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GOING GREEN

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Subscriptions and correspondence can be sent to:  
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contact@cjvrm.org

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## EDITORIAL

There is little doubt that volunteers around the world make a vital contribution to improving our environment. But just how much do they do? As a lead-up to the UN Conference on Climate Change that took place in 2009, the United Nations Volunteers “Volunteering for Our Planet” campaign encouraged volunteers from around the world to register the hours they spent on environmental activities. Volunteers doing activities ranging from conservation education to installing energy efficient equipment to online research rallied to the call, and 1.5 million volunteer hours were logged in six months. And that’s just the people who registered!

Organizations and individuals across Canada are part of this worldwide movement. In this issue, Gary Machan explores the vital contributions of the voluntary sector to the Green Movement. Christine Martin uses the example of Evergreen to demonstrate how an organization has helped empower Canadians to have a positive impact on their environment while also contributing to community building.

Lorraine Nyokong shares the story of how Ducks Unlimited volunteers are helping to preserve the habitat and animals of Canada’s wetlands, while Vicki Fannon talks about the challenges of making sure that a music festival hosting 20,000 people per day can still be green.

Alana Carmichael, Erin Desautels and Stacey Rosa share some of the diverse environmental volunteer opportunities offered by the City of Surrey. Chantal Gagnon interviews two volunteers involved with the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence and gets their honest feedback on the strengths and challenges of the volunteer program.

Isabelle Lewis shares information on the benefits of virtual volunteering and suggestions on ways that your organization can utilize virtual volunteers. To wrap up, Katie Fullerton offers ten fun and easy tips to green your office.

As for the Journal, we have been doing our part to help reduce our impact on the environment by distributing an electronic version of the journal since 2003. We hope the articles in this issue inspire you to “go green” in your organization, at home and everywhere else.

Lesley Abraham  
Editorial Team

# **TRICKLE UPISM: THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND THE GREEN MOVEMENT**

by Gary Machan

These are uncertain times - ones marked by no lack of angst, especially when it comes to environmental matters.

Just recently, we witnessed the latest of a long series of non events; namely, the Copenhagen climate conference debacle, in which it appeared that the only thing our leaders could agree to, was that they could not agree on much of anything. At least, not anything that would result in substantive change during their political term in office.

Was the conference a victim of its own inflated expectations? Perhaps. Or is it more a case of people being confused about the respective roles of government, business and the voluntary sector? Furthermore, neglecting to appreciate the tremendous significance of the latter, especially as it pertains to what is increasingly referred to as the Green Movement.

In this article, I submit that what will determine the course of our civilization, indeed the very survival of our planet as we know it, is none other than the voluntary sector. Contrary to conventional thinking, it is the voluntary sector and not the public sector that is ultimately responsible for maintaining the long view, for holding the Big Picture and for preserving all that a civilization holds in high regard.

It only stands to follow that as the voluntary sector goes, so too will the well being of our communities. That is, if it suffers from neglect, it is only a matter of time before the very fabric of our communities will begin to fray and we will lose our way, in terms of what really matters in our lives. What could possibly matter more than ensuring that our children and our children's children have access to clear water to drink, clean air to breathe and safe food to eat? What could possibly be more basic than that?

While our governments have done very little to support the voluntary sector, especially as it relates to the environment, we can be encouraged by the significant impact the voluntary sector is having within the Green Movement. In fact, one need not go out on a limb to suggest that the Green Movement is through and through one led and manned by legions of volunteers.

In this regard, I feel very privileged as a community worker for the Barrie Community Health Centre (BCHC), to have served on various green community initiatives comprised almost entirely of volunteers. What follows are

a couple of abbreviated stories of how volunteers have and are making a difference at the community level. I will focus primarily on how volunteers shape policy change, since I think too often their contribution is trivialized in various feel good, cosmetic projects.

## **Eco Health Initiative**

The Eco Health Initiative originated as a group of members at the BCHC who expressed concerns about the impact of various environmental contaminants on health. We started as a learning group, before moving into the action mode. This entailed our members volunteering their time and resources to learn more about such issues as the effects of smog on lung health. The manner in which they learned varied, such as by reading and attending conferences. Eventually, this group of volunteers decided to organize a Taking Our Breath Away forum that featured several prominent speakers, including Dr. Ted Boadway who was the Executive Director of the Ontario Medical Association. This was a first step for our members to educate both our partners and people in the community at large about what was for them a burning passion.

