist Volunteer	7	5%
Trail management	6	5%
Removing invasive species	5	4%
Watercraft inspection program	4	3%
Grant writing	0	0%
Other	21	16%

Alumni also identified volunteer roles, if any, in which they were interested and the results are shown in Table 26 below. On average, alumni respondents selected 1.3 roles each. The most frequently selected role was 'worker,' or someone doing hands-on work (39%). More than one-quarter of alumni respondents selected 'advisor' (31%) and 'mentor' (27%). Few alumni (3%) indicated they were interested in coordinating projects.

Table 26. Potential Volunteer Roles

	N	%
Worker	50	39%
Advisor	40	31%
Mentor	35	27%
Lead worker	21	16%
Advocate	13	10%
Project coordinator	4	3%
Other	5	4%

Few alumni (9%) expressed an interest in participating in a DNR Speaker's Bureau (see the table below). More than half of the alumni (64%) were definitely not interested in participating in a speaker's bureau, despite the presentations occurring locally and visuals (and equipment) provided by the DNR.

Table 27. Interest in DNR Speaker’s Bureau

	N	%
Interested	11	9%
Neither interested nor uninterested	33	27%
Not interested	78	64%

And alumni shared their thoughts about the importance of socialization in volunteer opportunities; the results are show in the table below. As can be seen in the table, one-quarter of the alumni respondents (28%) felt that volunteer opportunities should include socialization while more than half of the alumni (59%) were indifferent to the importance of socialization.

Table 28. Importance of Socialization in Volunteer Opportunities

	N	%
Important	33	28%
Neither important nor unimportant	70	59%
Unimportant	16	13%

Alumni also indicated the minimum and maximum number of hours per week they would be willing to commit when volunteering with the DNR and the results are shown in the table below. As can be seen in the table, more than half of the alumni respondents (58%) would be willing to perform a minimum of 1 to 4 hours per week with the DNR and a maximum of 1 to 4 hours per week (34%) or 5 to 8 hours per week (22%). However, some alumni respondents pointed out they would be willing to commit 1-4 hours *per month*, not per week. Some alumni respondents also commented that the number of hours they would volunteer would depend on the project.

Table 29. Minimum and Maximum Hours per Week Volunteering with DNR

	Minimum		Maximum	
	N	%	N	%
Not interested	8	9%	9	10%
1 to 4 hours	52	58%	31	34%
5 to 8 hours	6	7%	20	22%
9 to 12 hours	2	2%	7	8%
13 to 16 hours			2	2%
17 to 20 hours			3	3%
21 to 24 hours				
25 to 28 hours				
29 to 32 hours			1	1%
33 to 36 hours				
37 to 40 hours				
Other	21	24%	17	19%

**Shaded cells indicate no response.*

And alumni also indicated the minimum and maximum number of weeks they would be willing to volunteer with the DNR (see Table 30 below). More than half of the alumni respondents (62%) indicated they would be willing to volunteer for a minimum of 1 to 4 weeks to a maximum of 1 to 4 weeks (37%) to 5 to 8 weeks (16%). Again, some alumni commented that the number of weeks they would be willing to volunteer would depend on the project.

Table 30. Minimum and Maximum Weeks of Volunteering with DNR

	Minimum		Maximum	
	N	%	N	%
Not interested	11	14%	11	13%
1 to 4 weeks	50	62%	31	37%
5 to 8 weeks	8	10%	13	16%
9 to 12 weeks	1	1%	10	12%
13 to 16 weeks			4	5%
17 to 20 weeks			1	1%
21 to 24 weeks				
25 to 28 weeks				
29 to 32 weeks				
33 to 36 weeks				
37 to 40 weeks				
41 or more weeks	1	1%	1	4%
Other	10	12%	10	12%

*Shaded cells indicate no response.

One-third of the alumni (35%) indicated a preference for volunteering with the Fish and Wildlife division and one-quarter (25%) preferred Parks and Trails. Less than one-fifth of the alumni respondents indicated a preference for volunteering with Forestry (19%), Ecological and Water Resources (18%), or Enforcement (12%). And few alumni respondents indicated a preference for Operation Services (7%) and Lands and Minerals (4%). (See also the table below.)

Table 31. Preference for Division of Volunteering

	N	%
Fish and Wildlife	45	35%
Parks and Trails	33	25%
Forestry	24	19%
Ecological and Water Resources	23	18%
Enforcement	16	12%
Operation Services	9	7%
Lands and Minerals	5	4%

Last, alumni respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to share. Several alumni commented that they lived out-of-state or that they were uninterested in traveling to the Metro area to volunteer. A number of alumni also commented on the limited availability of their time to volunteer with the DNR. Many of the alumni respondents have already taken on one or more volunteer roles in their community and have limited time for additional volunteering. For some of the alumni, this includes volunteering with the DNR. And other alumni were excited at the prospect of volunteering with the DNR. A comprehensive list of all alumni comments can be found in Appendix I.

ALUMNI VOLUNTEERING BEST PRACTICES

The investigation also included a review of available literature to identify volunteering best practices, especially best practices among alumni volunteer programs. Relevant literature from scientific journals and online sources were examined, with a preference for peer-reviewed or other scholarly articles from nonprofits. The rationale for peer-reviewed or other scholarly

articles was to ensure that the identified best practices were based on research data or experiential evidence and to avoid opinion pieces without support.

No literature was found that identified best practices for alumni volunteering, so the literature search was expanded to include general volunteering best practices and retiree volunteering best practices. That search was fruitful and 62 articles were reviewed for this report. An annotated bibliography of the literature reviewed for this report can be found in Appendix J.

A small number⁶ of the reviewed articles (n=8) included volunteer best practices for organizations. The number of best practices included in each article varied from a low of 6 to a high of 22, although the average was 11. A complete list of best practices for volunteer organizations can be found in Appendix K. After the best practices were identified the lists were reviewed to identify themes across all the best practices. Ten themes were identified and they are presented below. It is important to note that the ten themes apply not only to alumni volunteers, but to all volunteers.

Develop written policies and job descriptions for volunteer and paid staff and clearly defined roles and outcomes of volunteer involvement⁷

Written policies regarding DNR volunteering, including a volunteering mission statement, will ensure that all aspects of the alumni volunteering program are aligned with DNR's mission. Policies may include DNR's position(s) on recruiting alumni, matching alumni with positions, reimbursing for personal expenses, working conditions, describing liability coverage, and outlining protocols for problems (e.g., how to separate from a difficult volunteer). The policies should include all phases of a volunteer's tenure with the DNR, from planning (e.g., recruiting and screening volunteers, what to do with the results of a background check), working with the volunteer (e.g., reimbursement for expenses, frequency of check-ins with supervisors, security of confidential information like passwords), to separation (e.g., transitioning volunteers, regardless of who initiated the transition). In many cases, the policies may already exist for DNR paid staff. Preparing the policies for the volunteers would require editing existing policies and writing some new ones. And, as the DNR staff policy manual evolves over time, so should the volunteer manual.

In addition, job or role descriptions for alumni volunteers are an essential component of any volunteer program. In fact, Brudney⁸ proposed that *"unless and until an organization has determined why volunteers are needed and the specific jobs they will be asked to perform, recruitment, training, management, and evaluation of unpaid workers are nearly hopeless tasks."*⁹ Brudney's assertion is supported by the available literature: job or role descriptions reduce volunteer turnover,¹⁰ increase perceived benefits to the agency (e.g., cost savings, improved quality of services or programs, expansion of services or programs),¹¹ and improved volunteer productivity.¹² In addition, development of job descriptions for alumni volunteers would address one concern expressed by DNR staff at all levels, in all regions, and across all phases of this project: that alumni volunteers, as past employees, would overstep the bounds of

⁶ Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004); Waid (2009).

⁷ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis and Cravens (2000); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004); Waid (2009).

⁸ Brudney (1999).

⁹ See Brudney (1999) pg. 238.

¹⁰ See Brudney & Meijs (2009); Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy (2006); Studer & Schnurbein (2013).

¹¹ See Brudney (1999).

¹² See Studer & Schnurbein (2013).

their role as a volunteer, fail to follow DNR protocols, or be unwilling to complete training. This concern was expressed by staff during the preliminary interviews and focus groups and in the more widespread staff online survey. Last, the volunteer job description would give DNR staff a foundation for separating from the alumni volunteer should she/he fail to comply with the requirements of the position.

Last, the DNR will need to develop goals or outcomes for an alumni volunteer program: what does the DNR intend to achieve through alumni volunteering at the site, region, and state-wide levels? Allen (2006) warns that organizational leaders should be thinking about the impact of the volunteer work (i.e., goals to be achieved) rather than activities to be completed. And developing goals or outcomes will aid in the evaluation of the volunteer program (see below) after implementation.

It is important to develop policies, job descriptions, and outcomes for alumni volunteers, in part, to ensure that all parties - alumni volunteers and their potential supervisors - are knowledgeable of what is and is not appropriate for alumni volunteers.¹³ This level of transparency will ensure that paid DNR staff see there will be no incursion in their job responsibilities or any conflict with the collective bargaining agreement. Furthermore, just the like the employee manual for paid DNR staff, an alumni volunteer manual would increase the likelihood that the alumni volunteer program is implemented consistently across the state.

Provide training and professional development for paid staff who work with and/or supervise volunteers¹⁴

It is not enough to recruit volunteers to share their time with the DNR. In order for the DNR to develop a committed, passionate pool of alumni volunteers who will continue to share their time with the DNR, alumni need to be supported and sustained by trained DNR staff.¹⁵ In order to fully support the alumni volunteer pool, DNR paid staff need to receive training and professional development. The investment in paid staff professional development will likely increase the positive impact of the alumni volunteer program¹⁶ as it will build the capacity of paid staff to support volunteers and paid staff will become more efficient.¹⁷ Providing training and professional development for paid staff will also enhance volunteer retention as research has found that up to 40% of volunteers stop volunteering because of poor volunteer management practices.¹⁸

Recruit and retain volunteers¹⁹

Two of the most popular ways of recruiting volunteers are working for an organization and being recruited by another volunteer.²⁰ Motivations for volunteering are varied and may include contributing to the community, social interaction, personal development, personal knowledge, an ethic of care, and an attachment to a place, group, or idea.²¹ It is important to note that the reason a person begins volunteering may not be the same as their reason for continuing to

¹³ See Ellis & Cravens (2000).

¹⁴ See Brudney (1999); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); Urban Institute (2004).

¹⁵ See UPS Foundation (2002), pg. 4.

¹⁶ See Urban Institute (2004).

¹⁷ See Studer & Schnurbein (2013); Urban Institute (2004), pg. 5.

¹⁸ See UPS Foundation, (1998).

¹⁹ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); UPS Foundation (2002).

²⁰ See Ockenden (2008).

²¹ See Measham & Barnett (2008).

volunteer.²² And some survey research has found that volunteers will separate from organizations if the volunteer feels their time or talents are not being used effectively.²³

Volunteer retention is crucial because the more volunteers an organization can retain, the less time and money will be spent screening potential volunteers, matching them to positions, and orienting and training new volunteers. In addition, when volunteers are retained with an organization, any additional training or professional development the volunteer has received stays with the organization. From a personnel investment perspective, it is in an organization's best interests to retain their volunteers. So why do volunteers separate from their organization? As stated above, volunteers will separate from their organizations if they feel their time or efforts are not being used effectively. In addition, Farmer and Fedor²⁴ propose that volunteers receive something from organizations at which they volunteer. The intangible outcome – knowledge, social importance or improved social standing, or positive feelings – will sustain volunteerism unless and until volunteers feel they are no longer receiving an outcome sufficient for their time and energy. What is important here is that this 'psychological contract' between a volunteer and the organization differs from the contract between an employee and employer. If organizations attempt to use the employer-employee contract with their volunteers, the organization is likely to recruit volunteers, but not retain them. To promote retention, organizations should align volunteer interests with open positions (see below), engage volunteers in decision making,²⁵ provide descriptions for all volunteer positions (see above),²⁶ and incorporate retention training in paid staff professional development. In addition, it may be helpful to periodically check in with volunteers (see below) to ensure their needs are being met. If not, adjust or adapt the volunteer's experience to enhance retention. As Hager and Brudney²⁷ assert, "*retention appears to be very much a product of what charities do directly for their volunteers.*"

Align volunteer's interests with possible positions, which may include interviewing, screening, matching²⁸

As stated above, an alignment between a volunteer's interests and the volunteer positions can increase volunteer retention,²⁹ reduce turnover,³⁰ and may reduce volunteer burnout.³¹ In order to match volunteers, job descriptions will be needed for all volunteer positions (see above). In addition, a mechanism for matching position with volunteer (e.g., volunteer application) will likely be needed and staff may need some training (see above) to best match volunteers with positions.

²² See Citizens Information Board (2008); McClintock (2004).

²³ See Brudney & Meijs (2009); Ryan, Kaplan & Grese (2001); UPS Foundation (1998).

²⁴ 1999. See also Studer & Schnurbein (2013).

²⁵ Some research has shown that engaging volunteers in decision making can positively impact retention. See Ryan, Kaplan & Grese (2001); Studer & Schnurbein (2013).

²⁶ See Brudney & Meijs (2009); Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy (2006); Studer & Schnurbein (2013).

²⁷ 2004; see p. 9.

²⁸ See Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004); Waid (2009).

²⁹ See Hager & Brudney (2004).

³⁰ See Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy (2006).

³¹ See Measham & Barnett (2008).

Provide liability coverage and/or insurance protection for volunteers and clients (e.g., background screening potential volunteers when appropriate or needed)³²

As with paid staff, volunteer staff should be covered by liability insurance. In addition, background screening should be completed with potential volunteers and, as stated above, the alumni volunteer manual should include wrap-around instructions for when background screening is appropriate, how to obtain a background screening, and what to do with the results of the background screening.

Provide orientation and training for volunteers, including ongoing or in-service training and professional development³³

Research suggests that orientation³⁴ and training³⁵ for volunteers can help reduce burnout.³⁶ In order to provide orientation to alumni volunteers, paid staff may need training themselves to effectively and efficiently train volunteers. In addition, job descriptions will be needed (as described above) so that the scope and breadth of training regimens can be identified and training materials can be developed and prepared. While all alumni volunteers will need orientation to the DNR volunteer program, the number of alumni volunteers requiring training will likely vary: some alumni will likely volunteer for a position similar to the one in which they were employed and will need minimal training while other alumni will volunteer in a for different positions and will require more training. In addition, the DNR will need to consider how often alumni volunteers will need 'refresher' training to keep skills up to standard for their respective volunteer position. Last, the DNR will need to determine how often to offer training, either on a rolling/as-needed basis or on a set schedule (e.g., quarterly, monthly).

Supervise volunteers and communicate with them regularly³⁷

Depending on the task, alumni volunteer may not need one-on-one, or even face-to-face, supervision, but supervision and communication should still be provided. Supervision allows paid staff to give alumni volunteers feedback on their performance and provide additional direction, when or if needed. Supervisors can also receive suggestions from alumni volunteers to improve the quality of the work or to get the work done more effectively or efficiently. And, with ongoing communication, supervisors can assess the alumni volunteer's satisfaction with the volunteer position. If the alumni volunteer has become dissatisfied with their role at the DNR, the supervisor can make adjustments or reassignments and hopefully avert burnout / enhance alumni volunteer retention. Last, regular communication between alumni volunteers and supervisors can help facilitate positive relationships between the alumni and paid staff as well (see below).³⁸

³² See Brudney (1999); Ellis (2005); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004).

³³ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004).

³⁴ Orientation to DNR alumni volunteer policies (e.g., reimbursement) and procedures (e.g., how to reserve equipment).

³⁵ Training to complete the specific task the volunteer will be completing.

³⁶ See Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy (2006).

³⁷ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004).

³⁸ See also Ellis (2005).

Develop positive relationships between paid and volunteer staff³⁹

Paid DNR staff may not embrace alumni volunteers in the work place: paid staff may feel their jobs are in jeopardy or that alumni will not respect paid staff's authority. In order to provide a cohesive and effective team, some time and effort will be needed to develop positive relationships between paid and alumni volunteer staff. In addition, paid staff may need training (as described above) to foster and facilitate positive relationships between paid and alumni volunteer staff.

Evaluate the impact of volunteer staff, including periodic assessment of volunteer staff performance and/or contribution⁴⁰

The impact of volunteer staff should be evaluated at two levels: First the individual contribution of the alumni volunteer to their volunteer position and, second, the collective contribution of alumni volunteers to the success of the DNR in achieving its goals. Individual alumni volunteer performance can be evaluated by supervisors by assessing the degree to which each alumnus met the requirements of their position. Alumni volunteers should be evaluated on a regular basis (e.g., once or twice per year). Please note that the processes and procedures for evaluating individual volunteer performance should be incorporated into the alumni volunteer policy manual. In addition, the collective contribution of the alumni volunteers to the success of the DNR should also be evaluated on a regular basis (e.g., yearly). Evaluating the contribution of the alumni volunteer program will likely involve surveying a much wider audience (e.g., all staff vs. volunteer supervisors) to determine if the program is meeting its goals.

Recognize the contributions of volunteers⁴¹

Recognizing volunteers' contributions can be done informally (e.g., verbal 'thank you') or formally (e.g., plaque or certificate at a year-end event). Although recognizing the contributions of volunteers is one of the most widely adopted best practices,⁴² yet it is far less beneficial to organizations than other best practices.⁴³ In order to maximize the impact of the recognition strategy, it should be meaningful to the volunteer, whether or not the recognition is formal or informal.⁴⁴ For instance, volunteers who are avid readers would find a gift of reading material much more personally meaningful than a mug or a cap. As a result, a range of recognition strategies will be needed to ensure that each alumni volunteer receives a personally meaningful recognition. And, although it is tempting to wait and provide formal recognition once or twice per year, recognition is more impactful when it occurs soon after a project or task is completed.⁴⁵

The DNR should have a policy on formal and informal recognition strategies to ensure that volunteers' contributions are acknowledged with some uniformity across the state.⁴⁶ In addition, the DNR will need to allocate resources (e.g., money, time, training) especially for formal recognition strategies.⁴⁷

³⁹ See Ellis (2005); National Council on Aging (2010).

⁴⁰ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004); Waid (2009).

⁴¹ See Brudney (1999); Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); National Council on Aging (2010); UPS Foundation (2002); Urban Institute (2004); Waid (2009).

⁴² See Brudney (1999).

⁴³ For example, the percentage of time paid staff spend managing volunteers and training for employees to work with volunteers both have a greater impact on the benefits of volunteers to an organization (see Brudney, 1999).

⁴⁴ See Ellis (2005).

⁴⁵ See Ellis (2005).

⁴⁶ See Citizens Information Board (2008).

⁴⁷ See Brudney (1999).

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS IN OTHER STATES

Additional interviews were completed to identify the way(s) in which states were implementing alumni associations. A total of 17 individuals participated in phone interviews representing organizations in 13 states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Interviewees included staff in park districts, independent alumni associations, volunteer associations, state departments of wildlife conservation or natural resources, state parks divisions, friends groups (members of the general public), and a member of the National Park Service. About half of the participants coordinated volunteer programs, one-quarter were staff in Human Resources or Communications departments, and one-third were board members (friends groups, alumni associations). The interviews were semi-structured and ranged from 5 to 45 minutes in length. The key interview questions included:

1. Does your state DNR [or within specific state parks division or organization] have a formal retiree or alumni association?
2. If yes, what was the focus or purpose of the association (e.g., was the association service-oriented, socially-oriented, or part of a friends group)?
3. What were key features of their association (e.g., how was it formed, when did it start, what was the legal structure, were membership dues collected, how many members were involved, what types of events or activities were offered, and how was the association staffed)?
4. What worked well? What did not work well?
5. What other states did they know had a formal alumni association?

Key findings

Only a handful of interviewees reported having a formal association for their alumni or retirees. Other participants described efforts to involve their alumni including announcements (e.g., monthly or quarterly newsletters), get-togethers through a friends group, and invitations to join current employees at annual meetings. These events were often described as being social and allowed participants to network, rather than being service-oriented. A few participants recalled previous efforts and interests from state employees to start such an association, but did not know of its outcome (e.g., signed up for it but have not heard anything).

It is important to note that many interview participants were affiliated with states that had volunteer programs for their constituents and/or a statewide friends group. Alumni and retirees were encouraged to participate in those programs and/or be part of a group(s), but no state run alumni association existed. Friends groups consisted of anyone interested in their state's natural resources who wanted to participate in activities to support their state parks and forests. Some states had fewer than 20 local friends groups while others had over 80 local friends groups (varied number of members in each group). Most friends groups operated as 501(c)(3) non-profit entities. One participant belonged to a friends group with 501(c)(4) IRS designation and lobbied on behalf of state parks. Participants stated that their contributions in friends groups were voluntary and a small handful of volunteers coordinated specific activities (e.g., email announcements, planning of events, webpage design, Facebook posts). Note that the friends groups were organized and implemented by volunteers, not state employees.

Very few participants (n=2) reported having a formal alumni association for their former employees and retirees. Membership dues varied: some were annual fees (\$10 to \$50 per year) and some had lifetime memberships (\$300 to \$500). The formal alumni associations were

staffed with volunteers and sent their members regular updates. Association activities included annual gatherings to share stories, welcome new members, and/or conduct business, as well as family fun days and workdays (focused on service projects). Similar to the friends groups, these associations were independent, had non-profit status, and minimal profits. Often, donations, event fees, and membership dues were applied toward event costs (e.g., food), web hosting fees, mailbox fees, printed materials, and charitable causes. Participants' experiences with such associations were mixed. One of the associations, for example, just celebrated their 25th year in existence while another struggled after 2 years. A few encouraged the DNR to pursue such an alumni association (e.g., *"that is a great idea," "we would be happy to help and Skype our people in"*) while others cautioned starting up such an association (e.g., *"It was a great concept, but it was disappointing because people held grudges. A lot of people talked about giving back but we did not think there were so much hard feelings"*).

Factors supporting successful alumni associations included:

- Recruiting members who developed the infrastructure for the association and continued to be engaged over the years (one participant described how their association invited its founders to share lessons learned with others in a special forum);
- Being strategically focused and having a clear mission for the association, its purpose, and by-laws (e.g., definition, objectives, membership, dues and voting privileges, officers and board, committees);
- Knowing the needs of the organization for short- and long-term project (e.g., volunteers knew they were fulfilling a need within their organization);
- Coming from an organization with a long history of civic engagement (e.g., leadership and management staff encouraged their current employees to volunteer through time off from work that in turned built the culture of volunteering after leaving the organization);
- Using multiple communication strategies to involve members such as emails, newsletters, Facebook, website, listserv, and personal phone calls (one participant, for instance, felt phone calls were more effective than other means of communication with retirees);
- Knowing the volunteer population (e.g., what were their skills, topic of interests); Incorporating social components into service-oriented projects; and
- Recognizing member contributions through meetings, events, and social media (e.g., Facebook posts, gallery of pictures, video production on YouTube).

Participants from new and seasoned associations described challenges with start-up and implementation efforts. Those challenges included organization politics or parks issues, budget cuts that terminated a lot of positions within the organization, low support from the organizational leadership team, and a narrow pool of retirees. A few participants also estimated DNR needing to invest 0.25 to 0.50 FTE initially (over a course of 2-3 month period) to get the association started. Participants were also very willing to offer suggestions for DNR. Suggestions included:

- Setting up structure independent of state parks (e.g., need to avoid politics of the organization and focus on the people);
- Incorporating both service-oriented and social components (e.g., as one participant felt social activities alone were not very useful);
- Building a strong culture of service within the organization (so that when employees leave or retire, they continue to be active because they were already part of the volunteer group);
- Obtaining feedback from volunteers (both past and present) to be more aware of the volunteer population (what were their hot topics, skills, and interests); and
- Considering the timeframe for capturing volunteers (one participant recommended giving retirees some time off right after they retired and not approaching them immediately).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the information presented above, at this time the evaluation staff recommend that the DNR suspend preparations for a DNR Alumni Association in order to invest time to adequately prepare the DNR's infrastructure for organizing and maintaining the group. During the initial focus groups, both DNR alumni and current staff expressed reservations about establishing an Alumni Association, including the logistics of organizing and maintaining the association, sufficient interest by alumni, costs associated with participation in the association (e.g., membership, time commitment), and the degree to which the association could keep alumni engaged with the DNR. In addition, as shown above alumni and staff opinions regarding the Alumni Association are, at best, lukewarm. While more than half of the alumni were interested in maintaining contact with other alumni, only one-quarter of the alumni were unreservedly interested in participating in an Alumni Association. Furthermore, DNR staff were concerned that development of an Alumni Association would require the diversion of funds for staff to oversee and administer the association and some staff questioned the need for an Alumni Association.

In addition, it is currently unclear why the DNR wishes to organize and maintain an Alumni Association. The success of the Alumni Association would depend, in part, on the ability of the DNR to develop and articulate the intent and goals of the Alumni Association to its current staff, who are also the association's future members. Last, few other states have successfully developed and maintained similar alumni associations and the Minnesota DNR would likely experience similar challenges.

