

Working with volunteers can be an art or a science. Some of the park managers and district foresters who have experience in working with PPFF Chapter volunteers have shared their wisdom with us.

- "They help us hold events that we could not sponsor with Commonwealth funds."
- They can help us obtain grant funding and provide additional volunteer labor."
- "It helps to 'connect' people to their parks and forests and gives them an active role in its stewardship."
- Tilt is the highest form of true stewardship."
- The support of volunteers and friends groups is a key element to our success."

Why do you think having friends groups or volunteers is important?



What have you found to be effective methods for working with volunteers and friends groups?



"Stay involved. The manager needs to establish relationships with the friends and work with them."

"Involving them [the volunteers] in a yearly planning meetings helps garner buy-in as they are involved in setting dates, getting projects on the work list, and being heard."

"Making specific assignments for duties, following up with instructions and thank yous."

"Being open to their ideas and suggestions and guiding them when they need ideas."



"Offer different types of volunteer work—trails, events. Not just fundraising and attending meetings."

"Very difficult in this area which has little diversity, but we try to provide 'family oriented' programming to engage youth."



"Use social media."

How can we diversify the volunteer work force?

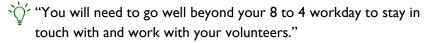


How do you thank volunteers?



- "Volunteer appreciation dinner each year."
- "I personally thank volunteers at each work day—and let them know how much I appreciate [their presence]."
- "Written thank you cards, recognition in news and social media, and any kind of giveaways."

"It's not easy, but you never know who might walk into your park and have some extremely valuable skills that they are willing to donate."



- "Be patient, they are volunteers. Be prepared for times with low numbers of participants."
- "Try and get your leadership positions in place right away and make sure they know what is expected. Start with an activity that will engage the majority of your group."

What advice would you give to someone new to working with volunteers or friends groups?



What should you avoid when working with friends groups or volunteers?



- Ourworking them or relying too heavily on volunteers and burning them out."
- (Variable) "Do not allow one, or a small fraction, to overrun the group."
- ("Letting them follow through with a crazy idea that doesn't fit in the park's mission."
- ("My way or the highway" type attitudes within the group or during an activity."
- "Doing their work for them."