Arising from these humble origins, the Eco Health Initiative has gone on to effect several important municipal policy changes including everything from enacting Smog Alert Response Policies to various anti-idling policies.

## **Eco Journalism Contest and Policy Change**

One of the offshoots of the Eco Health Initiative has been the organization of an Eco Journalism contest that is issued through the Simcoe County District School Board in conjunction with other community partners. Since engaging youth in a school setting is often a major challenge, I decided to create a community initiative that was integrated with the new curriculum and aligned with school board strategic priorities.

We are now entering our fourth year and the contest has grown from the first year when we simply showcased the articles in local newspapers. Today, there is a special "Eco Pulse" supplement that is circulated to all intermediate aged students in the school board, as well as now having a photo and soon to be multimedia component. Youth were recruited to serve on a youth editorial board for the production of Eco Pulse and were actively involved in the promotion of special events, such as an open house featuring the photography at the MacLaren Art Gallery.

The real unanticipated highlight of this project is that ideas generated by the youth are now flowing to municipal councils for consideration, such as the banning of future drive-thrus and the adopting of green purchasing policies in schools.

## Food Partners Alliance – Simcoe County

Once again, the genesis of the Food Partners Alliance began with volunteers and in particular, the coordinator of volunteers with Barrie Out of the Cold. She approached the BCHC for support in the crafting of a Hunger Report out of which evolved the Food Partners Alliance.

It should be noted that the primary intent of the Food Partners Alliance is to create a more sustainable food system, with a special focus on removing systemic barriers to local foods. Furthermore, the environmental benefits of purchasing local foods are well documented and result in a reduction in transportation costs and the burning of fossil fuels.

As was the case in each of the preceding examples, it is people putting in significant amounts of volunteer time that is making the difference. The people in this case are primarily farmers. In fact, the support from volunteers of organizations such as the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture is very significant. When one is engaged in effecting policy change, their support adds much needed profile and credibility. Although the Food Partners Alliance has been in existence for less than a year, it has already been able to enact a Food Proclamation on World Food Day as well as food procurement policies. These policies are aimed at encouraging municipalities and major institutions to Buy Local in order to support farmers.

There are other examples that could be cited of everyday people volunteering their time to make a significant difference in the Green Movement. While most of this change has occurred at the community and local levels of government, it is only a matter of time before it “trickles up”. Eventually leaders at the higher levels of office will have no choice but to respond to public pressure as this army of volunteers continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

For all people who might think that this is the Green Age, in the final analysis it will become so only on the backs of the voluntary sector. All major social change begins in the cracks of society, after which it is eventually taken up by the voluntary sector. As for the public sector, whose aversion to risk is the stuff of legends, it is merely the tail of the dog that the voluntary sector is just beginning to shake. Vigorously.

*Gary Machan is a community worker with the Barrie Community Health Centre. He has worked quite extensively with volunteers over the course of the past twenty years at a variety of levels ranging from non-profit boards to community groups in spearheading a variety of community initiatives aimed at addressing environmental issues.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY BUILDING

by Christine Martin

“Environmental volunteering”- images of people planting trees and picking up trash on Earth Day or perhaps maintaining a hiking trail or counting birds. In this age of environmental awareness, improving our environment is top of mind. We want a green planet.

At Evergreen, a non-profit organization that makes cities more livable, we believe that the opportunities are much greater than that. Not only can we directly improve our natural environments, we can also enhance communities in many ways. Volunteering is one of the most meaningful and direct ways Evergreen empowers Canadians to take a hands-on approach to their urban environments.

As in the early days in 1991, volunteers continue to be the backbone of Evergreen's community greening initiatives. For example, Community Greening Volunteers at Mahon Park in North Vancouver come together month after month, year after year for a few hours to remove invasive species, plant native plants and monitor the urban site. Some come out once, some every time. As a result, the park and its community has been transformed. A strong community of volunteers has been built where people take pride in their work and come back frequently to see improvements, inviting friends and family to be a part of it too. Research has shown that “active involvement in tree planting programs [can] increase a community's sense of social identity [and] self-esteem...and it teaches residents that they can work together to choose and control the condition of their environment”<sup>1</sup>. This story is repeated at dozens of sites across the country.

The community-building happens on several levels. First, within the team of volunteers and staff, diverse groups of people with shared values come together to work towards a common goal. Volunteers include new Canadians, families, youth, religious groups and all ages. There is an increased sense of ownership and collective responsibility, while relationships are deepened. In a recent survey of our volunteers, over half report feeling more a part of their community and more connected to nature through their experience.