Although the evaluators recommend against moving forward on the Alumni Association, one element of this study was endorsed by staff in all areas of the state and across all job types: alumni were encouraged to return to mentor new staff. Staff shared these comments during both the preliminary focus groups and on the survey. Some staff shared, *"having alumni volunteers 'mentors' current employees might be a great way to utilize alumni volunteers in a way that supports and contributes to the development of the current workforce."* And another staff commented, *"I would rather focus DNR time and money on having soon-to-be retirees mentor current staff."* Given the widespread endorsement of mentoring new employees, the DNR may wish to move forward on this matter.

The DNR could greatly improve the likelihood of an Alumni Association's success if the following three concerns are addressed. First, identify a compelling reason that the DNR should be responsible for organizing and maintaining an Alumni Association. Once the DNR can articulate why, beyond leveraging alumni time as volunteers, it should be responsible for the association that information should be shared with current staff. Second, get buy-in from staff outside of the Central Office. The DNR's current staff are the future participants of an Alumni Association and their interest in the association will drive and sustain membership. Once a reason for the DNR's interest in the Alumni Association can be articulated, that reason can be shared with staff to get their buy-in and support. It may take some time for the DNR to reach out to and inform all staff, but by doing so, the DNR can greatly improve staff's attitudes toward the Alumni Association and increase the likelihood of staff participation after their separation from the DNR.

Last, if the proposed Alumni Association will include a volunteering arm, it is important that the DNR work on improving the existing volunteer program. The DNR is encouraged to use the volunteer program best practices summarized in this report to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the current DNR program. Doing so will streamline the processes for staff and the existing volunteers and allow both paid and volunteer staff to make their time more efficient. By improving the efficiency of the existing volunteer program, those staff who are currently reluctant to work with volunteers may change their minds and accept or welcome alumni

volunteers in the future. Please note that several of the resources summarized above⁴⁸ include checklists to determine organizational readiness for planning for and implementing a volunteer program. The checklists may be helpful if the DNR plans to develop a volunteer arm of an Alumni Association.

⁴⁸ Citizens Information Board (2008); Ellis (2005); Ellis & Cravens (2000); UPS Foundation (2002).

APPENDIX A: ALUMNI INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND FINDINGS

Alumni Interview Script



Introduction

- Thank participant for their willingness to participate in the call/interview.
- The purpose of the conversation is to learn more about their perspectives on volunteering with/at the DNR.
- Encourage participant to be as honest as they feel comfortable; their anonymity will be protected by:
 - Not sharing recordings and/or transcripts with anyone at DNR (only ACET staff has access to the recordings and the transcripts)
 - Stripping out personally identifiable information (e.g., name, former job title); and
 - Combining their responses with responses from other participants (we will be interviewing 6-10 alumni).
- Please be advised that your name, the identity of any individual and the information you are providing, is classified as private data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subd.7(a). By attending this focus group you are giving us permission to ask questions and contact you for more information. You are not required to participate in this focus group and there are no consequences for not participating. Those who will have access to your name and suggestion data include Department of Natural Resources and ACET, Inc. employees that a business need and those authorized by state or federal law or by court order. Summary data will be created removing the names and identities of anyone participating in this focus group discussion.
- Ask their permission to record the interview. Once they have given assent, turn the recording on.
- Remind them that the interview will take up to 60 minutes and we will end the interview at that time because we want to be respectful of the time they share with us.
- Ask participant if they have any questions.

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
Icebreaker / Opening	1. How long were you with the DNR? ... What was your job title? And what did you do? How long since you worked at the DNR? When was the last time you talked (or emailed) with someone at the DNR?
<i>The DNR wants to know what they would need to do to get an alumni volunteer program up and running. The DNR's goal is to use a volunteer program to supplement existing staff, but not to supplant staff. In other words, the volunteer program could not be used to displace or lay off existing paid staff, reduce their hours, or fill a vacant position. In addition, we're not asking you to volunteer, but we would like to get your insights about the feasibility of an alumni volunteer program.</i>	
Roles and projects of interest	2. If the DNR were to set up an alumni volunteer program, which roles or projects at the DNR do you think alumni would prefer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Example roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project coordinator (schedule other volunteers, etc.) ii. Project leader (instruct other volunteers, etc.) iii. Worker (do the hands on work) iv. Advisor (share ideas, knowledge or skills) v. Advocate (educate others, persuasion)

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Example projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Removing invasive species, habitat development ii. Safety instructor iii. Fishing clinics iv. Hunting mentor, planting native plants or trees v. Working with students with school forests vi. Sealing wells vii. Monitoring easements or trail management viii. Advisory committee for a division c. If the DNR set up an alumni volunteer program, which roles or projects do you think DNR paid staff would like volunteers to fulfill/complete/be assigned to?
<p>Willingness to volunteer on projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Would you be willing to volunteer with the DNR? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why or why not? b. Are there specific projects or roles you would be willing to take on at the DNR? Why those projects or roles? c. What's the minimum and maximum time commitment you would be willing to take on for a volunteer position with the DNR? [Ask about hours-per-week as well as duration of the volunteer position.] 4. What about other alumni? Do you think others would be interested in volunteering with the DNR? Why or why not? 5. Would you have any interest in volunteering as a DNR speaker (a speaker's bureau)?
<p>Skill sets needed by volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Can you think of any specific skill sets that alumni volunteers would need in order to volunteer with the DNR? What are they? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Probe: Would alumni be likely to have the skills you mentioned, or might they require training? 7. When you think about volunteering, would you be more interested in learning a new skill set or using skills you already have?
<p><i>The DNR is exploring the possibility of establishing an Alumni Association. We've been asked to gather some initial thoughts about the possibility.</i></p>	
<p>Alumni Association structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. How important is it to you that stay in contact with other DNR alumni? ...Would you be interested in participating in an Alumni Association set up by the DNR? 9. If so, what critical/important features would you like to see? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examples: regular meetings, luncheons, board of directors and/or officers, web page (what content?), automatic updates, ability to contact (and be contacted) by other retirees 10. How do you think alumni would benefit from having an Alumni Association? Do you see any benefits for the DNR? 11. Do you have any concerns about developing an Alumni Association?
<p>Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Can you think of any obstacles the DNR would face when trying to develop an alumni volunteer program? If so, what are they?
<p>Anything else?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Wrap-Up

- Thank them again for participating in the interview.
- Assure them that their comments and input will be anonymously shared with DNR.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions.

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail
Department of Natural Resources

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: January 30, 2013 [Revised February 10, 2014]

Re: Summary of Alumni Interviews

Eight alumni/retirees from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) participated in telephone interviews between November and December 2013. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain feedback from alumni about the potential for an alumni-focused volunteer program and for an alumni association. To maintain alumni privacy, DNR initially emailed alumni about the interviews and asked interested persons to provide their contact information with ACET staff via a survey link. ACET followed up with emails or telephone calls, according to alumni preference, to schedule the interviews. Interviewed alumni included both men (n=4) and women (n=4) who had been retired from the DNR for less than a year to more than 20 years. In addition, while the goal was to include alumni from varied positions with the DNR and in all areas of the state, half of the interviewees had been stationed at the DNR central office in St. Paul and less than half (n=3) worked with volunteers while with the DNR.

Six key themes were identified from the phone calls:

- When asked about the alumni volunteer program:
 - Interviewees felt that roles or projects for volunteers would vary greatly and depend, in part, on the volunteer's background, personality, and physical stamina. Interviewees would also prefer volunteer opportunities that include some level of fun and/or socialization and that resulted in a tangible, positive outcome.
 - Interviewees may be willing to volunteer with the DNR, depending on the division in which they would be volunteering or on the project. Most interviewees preferred volunteer experiences that utilized their current skills.
 - Interviewees identified a number of perceived obstacles to establishing an alumni volunteer program including: willingness of alumni to volunteer, effective and efficient management of the program by DNR staff, the degree to which former managerial and non-managerial staff would effectively work together, using the volunteer program to replace paid staff, the amount of DNR paid staff time needed to maintain an alumni volunteer program, establishing defined roles for alumni volunteers, insurance coverage for alumni volunteers, and whether or not the alumni volunteer program would provide financial remuneration for volunteer-related expenses.
- When asked about the alumni association, half of the interviewees felt it was important to them to stay in contact with other alumni.
 - Interviewees felt the primary benefit of an alumni association to them would be maintaining or re-establishing relationships with other alumni. Interviewees commented that the DNR would benefit from an alumni association because it would be a volunteer resource.
 - Interviewees would prefer that the alumni association incorporate opportunities for face-to-face meetings between alumni once or twice per year, a newsletter, and the ability to

- o contact and be contacted by other alumni.
- o Interviewees identified a number of concerns regarding the establishment of an alumni association, including: financial commitments, organizing and maintaining an alumni association, interest of other alumni in the association, online security, location of alumni events, politicizing the alumni association.

Alumni Volunteer Program

When asked what types of roles and/or projects alumni would prefer most, most interviewees hesitated to identify a role or project and felt that would “*vary greatly from person to person.*” Interviewees felt the volunteers’ role or project would depend in part on the volunteer’s background, personality, and physical stamina. For instance, one interviewee shared, “*I tend to be rather extroverted and I enjoy people ... But I also know that there were a lot of people who worked at the department who were more introverted ... they might be the ones to put up signs.*” Another interviewee acknowledged that, after retirement, volunteers’ physical abilities will change and that volunteer opportunities will reflect those physical changes. As one interviewee commented, “*it might depend in part on you know like physical ability, of, retirees, you know can people still be tromping out in the woods, carrying something, or, you know, being... being some kind of extra on a crew.*” Several interviewees suggested that volunteers’ role or project should be based on a match between the volunteers’ interest and the needs of the DNR. As one interviewee commented, “*it’s going to vary a lot by individual. ... So I think if there was a system that would provide options—here’s some volunteer opportunities, where they’re located, how long it would take and what’s expected, I would think that would help as far as getting volunteers to apply.*” Volunteers also commented they had difficulty responding to this question because DNR’s needs varied a great deal from office to office and over time. As one interviewee shared:

“that’s kind of a tough one to answer, because it’s going to vary so much from office to office because of the wide range of things that need to be done. ... It’s going to be those things, I think, that either are critical and they need more help to complete. Examples would be all of a sudden they have to do CWD sampling or something and they need more help to do that, or help with moose sampling or something. That would be an area that volunteers are going to want to fill in. I think the volunteers are going to be looking for the field-type work, in general, although there’s some situations where there might be office type projects that they could help with, too.”

Other interviewees responded from a more personal perspective and, instead of sharing the roles and projects other alumni might prefer, shared the roles and projects the interviewee would prefer. Example roles and projects included office work (e.g., filing, data entry), wildlife surveys (e.g., “*counting insects, monarch butterflies, birds*”), field work (e.g., fence repair or weed control), interacting with the public (e.g., “*maybe helping with tours*”), and assisting with safety programs. And one interviewee responded they “*would probably do anything*” except go back to their original office. Interviewees also acknowledged that it might be a challenge to find tasks appropriate for alumni volunteers. They felt the DNR would have to identify tasks or projects that would require minimal supervision/paid staff time and would be completed using current protocols. Interviewees acknowledged that “*people can be kind of stuck in their ways*” and that some alumni volunteers might not know or understand current protocols for accomplishing tasks.

Interviewees also commented that they would prefer a volunteer experience that was “*fun*” and incorporated socialization. Interviewees, while accustomed to working alone, would prefer that there be a social aspect to volunteering with the DNR. Interviewees would also prefer volunteer experiences that resulted in “*some kind of ... demonstrable*” outcome. Interviewees would prefer their volunteer efforts to result in a tangible, positive difference. As one interviewee shared, “*I think something...once it’s completed you would feel like, you know, ‘I made a difference here; I did something that really*

helped out.’” Last, interviewees shared that the alumni-DNR staff relationship should be one of mutual respect. Interviewees recommended that the DNR build a culture in which all volunteers are appreciated for the contributions they can make rather than lamenting what the volunteer cannot do. As one interviewee shared, *“the 60-something volunteers may still might be able to hoist around 50-pound sacks or something ...feed for deer or whatever. But, if you're 70-75, maybe not.”* The interviewee also commented, *“most important thing for both sides of the dynamic would be, kind of, respectful.”*

Interviewees were also asked if they would be willing to volunteer with the DNR on projects. Only two interviewees unequivocally stated they would (n=1) or would not (n=1) be willing to volunteer with the DNR. One interviewee shared that they had previously volunteered with the DNR and commented that tapping into alumni was a great idea because the interviewee felt that former DNR employees were more likely to provide sustained volunteer support than were non-DNR volunteers. The interviewee who declined any volunteering with the DNR did so because of the distance between their current home and DNR sites (more than 2 hours).

The remaining interviewees generally responded ‘it depends’ when asked about volunteering with the DNR. Some interviewees (n=4) indicated that their decision to volunteer with the DNR would depend on the DNR division in which there was a volunteer opportunity. One interviewee identified a number of divisions based on division directors and the current division staff. This interviewee was particularly interested in the quality/work history of the division directors and the perceived need of that division for volunteer help. Three other interviewees also identified one or more divisions in which they would be willing to volunteer, but their decisions were based on their own personal interests. In particular, interviewees often indicated a willingness to volunteer with state parks because of a *“personal connection”* or because the state parks are one of the most *“visible”* elements of the DNR.

Other interviewees indicated that their likelihood of volunteering would depend on the project. Interviewees would be more likely to volunteer if the project they would be working on was closely aligned with their interests, especially if that project was focused and specific. As one interviewee commented, their decision to volunteer would *“have to depend on what the project was. And if it was something that I thought was really interesting and that I could make a contribution to.”* In addition, some volunteers would base their decision to volunteer on the amount of time required for the volunteer assignment or project. In particular, interviewees were interested in assignments or projects that would require shorter or limited time frames. For instance, one interviewee shared, *“if there's a project that's going to on for five weeks, and, you know, could I come every Thursday for five weeks, that I might be able to do.”* Another interviewee indicated that the time commitment required for the volunteer project would be a less important factor than the satisfaction gained from working on the project. That interviewee shared, *“let's say, four hours a week, two to four hours a week. Maybe. But it really depends on, what it is, and, how satisfying it is when I'm working on it.”* Last, interviewees also indicated that their own health and wellness would be a factor in the decision to volunteer with the DNR. When asked if there was a minimum or maximum number of hours they would be willing to commit to volunteering with the DNR, there was a great deal of variability in responses ranging from 4 to 16 hours per week.

When asked if they knew of other alumni willing to volunteer with the DNR interviewees were split. While three interviewees ‘thought’ they knew of at least one other alumni who would be willing to volunteer with the DNR, the remaining three interviewees did not know of other alumni willing to volunteer, (n=1), were unsure (n=1), or felt that other alumni they knew were too old to volunteer. And when asked if they would be willing to participate in a speaker’s bureau, three interviewees indicated they would be unwilling to be a part of a speaker’s bureau, one indicated ‘it depends,’ and one indicated it was a possibility.

Interviewees were also asked if they would be more interested in using the skills they already have or

learning new skills for a volunteer position. Most interviewees (n=4) indicated they would prefer to use skills they already have in a volunteer position rather than learn new skills (n=0). Interviewees indicated their preference for using already known skills was linked to the advantage of using alumni as volunteers: plugging volunteers *“into something they’re ready to go with so you wouldn’t have to spend a lot of time on training them.”* Two interviewees indicated they would like to use a mixed set of skills: some skills they already have as well as some new skills.

The last question posed to interviewees regarding the alumni volunteer program was perceived obstacles to setting up a DNR alumni volunteer program. Several interviewees commented that a major obstacle is the availability and willingness of alumni to volunteer. Interviewees pointed out that, upon retirement, many alumni have already established what they will be doing with their time. The DNR, looking for alumni assistance, would be one choice of many for alumni to utilize their time. As one interviewee pointed out, *“probably one of the major, main ones would be people, people’s time. People saying ‘is this really worth my time?’”* Interviewees also pointed out that the DNR would have to compete with other demands on retiree’s time, such as aging parents, grandchildren, opportunities for travel or pursuing hobbies, and other volunteer outlets. One interviewee suggested the DNR emphasize recruiting recent retirees and felt that strategy might be more successful than trying to recruit volunteers from among all DNR retirees regardless of when they retired.

Interviewees also expressed concern over trying to establish an alumni volunteer program for an agency as large as the DNR. Interviewees felt that the sheer size of the DNR would be a bureaucratic obstacle to organizing and maintaining an alumni volunteer program. Interviewees were concerned that the sheer size of the DNR would complicate establishing and maintaining an efficient and effective alumni volunteer program. In addition, interviewees were concerned about the impact of returning alumni volunteers on interpersonal relationships, especially relationships with union members. Of particular concern was the degree to which managerial and non-managerial staff would effectively work together as alumni volunteers. As one interviewee stated, *“and you know when you come from one big mess, you know where whether you like people or not, you have to get along with ‘em, and then you come into another, big environment where... the territorialism reigns supreme, that really works against people getting along.”*

At the beginning of the interview the interviewer clearly laid out parameters of the DNR’s proposed alumni volunteer program: that the program would be used to enhance current DNR operations and that it would *not* be used to reduce the hours of, lay off, or replace existing DNR staff nor would the program be used to fill open positions. Still, interviewees were concerned that utilizing an alumni volunteer program could be a *“slippery slope.”* Specifically, interviewees were concerned that the alumni volunteer program would be used to lay off existing staff or replace staff in unfilled positions.

In addition, interviewees were also concerned about the amount of DNR paid staff time needed to maintain an alumni volunteer program. Should the alumni volunteer program move forward, DNR paid staff will have to invest already-limited time in identifying volunteer tasks/projects, organizing materials and instructions for the volunteers, training volunteers to keep them up-to-date on current protocols and processes, and mentoring and monitoring volunteers. It is important to note that interviewees acknowledged that alumni volunteers would have to be carefully monitored to ensure they don’t overstep their bounds, which might require specialized training for current DNR staff. As one interviewee explained, *“[volunteers] want to throw their weight around a little bit or whatever you know, and I think that’s not- you know, that’s not something that the volunteers should be doing. So, that’s one of those things that you probably need to have some really good- guidance for the DNR employee who’s dealing with the volunteers as far as how they do that, you know.”*

Interviewees also felt that it was important that alumni have defined roles. One interviewee explained, *“they need to be working with those people. Because if you have too many cooks in the kitchen, the message gets lost, the person gets frustrated... and the program collapses.”* Another interviewee stressed the importance of identifying the volunteer roles prior to recruiting alumni. One interviewee

explained, “so retired folks know what opportunities are out there and what the real need is. Because those needs change over time with priorities and as things get assigned to managers, they might have to shift their workload, and so that would be a good opportunity then to maybe have a volunteer fill in on something they need help with. But I think it’s probably best if they can identify what the need is, and then the volunteers can say, yeah, that’s something I could do.” Interviewees also raised the importance of establishing insurance coverage for alumni volunteers. In addition, interviewees stated that DNR should establish whether or not the alumni volunteer program would provide financial remuneration for mileage, meals, and other volunteer-related expenses.

Alumni Association

Interviewees were also asked the degree to which it was important for them to stay in contact with other alumni. Three alumni indicated that it was important for them to stay in contact with other alumni. As one interviewee explained, “I guess on a scale of 1 to 10 I would probably put that at about a 6 or 7. So it’s more important to me than less important, I guess.” Another interviewee commented that staying in contact with other alumni was important, but had difficulty accomplishing that. The interviewee explained, “well it’s very important to me, which you might say, ‘well, then how come you’re not doing it?’ Well, it’s hard to- it’s hard to keep in touch with them ... I’m just so busy.” Another interviewee had mixed feelings about keeping in contact with other alumni. The interviewee explained, “I think if there was an association, I would think about it. I ... have no need to, to be involved in another kind of a quasi- you know, is it gonna be a dinner group, or is it gonna be a bureaucracy within a bureaucracy?” Three other interviewees explained they were interested in an alumni association but did not describe their interest in terms of ‘importance.’ All three interviewees expressed an interest in knowing what was happening with the DNR and with fellow retirees. As one interviewee explained, “well I don’t know whether, I don’t know whether you’d call it important, it certainly would be interesting to- and be able to know how many of the old boys are left.” Another shared, “I can’t say that it’s really important but it’s nice, you know, to be able to, to at least, if you wanna you know connect to somebody, have some opportunity to be able to do that.” And one interviewee commented that staying in contact with other alumni was not at all important. This interviewee shared, “I like hearing from the DNR about what they’re doing. But it is not important at all to me to stay in touch with a lot of the people there. I was much more interested in their- in the operating mission of the DNR.”

When asked critical features they would like to see in the alumni association, many interviewees indicated an interest in opportunities for face-to-face interactions or meetings. As one interviewee explained, “I know there are other options but, I don’t know, I think- to me face-to-face just another whole world, and I still like it.” Most of the interviewees with an interest in face-to-face meetings emphasized a fun or social purpose to the meetings and the opportunity to informally catch up with other attendees. As one interviewee commented, “if you make it a social get-together and you can get a little meeting done in the process, then it wouldn’t seem like a meeting.” One interviewee, however, suggested a more formal approach to the meetings and recommended a more formal and non-social purpose for the meetings. This interviewee commented, “I think if you were gonna have an alumni association it would be nice to, maybe, have, you know, have something- very professional, done maybe, meetings, meetings possibly, maybe twice a year, with speakers, and talk about what the DNR has accomplished, where they’re going, what their missions are.” Regardless of the intent or content of the face-to-face meetings, interviewees agreed that one or two meetings a year would be ideal.

Three interviewees also suggested a newsletter to share information about the DNR and other alumni. Interviewees acknowledged that communicating through a newsletter, even an electronic one, would be an investment of time and energy from an editor/preparer, but appreciated the friendliness of the format in communicating events. Other interviewees wanted the ability to contact and be contacted by

other alumni, probably over a web-based platform.

Interviewees felt that an alumni association's primary benefit would be socialization and re-establishing or maintaining relationships with other alumni. As one interviewee explained, *"I guess the only thing that comes to mind is that, to be the benefit of just being able to be connected with, you know some of the folks that that you used to spend days with."* Another interviewee acknowledged the social benefits of an alumni association and also commented that an alumni association could be a source of information; the interviewee shared, *"part of it's you don't lose contact with those people that you worked with over the years. Then also, kind of as a way to gain information on what's going on and maybe find out about things like volunteer opportunities or other things that people are doing, that kind of thing."* Few interviewees identified benefits of an alumni association for the DNR. Two interviewees who commented on the benefits of an alumni association to the DNR suggested that it could be a volunteer resource. For instance, one interviewee commented, *"there might be some use there where they could actually use them to help with issues they're working on, or legislation or whatever. Because when we're working, it's not really legal for us to contact our legislators about a DNR issue, but when you're retired, then you can. So that would be a doorway, maybe, to do some more of that."*

Last, interviewees were asked if they had any concerns regarding establishing an alumni association. While two interviewees had no concerns, the remaining interviewees expressed a range of concerns. Two interviewees expressed concerns about any financial commitment that would be required for participation in the alumni association. The financial commitment was concerning, in part, because many of the interviewees and future alumni would be living on a fixed income. One interviewee suggested that a \$5 per year membership fee would not be onerous.

Two interviewees also expressed concerns regarding organizing and maintaining the alumni association, specifically *who* would be responsible for overseeing the association. As one interviewee commented, *"my guess is their biggest obstacle is having someone dedicated with the time and the ability to do that, because it's going to take some time to organize and maintain and oversee. That's probably the biggest challenge for them because they are spread so thin all the time."* Another interviewee wondered if a DNR paid staff member or a volunteer would be responsible for maintaining or overseeing the alumni association.

And two interviewees were concerned that other alumni from the DNR may not be interested in the alumni association, attend alumni events, or be unwilling to take an active role in the association. One interviewee felt that, for larger alumni events, some alumni would need to take up the mantle of hospitality to ensure all attendees felt welcomed and comfortable. As the interviewee shared:

"I think it's hospitality, welcoming people, and, making them comfortable, and so on, and um, I just know, I mean in my life in the work with other nonprofits, you know, you have to designate people to do that.... Not everybody even recognizes that you need to do it, but you can tell when people aren't comfortable and you know they're not gonna come back. So you can get 'em to come to one thing cause they're curious, but if it's awkward and they spend time sitting around the edges and don't connect with anybody, they're not gonna come back."

Interviewees were also concerned about the security of any online facets of the alumni association. If, hypothetically, the alumni association established an online presence (e.g., website, wiki) that the information maintained online would remain secure. In addition, interviewees were concerned regarding the location of any alumni events and the time and cost (i.e., gas money) required to attend. Last, interviewees were concerned about the relationship between the alumni association and the DNR. Specifically, the interviewees did not want to see the alumni association become a political tool of the DNR.

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL MANAGER FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT AND FINDINGS

Regional Manager Focus Group Script



Introduction

- Thank participants for their willingness to participate in the focus group.
- The purpose of the conversation is to learn more about their perspectives on engaging volunteers – both stakeholders and alumni – on DNR projects.
- Inform participants that you will be recording the focus group. Encourage participants to be as honest as they feel comfortable; their anonymity will be protected by:
 - Not sharing recordings and/or transcripts with anyone at DNR (only ACET staff has access to the recordings and the transcripts);
 - Stripping out personally identifiable information (e.g., name, job title); and
 - Combining their responses with responses from other participants (we will be conducting 4 focus groups around the state).
- Your name, the identity of any individual and the information you are providing, is classified as private data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subd.7(a). By attending this focus group you are giving us permission to ask questions and contact you for more information. You are not required to participate in this focus group and there are no consequences for not participating. Those who will have access to your name and suggestion data include Department of Natural Resources and ACET, Inc. employees that a business need and those authorized by state or federal law or by court order. Summary data will be created removing the names and identities of anyone participating in this focus group discussion.
- Remind them that the focus group will take up to 60 minutes and we will end at that time because we want to be respectful of the time they share with us.
- Ask participants if they have any questions.

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
Icebreaker / Opening	1. Let's go around the room and have everyone share their first name. I'll go first ...
Current volunteer projects	2. Can you share with me some of your knowledge of division staff working with, or supervising, volunteers? 3. What do you know about the ways paid staff and volunteers interact? a. Probe: Have there been any instances when staff responded negatively to volunteers? b. Probe: Have there been instances when staff responded positively to volunteers? 4. How do volunteers fit within the culture of DNR? 5. How do you think volunteers fit into DNR's structure?
<i>The DNR wants to know what they would need to do to get an alumni volunteer program up and running. The DNR's goal is to use a volunteer program to supplement existing staff, but not to supplant staff. In other words, the volunteer program could not be used to displace or lay off existing paid staff, reduce their hours, or fill a vacant position.</i>	
Brainstormi	6. What we'd like to do now is brainstorm some new ideas for DNR projects that

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
ng new projects	<p>would be a good use of volunteers and/or alumni volunteers. What ideas do you have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Example roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project coordinator (schedule other volunteers, etc.) ii. Project leader (instruct other volunteers, etc.) iii. Worker (do the hands on work) iv. Advisor (share ideas, knowledge or skills) v. Advocate (educate others, persuasion) b. Example projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Removing invasive species, habitat development ii. Safety instructor iii. Fishing clinics iv. Hunting mentor, planting native plants or trees v. Working with students with school forests vi. Sealing wells vii. Monitoring easements or trail management viii. Advisory committee for a division
Risks and Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What risks or barriers do you anticipate in establishing an alumni volunteer program? How would you recommend DNR address each risk/barrier? 8. What does DNR need to do to ensure that the alumni volunteer program would be successful?
Anything else?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Wrap-Up

- Thank them again for participating in the focus group.
- Assure them that their comments and input will be anonymously shared with DNR.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions.

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: January 23, 2014

Re: Summary of Regional Manager Focus Groups

“[Alumni] understand natural resources. They understand their significance. They understand how the management of those natural resources is critical. So they could bring a sense of intelligence to this in addition to just the capacity to work.”

Summary. In November of 2013, four separate focus groups were conducted with 45 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Regional Managers in Bemidji (n=13), Grand Rapids (n=12), New Ulm (n=10), and Saint Paul (n=10). After analysis and identifying themes, no significant differences were found between regions, therefore results are not disaggregated by region. A summary of key points follows:

- Volunteers are used in wide variety of ways, and usage depends on and varies greatly by division and type of volunteer (e.g., general volunteers, college students, fire wardens).
- Managers' staff have overwhelmingly positive experiences with volunteers. Negative experiences, although rare, tend to result from volunteers stepping outside of their role.
- Managing volunteers presented several logistical challenges, including staff time to train and manage volunteers, willingness of volunteers to participate in training activities, conducting background checks, and insurance requirements.
- Managers thought that a regional volunteer coordinator could help remedy some of the challenges summarized above. Managers also felt that alumni volunteers could be used for public engagement (presentations, liaisons, advocacy), mentoring those who fill their positions when they retire, and fundraising (specific projects or grant writing).
- Managers thought it important that an alumni network match alumni skills and desires with particular projects and keep alumni engaged (social events, newsletters, rewards). They also thought it would be essential to clearly define alumni volunteer roles and involve many stakeholders (union representatives, legislators) in defining those roles to avoid conflicts with the bargaining agreement.
- Managers were concerned that alumni volunteers would need to be engaged through a network and participate in tasks that utilize their expertise to ensure strong involvement. There were also concerns that some alumni might have ideas that may not fit with the mission of the DNR and that there should be a process for removing a volunteer that must be followed, should this situation occur. Managers also saw potential conflicts with the union collective bargaining agreement in that use of alumni expertise might be seen as a threat to current unionized staff's work. Also, because alumni are retired, physically demanding tasks may present risks to the health and/or safety of alumni volunteers.

Current Volunteer Projects. First, DNR Regional Managers shared their knowledge of and experience in working with volunteers. Managers expressed that they themselves have very little, if any, interaction with volunteers. However, staff that the Managers supervised did have frequent contact, and Managers felt they had a good grasp of their staff's perceptions of volunteers.

Managers described a variety of current volunteer projects and the benefits of the projects to DNR staff. Many of the current volunteer projects involved monitoring of natural resources (e.g., goose or frog counting, loon monitoring, bird banding, lake levels), maintaining trails and parks, park supervision (e.g., campground hosts, interpreters), and safety instructors (e.g., firearms, ATVs, watercraft). In addition, Managers shared that some volunteer activities were unique to their location and included office work (e.g., filing, scanning), volunteer fire wardens, and job shadowing (among undergraduate and graduate students). Managers overwhelmingly described the interactions between their staff and volunteers as *“always positive”* and *“99% of experiences are positive.”*

Although the interactions between staff and volunteers were positive, regional Managers were able to identify a number of challenges of working with and managing volunteers. First, Managers shared that, although volunteers were extraordinarily helpful and staff greatly benefited from the volunteers' work, the management of volunteers required a fair amount of staff time. For example, Managers cited the amount of time spent training volunteers as challenging, *“training takes more of our time to run through somebody through a module. It's kind of frustrating.”* Another Manager shared, *“you have to provide some love and tender care for volunteers to help build them to a point where they can almost work on their own.”* Managers saw the challenge of managing volunteers even after volunteers were trained because managing volunteer time *“becomes staff time.”* Managers thought that for their staff, sometimes the process of managing volunteers can be *“overwhelming when you try to get something done [and] you've got somebody there volunteering.”*

Managers identified a second challenge, those volunteers who do not fit within the culture of the DNR. Although rare, Managers did report that some volunteers do not fit within the DNR's culture. For example, one Manager shared that, because volunteers sometimes *“have public engagement and little supervision”* and volunteers can be *“too invested”* in the program, the volunteer's actions can sometimes result in an image or direction that is not aligned with the DNR or its mission. This can be problematic because, as one Manager stated, volunteers are automatically representatives of the DNR *“whether they have a shirt that says so or not.”*

Last, Managers identified a logistical challenge when working with volunteers. Managers felt that some individuals did not become volunteers or were discouraged from being a volunteer because of the background checks and/or liability insurance, and some Managers felt that the union's collective bargaining agreement *“limit[s] the work of volunteers.”*

Managers felt that a volunteer coordinator could help address each of the challenges described above, and some envisioned this as a paid position while others saw it as a volunteer opportunity. The new volunteer coordinator could, as Managers described, *“eliminate staff time and training.”* There were some concerns that a new paid position, such as a regional volunteer coordinator, would cost money and that there would be *“one less dollar available to do the core mission [of the DNR].”* In addition, Managers felt that the DNR's volunteer program could be improved through a screening process. As one Manager shared, *“there was a zillion different things that these volunteers could do to help out and it's all based on what they liked to do. So you screen them and you say ‘what do you want to do?’”*

Projects for Alumni Volunteers. Managers also brainstormed new projects for alumni volunteers and identified a number of projects including: interactions with and outreach to the public, bridge with other stakeholder organizations, advocacy with the legislature, mentoring incoming employees, and fundraising. Many of the Managers commented that alumni volunteers could serve public and outreach roles for the DNR. Managers felt there was a *“need for stakeholder conversation with the public.”* Managers envisioned several roles for volunteers that would bring them into contact with the public. For instance, Managers felt that alumni volunteer participation in a *“speaker's bureau,”* in which alumni *“could be used as expert speakers or educators”* would be highly effective. Alumni would have expert-level knowledge from their time with the DNR. As a result alumni volunteers could

be very knowledgeable and useful in delivering “*topic-specific information on a program to the public.*” In addition, Managers envisioned alumni volunteers engaging the public in a more civic setting to “*just figure out where the public is on a certain issue or to figure out if they have some ideas about how to deal with a certain problem or situation.*” Managers also felt that alumni volunteers could be very valuable addressing the public with interpretive work within Minnesota’s parks and trails. Another way in which Managers saw alumni addressing the public is with interpretive work, describing various aspects of Minnesota parks and trails for the public.

In addition, Managers felt that alumni volunteers could serve as a valuable resource to connect the DNR with other stakeholder organizations. As one Manager explained, “*they could help us connect, from an outreach standpoint, to those audiences that we don’t always have the time in a day-to-day way to be connected with.*” Alumni could potentially reach out to community organizations of “*people who already have a vested interest in a lake or area*” like sportsmen’s clubs or conservation clubs, and could serve as a “*go between*” between the organizations and the DNR. Further, alumni could become effective advocates for the DNR and “*talk to legislators...they very well could talk to their old legislator, and legislators listen to their own constituents much more than anybody else.*” Because alumni would theoretically have more time, they would be able to impact their legislator, “*if somebody’s taken the time to go to Saint Paul and sit through some hearings and visit people in their office that adds an impact.*”

Managers also agreed that when some staff retire, their knowledge and understanding of their position “*retires with them.*” Right now, the DNR has no protocol in place for transferring knowledge from a retiring employee to their replacement. Managers felt that, if alumni could volunteer in a “*mentoring process*” with their replacements, valuable institutional knowledge could be maintained. In addition, Managers felt that alumni volunteers could be highly valuable assets during fundraising. Managers agreed that alumni would be most valuable in specific, not general, fundraising such as “*improving a certain part of the fairgrounds.*” Managers also commented that some alumni already have experience with and the skills needed to respond to grant opportunities. Those alumni “*can pretty much write the grant proposal and say ‘put your name on it’ and submit it; that’s drawing on their long-term expertise working as a DNR employee.*”

Last, Managers suggested that alumni volunteers could be helpful to work on DNR’s “*kind of a wish list of things we’d love to do, but we just don’t have the time or people to do it.*” Managers felt comfortable that alumni taking on these projects would not impede on the bargaining agreement.

Essential Elements of an Alumni Volunteer Network. Regional Managers also described what they thought would be essential elements for a successful alumni network. First, Managers explained the importance of matching alumni to volunteer opportunities. As a result, Managers stress the importance of establishing a database of alumni volunteer skills (e.g., “*[she/he] is good at the legislative process*”) and interests. The database could also house or track skills, positions, and potential “*likes and capabilities*” for future volunteer projects and be held within the DNR. DNR staff could then use the database to contact alumni when a project matching their skills and interests becomes available. This database could not only reach out to current volunteers but could also be made available on a website for alumni so they would have “*somewhere to go to see what’s out there.*”

Managers stressed that one of the potential alumni association’s primary function should be to keep alumni engaged with the DNR. As one Manager commented, “*so they [alumni] are keeping in touch and staying involved with past experience of theirs.*” One Manager commented, “*I may not want to be part of the alumni association if it’s a volunteer organization. But I may be interested in an alumni association and then as part of it we say, well, ‘what do you want to do?’*” Another Manager warned that, “*to create the alumni association focusing on volunteering, that’s going to be a misstep.*” Some Managers saw the potential alumni network as “*a communication or social group*” that could take on volunteer projects.

In order to keep alumni engaged in the potential alumni network and volunteer projects, Managers felt that certain rewards should be in place. They thought that alumni volunteers should be *“set...aside with coffee cups and patches”* and that the network should *“instead of focusing on more work, work, work, work, focusing on something that’s more positive and morale building and fun.”* Some Managers suggested going as far as potentially paying alumni or covering their health insurance.

In addition, some Managers commented that alumni volunteers could benefit from structured guiding principles and clearly defined expectations for their volunteer positions. One Manager shared, *“don’t think that they could really thrive without some internal support from the department to make it successful and make sure that whatever guiding principles, all the things we’ve talked about...are communicated well to that group and that their expectations for the group are clearly articulated in what their roles and responsibilities are.”* Furthermore, because the bargaining agreement specifies that volunteers cannot displace current staff, Managers felt that a wide variety of DNR stakeholders should participate in the organization and launch of the association to avert potential challenges. One Manager commented, *“there should be many conversations with the union and employee contract groups and...with legislators, particularly the chair of the environment committee...because their constituents, if somebody doesn’t like that, somebody thinks that we’re supplanting staff with volunteers, they will go to the legislators and complain.”*

Risks and Barriers. Regional Managers articulated several potential risks and barriers for establishing an alumni network and using alumni volunteers. The regional Managers had three primary concerns with establishing an alumni volunteer network.

First, keeping alumni engaged with DNR and wanting to volunteer. Managers stressed that if alumni want to volunteer it would need to *“be a satisfying experience...not for alumni to come back and do menial work”* which could be improved by *“matching people with their strengths.”* Managers also thought it would be useful to find ways to plug *“into what’s going on in the [DNR].”* Suggestions included an alumni newsletter and a network group to keep alumni engaged with the DNR and each other. Also, Managers suggested that it would be helpful to make volunteer opportunities very clear to alumni so *“[they] can get excited about getting back to come back and do it.”*

The second concern was that some of the alumni volunteers might stray from the mission and values of the DNR. Managers worried that a potential alumni volunteer could *“use their volunteer opportunity to achieve things not in line with DNR goals and mission.”* Managers acknowledged that an alumni volunteer, while passionate about their work, could be detrimental, in part, because they *“know the system.”* A further concern was that, once an alumni is a volunteer, it is not a simple process to ask them to discontinue their service. As one Manager shared, *“if somebody’s not working out you can’t just ask them not to come back; there’s a due process system that needs to be followed.”*

Third, Managers expressed concerns regarding the bargaining agreement. According to the agreement, a volunteer cannot displace or replace paid staff. Managers were concerned that the limitation of the agreement *“cuts out a lot of potential volunteer work.”* There was concern that the *“grey area”* between staff displacement would not only take a lot of negotiation and definition but could potentially need continual revision depending on the particulars of each potential project.

Less frequently mentioned concerns included that alumni are retired and, depending on their age, may not have the physical stamina they may have had earlier in their career. Because some work for the DNR can be *“labor intensive,”* there are safety concerns for older volunteers, especially if alumni volunteers end up working *“in remote areas.”* Another concern was that utilizing alumni volunteers places a demand on staff time. One Manager commented, *“if it’s for a specific project that you want to train somebody, you want to let them know what safety issues to look out for, what kind of equipment they need, this is how you do this for a specific project.”* Managers observed that staff often have *“more lists than they can accomplish on most days”* and *“don’t have time to manage volunteers.”*

APPENDIX C: NATURALIST FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT AND FINDINGS

Naturalists Focus Group Script



Introduction

- Thank participants for their willingness to participate in the focus group.
- The purpose of the conversation is to learn more about their perspectives on engaging volunteers – stakeholders and alumni – on DNR projects.
- Inform participants that you will be recording the focus group. Encourage participants to be as honest as they feel comfortable; their anonymity will be protected by:
 - Not sharing recordings and/or transcripts with anyone at DNR (only ACET staff has access to the recordings and the transcripts);
 - Stripping out personally identifiable information (e.g., name, job title); and
 - Combining their responses with responses from the other focus group participants.
- Your name, the identity of any individual and the information you are providing, is classified as private data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subd.7(a). By attending this focus group you are giving us permission to ask questions and contact you for more information. You are not required to participate in this focus group and there are no consequences for not participating. Those who will have access to your name and suggestion data include Department of Natural Resources and ACET, Inc. employees that a business need and those authorized by state or federal law or by court order. Summary data will be created removing the names and identities of anyone participating in this focus group discussion.
- Remind them that the focus group will take up to 60 minutes and we will end the focus group at that time because we want to be respectful of the time they share with us.
- Ask participants if they have any questions.

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
Icebreaker / Opening	1. Let’s go around the room and have everyone share their first name. I’ll go first ...
Current volunteer projects	2. Can you share with me some of your recent experiences working with, or supervising, volunteers? 3. What are some ways you’ve worked with volunteers recently? 4. What have you observed about the ways paid staff and volunteers interact? a. Probe: How do volunteer fit within the culture of DNR? b. Probe: How do you think volunteers fit into DNR’s structure?
<i>The DNR wants to know what they would need to do to get an alumni volunteer program up and running. The DNR’s goal is to use a volunteer program to supplement existing staff, but not to supplant staff. In other words, the volunteer program could not be used to displace or lay off existing paid staff, reduce their hours, or fill a vacant position.</i>	
Brainstorming new projects	5. What we’d like to do now is brainstorm some new ideas for DNR projects that would be a good use of volunteers and/or alumni volunteers. What ideas do you have? a. Example roles: i. Project coordinator (schedule other volunteers, etc.) ii. Project leader (instruct other volunteers, etc.)

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Worker (do the hands on work) iv. Advisor (share ideas, knowledge or skills) v. Advocate (educate others, persuasion) b. Example projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Removing invasive species, habitat development ii. Safety instructor iii. Fishing clinics iv. Hunting mentor, planting native plants or trees v. Working with students with school forests vi. Sealing wells vii. Monitoring easements or trail management viii. Advisory committee for a division
Risks and Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What risks or barriers do you anticipate in using alumni as volunteers? ... How could DNR address each risk/barrier? 7. What does DNR need to do to ensure that the alumni volunteer program would be successful?
Anything else?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Wrap-Up

- Thank them again for participating in the focus group.
- Assure them that their comments and input will be anonymously shared with DNR.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions.

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: November 20, 2013

Re: Summary of Naturalists Focus Group

Ten Naturalists with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) participated in a focus group held at the Ft. Snelling Visitor Center. The participants included men (n=3) and women (n=7) and many knew each other prior to the start of the focus group. Five key themes were identified during the focus group:

- In general, Naturalists were very appreciative of their repeat volunteers and described them as committed, dedicated, and a rich source of information.
- Naturalists reported several challenges working with volunteers including volunteers' showing up at agreed upon dates/times, difficulty finding suitable activities for individual and large groups of volunteers, DNR alumni working outside of their role as a volunteer, and long-term volunteer commitment.
- Participants felt that incentives, even small ones, led to greater commitment among volunteers. Naturalists were often frustrated with the large number of volunteers unwilling to participate in training, record keeping, or wearing clothing indicating their role as a DNR volunteer.
- Naturalists felt that DNR alumni returning as volunteers would be invaluable: sharing information with park visitors, collecting or entering data during major survey events, or teaching others (e.g., gun safety instructor). Naturalists also felt that DNR alumni could serve a crucial role as a volunteer coordinator.
- Last, Naturalists felt that an alumni volunteer program would need coordination, training, communication, and recognition for the volunteers and the DNR staff working with the volunteers in order to be successful.

“It’s work to, to develop volunteers and all the paperwork and all the, the cajoling and ‘good job’ and ‘you’re doin’ great,’ and ‘here’s what you can do to’ – it’s a lot of work.”

First, the Naturalists shared some of their experiences working with or supervising volunteers. The Naturalists reported that, in many cases, they have excellent volunteers who are willing to help any way they can. Naturalists described this “core group” of volunteers as “very committed,” “very dedicated,” and a “rich” source of information. Often, the core group of volunteers lives near the park and, because they are often retirees with a flexible schedule, can volunteer on short notice. And, because the core group of volunteers were repeat volunteers, staff spent less time training and overseeing their work. As a result, the Naturalists appreciated that they could hand off a task to the volunteer and be confident that it would be completed accurately.

However, Naturalists also reported several challenges working with volunteers, including, follow-through, finding suitable activities for volunteers, former DNR staff as volunteers, and volunteer commitment. One typical challenge is that some volunteers do not show up at a pre-arranged time. While the loss of volunteer time is unfortunate, when volunteers do not follow-through with their

volunteer request it costs the DNR in terms of staff time that was spent scheduling the volunteer, identifying a suitable activity, and any other time spent planning.

Naturalists often get requests to volunteer a specific number of hours, typically because the potential volunteer is attempting to fulfill a requirement for a class, educational program, or social/fraternal organization. Unfortunately, Naturalists/the parks generally do not maintain lists of volunteer opportunities. Therefore, when a request comes in staff have to spend time finding a suitable activity for the volunteer. Finding a suitable activity for volunteers is especially challenging when groups would like to volunteer and perform the same activity because parks seldom have the resources (e.g., tools, personal protective equipment) for all of the volunteers to perform the same activity, there are not suitable large-scale activities at that time of the year, or the activity is already performed by a paid DNR staff member.

Naturalists have addressed this challenge in two different ways. Some Naturalists explained that, because of the number of requests for larger groups they have received, they now plan for large-group volunteer activities, such as bud-capping, cone collecting, or removing invasive species, at limited times of the year. All requests for large group volunteering are diverted to those times. The Naturalists felt that this strategy was an effective use of their time, but was also keeps the potential volunteers happy as well.

Some of the Naturalists have already had experience with former DNR employees (“alumni”) as volunteers in their park. In one case, the alumni appropriately waited two years before being hired on by a competitor and is now working for the competitor while also volunteering in a Minnesota park. Because the alumni’s current work, former work, and volunteer interests overlap, the Naturalist is concerned that there may be a conflict of interest. The Naturalist is worried that the alumni might be trying to influence the park in their current employer’s best interest rather than the DNR’s best interest and/or policy. Another DNR alumnus is currently volunteering in one of the parks and, according to a Naturalist, the alumnus is “extremely knowledgeable” and can work unsupervised. However, on occasion, the alumnus has begun research projects or solicited their own volunteers without permission. The Naturalist has had to periodically touch base with the volunteer to ensure they operate within the parameters of a DNR volunteer (and not a DNR staff member). Another Naturalist’s experiences with an alumnus was much more positive. The Naturalist explained that the alumnus walks the park and reports back on any observed species. The Naturalist found the alumnus’ contributions to be highly valuable and opined that it would be extremely difficult to train a different volunteer to observe species with the ease the alumnus shows.

Last, over time many of the Naturalists have developed strategies to help them identify those volunteers who are committed to volunteering with the DNR. Some of these strategies evolved so that staff could minimize *“loss of our time trying to train somebody who does not come back.”* Staff described starting volunteers out with relatively simple tasks to learn how much interest the volunteer has in returning. Naturalists are looking for the volunteer’s ‘vested interest’ in the DNR to *“find that balance between someone who will be committed and the energy put in to training them.”* Naturalists often wait until volunteers notice and ask to help with additional projects before investing a great deal of time on the volunteer. As one Naturalist said, *“we’ve gotten so tired of that, because our time is precious, too, and so when they have been seeing our need, and then they pose the question, then we kind of put feelers out to see if they would help a little more, so we aren’t spending and repeating, the efforts for nothing.”*

Naturalists also discussed the role incentives play in volunteering. One Naturalist observed that the number of volunteers, and the number of hours completed by each volunteer, was strongly impacted when volunteers were told they would receive a small container of maple syrup. The following year, when no incentive was offered, the number of volunteers plummeted and DNR staff had to start back at *“square one”* to develop a cohort of volunteers to work at the park. One Naturalist posited that some volunteers have the *“volunteer giving spirit,”* a passion for giving to the community, in this case, the

Minnesota park system. But with their lives spread so thin, it's often difficult for the volunteer to become a returning volunteer. Over time, Naturalists have found that former teachers, professors, and medical professionals have become their most passionate volunteers. For instance, one current teacher paints faces at park events.

Naturalists were then asked for their observations about the ways paid staff and volunteers (alumni and others) interact. The Naturalists noted that, if union difficulties occur, they generally happen in northern Minnesota. One Naturalist suggested, *"the bigger the [DNR] staff, the more they pay attention to the union."* The remainder of the conversation revolved around challenges the Naturalists experience with some repeat volunteers (both alumni and others). While many of the Naturalists will volunteer within the DNR's parameters, *"most"* volunteers generally do not want to participate in training, sign in, talk to paid staff, or wear a hat or nametag, *"they just want to go out into the park and do their thing."* Naturalists felt strongly that, if they were required to undergo training to perform a task, volunteers should also be required to undergo the same training to perform the same task. As one Naturalist stated, *"we go through hours and hours and hours of training, and we should be putting them through the same training as what we put in ourselves."* Some Naturalists have become creative about recording the time volunteers spend at the parks: the Naturalists report that, when volunteers stop in to say 'hello,' the Naturalists will record the time and activity so the information can be shared with the DNR's Central Office. The Naturalists suggested that volunteers felt, *"I'm retired now, I don't want to deal with that. I did that all my life."*

When asked which roles or projects would be a good match for DNR alumni returning as volunteers, the Naturalists felt that *"sharing information"* was a key role regardless of the context or the project. Naturalists also felt that DNR alumni could be a major asset during major survey events (e.g., the July 4th Butterfly Survey). Even assisting with entering data from survey events would be highly useful to DNR staff. Naturalists also felt that DNR would benefit if alumni were utilized as guest presenters, speakers, or teachers. For instance, Naturalists suggested alumni might excel teaching gun safety.