On another level, volunteers provide a bridge between our work and the broader community, helping to engage others. “As residents of a neighbourhood come together to ... participate in naturalizing a site, they get to know one another, have a focal point for community organizing and interaction, and share a sense of accomplishment and pride in what they are doing.”<sup>2</sup> The volunteers are transformed from individuals to active community members. Almost 75% of our volunteers from 2009 have already told others about volunteering and most others would consider it – ever expanding the community of volunteers involved in our programs and in their local neighbourhoods. Finally, the work of volunteers in community greening

contributes to the general public's sense of community and identity, improving health, reducing crime and improving perceptions of safety.

At Evergreen Brick Works, our new site in central Toronto where we are creating an environmental community centre, we have seen how critical volunteers are to building that community. In 2009, we launched our Eco-Craft Leaders team. This group of 10 to 12 volunteers worked with staff to create recycled/nature craft ideas at a Saturday Farmers' Market each week with kids and families. Through this endeavour they have come to know each other and have taken responsibility for their work. They have attracted new volunteers and engaged hundreds of visitors on the site. The welcome and activities they have provided (along with over 100 other volunteers at the site) play a key part in creating a great community atmosphere and a sense of place at the Brick Works site. People leave feeling more connected to nature and to others and have a greater sense of ownership for our urban natural environment.

To make this kind of impactful volunteering effective, we have found a few key elements helpful. For one, we have been building a range of ways for people to get involved that suit them. We make it easy to get involved through planting trees for a couple of hours or other roles that require a greater commitment. Flexibility is built into the roles, making it easier to be involved. We make sure to follow up with volunteers, to reflect upon the impact of their work and to always keep the door open for future volunteering. Solid communication with volunteers, even during the off-season, helps each individual feel that they are part of a big movement. Having a solid staff-volunteer team approach across the organization and intentionally soliciting feedback from volunteers (and acting on it) has shown them how important they are to the team. For those who want to give more, leadership opportunities have been developed.

Volunteers are critical to getting the work done in almost any environmental organization. At Evergreen, volunteering is not only transforming the natural environment – it is also transforming and building community in our cities.

*Footnotes:*

1. Mark Hudson, *Ground Work: Investigating the Need for Nature in the City, Toronto, Evergreen, 2000* (<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/resources/ground-work/gw2000-2.html>)

2. *ibid*

*Christine Martin is the Manager, Volunteer Development with Evergreen (www.evergreen.ca), in Toronto.*

## **DUCKS VOLUNTEERS ARE ACTIVE BY NATURE**

by Loraine Nyokong

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is truly a story about people. It is about people who – with dedication, determination and innovation – put their passion for the environment into action. These people give freely of themselves, live by what they learn and continue to be the driving force behind DUC's more than 70 years of wetland conservation success. These people are volunteers.

DUC is fortunate to have the support of approximately 7,400 volunteers across the country. They come from all walks of life but have one thing in common: a commitment to conservation. By sharing their time and talents to raise vital funds for DUC's wetland conservation efforts, volunteers help to make their communities healthier places for waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

It started during the 1930s drought when a group of intrepid sportsmen recognized that wetlands on the Canadian Prairies were steadily disappearing and the rich soil was turning to dust. These men saw how the drastic effects of drought made times tough for wetlands and waterfowl, so they decided to do something about it. They started raising funds and generating widespread interest in wetland conservation to sustain North America's waterfowl populations. From the hearts and minds of these original volunteers, DUC was born. Our volunteers still share the same passion, dedication and steadfast fortitude that our founders displayed.

Today, they have expanded their repertoire to include both event fundraising and major gift fundraising in an effort to help save Canada's wetlands. In event fundraising, volunteers organize a variety of dinners and auctions, sealed bid auctions (where high quality DUC merchandise is placed on easels in local businesses for public bidding) and other special events. In major gift fundraising, volunteers also play an important role in building relationships with conservation-minded businesses and individuals and in helping DUC obtain major donations.

Our research shows that people care about the environment and are ready to act. DUC gives conservation-minded people who share our concerns about waterfowl and wildlife and the depletion of natural areas an opportunity to take a stand and make a difference. DUC volunteers are active by nature. Many DUC volunteers enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, gardening, waterfowling and fishing. They invest in DUC because they know that they are working hard to conserve and restore the precious habitats that support the outdoor pursuits they love.