Naturalists also felt that an alumni volunteer could be invaluable as a volunteer coordinator. Because Naturalists/parks generally do not have lists of needs in their unit, let alone needs in other divisions, volunteers may be deferred until a need is identified. But a volunteer coordinator could liaise with all divisions and accurately inform potential volunteers with DNR needs. In addition, the volunteer coordinator could respond to potential volunteers more rapidly and maintain the potential volunteer's interest. As one Naturalist pointed out, *"if you ignore them [potential volunteers], you lose 'em."*

Last, the Naturalists were asked what the DNR should do to ensure an alumni volunteer program would be successful. Naturalists very quickly indicated that the program should include coordination, training, communication, and recognition for all volunteers. In addition, the Naturalists suggested that the process for getting a volunteer from 'expressing an interest' to 'actively volunteering' could be streamlined. For instance, Naturalists reported they were often frustrated during the background check process because it is *"kind of a pain."* But when the background check was completed Naturalists and their co-workers did not know what to do with the results.

In addition, the Naturalists would like the same four key events – coordination, training, communication, and recognition – for themselves. Specifically, Naturalists would like training to better understand protocols and processes of the volunteer program and to effectively work with volunteers. Naturalists would like more information and support to keep volunteers motivated, returning, and to recognize volunteers' contributions. And Naturalists would like formal recognition for working with volunteers. As one Naturalist pointed out, volunteers are *"an unpaid employee.... You have to give them as much care and attention as you would a paid employee, because they won't come back."* Another Naturalist pointed out that it takes time to fully support volunteers. As one Naturalist described, *"it's time....were really not giving them anything else besides our time. They're not getting anything else."*

APPENDIX D: OPERATIONS MANAGER INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND FINDINGS

Operations Manager Interview Script



Introduction

- Thank participants for their willingness to participate in the call/interview.
- The purpose of the conversation is to learn more about their perspectives on volunteering with/at the DNR.
- Encourage participant to be as honest as they feel comfortable; their anonymity will be protected by:
 - Not sharing recordings and/or transcripts with anyone at DNR (only ACET staff has access to the recordings and the transcripts)
 - Stripping out personally identifiable information (e.g., name, former job title); and
 - Combining their responses with responses from other participants (we will be interviewing 6-10 alumni).
- Your name, the identity of any individual and the information you are providing, is classified as private data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.43, subd.7(a). By attending this focus group you are giving us permission to ask questions and contact you for more information. You are not required to participate in this focus group and there are no consequences for not participating. Those who will have access to your name and suggestion data include Department of Natural Resources and ACET, Inc. employees that a business need and those authorized by state or federal law or by court order. Summary data will be created removing the names and identities of anyone participating in this focus group discussion.
- Ask their permission to record the interview. Once they have given assent, turn the recording on.
- Remind them that the interview will take up to 60 minutes and we will end the interview at that time because we want to be respectful of the time they share with us.
- Ask participant if they have any questions.

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
Icebreaker / Opening	1. How long have you been with the DNR? And how long have you been an operations manager? How often do you interact with volunteers?
Current volunteer projects	2. How often does your staff interact with volunteers? a. Probe: Can you share with me some of your recent knowledge of division staff working with, or supervising, volunteers?
Role of volunteering in DNR's mission	3. How have volunteer staff fit within the culture of the DNR? 4. Tell me how you feel volunteers fit into the DNR's structure. 5. In what ways do volunteers contribute to DNR's mission?
<i>The DNR wants to know what they would need to do to get an alumni volunteer program up and running. The DNR's goal is to use a volunteer program to supplement existing staff, but not to supplant staff. In other words, the volunteer program could not be used to displace or lay off existing paid staff, reduce their hours, or fill a vacant position.</i>	
New projects/ roles for volunteers	6. If the DNR set up an alumni volunteer program, which roles or projects do you think DNR paid staff would like volunteers to fulfill/complete/be assigned to?

Core Concept(s)	Additional Probe(s)
	a. Example roles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project coordinator (schedule other volunteers, etc.) ii. Project leader (instruct other volunteers, etc.) iii. Worker (do the hands on work) iv. Advisor (share ideas, knowledge or skills) v. Advocate (educate others, persuasion) b. Example projects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Removing invasive species, habitat development ii. Safety instructor iii. Fishing clinics iv. Hunting mentor, planting native plants or trees v. Working with students with school forests vi. Sealing wells vii. Monitoring easements or trail management viii. Advisory committee for a division
Benefits from volunteers/ Value of volunteers	7. In what ways would the DNR benefit by developing an alumni volunteer program? 8. What value would an alumni volunteer program have to the DNR?
Volunteer's skills	9. Can you think of any specific skill sets that alumni volunteers would need in order to volunteer with the DNR? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Probe: What are they? b. Probe: Are those skills the alumni currently possess or would they need to learn them?
Risks/Barriers and strategies	10. What concerns, risks or barriers do you anticipate in establishing an alumni volunteer program at the DNR? ... How about in your region? Your division? ... How would you recommend DNR address each risk? 11. From your perspective, what are the most important things the DNR needs to do to ensure that a volunteer alumni program would be successful?
Anything else?	12. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Wrap-Up

- Thank them again for participating in the interview.
- Assure them that their comments and input will be anonymously shared with DNR.
- Ask the participant if they have any questions.

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: January 24, 2014 (*Revised February 21, 2014*)

Re: Summary of Regional Manager Focus Groups

“People who worked for us in the past...are...certainly the most valuable that that we can get.”

In November of 2013, six separate interviews were conducted with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Operations Managers from six different divisions (Enforcement, Ecological and Water Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, IT Computer Services, and Parks and Trails) regarding the current volunteer situation and the feasibility of an alumni volunteer network. A summary of key points follows:

- Although managers had little direct contact with volunteers, they described interactions between staff they supervise and volunteers very positively and value volunteers' contributions to the DNR.
- Managers felt alumni volunteers could work on a variety of projects with the DNR and saw value in an alumni volunteer network.
- Managers observed a number of potential challenges to an alumni volunteer network, including conflicts with the collective bargaining agreement, lack of clearly defined roles for alumni volunteers, persuading alumni to return to the DNR after a long career, and the potential for alumni to pursue ideas or projects that may be not aligned with the DNR's mission. In addition, managers acknowledged that managing volunteers requires a fair amount of staff time.

Current Volunteer Situation. Managers had little direct contact with volunteers, but described the interactions between the staff they supervise and volunteers as *“positive”* and *“highly valued.”* Volunteers have been used for a variety of tasks that varies by specific needs. Some regular activities for volunteers have been campground hosts, invasive species management, trail maintenance, and interpretive work. Managers agreed, *“there's a lot of work that can't be done without them [volunteers].”* However, managers did express some concerns in managing volunteers. First, managers agreed that *“the supervision of volunteers is like supervision of employees”* and that making best use of volunteers requires *“a lot of effort in...mentoring a volunteer.”* Managers also stressed that, although nearly all interaction with volunteers is overwhelmingly positive, occasionally volunteers can *“sometimes be difficult to work with.”* For example, one manager said *“they can be so enthusiastic, that it's hard to kinda pull them back, too, and rein them in a little bit”* and others concurred that the largest concern with volunteers is volunteers not following protocols. This is further complicated because *“sometimes it's hard to fire a volunteer”* and there is a process that must be followed to remove a volunteer.

Projects for Alumni Volunteers. Managers were enthusiastic about the potential for alumni volunteers: *“people who worked for us in the past...are...certainly the most valuable that that we can get”* and *“they have the skill sets that you can lean towards...So it's unique skillsets and knowledge of*

the system, and then the ability that they can step right in.” Managers felt that alumni volunteers would be very useful for a number of specific projects. First, they saw alumni as fitting into some regular, on-going volunteer projects like Adopt-A-Park, invasive species management, campground hosts, interpretive work, and other regular volunteer activities. Second, managers thought that alumni’s specific experience in the DNR could be harnessed by having them *“being a representative of the DNR.”* Specifically, alumni could be involved with *“some sort of partnership with them [community groups]...cause the friends groups and other groups allow that...that's one of the partnerships we're looking for potentially from volunteers.”* As another manager said, *“as our budgets decline [alumni could help in] developing partnerships for maintaining some of the basic operations of our parks.”* Managers thought alumni could also represent the DNR through *“education to the public around natural resources and values.”* Third, managers observed that when a staff member retires, sometimes their knowledge and experience is not transferred to new employees filling their vacant position. Managers thought alumni could be essential in transferring their knowledge to a new staff member by serving as a mentor. Last, managers saw alumni fitting a unique role between some paid projects and other volunteer projects, *“I like the option of paying them for project specific work that that they do, I think there's plenty of room kind of in the middle there somewhere, where people could volunteer and do some valuable things for us.. it's kind of a bridge between the two.”*

Risks and Barriers. Managers did have some reservations surrounding an alumni volunteer network. Foremost, managers were aware that some potential alumni volunteer work could be seen as a threat to the bargaining agreement: *“I think [the] bargaining unit [is] gonna chime in on this big time.”* Second, managers cautioned that it may be difficult to get alumni to come back after a long career and volunteer: *“a lot of them, you know, they retired and they're ready to move on”* and *“recruitment and retention of those key people might be a challenge.”* Third, managers were concerned that staff time may be needed to manage alumni volunteers in the same way staff time is required to manage current volunteers. As one manager said, *“the concern will be that, is it going to take me more time to work with these volunteers than the value that I get out of them,”* and another shared, *“I think the number one concern would be...the time and effort does it take [to manage volunteers]. Is it added value, by doing spending that extra time to get the volunteers and to manage the volunteers.”* Another manager shared, *“every one of these good ideas always comes with a price tag.”* Last, managers were concerned that some alumni might *“come back to finish... unfinished business before the retired they couldn't get finished, or they see a program or something moving in different direction and now they come back and they want to...set things the way that they should be, the way they left it when they left.”* The concern was that alumni might have an agenda that would not fit the mission or vision of the DNR, and their position as alumni might give them some perceived power to change things in a direction not endorsed by the DNR. As one manager said, *“well I used to work here, I can say what I want now, because what are they gonna do, fire me?”*

Database Management for Alumni. Although IT and Computer Services did not envision using alumni volunteers (and therefore were not asked about the above), the operations manager was able to provide his ideas for a database to store and use relevant information on alumni. He envisioned an online database where alumni can visit the DNR website and apply to be a volunteer. When someone applies to be a volunteer via the website, the person would be required to provide some information that would help them be matched to projects in the future. For example, the application process could gather information on what skills the applicant possesses, where they live or recreate and how far they would be willing to travel to volunteer, some of their favorite state parks or trails, if they have a current background check on file, and any restrictions they might have (driving, physical restrictions). This information would allow the DNR to alert potential volunteers via email and/or the website when a volunteer opportunity arises that matches their particular skills and places they would likely be willing to volunteer for.

APPENDIX E: DNR STAFF ONLINE SURVEY

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: February 5, 2014 (*Revised February 18, 20, and 27, 2014*)

Re: Item Bank for Staff Online Survey

Information about this survey:

- DNR is conducting a study aimed at assessing the feasibility, costs, and benefits of creating a DNR Alumni Association with the potential added component of retirees/alumni providing volunteer assistance to the DNR.
- Your input is essential in determining which features to include in such an association and learning your past experiences working with volunteers.
- We are also interested in learning your future interest in possibly tailoring volunteer opportunities to leverage DNR alumni's knowledge and skills to have the most impact on your projects.
- We also want to know the challenges and obstacles you may anticipate with such a program. Feel free to make comments as asked throughout the survey.
- The survey is being administered and monitored by ACET, Inc. ACET will keep all responses confidential: No one at DNR will know who completed the survey and all responses will be aggregated for reporting. If quotes are used, personally identifiable information will be removed.
- Questions or further information about keeping your confidentiality should be directed to Dr. Kirsten Rewey (952.922.1811 or kirsten@acetinc.com).
- This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

[Note: Items with "☐" indicate a 'check all that apply' question while items with "○" indicate a question that requires only one response.]

Items on Alumni Volunteer Work

1. Which of the following ways do you think alumni volunteers could best support the work of the DNR? Please check all that apply
 - Becoming a Master Naturalist Volunteer
 - Campground hosts
 - Connecting the DNR with community groups (e.g., "Friends" groups, conservation clubs, sportsmen's clubs)
 - Fishing clinics
 - Grant writing
 - Habitat development
 - Hunting or Fishing mentor

- Lake level monitoring
 - Monitoring easements
 - Naturalist assistance
 - Non-game wildlife surveys
 - Planting native plants and trees
 - Precipitation observers
 - Public outreach and education
 - Removing invasive species
 - Safety instructor
 - State Fair volunteer
 - Trail management
 - Transferring knowledge learned on the job to new employees
 - Watercraft inspection program
 - Working with students and school forests
 - Other (please describe)
2. Would you be willing to manage or supervise one or more alumni volunteers?
- Yes
 - Perhaps
 - No

[Individuals who respond 'Yes' or 'Perhaps' will be directed to item 10 below while individuals who respond 'No' will be directed to item 9 below.]

3. *If no, why not?*
[Comment box]

Items on Alumni Network

4. What features do you think are important to a successful alumni association? Please check all that apply:
- Opportunity to share information with other alumni
 - Opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in their local community
 - Formal face-to-face meetings with speakers in their local community
 - News from the DNR
 - Online presence (e.g., website, social media)
 - Association officers
 - Other (please describe)
5. What features do you think are important for a successful alumni volunteer network? Please check all that apply:
- Clearly defined expectations for alumni volunteers
 - Clearly defined roles for alumni volunteers
 - Matching volunteers to projects (e.g., skills, location, areas of interest)
 - Online website of volunteer opportunities
 - Recognizing DNR staff for their work managing and supervising volunteers
 - Recognizing volunteers for their participation (e.g., coffee mugs, patches)
 - Training DNR staff to manage and supervise volunteers
 - Training volunteers, when needed, for their projects or activities
 - Other:
6. What do you think will be challenges for an alumni volunteer network? Please check all that apply:
- Demands on current staff time to manage alumni volunteers
 - Ensuring alumni follow the mission and goals of the DNR

- Inconsistent participation by volunteers
- Insufficient number of volunteers to complete the work
- Keeping alumni engaged in the DNR
- Physical limitations
- Possible conflicts with union bargaining agreements
- Volunteers not willing to complete forms or records
- Volunteers not willing to complete training, including learning new or changed DNR protocols
- Other:

Items on Current Volunteer Experiences

7. Which of the following statements best describes your experiences working with volunteers at the DNR?
- Currently I work directly with volunteers.
 - In the past I worked directly with volunteers.
 - Currently I supervise staff that work with volunteers.
 - In the past I supervised staff that worked with volunteers.
 - I have not worked with volunteers nor have I supervised staff that worked with volunteers.

[Individuals who select one of the first two responses will be directed to questions 8-11 that ask about 'you'; individuals who select either the third or fourth responses will be directed to questions 13-17 about 'your staff,' and individuals who select the last response will be directed to the item on additional thoughts (#18 below).]

Items below are for individuals who work directly with volunteers

8. How would you classify your work with volunteers?
- Always or almost always positive
 - Mostly positive
 - A mix of both positive and negative
 - Mostly negative
 - Always or almost always negative
9. How do you feel about working with volunteers?
- Always or almost always a positive experience
 - Mostly positive experiences
 - A mix of both positive and negative
 - Mostly negative experiences
 - Always or almost always negative experiences
10. In what ways have you worked with volunteers? Please check all that apply:
- Events
 - Habitat improvement
 - Maintaining parks and trails
 - Monitoring natural resources (e.g., frog counting, loon monitoring, lake level measurement)
 - Natural Resource project assistance
 - Office work (e.g., filing, scanning)
 - Research
 - Safety instructors (e.g., firearms, ATV)
 - Surveys
 - Other (please describe)

11. Rank the top three challenges that you have encountered when working with volunteers:

- ✓ Time to train volunteers
- ✓ Time to manage volunteers
- ✓ Volunteers not following protocols
- ✓ Volunteer safety concerns
- ✓ Requiring background checks
- ✓ Objections raised by union employees about volunteers
- ✓ Insufficient numbers of volunteers to complete the work
- ✓ Inconsistent participation by volunteers
- ✓ Volunteers not willing to complete forms or record activities
- ✓ Physical limitations
- ✓ Other (please describe)

12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

[Comment box]

Items below are for individuals who supervise those who work with volunteers

13. How would you classify your staff's work with volunteers?

- Always or almost always positive
- Mostly positive
- A mix of both positive and negative
- Mostly negative
- Always or almost always negative

14. How do your staff feel about working with volunteers?

- Always or almost always a positive experience
- Mostly positive experiences
- A mix of both positive and negative
- Mostly negative experiences
- Always or almost always negative experiences

15. In what ways have your staff worked with volunteers? Please check all that apply:

- Events
- Habitat improvement
- Maintaining parks and trails
- Monitoring natural resources (e.g., frog counting, loon monitoring, lake level measurement)
- Natural Resource project assistance
- Office work (e.g., filing, scanning)
- Research
- Safety instructors (e.g., firearms, ATV)
- Surveys
- Other (please describe)

16. Rank the top three challenges that your staff have encountered when working with volunteers:

- ✓ Time to train volunteers
- ✓ Time to manage volunteers
- ✓ Volunteers not following protocols
- ✓ Volunteer safety concerns
- ✓ Requiring background checks
- ✓ Objections raised by union employees about volunteers
- ✓ Insufficient numbers of volunteers to complete the work
- ✓ Inconsistent participation by volunteers

- ✓ Volunteers not willing to complete forms or record activities
- ✓ Physical limitations
- ✓ Other (please describe)

17. Is there anything else you would like to share?
[Comment box]

Items below are for individuals who have no direct or indirect contact with volunteers

18. Is there anything else you would like to share?
[Comment box]

Demographic Items

19. What is your position in the DNR:
- Manager (including Senior, Operations, and Regional Managers)
 - Supervisors
 - Professional Staff
 - Technical Staff
 - Office Assistants
 - Other (please describe)
20. In what division do you work?
- Ecological and Water Resources
 - Enforcement
 - Fish and Wildlife
 - Forestry
 - Lands and Minerals
 - Operations Services (HR, OMB, MIS, Management Resources, Communications and Outreach)
 - Parks and Trails
21. In which region do you work?
- Northwestern
 - Southern
 - Northeastern
 - Central
 - Central Office
22. How long have you worked at the DNR?
- Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 3 years
 - 3-6 years
 - 6-9 years
 - 10 or more years

APPENDIX F: STAFF ONLINE SURVEY COMMENTS

All quotes are verbatim from the DNR Staff online survey. While survey comments have been de-identified and alphabetized, no other editing has taken place.

1. Which of the following ways do you think alumni volunteers could best support the work of the DNR? 'Other' responses

- advising or managing an urban forestry program
- Advisory panel available for advice in current DNR. Retired employees carry a lot of knowledge through experience. (could answer questions current employees have about 'how things were done 'back then')
- ALL of the above
- All of the above and/or within their previous area of expertise.
- All of the above depending on discipline
- All of the above if this is what they like to do.
- all of the above recommendations
- all of the above, depending on what their interest is
- All of the above, if knowledgeable.
- alumni association should not just be volunteers, but also temp paid hires. This role should support all types of opportunities
- ALumni volunteers that I've worked with have a high level of skills and connections. I'd capitolize on that, and let other volunteers do the relatively lower-skilled work
- Alumni would be useful in all of the above.
- any of above
- Any of the above
- Any of the above, based on local needs and alumni interests
- Any or all of the above.
- Any way a retiree wants to contribute their time and knowledge to being a steward for natural resources
- As advocates for the staff on the ground to upper mgmt and the legislature.
- assist with various biological surveys and monitoring data collection
- assisting conservation groups with applications for funding (e.g., CPL grants)
- Be willing to be contacted by previous employer in case we have a question about work that they did.
- Being a volunteer coordinator in the regions - a "Volunteer Volunteer Coordinator"
- Best to transfer knowledge to newer, younger staff that are recently hired.
- canoe, boating volunteer/mentor,
- cleaning bathrooms
- Contributing citizen science data to national databases, especially for insects like lady bugs, butterflies, dragonflies, etc.
- Depends on experience, could work at any of above capacities.
- DNR Public Land Site Stewards
- Everything!! Especailly transferring knowledge.
- Facilitating meetings, escorting guests on bonding tours
- Fill in During All-Staff meetings/trainings to provide a way to keep the office open during that time working as a front desk counter greeter..providing basic information and referrals.
- Fish hatchery spawning activities, consulting with CPL and other grant appllicants
- Fit the skills to the individual. All of the above seem plausible.
- game species surveys,
- Help convert data from paper to digital formats.
- Help finish projects left un-finished when they retired
- I am sure they could do all of the above
- I honestly think not many people who retire from theDNR want to be associated with the DNR beyond employment.

- I probably will not volunteer when I retire
- I think all of them would be great ways to help our mission!
- I think they could do any one of these depending upon skill sets. Transferring knowledge definitely.
- I would be interested in more activities as long as there was no employees, regular/seasonal on layoff who could be doing the work
- I've never worked with volunteers, so I don't think I can say what I think they'd be good at doing.
- In general, I think the state should hire people. Volunteers cheat young people out of jobs.
- inspectors for tree planting/site prer/road construction contracts
- Instructing in their field of expertise
- It would really depend on individuals expertise and willingness to share their professional interests.
- Land management on public or private land, landowner outreach and education
- Let them retire. Do not make another "GROUP"
- Mentoring new hires
- Nongame is spelled as one word it is not Non-game
- not only to new employees but to any employee that would need some mentoring or guidance
- Nothing that has any regulatory or suggested regulatory component. Paid staff should do that.
- observation well measurement and spring flow measurement
- outside groups need help being empowered to aid in the work that DNR does - alumni could help spur that
- Plant surveys
- promoting the DNR state wide.
- rare species surveys
- Report writing
- research and plant and animal population monitoring
- routine fisheries sampling
- scanning and photocopying paper documents to digital documents
- Seems to me that whatever skill they have, would be something valuable to tap into. Might be union issues if FT volunteer in work currently being done by paid staff, but otherwise it would seem we could use whatever skill they are able to bring to the table...
- Serving as liaison between DNR and other agencies, academic institutions, and industry regarding environmentally sound mine waste management
- so much depends on the skill set/capabilities that of individual volunteers which may open additional opportunities; not 1 size fits all
- Soyund like these volunteers may be potentially taking jobs away from DNR employees
- Staff often think of new things not on this listing; remain open to them.
- there is general concern about a declining environmental ethic as MN's population becomes more urban/suburban; there would likely be many ways alumni volunteers could engage in their communities that would help transfer their "environmental ethic" beliefs to others who have less direct experience with the outdoors and natural systems.
- They could do all of the above. There are people outside of the alumni that could do them all as well, except, transferring knowledge to new employees.
- They could do anything that they have an interest in
- they should do what ever they were good at and whatever they want to continue to do.
- This is a general response as opposed to one for myself only
- This is related to the above, but having mentorship workshops with new employees to preserved some of that institutional knowledge
- Too numerous
- where-ever and how ever thier interests, experience and experitse can be utilized to support the current DNR mission
- Why be limiting?- pick "all of the above"
- wildfire suppression/support
- Wildlife surveys for game species
- Working with students - Ambassadors to all ages. Mentoring new employees if menotrs are recent employees
- You have got to be kidding! I spend 40 years underpaid and overworked and you want me to work for nothing.

3. If 'No,' why not? (Respondent unwilling to manage or supervise one or more alumni volunteers)

- Because working for the DNR, and being hated by the public, has sucked the life out of me.
- Burned out.
- Doesn't apply to my work
- Don't have enough time.
- Don't have the time.
- Have enough to do already
- Have not dealt with volunteers on a large scale previously
- I am not a permanent employee of the DNR. I am a long ways off from retirement, but envision myself being interested in some sort of volunteering/phased program like this when I do retire.
- I don't think they want to crunch statistics or write reports.
- I have put my time in with the DNR and do not want to extend the misery
- I have to many personal activities that I want to accomplish that do not include working as a volunteer with the DNR. The organization is not the same as it was 10 or 20 years ago.
- I think volunteers do work that the state should be paying for. Volunteers should not perform work that is covered under the union contracts or that could be performed by a union employee.
- I work in IT and do not do those activities.
- I would be retired.
- I'm disgruntled and I still have about 25 years until I can retire. I'm sure by the time I can retire there is no way I'm going to do this for free, since I wouldn't do it for free now. The DNR needs to focus on fixing the current problems in the division before it starts new ones.
- I'm overworked as it is
- I've got a life
- It does not fit with my current job responsibilities.
- Just because
- Just not interested.
- Let them retire. You should not need to make a new group of volunteers. Let them fit into existing groups.
- Main function is IT and not DNR field speciifc
- Managing my workload with current employees and new volunteers keeps me busy.
- may encounter challenges with trying to uphold new departmental processes with alumni who worked under a different set of guidelines
- Moving out of state.
- My current work duties do not allow for this type of interaction.
- my experience with those that have retired is that they either want to be retired and out of the circle of things, or they NEED to retire, and are no longer a functional part of our Division.
- no interest
- No Time
- Not enough time in my day
- Not involved in the areas previously checked.
- Not particularly helpful for a grants admin job.
- other interests, and donated enough time to the state already.
- Plan to work til I drop dead.
- The work described should be compensated rather than volunteer. Develop the program for part time "older and retired" workers and if an individual retiree is well enough off to donate his time that should be their personal decision. In other words before you start a "volunteer" program lets see some support and effort to establish a program to offer part-time paid work.
- These volunteers would potentially be replacing jobs for DNR employees.
- This is soley centered around the DNR getting another set of volunteers to do things that should have been supported in the past.
- Time limitations.
- to busy
- To busy.
- Too busy

- Too busy; volunteers need a lot of instruction/supervision. My past experiences with having volunteers have proven to be counterproductive.
- Too many other extracurricular activities.
- Too much work to do right now, not enough time to give to volunteers.
- What I worry about with my work is trusting a volunteer to do the work accurately; maybe ridiculous, but the effort it takes to train someone in is extensive, and I worry that a volunteer might not be as objective/invested/committed as someone whose career/livelihood is 'on the line'. One exception is passing information from the retiree to the new recruit, but in that instance, I think the new recruit should be hired before the retirement, so both the retiree and the new recruit are paid for the training. I recognize some people are genuinely committed and are capable of contributing high quality work, but how do you sort out who's who? Sorry to be a pessimist.
- Will volunteer at the school my grandsons go to and local library.
- Workers should be paid a fair wage for their skills.
- Working with volunteers requires extra work - it is usually easier for me to just do my job myself. Not to mention, I'm not interested in clashing egos with a retired person who thinks he/she knows more than I do.
- Would not be a good fit for my responsibilities.

4. What features do you think are important to a successful alumni association? 'Other' responses

- A system to filter out the bad ones. We do have many retirees who's greatest contribution to the DNR was leaving.
- Active Members Working Toward A Common Goal
- all of the above
- allowing others to connect and keep up friendships that may have developed over their career with other alumni
- An efficient way to disseminate tasks to volunteers from current DNR staff - automated
- connections with the DNR, but I am not sure how
- Continuing a legacy or project they started
- Coordination and organization to make contributions by alumni a valued resource.
- DNR library access to literature?!!
- don't know
- feedback back to the DNR
- feeling valuable
- financial compensation?
- Fund Raising Events
- group cohesion, pride, motivation
- I don't know. I can't speak for the alumni nor guess what they might like.
- I don't think an alumni association is necessary.
- I don't think it's important to have an alumni association.
- Keeping connected with DNR and what is happening their fields (not newsletters, but face to face discussions)
- Knowing of volunteer opportunities.
- Knowledgeable people working with volunteers
- Monthly gathering with alumni
- my experience in 2 other states led me to believe that the most valuable part of the volunteer experience is the meet/greet followed by work that is important to the individual which may be very different from their work experience. A good conversation/interview can go along way to targeting the volunteer with the right job and cohort group.
- Newsletter that Alumni can contribute to
- no
- not being directed by the DNR but rather their own association with input/suggestions from DNR
- Not calling me to ask for money when I become an alumni
- not really sure what the features listed would be used for
- Not sure if you are speaking alumni volunteers or alumni employee - there is a difference

- Not sure what you mean by Formal Face-to-Face meetings with speakers in their local community?
- Opportunities to mentor or share knowledge
- opportunities to pass on knowledge to current DNR employees
- Opportunity for face to face gatherings with alumni and current DNR employees
- opportunity to renew friendships with formal workers
- people who are actually interested and willing to promote it
- Point person within DNR to supervise them and provide REAL recognition. Our current volunteer coordinator does NOT coordinate volunteers nor provide ANY service to the Divisions..
- Realistic expectations of what alumni are willing to perform or do
- regular notice of opportunities to volunteer or where their services may be useful
- taking on a lot of admin responsibilities (officer duties) may not appeal to alumni but likely need designated coordinator(s)
- The Assn has to be important enough to warrant the investment of time.
- The opportunity to support each other, and help each other feel good about our careers at DNR.
- The passing away of former DNR employee ,friends and staff
- Ther should be no additional DNR staff added to administer this program.
- Thinking about my father's retirement from another organization, there was an informal coffee/beer klatsche that kept important soical networks alive post retirement.
- Volunteers should not be informing public on current DNR laws or Policies as they change and they may not have current knowledge.

5. What features do you think are important for a successful alumni volunteer network?

'Other' responses

- ?
- A DNR volunteer coordinator that provides incentives, trainings, appreciations, etc directly to volunteers. When I worked at a major museum we had a full time coordinator that ACTUALLY provided these services - now the DNR coordinator does not provide even basic volunteers to meet our needs or provides ANY incentives or appreciation luncheons. It is better not to offer this service if it can't be funded and run appropriately as Division staff cannot take on the work of overseeing volunteers.
- Accountable Manager responsible for Alumni Volunteer program
- Again, I think a volunteer, volunteer coordinator would be helpful in lieu of training staff to manage and supervise volunteers. That's a full-time job itself.
- all of above
- alumni volunteers are already trained?
- An efficient way to disseminate tasks to volunteers from current DNR staff - automated - just in time fulfillment
- Clear leadership from within the DNR, positive and timely feedback on the results from their work, opportunities to receive awards/recognition for their efforts
- Clearly defining that former employees do not represent the DNR and it's current goals/priorities
- communicating clearly the value of the project
- Do not make this in to just work! make it fun for all.This question sounds like its what you can getout of usyet !
- don't understand the difference being drawn between an "association" (previous question) and "network"
- emphasis on training the DNR staff to manage and supervise volunteers
- I am all for recognizing DNR staff for their many contributions (and, overall, we are a pretty dedicated bunch), so I guess recognizing their work with volunteers would depend, in part, on whether it was a part of their regular work, or in addition to their regular work.
- I have been a volunteer for another state agency for over 20 years. All of these activities are important
- I think it will be different levels. Some alum might really want to take charge and others might just want to give a little time. Can't be boxed.
- Incentives for volunteer participation
- Making a clear distinction that the "aulmni" is retired and no longer a DNR employee who can make natural resource decisions.

- Making DNR staff aware of the pool of alumni volunteers available for work
- making sure volunteers understand how valuable their contribution is to the work of the DNR and helping them see how their individual small contributions when added together result a large positive outcome
- More volunteer coordination infrastructure to support the effort. Field staff will not have time to manage those pieces successfully.
- no
- not just volunteering, but paid short term positions as well.
- One point is that DNR staff should not have to train matched volunteers. Make the perks real, co authorship, freedom to act, supervising non-alumni volunteers. Use alumni as professionals
- related to vol mgmt--ID potential assoc costs & funding sources for gear,office space,recognition, etc). Vol recognition=good but patches & mugs..??
- safety training for all volunteers
- see above
- Social meetings
- stop it
- The term "alumni" will be confusing for staff, the public, and the pool of volunteers
- volunteers should get interesting non-professional work - and not horrid jobs like scanning that should be done for pay.
- We need to be focused on what it is that will provide value to the DNR that our retired colleagues can provide that no one else can. Grunt labor that general volunteers can do is not important. Skilled labor - we should maintain the staff capacity to do that kind of work. We need to use this association to help existing employees accelerate learning curves, understand deep insitutional history and preserve institution memory.

6. What do you think will be challenges for an alumni volunteer network? 'Other' responses

- All of the above
- Alumni volunteers doing things their way - which may not be the way we do things now.
- always a challenge working with volunteers. but since these will have worked for the DNR some of the usual challenges may not be there while others present themselves.
- Bringing past thought processes into play where we are trying to change things
- c mon
- Clarity of boundaries, what is the nature of the relationship with the DNR - they are part of the DNR - sort of...but how to set that without creating some a formal document that is offensive to prospective volunteers.
- competition with many other more rewarding opportunities with NGO's and other organizations more geared to retirees.
- Conflict or unclear role between a replacement employee and the "alumni" who previously held the position. It is hard enough for DNR customers to accept the "new kid" after someone held a DNR position for 30+ plus retirees. If that retiree is still active in the picture, the transition becomes harder. I'm speaking from experience.
- Could be any or all of the above
- Cultural differences between divisions: within division volunteer networks in some ways would be easier to manage.
- don't know
- Ensuring alumni realize they are not the boss, in some cases.
- Gaining permission from supervisors to take on volunteers, funding to buy supplies for volunteer work, displacement of opportunities for paid positions by volunteer work
- Getting rid of volunteers that are not following the rules or are giving incorrect information
- getting the message out about what an Alumni Volunteer network is and why a state agency has an "alumni association"
- Human resources not adequately incorporating the need to keep retiring employees hired until 6 months after their replacement has been working in that same position to ensure a good transition

- and transfer of knowledge, which should not be thought of as a volunteer activity, but instead something the DNR should be doing now!
- I can imagine a scenarion where qualified volunteers have difficulty getting plugged into a position; they want to he, but the system for helping is not able to make it happen.
 - I hate filling out forms. Other issues for volunteers include possibly transportation and/or safety issues (i.e., working alone, slips, trips, and falls, heat exhaustion.... Perhaps training could include a CPR and First Aid course (and subsequent refresher courses).
 - I imagine there are many potential challenges that I cannot anticipate
 - I work with many volunteers - my program couldn't run without volunteers BUT they take up SO much time. They have a lot of demands, do not understand DNR limitations/policies and I do not have a budget to adequate appreciate them.
 - if DNR aids in the creation but not the running of the network, the network would self sustain rather than be reliant on the DNR
 - it won't be fun enough
 - Lack of an efficient way to disseminate tasks to volunteers from current DNR staff - no just in time jobs available
 - Lets continue to take advantage of employees post retirement. I'm a cynic but this beats all.
 - managing level of involvement with specific projects
 - Matching Volunteer's Interests With Projects
 - New staff not wanting to work with volunteers that had the job before them (not all retirements are a great loss of institutional knowledge).
 - Not opening up positions to the next generation of workers
 - red tape and bureaucracy driving volunteers off
 - retired DNR employees (alumni) need to be able to step back and let current DNR employees do the job
 - Status concerns based on the level with which they retired may pose issues working with younger or non-supervisory personnel providing direction or the alumni feeling a need to take over because of their experience
 - Status Quo. Most processes are outdated. Typically retirees were stuck at a certain point in their career to entertain new methodologies.
 - The DNR responsibility for the volunteer's actions
 - thinking about volunteers as an extension of DNR's work force and as a way to help get DNR's work done. My thought is that a new type of work needs to be envisioned for volunteers that fits in well with their lifestyle post-DNR and is matched to the needs of the communities in which they live. I don't know if DNR is willing to invest the time to pull this off.
 - Training should only be required for new protocols. Freedom to speak out--if part of association will alumni have to tow the party line
 - Travel - getting the right volunteer to a site that may be a long distance away.
 - Treating alumni as a "free workforce" to reduce paid workforce -And implementing an excess of policies and forms and administrative "red-tape" to comply with.
 - Volunteers can be a great supplement but not substitute for full-time staff. Volunteers aren't free. Depending on activity, can be best to have a few that are "golden" that many that are difficult to manage. Ultimately, has to be a net benefit.
 - Volunteers keeping up on the latest scientific info, state of the landscape, etc.
 - Volunteers thinking their way is the best and not wanting to take direction from newer staff
 - Voluntreers not wanting to work with current staff that they worked with previously.
 - With decreasing budgets and more dedicated funding it sees like DNR alumni may be used to continue to run programs that the DNR no longer prioritises as important to pay someone to do. Alumni should not be used in this way.
 - working under people they used to supervise
 - You need dedicated employee staff person responsible to have a board to represent the volunteers with policy and procedures. All must follow the rules, donate minimum hours yearly to remain a volunteer or take training again. There should be training for all volunteers or for the section that they are volunteering in.

10. In what ways have you worked with volunteers? ‘Other’ responses

- advisory board
- Advisory committees
- AIS Watercraft inspection program
- Angling mentoring
- As a guest speaker about a specialty topic at a DNR staff meeting (photography)
- Camp host program
- campground host
- Campground hosts
- Campground hosts
- Campground hosts
- Campground hosts
- campground host in SF rec areas/campgrounds
- CG host program
- clean up events, campground hosts
- Computer programming
- conservation easement monitoring
- Development of computer application
- Disaster response
- Education - teacher workshops
- Environmental Education
- Fire wardens
- Fire wardens issuing burning permits
- Fish spawning and light hatchery duties
- fund raising, land acquisition, waste water mgmt, lake assns, planning
- GIS
- GIS work
- high school tree planting
- hospitality services
- I used to manage the Volunteer Program (along with several other programs)
- individual program volunteers
- Inspection Volunteers
- Lab work/specimen processing/databasing collection information
- lake level monitoring
- legal research, compile survey results
- litter pick-ups
- Maintaining or improving public parking lots and informations displays (Kiosks).
- month long high school student intern who worked with me daily
- Naturalist programs
- outreach, presentations
- Oversight Committees
- Program Instructors
- special hunts
- Specific projects
- state fair assistance
- state fair volunteers, shoreline cleanups
- student workers
- Stuffing packets, stamping envelopes, etc.
- township fire wardens
- transcripts made ADA accessible
- volunteer driver
- watercraft inspection education
- yada yada yada

12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

- About 11-12 years ago I tried to recruit volunteers for a DNR project, and it was very difficult. Despite sharing the announcement in the Volunteer Newsletter and other outlets, I got 0 volunteers. I think recruiting volunteers, even if they are DNR alumni, could be difficult.
- Alumni associations should not be all about doing volunteer work. Throw in some benefits such as reduced group travel or things like that.
- Alumni usually are familiar with the protocols and should be easier to manage than 'off the street' volunteers. The reason people volunteer is important in getting any project completed. If people are 'required' to volunteer in the situation of 'community service' it is much more difficult to supervise and keep track of their work. Alumni are there because they want to be there and usually are a pleasure to work with. The biggest issue would be getting them to follow current rules rather than the 'way they use to do it'.
- An Alumni Association is a good idea but it should be kept separate from volunteering. DNR Alumni should not have special status over other volunteers. DNR Alumni who want to volunteer should be encouraged to pick activities not related to their career.
- Connecting with the community that actually cares enough about our natural resources to actually get out and do something positive is a tremendously valuable opportunity. We don't do it as much as we can or should. That is a strategic mistake.
- Could be an excellent program. Can do some/many of these things with current program.
- Despite my pessimism, I think there is a way to make this work. Right now, our unit is short staffed and as much as we need help, the idea of finding the right volunteer and investing in the training does not appeal to me. Ironically, I think the best time to take on and train volunteers is when you do not desperately need them. Additionally, for a volunteer program to be successful, I think we need an established/solid work team/unit. Right now, in the the midst of a lot of staffing change and being understaffed, our unit is not set up for a successful volunteer experience. Once the paid positions are fully staffed and more settled, I see a lot of potential for success. On the other hand, if there is a volunteer who can offer consultation services for successfully navigating organizational change, by all means, bring them on now! :) Thanks for your work on this.
- DNR alumni are not typical volunteers. An alumni network should be able to change and develop organically based on the skill set and interests of active members at any given time. If it becomes too much like working for the DNR, people will lose interest.
- DNR alumni will be professionals. If matched to appropriate activities, they should not require enormous investment of staff time in training and supervision. This program will be most effective if they can continue to operate as professionals.. There should be an agreement in writing on a project by project basis exactly what freedom to act, supervisory authority, reporting requirements, and professional arrangements (like co authorship on papers) will be afforded to the alums. Liability and following the DNR party line may be two issues, liability for DNR and party line for the alums. Many alums entered the workforce under different DNR paradigms (stewardship vs commodification) and it should be clear to alums if they have to button their lips if they are involved with the association. For my own part--if that were the case I would definitely NOT participate as I look forward to the freedom to speak out on DNR policies
- DNR Staff should have a one year schedule (Jan-Dec) of important tasks they are responsible. This would help staff and volunteers assist with their work load when they retire.
- Don't expect me to volunteer for operations conducted by paid employees. I may continue to volunteer for loon counts and firearm safety. Working for DNR has required a great amount of donation of time already, and lack of opportunity to use my education, experience, skills, judgement, insight, vision. After 20 years of insults to my intelligence, personal integrity, and professional standards, I don't expect to come back for more.
- FANTASTIC IDEA! One of the scariest things approaching retirement is the prospect of suddenly being isolated from all the good work and wonderful fellow workers with which/whom one has invested years. Another is the prospect that work begun by ourselves or others that uses or could use volunteers may dwindle away. Another thing is how some activities that could actually use the expertise of retirees tend to languish. Imagine the potential of having local or well-embedded retired staff adopt a site as volunteer stewards or interpreters or volunteer coordinators for management activities. This association could address these needs.
- Fear that the retiree volunteers won't realize their subordinate role, rather than staff member---had this happen in a non-DNR--"seasoned" volunteer wanted to run the show and tell staff/leaders how it should be done---like in the past. Fortunately younger staff didn't listen and risked political backlash

(from a powerful seasoned staff) and produced the best product in 30 years. Issue is clear definition of roles.

- Good luck. I would think that if a retired DNR employee wants to volunteer they would contact the area office an offer. Is an alumni association really necessary? When I am done with the job, I am done with the DNR.
- Great idea
- Great idea - DNR alumni have a lot of knowledge and experience to share and likely would be interested in spending time in this capacity, particularly if they are in retirement.
- Health screening will be important.
- I believe it would be a nice way to mentor other volunteers. If of course it is not taking jobs away from employees or potential new employees, possibly because of budget cuts. Seems there is money for the high dollar positions but not enough money for the "grunt" or lower class blue collar workers that are doing more of the hands-on, physical - labor that the public sees and /or deals with on a daily basis.
- I believe that an alumni assoc. would be good for retirees but to have the main reason to create a volunteer base isn't. We need to keep bringing in entree level employees for future employment. We also need to pay these people a respectable wage and hrs. so that they don't have to struggle to make a living and therefore leave DNR employment for the private sector due to better employment. Therefore losing the best to private jobs.
- I believe there is a word missing in question #2.
- I can see this easily being one of those "In theory it is great, but in practice....not so much." situations. I feel this is going to take a lot of forethought, and congrats on doing what you are with this survey, but without more funding and full time personnel to aide in this venture, it is set up for failure before it even starts.
- I do not think that this should be something the DNR develops or funds. The Fish and Wildlife Employee Association, or whatever that group is called now, or a similar group should take on this task. It is not important for our work.
- I have had volunteers assisting with many of my tasks. A lot has been accomplished. I feel it works well.
- I have several current and former DNR/State employees currently volunteering for my survey, and they tend to be more consistent and easier to manage than volunteers from the general public. If there were a better forum to convey volunteering opportunities directly to retirees, I think it would be beneficial for the volunteer programs and the potential volunteers.
- I have worked with lots of volunteers over the years, mainly lake association members or sportsman's groups interested in "their" lake or stream. Also, lots of young people (high school & college age) interested in job shadowing, or learning about jobs in the natural resources field. There are challenges working with volunteers, but overall it has been a positive experience. I think it is great that the retired community wants to volunteer their time and talents, and I look forward to doing the same thing in a few years! That being said, I don't think it is the responsibility of state government to organize a Alumni Association. If retired DNR folks want an association - organize it on their own time and cost. Do other state agencies have an alumni association that wants to volunteer their time back to the department? Do retired Dept of Transportation folks come back and volunteer to plow snow? Do retired Dept of Corrections folks come back to work at the prisons? Not trying to be negative, just asking.
- I haven't seen consistent appreciation of existing volunteer contributions by our management. Often there is none. Division management appear uninterested. Managers do not actively encourage staff to work with volunteers of any kind. Endorsement by DNR managers and supervisors are the biggest hurdle to having a successful DNR Alumni program. Staff that already work with volunteers could use management "buy-in" to continue. We have a very loyal wheelchair disabled volunteer that I feel has been treated disrespectfully by our management, (not the staff that use her volunteer abilities). Our office is not very ADA friendly, to either staff or volunteers. Wouldn't DNR alumni encounter the same barriers as well, if they are part of an aging population? Eliminating ADA obstacles can only improve our relationship with our citizens, staff, DNR alumni and volunteers. It's an excellent goal, but I don't think we have begun the rudiments of accessibility.
- I love the idea of tapping into alumni for volunteer options. Currently, with the volunteers I work with we run into so many safety concerns and paperwork required that it almost becomes counterproductive to have volunteers (I spend more time coordinating that than volunteers actually spend volunteering). I hope we can address some of those hurdles in working with alumni. I would also suggest we create a strong website presence (sign volunteers up online, create more web-friendly

forms that folks can fill out directly on our website) ... stop this paper shuffling that's needed now and move to electronic. Plus, if we can create online volunteer calendars showing all the options for volunteers, we might get better response. I know the volunteers (alumni and not) are out there, we're struggling getting the opportunities to them. Thanks!

- I think having an alumni association of sorts where volunteer opportunity connections are just one feature of belonging, along with a newsletter, social gatherings, etc. is a great idea.
- I think it is a great idea but challenging. Like with any group of volunteers you will have some who are very dedicated and those who aren't. The program will have to be flexible for that.
- I think that volunteers are best used where they are not directly representing the DNR to the public. I think some retired managers or supervisors may have a hard time working in the same area where they worked. It also may be intimidating to current employees to have their former supervisor "looking over their shoulder".
- I think this is a great program idea to explore further!
- I think this would be a great opportunity to help retirees maintain engaged in the agency without the stressful demands of a full-time job. If I were close to retirement, it's something I'd be very interested in.
- I think this would be a great opportunity to use the knowledge of the alumni, when a person that worked for the DNR for 30 years or so, lots of knowledge goes with him/her, this would be a great way to bring that knowledge back to the DNR.
- I think you should seriously reconsider the term alumni association and alumni volunteer network. The term "alumni" is currently exclusively used by colleges and universities. That you are drawing a parallel could be easily lost on people.
- I think you're making more work for those in the field. 1/2 the time, training and safety take up time that staff could be doing the job themselves.
- I view the alumni volunteer program as a way for former employees to stay engaged in the DNR mission once retired. Mentoring new hires is one area I see potential for this program. Program should focus on projects that tap their unique skill sets.
- I volunteered at the State Fair and I guess as a volunteer, I wish there had been someone present when I showed up who knew what I was supposed to do and could show me. I read all the instructions beforehand, but the person who greeted me wasn't quite sure what I was supposed to be doing. If you want people to volunteer and to come back and do it again make sure that all staff is aware of who is coming, when they are coming and can demonstrate or has clear instructions for the volunteer. I don't like standing around or trying to guess what I'm supposed to be doing or where to find stuff. Thanks!
- I will not become a member of an alumni association. If I want to volunteer, I will. If I want to socialize with former employees, I will call them up and we will meet and socialize. More than likely, I will work on my own properties to improve habitat and call it good. I do not need to be supervised or managed.
- I work as a volunteer with another organization that puts on events that can range from \$5,000 to 27,000. I would like to help the DNR set up events like that.
- I worked for a bank at one time that would always hire ex-employees for short term assignments (paid w/o benefits. This survey only explores volunteering, but I think more participations could happen if returning employees were paid for their short-term assignments.
- I would like to see some good training courses for employees who decide to work with volunteers. If this already exists, I'd like to see it better advertised. Thanks again for compiling this information!
- I would rather focus DNR time and money on having soon-to-be retirees mentor current staff.
- I would volunteer for certain projects or activities, but volunteers shouldn't be looked at to fill holes in budgets. The legislature and governor should step up to the plate and fund the DNR for the mission they want to accomplish.
- I'm wondering if you have a significant pool of DNR alumni interested in participating in a DNR Alumni Association and/or volunteering for the DNR in their retirement or post DNR employment? My concern is this isn't something DNR Alumni are requesting or engaged with creating, but a money saving strategy that management and the administration is considering to shore up labor costs and plug holes in the work force. And for the agency's long-term it's just as critical to invest in the professional development and strength of the current workforce... as it is to pad your workforce with volunteers. When you create an environment in which employees and their "jobs" are regarded more like "investments," employees will show up with passion, productivity, and focus, and deliver about and beyond expectations. Investing in employee orientation, initial training and professional development, and their future - cross-train employees, prioritize fun (when fun is a regular part of

work, employees get to know each other as real people and friendship fosters satisfaction and productivity. If there are efforts to remove the stresses of finding quality childcare, encourage and support continued education and pursuit of degrees... employees have more energy and value to contribute to their jobs. If employees do not feel valued and invested in, they will not be motivated to invest themselves in their jobs and value the work... and will not experience the "fun" in doing the good work. Is the plan to expand the services the DNR provides to its alumni, employees and the public - - - or is a volunteer program a way to save money and keep the system afloat as it currently functions? Will internal volunteers just be used internally or will they be involved in collaborative efforts? And would DNR partners be amenable to working with alumni volunteers? What are the reasons for the DNR implementing an alumni volunteer program and what work would they be doing? How will it be ensured that volunteers fill unique roles and not duplicate efforts within the organization, just to use volunteers to reduce the size of the workforce. And where will the volunteers be housed? My experience is that office space and space in general is at a premium here at the agency. Volunteers will need a place to work without inconveniencing paid staff... Where will the funding for administration of the alumni volunteer staff come from? Would an alumni volunteer program replace or reduce the size of the current DNR volunteer program- or expand the current DNR volunteer program? And volunteers, like paid staff, need to get help with problems and answers to their questions. They need to feel productive, do work that challenges them, and have an opportunity to grow. They also need to know they are valued for what they do. An alumni volunteer group would need a designated volunteer coordinator. Coordinating volunteers should not be a shared responsibility that staff attend to when they have "spare time." There needs to be a defined volunteer program, with the role of volunteers in the organization, and position descriptions. There should be a volunteer training program and supporting materials, such as a handbook. There should be a clear set of rules for volunteers and for staff working with volunteers. There should be a recruitment and management plan in place for an alumni volunteer group. And there should be a recognition program, such as an annual awards ceremony. Any program would need to be clearly defined and organized to help ensure that volunteers, staff, and clients have a productive and worthwhile experience. A key component of any alumni and/or volunteer program is the organizations directors or administrators. The directors should be involved in all aspects of the new or expanded volunteer program, beginning with the planning. The directors must make a commitment to support and encourage volunteer involvement. Directors need to understand that a successful volunteer program improves the Agency's image, helps to expand services, and leads to better outreach. They could assist a volunteer program by talking up and publicizing for volunteer recruitment and mentioning volunteer opportunities at their public speaking engagements. They can speak at specific recruitment events. They can take part in the volunteer orientation and training. They can attend and help with volunteer recognition events. Even in a large organization where the directors are very busy, they should not overlook the volunteer program, and if possible, the directors should create a volunteer program subcommittee - including a few directors, a few volunteers, and the volunteer manager. This subcommittee would assume responsibility for some delegated tasks and would communicate volunteer-related issues and information to the entire group of Agency Directors. Position descriptions for the volunteer positions are important in helping to screen, place, and evaluate volunteers in a fair and reasonable way... and to help volunteers decide if they have the necessary time, skills, and interest to perform the position tasks outlined in the PD... remembering that volunteers play a different role than staff do. Volunteers who understand the expectations will do a better job and feel more satisfied with their duties than will volunteers who don't understand their role. Creating a cadre of highly effective volunteers requires a recruitment strategy... to attract and invite alumni to consider involvement with the organization. People volunteer for organizations they perceive as worthwhile. They want to know their contribution will make a difference (and not just replace someone's job.) And one way to make the agency seem welcoming to volunteers is to make volunteers visible throughout the organization. And not only how the alumni volunteer makes a difference and contributes to the organization, but how the opportunity benefits the volunteer - needs to be thoughtfully outlined, as well. Having alumni volunteers "mentors" current employees might be a great way to utilize alumni volunteers in a way that supports and contributes to the development of the current workforce.

- I've worked with a number of people who have retired that I think would make wonderful volunteers, but now that they are retired, they may not want to volunteer where they worked.
- if the job is important enough to do then there ought to be the commitment to pay current staff to get it done. on occasion a volunteer can assist staff in such a way that one two person crew could become two crews(2 staff+2 vol.) thereby enhancing productivity. but to recruit 4 vol. to replace full time staff would not be a good thing.

- If we do this, we really need to evaluate the appropriateness of the work and the effectiveness of the participants in meeting the needs of the organization at least annually.
- If we had more of a stable of volunteers, the inconsistent participation issue would turn into a scheduling issue. Of course retirees want to go off to Hawaii - wouldn't we all?
- If you have a way of surveying past alumni, I think it would be a great idea. Especially to find out why they would be interested in volunteering, or why not.
- In structuring a DNR Alumni Association, the potential negatives need to be carefully evaluated and minimized to the extent possible. If there are too many rigid, bureaucratic requirements, some DNR alumni will not participate--part of why some people retire is to get away from those kinds of requirements, which have proliferated over the past 30 years.
- Incorporating retired employees into operations they formally managed or worked in may cause undo stress and conflict with current employees (i.e., When I worked here we never did it that way).
- Is there an interest in alumni being part of an association? What are their thoughts on structure/design?
- Is this really about volunteers???? I thought it was to see whether people were interested in an alumni association, which might, among other things, be a source of volunteers.
- It is important to have a large enough pool of volunteers to satisfy their socialization needs so they are not relying on staff to interact with them.
- It will be important that volunteers are kept up-to-date on current policies if they are representing the department. A speaker's bureau could be a very good way to utilize volunteers. Reducing paperwork would encourage staff to use more volunteers.
- Keep it simple
- Keeping DNR alumni connected to DNR issues and programs will allow them to be advocates and create support for our work in communities across the state. The volunteer aspect of better connecting with alumni is secondary, in my opinion.
- Lack the time needed to make volunteers feel special and cared about. Each has their unique personalities - can lead to constant work for me to meet individual needs and desires. They provide more "work Ideas" for me but not always available to help. One volunteer comes up with a great idea like a newsletter - then expects new volunteers to take over but don't and then expect me to take it on - too much work. Too many ideas and not enough help.
- Let's do it!
- Maintaining and retaining volunteers requires lots of time to train, depending on existing skill levels; ongoing interaction with them to keep them interested; and giving recognition for the work they do. They need to feel like they are part of the team and provide a valuable service.
- Many retired employees believe they are now free to say anything they want - because they are. For some, 30+ years of frustration comes out after retirement and they do more harm than good for the organization. It will be difficult to manage those who will use the Alumni Association as a soap box for their personal agenda.
- Need to recognize the lack of leverage to ensure a volunteer will finish what they started and make smart choices about what work to give to a volunteer
- no
- No, thank you.
- No.
- No.
- Nope
- Nope.
- Not sure this survey captured the real potential of working with retired staff. It looks at them in the same way non-DNR volunteers are looked at. The major difference is in retired staff specific knowledge, experience, and skills--that can be brought into play for very specific tasks with **LITTLE SUPERVISION NEEDED** (capitalized for emphasis!). For example, I am currently working with a retiree on a very specific complex database structure assignment. He knows the task and how it was developed originally as he initially developed it. There is no way a normal volunteer could provide the same service, and if I could find one that might be capable I would not have the time to train/supervise them.
- One of the biggest challenges in volunteers is keeping them motivated to do something and sometimes finding things for them that they can do when they are motivated. Time is a big issue with volunteers because you may be able to do it on one day that the volunteers are not ready and vice versa.

- Our office has an active alumni group that meets every month for lunch. It sounds like they have lots of fun and enjoy getting together.
- Outside of top positions, most DNR employees need additional income after they retire if they consider health care costs. If the DNR truly has it's employees in their best interest they would would make sure to offer more assistance to retired employees rather than look for ways to exploit them. I think a lot of retirees would be happy to help the DNR and it would be rewarding for them to do so, but it should be a two-way relationship rather than the DNR taking advantage of their power. There seems to be a trend to take more and more away from retirees and I think it the DNR leaders should be ashamed of their involvement in taking advantage of older people that have already given so much and are vulnerable. Lets see someone in a leadership position actively promote more benefits for retirees - if you treat them right they will return the favor.
- Perform an exit interview to staff retiring and identify what they might be willing to share or do as a volunteer.
- Projects must be evaluated on most efficient way to accomplish. some projects are better and more efficiently accomplished by trained employees and are not good volunteer projects. matching the project to the workforce, including volunteers, is essential.
- Rather than strictly volunteer, why not pay them a little bit - that way you solve some of the apparent concerns that I read in this survey. You also help out the retiree!
- Set up a Facebook page and save the DNR and the State a lot of money. It seems like a waste of resources to have a feasibility study and a committe to decide if there should be an alumni association. If people want to continue to be involved with each other or the DNR there are ways for them to do it without all this hub bub.
- Sounds like a cool idea!
- The regions each need a volunteer coordinator. Staff would be more likely to use volunteers if there was someone who managed, trained, coordinated the equipment and sometimes supervised volunteers. Could we consider having a volunteer volunteer coordinator in the regions who could connect staff with volunteers who are "on the ground" ready? There are many community organizations with volunteers that would be interested in DNR activities. It could be a huge network of volunteers, not just DNR alumni.
- The tone of this survey leaves me with the impression that the alumni would be considered to be inexperienced, an almost condescending tone. That would not be the case. The alumni volunteers will likely be more experienced than the "supervisor" (the alumni may have actually hired the supervisor) so level of oversight should not be given careful consideration. Too much supervision will send the volunteer away. Alumni volunteers would not be the same as volunteers with other life experiences. The employee/supervisor might be better off to consider working with the volunteer as good training for themselves.
- The volunteer program for the MN Zoo has volunteers that are retained for multiple years. They all go thru a training program. The volunteers after training do select what they would like to do as volunteers. Each day has a volunteer captain (volunteers who supervise other volunteers). This could be done by area instead of day. The volunteers report to a regular state employee(s). The program is very large. Volunteers pay for the uniform and for their manual. They want to be volunteers and have a high committment to the volunteer corp. Volunteers can also be terminated from the program.
- there is a lot of tallent to tap but they need to be managed much differently than an employee and we can perhaps learn to do that.
- There is a time commitment to line up volunteers for an event. Those that volunteer are wanting to do it. Have to allow some flexibility .
- Think about things that people who work for DNR in an administrative capacity can do - human resources, IT, planning, accounting and financial management, facility management, etc.
- This is a fine idea. For the retired DNR employee, it allows them to stay connected and in touch with the field that most of them fell in love with and enjoyed working in. It gives them another social opportunity. The downside is potentially large: @#\$!! background checks, training time, union objections, rogue retirees doing things their own way, physical limitations, etc. As a current employee, I would want to be very selective about who I brought back for the project I need help with. Many are very conscientious other are not.
- This is a great program that reflects well on our agency and can create and enhance community support for our mission. I hope it gets more financing and staffing.
- This survey would have been easier if a check mark could have been made for "all of the above" ... :-)

- This would be welcomed. We need certain out-going staff come back to mentor young entry-level staff or train citizens on DNR work. I'm currently a member of a professional conservation association and will note that DNR "policy" on resource issues sometimes gets in the way of participation by the volunteer, so they opt not to attend or commit to the cause or direction.
- Volunteer participation is so inconsistent. Volunteers cannot be used as crew members. They have no stake in the completion of the work, and often are not prepared for us to expect anything of them.
- Volunteers are valuable but there is a cost to train and manage them.
- Volunteers are very important and can play a much bigger role if treated the same with the same number or more staff like Three Rivers Park District has to monitor and recruit them. Their program is an excellent model.
- Volunteers can range from a curse to an absolutely wonderful resources. Will never replace full-time dedicated staff but can & do fill essential niches. Vol mgmt isn't free (\$,staff time, other resources) so don't engage in large vol efforts if can't provide the support & resources. Need to appropriately ID & match vols with task. All should have clear expectations & understanding. When it all comes together, can be great.
- Volunteers cannot do any jobs that a DNR employee should be doing. It could violate the Union Contract and cause grievances. All of the DNR Locals under AFSCME will be conducting a study in April to look at all of what is going on regarding Volunteers, Greenview Workers, Interns, DNR Workers, and Part-time employees that don't work enough hours to be covered under AFSCME. All of those positions that fall under the Commissioner's Plan will be scrutinized.
- Volunteers need to know they are being appreciated, and that they are doing tasks that make a difference.
- We really need a way to automatically disseminate tasks to volunteers from current DNR staff. Currently we post, people pick and contact us. Needs to be figured out months ahead of time. With past staff, there would be a great potential to use them on a just in time basis, something comes up, and grab the job from the job board. We need an automated job board.
- We're too limited by safety and liability concerns to rely strongly on a volunteer program, not to mention also the impact of displacing current seasonal employees who struggle to make a living.
- What about alumni managing, training and supervising groups of volunteers (Not necessarily alumni volunteers but volunteers off the street) on projects. It seems like this would be a good way to help implement Adopt-A-WMA as well. We have folks who want to volunteer but don't have the staff time to make note of special skills or interests. or to put together a queriable database should a need arise.
- What would be the cost to start and maintain this program? Would the benefits of starting this program pay off in the end?
- Why is this survey needed? OF COURSE IT IS A GREAT IDEA TO INCLUDE ALUMNI AND RETIREES and create an association THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE FORGOTTEN. I am shocked somebody wasted taxpayer money making this stupid survey when it simply could have involved somebody just making the decision. Stop being so afraid to make decisions.
- With this special group of knowledgeable and experienced volunteers, we must provide them with meaningful opportunities, not just the usual tasks that we often rely on volunteers to complete.
- Worth pursuing, but I think it is important that work done with volunteers does not reduce job opportunities for folks just starting their career in natural resources.
- You should have my comment already....

APPENDIX G: DNR ALUMNI ONLINE SURVEY

Memorandum



To: Renée Vail

From: Kirsten Rewey and Joseph Curiel
ACET, Inc.

Date: February 3, 2014 [Revised February 4, 10, 21, and 27, 2014]

Re: Item Bank for Alumni Online Survey

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is conducting a survey to assess the feasibility, costs, and benefits of creating a DNR Alumni Association. As a former employee, your input is essential in letting us know your level of interest, what you'd like to get out of such an association, and what you are potentially willing to put into it. We are also exploring adding a volunteer component to the association that would be tailored to provide specialized opportunities to match the knowledge, skills and interests of DNR alumni. Please share your thoughts and views on this topic so the DNR can make an informed decision if this is worthwhile to pursue.

The survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes of your time and is being administered and monitored by our external vendor, ACET, Inc. ACET will summarize the results for the DNR and report on the findings. Compiled feedback will be shared electronically on the DNR website at a future date.

[Note: Items with "☐" indicate a 'check all that apply' question while items with "○" indicate a question that requires only one response.]

1. How important is it to you to stay in contact with other DNR alumni?
 - Important
 - Neither important nor unimportant
 - Unimportant
2. Are you interested in participating in a DNR Alumni Association?
 - Yes
 - Perhaps
 - No

[Individuals who respond 'No' will be asked 'why not?' while individuals who respond 'Yes' or 'Perhaps' will be directed to item #4 below.]

3. Why not?
[Comment box]
4. What features would you like to see in a DNR Alumni Association? Please check all that apply.
 - Opportunity to share information with other alumni

- Opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings in your local community
 - Formal face-to-face meetings with speakers in your local community
 - News from the DNR
 - Online presence (e.g., website, social media)
 - Association officers
 - Other (please describe)
5. If the DNR Alumni Association were to provide opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings that you were interested in attending, how often would you like those activities to occur?
- Monthly
 - Four times per year (quarterly)
 - Twice per year (biannually)
 - Once per year (annually)
 - Not at all
 - Other (please describe)
6. If the DNR Alumni Association were to provide opportunities for formal face-to-face meetings with speakers that you were interested in attending, how often would you like those meetings to occur?
- Four times per year (quarterly)
 - Twice per year (biannually)
 - Once per year (annually)
 - Not at all
 - Other (please describe)
7. How often would you like to receive news and updates from the DNR Divisions?
- Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Six times per year (every other month)
 - Four times per year (quarterly)
 - Twice per year (biannually)
 - Once per year (annually)
 - Not at all
 - Other (please describe)
8. Would you be willing to serve as an officer for the DNR Alumni Association?
- Yes
 - Perhaps
 - No
9. Would you be willing to serve in another role for the DNR Alumni Association?
- Yes
 - Perhaps
 - No

Individuals who respond 'No' will be directed to item #11 below and individuals who respond 'Yes' or 'Perhaps' will be directed to #10 below.

10. In what capacity might you be willing to serve? Please check all that apply.
- Greet others at face-to-face social gatherings
 - Plan/Help plan face-to-face social gatherings
 - Greet others at face-to-face formal meetings
 - Plan/Help plan face-to-face formal meetings
 - Contribute to DNR Alumni Association webpage (e.g., provide personal updates)

- Serve as an Association officer
- Other (please describe)

Many DNR alumni have spent decades becoming specialists in their fields but when people leave the department, that knowledge and expertise is often lost. The DNR would like to create the right kind of challenging volunteer opportunities that could leverage some of this expertise by engaging alumni in projects where they can have an impact.

11. Are you interested in volunteering with the DNR?
- Yes
 - Perhaps
 - No

[Individuals who respond 'No' will be directed to item #12 below while individuals who respond 'Yes' or 'Perhaps' will be directed to item #13 below.]

12. Why not?
[Comment box]

[After #11 individuals will be directed to item #14 below (speaker's bureau).]

13. If the DNR were to set up an alumni volunteer program, which of the following *projects* would you be interested in? Please check all that apply.

- Campground host
- Connecting the DNR with community groups (e.g., "Friends" groups, conservation clubs, sportsmen's clubs)
- Fishing clinics
- Grant writing
- Habitat development
- Hunting or Fishing mentor
- Lake level monitoring
- Monitoring easements
- Non-game wildlife surveys
- Planting native plants or trees
- Precipitation observers
- Public outreach and education
- Removing invasive species
- Safety instructor (e.g., firearms, ATV, bow, hunter education, snowmobile)
- State Fair volunteer
- Trail management
- Transferring knowledge learned on the job to new employees
- Master Naturalist Volunteer (training by DNR and MN Extension)
- Volunteer naturalist assistant in state park
- Watercraft inspection program (at boat accesses)
- Working with students and school forests
- Other (please describe)

14. If the DNR were to set up an alumni volunteer program, which of the following *roles* would you be interested in? Please check all that apply.

- Project coordinator (e.g., coordinating and scheduling projects)
- Lead worker (doing hands-on work and supervising others)
- Worker (doing hands-on work)
- Advisor (e.g., sharing your knowledge with a Division or Committee)
- Advocate (e.g., public outreach, community supporter)

- Mentor (e.g., share knowledge with new DNR employees and staff, or others new to outdoor activities or subject matter)
- Other (please briefly describe)

Volunteers in the DNR Speaker's Bureau would give presentations on natural resource topics to community groups and schools. DNR staff are willing to create the presentations and provide visuals if alumni can deliver the speech.

15. How interested are you in participating in a DNR speaker's bureau in your local community?
- Interested
 - Neither interested nor uninterested
 - Not interested

16. How important is it to you that DNR volunteer opportunities include socialization?
- Important
 - Neither important nor unimportant
 - Unimportant

17. What is the minimum and maximum number of hours per week you would be willing to commit when volunteering with the DNR?

Minimum:

- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-12
- 13-16
- 17-20
- 21-24
- 25-28
- 29-32
- 33-36
- 37-40
- I am not interested in volunteering with the DNR.
- Other (please specify)

Maximum:

- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-12
- 13-16
- 17-20
- 21-24
- 25-28
- 29-32
- 33-36
- 37-40
- I am not interested in volunteering with the DNR.
- Other (please specify)

18. What is the minimum and maximum time commitment in weeks would you be willing to take on for a volunteer opportunity with the DNR?

Minimum number of weeks:

- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-12

- 13-16
- 17-20
- 21-24
- 25-28
- 29-32
- 33-36
- 37-40
- 41 or more
- I am not interested in volunteering with the DNR.
- Other (please specify)

Maximum number of weeks:

- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-12
- 13-16
- 17-20
- 21-24
- 25-28
- 29-32
- 33-36
- 37-40
- 41 or more
- I am not interested in volunteering with the DNR.
- Other (please specify)

19. Do you have a preference for division in which you would volunteer? Please check all that apply

- Ecological and Water Resources
- Enforcement
- Fish and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Lands and Minerals
- Operations Services (HR, OMB, MIS, Management Resources, Communications and Outreach)
- Parks and Trails

20. Is there anything else you'd like to share?
[Comment box]

Demographic Items

21. What was the last DNR Division in which you worked?

- Ecological and Water Resources
- Enforcement
- Fish and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Lands and Minerals
- Operations Services (HR, OMB, MIS, Management Resources, Communications and Outreach)
- Parks and Trails

22. How many years has it been since you retired or separated from the DNR?

- 0-5
- 6-10

- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26 or more

23. In which Minnesota County do you currently reside?

- I am not a Minnesota resident
- Aitkin County
- Anoka County
- Becker County
- Beltrami County
- Benton County
- Big Stone County
- Blue Earth County
- Brown County
- Carlton County
- Carver County
- Cass County
- Chippewa County
- Chisago County
- Clay County
- Clearwater County
- Cook County
- Cottonwood County
- Crow Wing County
- Dakota County
- Dodge County
- Douglas County
- Faribault County
- Fillmore County
- Freeborn County
- Goodhue County
- Grant County
- Hennepin County
- Houston County
- Hubbard County
- Isanti County
- Itasca County
- Jackson County
- Kanabec County
- Kandiyohi County
- Kittson County
- Koochiching County
- Lac qui Parle County
- Lake County
- Lake of the Woods County
- Le Sueur County
- Lincoln County
- Lyon County
- McLeod County
- Mahnommen County
- Marshall County
- Martin County
- Meeker County

- Mille Lacs County
- Morrison County
- Mower County
- Murray County
- Nicollet County
- Nobles County
- Norman County
- Olmsted County
- Otter Tail County
- Pennington County
- Pine County
- Pipestone County
- Polk County
- Pope County
- Ramsey County
- Red Lake County
- Redwood County
- Renville County
- Rice County
- Rock County
- Roseau County
- St. Louis County
- Scott County
- Sherburne County
- Sibley County
- Stearns County
- Steele County
- Stevens County
- Swift County
- Todd County
- Traverse County
- Wabasha County
- Wadena County
- Waseca County
- Washington County
- Watonwan County
- Wilkin County
- Winona County
- Wright County
- Yellow Medicine County

24. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

Thank you for completing the survey!

APPENDIX I: ALUMNI ONLINE SURVEY COMMENTS

All quotes are verbatim from the Alumni online survey. While survey comments have been de-identified and alphabetized, no other editing has taken place.

2b. If 'No,' why not? (Only respondents who indicated they would be unwilling to work with alumni volunteers.)

- don't think I would have much to offer
- Enforcement does a pretty job of keeping it retired employees up to date.
- I already maintain contact with the people that are important to me.
- I have a couple of lunch groups of retired folks that meet and that's enough.
- I stay in contact with former associates as I feel the need to.
- not interested enough. I already stay in contact with the people I want to.
- Not that interested.
- The purpose and benefits have not been defined. Life is busy and do not need to just fill time.
- Too big a group.
- Too old and cannot operate the computer. Would have to have my wife do it and she is too busy to do that.
- WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY. THERE WERE TWO BEFORE AND THEY BOTH WENT CAPUT.
- Worried my taxes would have to support it in any way

4. What features would you like to see in a DNR Alumni Association? 'Other' responses

- DNR speakers who give updates on their divisions
- face-to-face meeting at statewide event
- History of personnel, special programs, Divisions and Bureaus
- none of the above
- participate on work groups, task forces
- passing away of fellow employees
- Since I no longer live in MN, it would be difficult to meet with other alumni, however I do think that having this opportunity for those who live nearby would be important.

5. If the DNR Alumni Association were to provide opportunities for face-to-face social gatherings that you were interested in attending, how often would you like those activities to occur? 'Other' responses

- I live in Montana so it would be difficult to attend
- I live out of state and am not able to meet
- Initially I would say monthly, but it depends on the nature of the gatherings--how easy it is to socialize, how many people do I know, etc.
- live out of state
- spring, summer, fall?

6. If the DNR Alumni Association were to provide opportunities for formal face-to-face meetings with speakers that you were interested in attending, how often would you like those meetings to occur? 'Other' responses'

- 2-4
- Cannot say I would be able to be present
- Depends on subject
- Integrated with general public
- maybe this could be the winter gathering (see above)

- Monthly
- Public meetings are always available
- See #4
- twice per year depending upon where they are, don't live in the metro area.

7. How often would you like to receive news and updates from the DNR Divisions?

'Other' responses

- already receive them on line.
- I get my forestry news letter now.
- Information is available via the media . . .

10. In what capacity might you be willing to serve? 'Other' responses

- ...?????
- Author historical notes and perhaps publish book or on web page
- Bring Pot Luck Dish To Pass
- I am versatile.
- Live in Montana
- maybe help other ways--would have to see how it works out
- unknown

12. Why are you not interested in volunteering with the DNR?

- Already volunteering for DNR at maximum I can handle
- As I have said, I no longer live in MN. If and when I come back for a vacation, it would be fun and interesting to get together with other alumni and chat.
- Because I need a bit of income. My retirement income is not quite enough and volunteering is unpaid.
- Currently do thru Bird house building for wildlife
- Do not live in the area.
- First because we don't live in Minnesota. Second, I wouldn't want to meet some of the people I used to work for (not with).
- HAVE OTHER THINGS GOING AND HAVE BEEN AWAY TO LONG.
- Health concerns
- Health would limit my participation in volunteering - and age has crept up on me!
- I am already volunteering for a homeless shelter and our church for at least 30 hours per week right now.
- I am not interested in anything that would require travel. I also have plenty of non-profit conservation organizations that I am involved in.
- I do so now through other forestry groups
- I don't drive in the Cities, and have health constraints.
- I have more important things to do with my remaining time on this earth
- I have more interest for providing comment on DNR policy and issues
- I have other commitments and opportunities to volunteer time and talent at the local level. But its always nice to hear whats going on in the DNR ti keep informed.
- I have too many other things going right now
- I live in Montana so I am in MN only once in a while
- I live out of state
- I would love to, but live too far away in another state. I live in Florida.
- I'll do something for pay if I become bored enough to volunteer
- If I can pick what I volunteer for.
- Loved my career and friends, but I've moved on and don't want to do natural resource work
- Not enough expertise to be valuable to anyone.
- Not yet retired; other volunteer obligations at this time
- Preferred to volunteer in non DNR opportunities

- Spent enough time on the job.
- there is so little institutional memory passed on to new employees; this comes at great financial and public relations cost to DNR and its customers.
- Too busy.
- very busy
- Very busy!
- Volunteering may mean a young person in search of a career employment opportunity will be left unemployed.

13. If the DNR were to set up an alumni volunteer program, which of the following projects would you be interested in? ‘Other’ responses

- Adult hunting mentor
- already do loon count, participate in a friends group
- archeology digs for dept
- clerical assistance
- Collecting native prairie seed
- Currently volunteering with Wolf Ridge ELC in fisheries assessment; help with Fisheries assessment work
- Greeter, receptionist, registering for meetings
- growing trees from seed
- I all ready am a Safety instructor.
- I already do Lake level monitoring
- If I lived there I would like to volunteer
- Listed plant species monitoring
- not sure what habitat development would involve as a volunteer, but i sounds interesting
- Research project or GIS Mapping or Land Acquisition for WMA's
- seed collecting
- Stuffing envelops
- This doesn't apply to me since I am 500 miles away.
- try me?
- Watershed Protection, Resource Management
- Wood working for wildlife
- would depend on available time

14. If the DNR were to set up an alumni volunteer program, which of the following roles would you be interested in? ‘Other’ responses

- Clerical duties
- Interested in restoring newly acquired lands to native habitat
- Not sure right now. I am more than busy enough.
- timing always factor
- Would love to mentor if I lived there

17. What is the minimum and maximum number of hours per week you would be willing to commit when volunteering with the DNR? ‘Other’ responses

Minimum Hours	Maximum Hours
• 0	• 0
• 0	• 0
• 4	• 0
• 8	• 10
• 0-1	• 16
• 2-4 per month	• 16 per week on an occasional basis
• 8 per week on an occasional basis	• Again, not sure how many because of other

Minimum Hours	Maximum Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busy enough now including natural resource work • Depends on project • Depends on the project • I already volunteer as much as I want • I would be more interested in helping for specific short term periods, rather than regular hours per week. • I would only be interested in doing volunteer work on local projects such as the lake level monitoring and loon survey work that I currently do. I would also consider volunteering to help with deer distance sampling locally. • It depends on time available and subject matter • limited due to health • Montly not weekly 1-4 hr • Not actually sure how many hours. I already do a lot with veterans groups but am willing to volunteer here • not sure at this time • not weekly, monthly - maybe • Rather than committing to number of hours per week I would rather work on a project until completion and adjust hours to fit my schedule. • t 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteer obligations • Depends on project • Depends on the project • I might work 50 hours one week and none the next and 20 the following, etc. • I would be more interested in helping for specific short term periods, rather than regular hours per week • It depends on time available and subject matter • Monthly not weekly 1-4 hr. • not sure at this time • not weekly • Some weeks zero time, other weeks maybe 8 hours. • t

18. What is the minimum and maximum time commitment in weeks would you be willing to take on for a volunteer opportunity with the DNR? ‘Other’ responses

Minimum Weeks	Maximum Weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 • 0 • 1 • 0-1 • 1 week/year • depends lenght by project and type • Depends on the project • It depends on time available and subject matter • not sure at this time • One day per week on occasion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 • 0 • 4 • depends lenght by project and type • Depends on the project • depends on the type of activitiy. i.e. precipitation observing could be indefinate • It depends on time available and subject matter • max. 1 week/year • not sure at this time • Two or three days per week until project completion.

20. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

- A potential limiting factor for me is that I live 3 hours from the Twin Cities in Wisconsin. I am, however, less than an hour from SE MN. Please keep that in mind.
- Also, retired for 12 years so the many changes at DNR leaves me feeling that I no longer have anything to contribute.
- Am currently teaching FAS, building bird houses with wildlife, working with local school forests and helping with programs at Itasca State Park.
- Am interested in working with lake associations, COLAs, and other local citizen-driven initiatives and helping to make the connection with DNR on collaborative efforts.

- Believe I've been away from the DNR too long to be a good representative. Times have changed and I've definitely have gotten older!! We do have a quarterly luncheon with Regional retirees, and an annual luncheon with statewide Fisheries retirees.
- Currently volunteering with North Shore State Parks doing flint knapping demonstrations, about one demo per month during the summer.
- Enjoyed my time at the DNR. Have been living in SE Tennessee (in the mountains) since I retired in 2006.
- I already volunteer regularly with Ecological and Water Resources staff. We monitor populations of federally listed species, dwarf trout lily and western prairie fringed orchids. I will continue as long as I am able to contribute.
- I am concerned how DNR employees would feel about former employees coming back to do work--it should not replace what they do or be a reason to remove positions or leave them unfilled--so how would you deal with that?
- I am currently the president of a local sportsman's club. I have worked with our local DNR office on WMA parcel acquisition in the past and with USFWS and Minnesota Valley Trust on WPA acquisitions and parcel restorations.
- I am excited about the possibility of a DNR alumni organization.
- I am very interested in these volunteer opportunities. It will take a bit to figure out how much time I can dedicate since I already do a lot with DAV, VFW, and American Legion. There is still room for DNR and I can back off some of the veterans organization duties. Will just have to see.
- I believe this would be an excellent opportunity for some DNR retirees. Right now I am just too busy to help out. Things may change in the future and if so, I would be willing to help wherever needed.
- I do want to stay in touch.
- I have extremely limited time for volunteer work in spring and fall.
- I have worked for most of the DNR Divisions during my career. (clerical)
- I know that my previous division wouldn't be interested in anything I had to impart. Maybe some would but not the upper management. They know I'm right but they don't want to hear it.
- I live in Wisconsin, will be hard to make commitments.
- I might be persuaded to spend more time than stated above, for a specific purpose, such as seed collecting.
- I really want to stay in touch with my DNR family. I am proud to have been a part of the DNR group and I miss it.
- I spent over 33 years with the DNR but since being out I have little interest in the DNR. I have new interests, new friends, and a new job which I enjoy very much. I really have moved on in life. I enjoy reading about various projects and issues within the DNR but have no interest in being actively a part of anything they do anymore.
- I think a DNR Alumni Association is a great idea, especially re-connecting with former DNR employees.
- I would also be interested in helping Division of Enforcement with aerial surveys. I flew with both retired DNR pilots Dick Stoltman and Al Buchert while employed.
- I would be unable to be a part of volunteer program as I'm living in Colorado.
- If I didn't live so far away I'd love to volunteer.
- If I lived in MN I would love to be involved
- no
- No
- no
- no
- Nope
- Nope
- Not at this time
- NOTHING AT THIS TIME.
- Passing on institutional memory is so important. Each DNR Division should have a historical booklet so important information can be shared and passed on.
- Please keep the "hoops" we'd have to jump through to a minimum.
- Some retirees from the New Ulm office gather quarterly for lunch. Works well. Might be few that would be interested in more than that.

- Thank you for giving DNR retirees an opportunity to be useful again . . . we need to be needed.
- Thanks for providing some opportunities. However I am kept plenty busy with my hobby farm and other community involvement.
- The DNR has done a terrible job in reaching out to the retirees. Once we walked out the door all our dedication to the agency was forgotten.
- Through the club I currently volunteer each year controlling noxious weeds on an AMA for the Division of Fisheries. What I would be interested in is seeding projects on newly acquired WMA lands.
- Traveling to the Metro would not interest me on a regular basis, if opportunities were available in the Northeast I would be more available to participate in those.
- Would be nice to learn/know more of what is currently happening in the DNR, or what is being planned. Would an alumni association be a conduit for that?
- Would like to know if any fellow DNR people live in this area.
- You will need to figure out a way to deal with the statewide issue of retiree locations. Many outstate retirees may not come to the metro and vice versa for meetings, volunteering, etc.

APPENDIX J: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please note: items in bold are available, for free, on the internet. All other items must be acquired through a library with access to the respective journal.

Volunteering and Volunteering Best Practices Resources

Allen, K. (2006). From motivation to action through volunteer-friendly organizations. *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, 24(1), 41–44.

[Abstract.] In excerpted remarks to delegates to the 2005 Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference of IAVE, The International Association for Volunteer Efforts, in Hong Kong, the author suggests three “myths,” three “truths,” and six leadership “sins” about volunteering. He encourages managers of volunteers to move toward “Volunteer-Friendly Organizations” by embracing four basic concepts.

Barnes, M. L., & Sharpe, E. K. (2009). Looking beyond traditional volunteer management: A case study of an alternative approach to volunteer engagement in parks and recreation. *Voluntas*, 20, 169-187. doi: 10.1007/s11266-009-9080-5

[Abstract.] In an era of declining volunteerism it is critical to examine alternative approaches to volunteer management that may better promote engagement and address common barriers to volunteering. Using a “best practices” Canadian case study approach, this research describes an alternative approach to volunteer engagement that emphasizes lifestyle integration, organizational informality and flexibility, and volunteer–agency collaboration. We suggest that traditional volunteer management structures may actually be hindering engagement and call instead for a more vocation-based, networked, and collaborative approach which affords greater autonomy to the volunteer and sees power being shared between agencies and volunteers.

Bidee, J. J., Vantilborgh, T. T., Pepermans, R. R., Huybrechts, G. G., Willems, J. J., Jegers, M. M., & Hofmans, J. J. (2013). Autonomous motivation stimulates volunteers' work effort: A self-determination theory approach to volunteerism. *Voluntas*, 24, 32-47. doi:10.1007/s11266-012-9269-x

[Abstract.] Although today’s nonprofit organizations make a strong appeal to volunteers, they often have difficulties with attracting and retaining these free labor forces. In this sense, studying the motivation of volunteers and its effects proves useful. In the present article, we investigate the relationship between volunteers’ motivation and their self-reported work effort, while relying on the Self-Determination Theory. The results indicate a positive link between volunteers’ autonomous motivation and work effort. Moreover, this relationship holds for each person in our sample, irrespective of the organization in which she/he is volunteering. Implications for future research, as well as the practical impact of these findings, are discussed.

Boezeman, E. J., Ellemers, N. (2008). Volunteer recruitment: The role of organizational support and anticipated respect in non-volunteers’ attraction to charitable volunteer organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 1013-1026. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.93.5.1013

[Abstract.] In 3 experiments the authors examined how specific characteristics of charitable volunteer organizations contribute to the recruitment of new volunteers. In line with predictions, Study 1 revealed that providing non-volunteers with information about

organizational support induced anticipated feelings of respect, which subsequently enhanced their attraction to the volunteer organization. However, information about the current success of the volunteer organization did not affect anticipated pride (as among those who seek paid employment) and in fact caused potential volunteers to perceive the organization as being in less need for additional volunteers. Study 2 further showed that information about support from the volunteer organization is a more relevant source of anticipated respect and organizational attraction than support from co-volunteers. Study 3 finally showed that information about task and emotional support for volunteers contributes to anticipated respect and organizational attractiveness and that this increases the actual willingness of non-volunteers to participate in the volunteer organization. Interventions aimed at attracting volunteers and avenues for further research are discussed.

Brudney, J. L. (1999). The effective use of volunteers: Best practices for the public sector. *Law & Contemporary Problems*, 62(4), 219-255.

No abstract included.

Brudney, J., & Nezhina, T. (2005). What is old is new again: Achieving effectiveness with volunteer programs in Kazakhstan. *Voluntas*, 16(3), 293-308.

[Abstract.] This study based on Kazakhstan nonprofit organizations (NPOs) is the first to address the important issue of the relationship between volunteer management and volunteer program effectiveness in an international setting. Our inquiry is informed by findings of US scholars that show that the adoption of a recommended set of volunteer management practices is related to the level of effectiveness achieved with volunteer involvement in NPOs. The paper advances a path model to explain volunteer program effectiveness, with volunteer management practices the crucial intermediate variable. Based on data collected in a survey of Almaty (Kazakhstan) NPOs in 2004, the empirical analysis yields considerable support for a path model that focuses on both the adoption of these practices and the attainment of program effectiveness. Given the heterogeneity of NPOs, not every organization can be expected to benefit from the adoption of the recommended practices. Nevertheless, results suggest that they offer one workable means for successfully integrating volunteers.

Brudney, J. L., & Meijs, L. M. (2009). It ain't natural: Toward a new (natural) resource conceptualization for volunteer management. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(4), 564-581.

[Abstract.] This article presents a new conceptualization of volunteerism as a natural resource. The authors propose that volunteer energy can be understood as a human-made, renewable resource that can be grown and recycled, and whose continuation and volume of flow can be influenced by human beings positively as well as negatively. Based on this conceptualization, we describe the major features of volunteer energy and suggest that a new regenerative approach is necessary for the field to fully embrace it. We develop the new approach and contrast it with the traditional instrumental approach to volunteer management.

Byron, I., & Curtis, A. (2002). Maintaining volunteer commitment to local watershed initiatives. *Environmental Management*, 30, 59-67.

[Abstract.] ABSTRACT / Australia's Landcare program is advanced as a successful international example of local watershed groups and governments working together to improve natural resource management. One of the aspects considered critical in the success of watershed groups is engaging widespread participation. This paper draws on two regional surveys that explored burnout, or loss of engagement, among Landcare participants in the state of Victoria using the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Survey findings indicated that a large

proportion of respondents were experiencing high burnout in terms of low personal accomplishment and suggested that there was potential for burnout to increase. The authors suggest that the expectations of watershed groups must be based around a realistic assessment of the capacity for volunteer groups to deliver improved environmental and social outcomes.

Citizens Information Board. (2008, July). *Managing volunteers: A good practice guide*. Dublin, Ireland. Retrieved on August 29, 2013 from:
<http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/providers/downloads/ManagingVolunteers08.pdf>

[No abstract provided.]

Cormier, C. B. (1990). 10 tips for managing volunteers. *Nursing*, 20(2), 32X.

This consultant, a former hospital volunteer, offers some practical advice for making the most of volunteer staff.

Cuskelly, G., Taylor, T., Hoye, R., & Darcy, S. (2006). Volunteer management practices and volunteer retention: A human resource management approach. *Sport Management Review*, 9, 141-163. doi: 10.1016/S1441-3523(06)70023-7

[Abstract.] This study used a human resource management (HRM) approach to examine the efficacy of volunteer management practices in predicting perceived problems in volunteer retention. Participants were a sample of 375 Australian Rugby Union clubs from across the country. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the properties of a hypothesized reflective measurement model with seven volunteer management constructs (planning, recruitment, screening, orientation, training and support, performance management, and recognition). The efficacy of volunteer management practices was tested using regression analysis. The study found significant relationships between perceived retention problems and several of the volunteer management constructs. Clubs that reported more extensive use of planning practices and training and support practices were likely to report significantly fewer perceived problems in the overall retention of volunteers. Results indicated significant relationships between management practices and retention problems, with variances noted by the category of volunteer position, including management committee or board members, coaches, team managers and volunteers in other formal positions. Implications for volunteer management and retention are discussed from a HRM perspective.

Cuthill, M. (2000). An interpretive approach to developing volunteer-based coastal monitoring programmes. *Local Environment*, 5, 127-137.

[Abstract.] The concept of sustainable development has highlighted the need to involve those who use a natural resource in helping to manage and maintain it. This has prompted the development of monitoring programmes involving volunteers who collect scientific data on the state of the natural environment. This paper argues that interpretation theory and practice provide a sound basis for the design and implementation of volunteer-based coastal monitoring programmes. Integration of multiple interrelated objectives in programmes relies on sound 'audience' research, including planned evaluation procedures. Three case-studies are presented which serve to identify and highlight the benefits of broadening the primary scientific focus of monitoring programmes to include greater consideration of participant motivations, skills and knowledge in the design and delivery of programmes. Discussion in this paper focuses on coastal monitoring programmes but the stated benefits might also be expected when applying this approach to other natural resource monitoring programmes.

Duncan, M. S. (2003). *Volunteer lobbyists: Utilizing nonprofits' advocacy assets*. Austin, TX: Center for Philanthropy and Community Service. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www.serviceleader.org/instructors/studentpaper10>

[No abstract provided.]

Ellis, J. (2005). *Best practices in volunteer management: An action planning guide for small and rural nonprofit organizations*. Ottawa, ON: Volunteer Canada. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www.volunteeryukon.ca/IMG/pdf/BestPracticesVolunteerManagement.pdf>

[No abstract provided.]

Ellis, S. J., & Cravens, J. (2000). *The virtual volunteering guidebook*. Palo Alto, CA: ImpactOnline. Retrieved from <http://www.serviceleader.org/sites/default/files/file/vvguide.pdf>

[No abstract provided.]

Farmer, S., & Fedor, D. (1999). Volunteer participation and withdrawal: A psychological contract perspective on the role of expectations and organizational support. *Non Profit Management and Leadership*, 9(4), 349-367.

[Abstract.] Volunteer behavior is often difficult to manage or control since control systems of the sort that direct behavior in most for-profit organizations are usually not available. This study introduces a tool—the psychological contract—that can give voluntary-agency administrators a powerful way to help them understand and manage volunteers' contributions to their organizations. The study finds that elements of this approach, especially the level of support the volunteer believes he or she is receiving from the organization, are especially important tools that can both increase participation in various events and reduce withdrawal or turnover intentions.

Gebbie, E. N., Morse, S. S., Hanson, H., McCollum, M. C., Reddy, V., Gebbie, K. M., Smailes, E., & Balter, S. (2007). Training for and maintaining public health surge capacity: A program for disease outbreak investigation by student volunteers. *Public Health Reports*, 122, 127-133.

[No abstract provided.]

Gooch, M. (2005). *Voices of the volunteers: An exploration of the experiences of catchment volunteers in coastal Queensland, Australia*. *Local Environment*, 10, 5-19.

[Abstract.] This paper discusses findings of a study of catchment care volunteers drawn from the east coast of Queensland, Australia. Catchment volunteering includes individuals in not-for profit stewardship groups with a catchment focus. Catchment volunteering was experienced by participants as maintaining a balance of perspectives; developing/maintaining an identity; networking; learning; empowering; and sustainable. An illustrative model (the Outcome Space), representing a set of scales, shows the relationship between conceptions. Results indicate that catchment volunteering offers many benefits to individuals and local communities. Although there were frustrations at times, many volunteers expressed deep levels of satisfaction about their volunteering experiences. Results suggest that satisfied volunteers are those that manage to balance volunteering with other aspects of their lives; identify strongly with some aspect of volunteering; enjoy learning from their volunteer experiences; and were willing and able to share and apply their new knowledge in a variety of

ways. They also made friends with other volunteers; felt valued by others in the group, and believed that what they do is important. For these respondents, volunteering contributes richly to the fabric of their lives, providing meaning and satisfaction in routine activities, enhancing local communities and building sustainability.

Graham, C. (2003). *Formal volunteering by the elderly: Trends, benefits, and implications for managers*. Austin, TX: Center for Philanthropy and Community Service. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www.serviceleader.org/instructors/studentpaper6>

[No abstract provided.]

Hager, M. A., & Brudney, J. L. (2004). *Volunteer management practices and retention of volunteers*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411005VolunteerManagement.pdf>

[From the Executive Summary.] This report is the second in a series of briefs reporting on findings from a 2003 survey of volunteer management capacity among charities and congregations. The findings in this report are based on conversations with a systematic sample of charities about their practices, challenges, and aspirations for their volunteer programs. We focus on charities' adoption of nine recommended practices for volunteer management. Further, we explore the relationship between adoption of these practices, other organizational characteristics, and the retention of volunteers. The practices under study are supervision and communication with volunteers, liability coverage for volunteers, screening and matching volunteers to jobs, regular collection of information on volunteer involvement, written policies and job descriptions for volunteers, recognition activities, annual measurement of volunteer impact, training and professional development for volunteers, and training for paid staff in working with volunteers.

Hazzard, E. L., Moreno, E., Beall, D. L., & Zidenberg-Cherr, S. (2011). Best practices models for implementing, sustaining, and using instructional school gardens in California. *Journal of Nutrition Education & Behavior*, 43, 409-413.

[Abstract.] To ascertain best practices for schools implementing or sustaining instructional school gardens by interviewing key members in 10 schools with exemplary instructional school gardens programs in California. Practices of schools with exemplary instructional school gardens programs were analyzed by constant comparative analysis using qualitative data analysis software. Seven of the 10 schools had people from at least 3 of the following 4 groups: administrators, teachers, parent and community volunteers and garden coordinators. Nine of 10 schools had a part- or full-time garden coordinator. Results demonstrated that a committee committed to instructional school gardens is the most important step towards success.

Howlett, S. (2002). *Volunteering in libraries, museums and archives. Cultural Trends*, 12(46), 39-66.

[Abstract.] Volunteering is very much in vogue as far as government is concerned; volunteering strengthens society through participation, whilst helping to extend and deliver services and enhance the lives of volunteers in numerous ways. This chapter of *Cultural Trends* offers an overview of volunteering before looking at the involvement of volunteers in museums, libraries and archives. Many volunteer-involving organisations are examining carefully the way in which they recruit and support volunteers, as the environment in which volunteers are recruited becomes more competitive. At the same time, organisations can sometimes lose sight of why they involve volunteers. This chapter reports on a survey of museums and libraries conducted for Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and

Libraries, identifying the added value of involving volunteers and the institutional structures in place to support them. A survey was conducted in which 1,500 questionnaires were sent out – with 500 each going to libraries, museums and archives. It finds that volunteers are a key element in extending the services that museums and libraries can offer. It also finds that practices in involving volunteers vary widely. Volunteers are more likely to be found in libraries than museums or archives and women are more likely to be involved than men. Very few of the organisations returning the questionnaires have somebody whose job is to manage or coordinate volunteers; perhaps unsurprisingly most are to be found in museums. Where organisations do not involve volunteers, issues of time management were most often cited although a minority argued against involving volunteers per se. The chapter concludes that although many organisations value highly the involvement of volunteers, there is more that can be done to support volunteering in libraries, museums and archives.

Hustinx, L., & Handy, F. (2009). Where do I belong? Volunteer attachment in a complex organization. *Administration In Social Work*, 33(2), 202-220. doi:10.1080/03643100902769129

[Abstract.] To understand volunteer retention and recruitment in complex organizations, this paper focuses on volunteers' attachment to a multipurpose and multi-branch organization. Using the Red Cross in Flanders (Belgium), a service organization with multiple locations offering a variety of programs, we investigate whether volunteers' attachment is primarily directed toward the organization as a whole, or whether volunteers are more prone to develop localized attachment to the program or branch in which they participate. Our findings suggest that managers recruiting volunteers to large complex organizations should be cautious in using the overarching organizational mission to attract volunteers. Rather, attention should be put on specific programs and activities using volunteers. It is only through longer-term service that volunteers appreciate the organization's mission and principles and find their allegiance to the organization as a whole.

Jirovec, R. L., & Hyduk, C. A. (1998). Type of volunteer experience and health among older adult volunteers. *Journal Of Gerontological Social Work*, 30(3-4), 29-42.

[Abstract.] The purpose of this investigation was to ascertain if the type of volunteer experience was related to the physical health or psychological well-being of older adult volunteers. A central pattern emerged from the data: the type of, as well as the number of, hours donated to a volunteer activity were associated with psychological well-being. Implications for social workers involved with volunteer programs and services are discussed in terms of volunteer recruitment and retention, and the need to develop more significant volunteer roles, especially for low-income older adults.

McClintock, N. (2004). *Understanding Canadian volunteers: Using the national survey of giving, volunteering, and participating to build your volunteer program*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. Retrieved from: <http://www.imaginecanada.ca/files/www/en/giving/reports/understandingvolunteers.pdf>

[From the Introduction.] This manual is primarily intended for those who are new to the field of volunteer resource management. It has two purposes:

- To highlight some of the significant findings of the 2000 NSGVP (National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating) and show how these can be useful to those whose work involves recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers.
- To provide a brief overview of the steps involved in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

This manual includes examples of how some organizations are successfully applying NSGVP information to their volunteer programs, exercises to help users relate information from the

2000 NSGVP to their specific situation, and suggested Key Resources for readers who want additional information.

McGinige, K. L., Milano, P. M., Rich, P. B., & Viera, A. J. (2008). Volunteerism among surgeons: an exploration of attitudes and barriers. *American Journal of Surgery, August*, 300-304. doi:10.1016/j.amjsurg.2007.10.015.

[Abstract.] **BACKGROUND:** In a recent survey, the American College of Surgeons found great interest in surgically related volunteerism, but it was unclear if the interest reflected participation. The purpose of the current study was to explore attitudes and barriers to volunteering. **METHODS:** To assess surgeons' experiences and beliefs about volunteerism, we mailed a questionnaire to Nathan A. Womack Society members. We analyzed respondents' demographics and attitudes, and associations between physician characteristics and volunteer status. **RESULTS:** The response rate was 42.5%. More than half (56%) of respondents volunteered surgical skills at least once, and 48% actively volunteer a mean of 9 days per year. Full-time practicing status was associated with being an active volunteer (57.8% vs 17.2% not full-time, $P < .001$). Modifiable barriers were identified. **CONCLUSIONS:** Many different kinds of surgeons volunteer their surgical skills, reflecting the interest found by the College. Knowledge of barriers can be used to develop strategies to help interested surgeons pursue volunteer interests.

Measham, T. G., & Barnett, G. B. (2008). Environmental volunteering: Motivations, modes and outcomes. *Australian Geographer*, 39, 537-552. doi: 10.1080/00049180802419237

[Abstract.] Volunteers play a key role in natural resource management: their commitment, time and labour constitute a major contribution towards managing environments in Australia and throughout the world. From the point of view of environmental managers, much interest has focused on defining tasks suitable to volunteers. However, we argue that an improved understanding of what motivates volunteers is required to sustain volunteer commitments to environmental management in the long term. This is particularly important given that multiple government programs rely heavily on volunteers in Australia, a phenomenon also noted in the UK, Canada, and the USA. Whilst there is considerable research on volunteering in other sectors (e.g. health), there has been relatively little attention paid to understanding environmental volunteering. Drawing on the literature from other sectors and environmental volunteering where available, we present a set of six broad motivations underpinning environmental volunteers and five different modes through which environmental volunteering is manifested. We developed and refined the sets of motivations and modes through a pilot study involving interviews with volunteers and their coordinators from environmental groups in Sydney and Bass Coast. The pilot study data emphasise the importance of promoting community education as a major focus of environmental volunteer groups and demonstrate concerns over the fine line between supporting and abusing volunteers, given their role in delivering environmental outcomes.

National Council on Aging. (2010). *The boomer solution: Skilled talent to meet nonprofit needs*. Retrieved on September 16, 2013 from: http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/100524_RespectAbility-Final-Report_3.pdf

[From Executive Summary.] This report outlines how best to leverage the talents of skilled older adults and what is gained in return:

- Organizational practices that proved to maximize the impact of adult 55+ volunteers
- Higher-level volunteer roles and their added value
- NCOA's return-on-investment (ROI) approach to assessing unpaid work and

- characterizing organizations that realize success
- Overviews of the 22 participating MSS sites' individual models
- Fundamental principles from past NCOA research
- Proven successful techniques, ranging from team structures, to participatory evaluation, to social networked knowledge sharing

These findings are the first in a stream of materials intended to advance older adult civic engagement and help ensure that communities throughout the country benefit from the abundant resource that adults 55+ represent.

Ockenden, N. (2008, September). *Environmental volunteering in the north east of England*. London: Institute for Volunteering Research. Retrieved on August 7, 2013 from: <http://www.ivr.org.uk/component/ivr/environmental-volunteering-in-the-north-east-of-england>

[No abstract provided.]

Penner, L. A. (2004). Volunteerism and social problems: Making things better or worse? *Journal of Social Issues*, 60, 645-666.

[Abstract.] Volunteerism is described and defined and then a model of the decision to volunteer is presented. Data from an archival analysis of volunteering after the September 11, 2001 attacks and an on-line survey of volunteers are presented in support of the model. Finally, the implications of increasing volunteerism for the solution of social problems are considered.

Perry, S., & Aft, M. (2005). Make room for boomers. *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 18. Retrieved from EBSCOHost on 7/23/13.

[No abstract provided.]

Peterson, D. K. (2004). Recruitment strategies for encouraging participation in corporate volunteer programs. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49, 371-386.

[Abstract.] Perhaps due to the numerous community and company benefits associated with corporate volunteer programs, an increasing number of national and international firms are adopting such programs. A major issue in organizing corporate volunteer programs concerns the strategies that are most effective for recruiting employee participation. The results of this study suggest that the most effective strategies for initiating participation in volunteer programs may not be the same as the strategies that are most effective in terms of maximizing the number of volunteer hours contributed by employees. More importantly, the results suggest that the most effective recruitment strategies depend on the age of the employee. The results were discussed in terms of matching the recruitment strategies with the characteristics of the potential volunteers and the nature of the volunteer project.

Ryan, R. L., Kaplan, R., & Grese, R. E. (2001). Predicting volunteer commitment in environmental stewardship programmes. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 31, 561-568.

[Abstract.] The natural environment benefits greatly from the work of volunteers in environmental stewardship programmes. However, little is known about volunteers' motivations for continued participation in these programmes. This study looked at the relationship between volunteer commitment and motivation, as well as the effect that volunteering has on participants' behaviour and attitudes toward the environment. The study

participants were 148 long-term volunteers from three environmental stewardship programmes in Michigan. The results of the study revealed that helping the environment and learning were important initial motivations. Other motivations, including social factors and project organization, were found to be significant predictors of volunteer commitment. Volunteers also indicated many significant changes in their environmental outlook and actions during their involvement in stewardship activities. The results of the study suggest that stewardship programmes that consider volunteers' changing motivations at different stages of their participation can effectively nurture personal growth while fostering a powerful constituency for the environment among their volunteers.

Shye, S. (2010). The motivation to volunteer: A systemic quality of life theory. *Social Indicators Research*, 98, 183-200. doi: 10.1007/s11205-009-9545-3

[Abstract.] A new approach to volunteer motivation research is developed. Instead of asking what motivates the volunteer (accepting any conceptual category), we ask to what extent volunteering rewards the individual with each benefit taken from a complete set of possible benefits. As a "complete set of benefits" we use the 16 human functioning modes formulated within the systemic quality of life model (SQOL). Data collected from a large representative sample substantiate the conceptual basis of the approach proposed. Empirical results (by Faceted SSA, a multidimensional scaling technique) support the volunteer-motivation structural hypothesis and highlight the more salient volunteering motivations. Social groups (including volunteers vs. non-volunteers) are compared with respect to their volunteering motivation assessments. The proposed approach sheds new light on theoretical issues, such as the roles of altruism versus egoism in volunteering, and suggests new ways for studying the questions of volunteer recruitment and retention.

Skoglund, A. G. (2006). Do not forget about your volunteers: A qualitative analysis of factors influencing volunteer turnover. *Health & Social Work*, 31, 217-220.

[From the Introduction.] The number of individuals who share their time and talents as volunteers is on the rise. In 1993 it was reported that formal volunteer work was performed by 89.2 million Americans, worth an estimated \$182.3 billion (Grube & Piliavin, 2000). In particular, most hospitals rely on volunteers to complete a multitude of tasks that both the clinical and the administrative staff cannot fit into their schedules. Those individuals who manage and oversee volunteer programs face a twofold challenge: orienting, training, and monitoring volunteers as well as retaining these volunteers (Forsyth, 1999). There appears to be a cause and effect relationship between these two facets of volunteer program development. An effective orientation and training of a program's volunteers will engage participants in a way that results in volunteers' willingness to participate in the agency's volunteer program for a significant period of time. However, if there is a breakdown in one of these functions, it is not long before an organization's volunteer program starts to flounder.

Smith, D. B. (2004). Volunteering in retirement: Perceptions of midlife workers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33, 55-73. doi: 10.1177/0899764003260591

[Abstract.] Using a life course perspective as well as continuity and role theories, this research investigates midlife workers' perceptions of volunteering as part of an ideal retirement lifestyle. The Study of Midlife gathered data from 258 working respondents ages 50 to 64 on demographic information, retirement plans, and voluntarism. The data are consistent with continuity and role theories. Those who consider the volunteer role highly salient are much more likely to see volunteering as part of an ideal retirement lifestyle as are those who frequently attend religious services. Workers less than 5 years away from planned retirement are less likely to see voluntarism as part of an ideal retirement lifestyle, regardless of age,

indicating that location in one's own life course influences perceptions of volunteering in retirement. Implications for volunteer recruitment strategies for nonprofit organizations are discussed.

Studer, S., & Schnurbein, G. (2013). Organizational factors affecting volunteers: A literature review on volunteer coordination. *Voluntas*, 24(2), 403-440. doi:10.1007/s11266-012-9268-y

[Abstract.] While volunteer literature presents diverse insights into the motives, personal dispositions, and sociodemographic characteristics of volunteers, researches comparatively seldom focus on the incentives and organizational context affecting volunteers. This review aims to shed light on the organizational factors affecting volunteers collectively and to discuss the coordination of volunteers. Systematic research of the literature revealed 386 publications that are relevant to volunteer coordination. Their abstracts were analyzed in a process of open and selective coding, which led to the identification of three main clusters. This literature review produced the following propositions: it is argued that the practices and instruments of volunteer management (Cluster 1), and, even more strongly, the organizational attitudes towards volunteers as well as the organizations' embedded values (Cluster 2), co-determined by social processes (integration and production of meaning), are crucial factors affecting volunteers. The review also deals with structural features that limit the action space of volunteers and volunteer coordination (Cluster 3). It concludes by discussing the limitations present in the current volunteer research and provides implications for future research endeavors. Thus, this piece of work presents a holistic view on volunteer coordination and theory building by carefully synthesizing information about the organizational context of volunteering from different disciplines and research traditions, resulting in different intervention logics, and by integrating these data in an analytical framework.

Taniguchi, H. (2012). The determinants of formal and informal volunteering: Evidence from the American time use survey. *Voluntas*, 23, 920-939. doi: 10.1007/s11266-011-9236-y

[Abstract.] Using data from the 2009 American Time Use Survey, this study examines to what extent time spent in major life domains such as education, paid work, domestic work, and religion is associated with individuals' decisions to volunteer formally and informally. Consistent with earlier studies of volunteering behavior, this study finds that time spent on market and domestic works is significantly and negatively associated with both formal and informal volunteering, though in slightly different ways. Meanwhile, time spent on educational and religious activities is significantly and positively associated with only formal volunteering but not informal volunteering. Moreover, the study finds that the two forms of volunteering are complements rather than substitutes. Implications of these and other-related findings for integrating the literatures on decisions about formal and informal volunteering are discussed.

UPS Foundation. (1998). *Managing volunteers: A report from United Parcel Service.* Available at <http://www.community.ups.com>

[No abstract provided.]

UPS Foundation. (2002). *A guide to investing in volunteer resources management: Improve your philanthropic portfolio.* Retrieved on August 9, 2013 from: <http://centreonphilanthropy.com/kc/view/351>

[No abstract provided.]

Urban Institute. (2004). *Volunteer management capacity in America's charities and congregations: A briefing report*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved on August 9, 2013 from: <http://www.urban.org/publications/410963.html>

[No abstract provided.]

Vecina, M. L., Chacón, F., Marzana, D., & Marta, E. (2013). Volunteer engagement and organizational commitment in nonprofit organizations: What makes volunteers remain within organizations and feel happy? *Journal Of Community Psychology*, 41(3), 291-302. doi:10.1002/jcop.21530

[Abstract.] This study was conducted in order to determine whether commitment to organizations and work engagement are distinguishable constructs among volunteers from 18 nonprofit organizations. The strategy used addresses their distinctiveness, demonstrating that they relate differently to outcomes of interest. It is expected that organizational commitment will predict intention to remain and work engagement will predict psychological well-being. Results indicate that the pattern of relationships is clearly different: the relationship between engagement and intention to remain is entirely mediated by commitment, and the relationship between commitment and psychological well-being is fully mediated by engagement. Regression analyses confirm that commitment, and not engagement, predicts intention to remain, and that engagement, and not commitment, predicts psychological well-being in the sample of 232 active volunteers. These results are useful to differentiate between both concepts, and to develop specific nonprofit organization management strategies.

Waid, S. (2009). *Highly skilled with time on their hands: Best practices for using the early retired in volunteering*. Menomonie, WI: University of Wisconsin-Stout. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2009/2009waid.pdf>

[Abstract.] Seventy-seven million people will be retiring in the next twenty years. Close attention needs to be paid to the quality of life and the volunteer opportunities available to this highly skilled volunteer workforce. This project addresses the need to improve the volunteer programs throughout the nation to better utilize these potential volunteers. The project goals are to provide healthcare organizations which utilize volunteers with methods to engage this emerging volunteer workforce. Additionally, the types of organizational structure, leadership and administrative support needed by healthcare organizations will be identified. Lastly, the top ten priorities for organizational change will be identified as keys to the successful recruitment and retention of this new volunteer. Best practices are identified through the use of a survey of healthcare Directors of Volunteer Services. A literature review focused on the baby boomer generation further supports the best practice data. The findings will be disseminated by posting them to the national listserv of the Association of Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals (AHVRP). It will also be submitted to the AHVRP web site for publication. Additionally, the information will be presented at the Wisconsin Association of Volunteer Services Directors at the state conference in 2009. This project will benefit the Healthcare Volunteer Management profession by providing additional knowledge and tools necessary to engage the upcoming volunteer workforce.

Warburton, J., & Dyer, M. (2004). *Older volunteers participating in a university research registry: Helping others my age*. *Educational Gerontology*, 30, 367-381. doi: 10.1080/03601270490433567

[Abstract.] This paper discusses a study that examined why older people volunteer for a research registry based at the University of Queensland, Australia. A mailed questionnaire was utilized to explore a list of reported motives developed from an in-depth qualitative phase. An exploratory factor analysis of the findings was conducted, which showed that there were four

main motivations for respondents to volunteer in this context. These motives were to make a contribution to society and to research; to be involved in research; to meet others; and to be informed about the university environment. These findings show that older research volunteers have a strong interest in university research outcomes and demonstrate a commitment to aging productively. There are lessons here for researchers and policy-makers, who need to develop additional ways to involve older people in the research that affects them.

Wymer, W. (2011). The implications of sex differences on volunteer preferences. *Voluntas*, 22, 831-851. doi: 10.1007/s11266-010-9174-0

[Abstract.] This study explores the relationship between sex differences and preferences for volunteer roles, organizations, and supervision. A series of hypotheses were developed from prior research on sex differences from the fields of biology, neuroscience, and psychology to determine whether such preferences can be predicted. An online survey panel of over 700 individuals comprised the sample. Many of the hypotheses were supported. Implications of the findings on future research and on volunteer recruitment and retention are discussed.

Yeung, A. B. (2004). The octagon model of volunteer motivation: Results of a phenomenological analysis. *Voluntas*, 15, 21-46.

[Abstract.] Individual motivation is the core of the actualization and continuity in voluntary work from both the standpoint of theoretical research and practical volunteerism. Volunteer motivation also provides an excellent research area for investigating the wider sociological theme of late-modern participation. This study, based on the data from 18 interviews, explores volunteer motivation utilizing a phenomenological approach to individual experience and the meaning of volunteerism. Using a phenomenological approach illuminates the nature of volunteer motivation more holistically. The research includes 767 motivational elements in 47 themes and develops an innovative four-dimensional octagon model of volunteer motivation—the theoretical and practical applications of which are discussed.

Return on Investment Resources

Femida, H., & Srinivasan, N. (2004). Valuing volunteers: An economic evaluation of the net benefits of hospital volunteers. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33, 28-54.

[Abstract.] The use of volunteers in hospitals has been an age-old practice. This nonmarket community involvement is a distinctive aspect of North American life. Hospitals may be attracted to increase the use of volunteers, both to provide increased quality of care and to contain costs. Hospitals rely on the use of professional administrators to use the donated time of volunteers efficiently. This study examines the benefits and costs of volunteer programs and derives an estimate of the net value of volunteer programs that accrue to the hospitals and volunteers. In particular, the costs and benefits to hospitals are detailed. Using 31 hospitals in and around Toronto and surveying hospital volunteer administrators, hospital clinical staff members, and volunteers themselves, a striking pay-off for hospitals was found: an average of \$6.84 in value from volunteers for every dollar spent—a return on investment of 684%. Civic and community participation is indeed valuable.

**Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service. (2003). *The cost of a volunteer: What it takes to provide a quality volunteer experience*. Retrieved from the Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement website:
<http://www.pacefunders.org/publications/pubs/Cost%20Volunteer%20FINAL.pdf>**

[No abstract provided.]

Handy, F., & Mook, L. (2011). Volunteering and volunteers: Benefit-cost analyses. *Research on Social Work Practice, 21*, 412-420.

[Abstract.] This article examines the phenomenon of volunteering from a benefit-cost perspective. Both the individual making a decision to volunteer and the organization making a decision to use volunteer labor face benefits and costs of their actions, yet these costs and benefits almost always remain unarticulated, perhaps because the common perception of the do-good volunteer who contributes his or her labor for free discourages rational benefit-cost calculus. In this article, we examine, conceptually, the benefits and costs (both direct and indirect) accruing to the volunteer and the organization that uses volunteer labor. It is important for organizations making resource allocation both to understand and to delineate these benefits and costs. Using a case study of an organization and recent methods in social accounting, we present a practical model for doing so.

Kentner, N., Lange, C., Reifschneider, E., & Takacs, A. (unknown). *The cost and benefits of volunteers*. Retrieved from the Michigan State University Extension Service website on October 9, 2013:
http://www.msue.msu.edu/objects/content_revision/download.cfm/revision_id.275614/workspace_id.275600/Cost%20and%20Benefits%20of%20Volunteers.pdf/

[From the Introduction.] A cost-benefit analysis can provide a practical understanding of program costs and a quantifiable value of program outcomes. This kind of information is essential in proving organizational accountability and garnering support for programs utilizing volunteer support. (North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service) Volunteers are considered the base element of our programs. (Riley, Schott 2001) Their delivery of the programming and skills for project related presentations to our audience, be it newborns to senior citizens within our communities is a valued and important component. Volunteering is at the heart of citizen action and central to their ability to serve their communities. (Independent Sector, 2001). Several comprehensive studies have demonstrated that the everyday generosity of American volunteers is paramount to the over 1.23 million charities, social

National Council on Aging. (2010). *The boomer solution: Skilled talent to meet nonprofit needs*. Retrieved on September 16, 2013 from:
http://www.ncoa.org/assets/files/pdf/100524_RespectAbility-Final-Report_3.pdf

[See above.]

Vinton, L. (2012). Professional administration of volunteer programs now more than ever: A case example. *Administration in Social Work, 36*, 133-148.

[Abstract.] The need for volunteers is greater than ever, and yet steady volunteerism has declined. This article describes a volunteer program implemented at two community-based aging services agencies that employed professional volunteer administrators. Specific objectives were evaluated after a year, along with cost effectiveness. In one year the administrators recruited and trained 871 new volunteers who performed more than 30,000 hours of primarily in-home services to an average of 226 unduplicated clients per month. Services were valued conservatively at almost \$300,000 compared to the \$100,000 outlay; thus, costs were \$115 per volunteer. The vast majority of volunteers and staff agreed that the volunteer program was effectively managed and resulted in positive organizational change.

Implications for professional volunteer coordination as a response to issues facing agencies are discussed.

Warburton, J., Terry, D., Rosenman, L. S., & Shapiro, M. (2001). Differences between older volunteers and nonvolunteers: Attitudinal, Normative, and control beliefs. *Research on Aging*, 23, 586-605.

[Abstract.] It has been suggested that older people are a rich potential source of volunteers, as prior literature has highlighted the benefits and rewards of volunteering in later life. This article examines differences between volunteers and nonvolunteers in a random sample of older people resident in Brisbane, Australia. Using the theory of planned behavior as a framework, the article focuses on the beliefs that distinguish those who volunteer from those who do not. Findings from the study allowed for an assessment of both the costs and benefits associated with volunteering; beliefs about the support of others, including the broader community, to volunteer; and beliefs about the barriers that might prevent volunteering. The implications of these findings to a country with an aging population are discussed.

APPENDIX K: IDENTIFIED VOLUNTEER BEST PRACTICES

Brudney, J. L. (1999). The effective use of volunteers: Best practices for the public sector. *Law & Contemporary Problems*, 62(4), 219-255.

- Gain support for volunteer program from high-level officials
- Have written policies to govern the volunteer program
- Create job descriptions for all volunteer positions
- Practice active outreach
- Provide necessary support activities (i.e., orientation, basic training, ongoing or in-service training for volunteers)
- Empower volunteers to manage other volunteers
- Recognize the contributions of volunteers
- Evaluation of volunteers, including record keeping of volunteer contributions and participation
- Training and development for paid staff who work with volunteers
- Allocate resources to volunteer program
- Newsletter for volunteers (to inform volunteers about changes, training, recognition, etc.)
- Liability insurance coverage for volunteers

Citizens Information Board. (2008, July). *Managing volunteers: A good practice guide*. Dublin, Ireland. Retrieved on August 29, 2013 from:

http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/providers/downloads/Managing_Volunteers_o8.pdf

- Planning
- Recruitment
- Induction and training
- Supervision and evaluation
- Review
- Recognition

Ellis, J. (2005). *Best practices in volunteer management: An action planning guide for small and rural nonprofit organizations*. Ottawa, ON: Volunteer Canada. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: http://www.volunteeryukon.ca/IMG/pdf/Best_Practices_Volunteer_Management.pdf

- Valuing the role of volunteers
- Defining rules and expectations
- Developing volunteer management skills
- Reducing client and group risk
- Creating clear assignments
- Reaching beyond the circle (use creative recruitment strategies)
- Orienting and training volunteers
- Providing supervision
- Making volunteers feel they belong
- Recognizing volunteer contributions

Ellis, S. J., & Cravens, J. (2000). *The virtual volunteering guidebook*. Palo Alto, CA: ImpactOnline.

- Planning and resource allocation
- Volunteer work design

- Recruitment/public relations
- Interviewing, screening, and matching
- Orientation
- Training
- Volunteer / employee relations
- Coordination
- Supervision
- Evaluation
- Recognition
- Record keeping and reporting
- Volunteer input

National Council on Aging. (2010). *The boomer solution: Skilled talent to meet nonprofit needs.*

Retrieved from: <http://www.ncoa.org/press-room/community-action-volunteering/boomer-solutins-skilled.html>

- Policies and procedures that emphasize intake, orientation, skill matching
- Policies and procedures that emphasize training
- Policies and procedures that emphasize ongoing communication
- Policies and procedures that emphasize volunteer-paid staff relations
- Policies and procedures that emphasize volunteer retention
- Policies and procedures that emphasize performance feedback
- Policies and procedures that emphasize recognition
- Policies and procedures that emphasize exit interviews
- Establish balanced between volunteer's autonomy and accountability with paid staff's oversight
- Balance volunteer's autonomy with staff concerns for retaining authority and job responsibilities

UPS Foundation. (2002). *A guide to investing in volunteer resources management: Improve your philanthropic portfolio.* Retrieved on August 9, 2013 from:

<http://centreonphilanthropy.com/kc/view/351>

- Written statement of philosophy related to volunteer involvement
- Orientation for new paid staff about why and how volunteers are involved in the organization's work
- Designated manager/leader for overseeing management of volunteers agency-wide
- Periodic needs assessment to determine how volunteers should be involved to address the mission
- Written position descriptions for volunteer roles
- Written policies and procedures for volunteer involvement
- Periodic risk management assessment related to volunteer roles
- Liability insurance coverage for volunteers
- Specific strategies for ongoing volunteer recruitment
- Standardized screening and matching procedures for determining appropriate placement of volunteers
- Consistent general orientation for new volunteers
- Consistent training for new volunteers regarding specific duties and responsibilities
- Designated supervisors for all volunteer roles
- Periodic assessments of volunteer performance
- Periodic assessments of staff support for volunteers
- Consistent activities for recognizing volunteer contributions
- Consistent activities for recognizing staff support for volunteers

- Regular collection of information (numerical and anecdotal) regarding volunteer involvement
- Information related to volunteer involvement is shared with board members and other stakeholders at least twice annually
- Volunteer resources manager and fund development manager work closely together
- Volunteer resources manager is included in top-level planning
- Volunteer involvement is linked to organizational or program outcomes

Urban Institute. (2004). *Volunteer management capacity in America's charities and congregations: A briefing report*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved on August 9, 2013 from: <http://www.urban.org/publications/410963.html>

- Regular supervision and communication with volunteers
- Liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers
- Regular collection of information on volunteer numbers and hours
- Screening procedures to identify suitable volunteers
- Written policies and job descriptions for volunteer involvement
- Recognition activities for volunteers
- Training and professional development for volunteers
- Training for paid staff in working with volunteers

Waid, S. (2009). *Highly skilled with time on their hands: Best practices for using the early retired in volunteering*. Menomonie, WI: University of Wisconsin-Stout. Retrieved on August 5, 2013 from: <http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/lib/thesis/2009/2009waid.pdf>

- Provide opportunities that inspire. Ask and answer the question - why is this important?
- High expectations of the volunteer's involvement in the organization.
- Clearly defined roles, goals, and outcomes
- Multiple volunteer options, both short and long term
- Opportunity for change and advancement
- Small, meaningful incentives: reduced cost of prescription drugs, mileage, education credits, etc.
- Involvement in program/project planning and development
- Opportunities unique to their skills, knowledge, and interest
- Flexible scheduling
- External recognition (community, social groups, media, etc.)