With the support of volunteers, DUC has conserved millions of acres of wetland habitat, taken its wetland and waterfowl research to new heights and provided meaningful wetland education to youth and adults alike. Tangible results like these keep our volunteers inspired and motivated.

We all live in the same world and when it comes to conservation, we are all in it together. For the past seven decades, volunteers have provided both roots and wings for our organization. Together, DUC and our dedicated team of volunteers are building a bridge from one generation to the next – and continuing the proud history of conserving wetlands that benefit waterfowl, wildlife and all Canadians.

Learn more at [www.ducks.ca/volunteer](http://www.ducks.ca/volunteer).

### **Who is a DUC volunteer?**

When it comes to conserving wetlands, DUC volunteers have vast and varied reasons, but all have a strong connection to the wetland conservation cause and believe they can make a difference.

DUC volunteers:

- are well educated
- are active in the outdoors
- want to leave a legacy for the next generations
- believe it is very important to preserve the environment for the future
- feel a sense of satisfaction in knowing they have made a difference
- enjoy being part of a group that shares their concerns about the environment and wildlife conservation

*Loraine Nyokong is Ducks Unlimited Canada's Director of Event and Retail Fundraising. Working from the organization's head office in Stonewall, Manitoba, Loraine leads DUC's team of 7,400 volunteers across the country who raise vital funds in support of DUC's wetland conservation work.*

## **EDMONTON FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL WORKS AT BEING GREEN**

by Vicki Fannon

It is not easy to walk softly and leave no footprints when you host 20,000 people per day for four or five days in a city park with no paved pathways or roads! But since the early 1990s, the Edmonton Folk Music Festival has worked hard to minimize our impact on Gallagher Park in downtown Edmonton and the Cloverdale community. Preservation of the park, in concert with the City of Edmonton and Cloverdale community, has always been a Festival commitment.

Our early efforts focused on minimizing impact through five strategies:

### 1. Bike lock-up service

This enables patrons to bicycle to the site rather than drive.

### 2. Temporary walkways

To minimize damage to the park, early approaches used wooden pallets. These were replaced by plastic walkways funded in part by the Edmonton Community Foundation.

### 3. Garbage collection

During the Festival, EnviroPower, our morning clean-up crew of youth volunteers, scours the park picking up garbage. The Site Environment crew monitors the park during the day and evenings.

### 4. Recycling

The Festival Site Environment team collects recyclable items to minimize garbage sent to the landfill. In 2000, the Festival partnered with Clean It Green It, a subsidiary of KC Environmental, to aid with the composting of organic waste generated during the Festival.

### 5. Restoring Gallagher Park

Returning the park to its original state includes removing facilities and equipment in a timely manner and restoring the grass.

In 1995, the Festival started a “plate program” to reduce waste generated by concessionaires and the Festival volunteer kitchen. With support of the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Festival bought 5,000 washable plates. Providing these plates to concessionaires facilitated implementing a “no styrofoam” policy on site. As well, volunteers were required to bring their own reusable cups or purchase them from the volunteer kitchen.

Although not an obvious "green" program, the Festival took steps to minimize impact on the Cloverdale Community by eliminating both overnight line-ups and patrons sitting on neighbours' lawns. These were replaced by a line-up lottery and later starts to line-ups in controlled "corrals". This program has been very successful with neighbours and patrons alike.

In 2007, in cooperation with Big Rock Breweries, the Festival started using Poly Lactic Acid (PLA) beer cups. PLA, a resin derived entirely from natural corn materials, is 100% renewable through annual corn harvests and fully compostable in municipal and industrial facilities. After a featured story on The National on CBC television, many organizations, including the Berkebeiner Ski Festival and Parks Canada, have inquired about these special cups.

Also in 2007, the Festival installed solar panels to power our merchandising tent, running lights and cash registers. This experiment was very successful. We hope to continue and enlarge the use of solar power during upcoming festivals.

By 2009, concessionaires at the festival were expected to use biodegradable containers for food items not appropriate for the plate program, including paper or PLA beverage containers. Volunteers were given the option of bringing their own reusable cutlery and many chose to bring their own cloth napkins as well. In 2010, the Festival will use biodegradable cutlery replacing plastics on site.

This past year, the Festival created a working committee of all of the groups that deal with environmental issues so that initiatives can be better coordinated.

The Edmonton Folk Music Festival is committed to reducing its footprint during the four-day event. We will continue to implement strategies that improve our environmental track record.

*Vicki Fannon has been the Manager of Volunteers with the Edmonton Folk Music Society since 1991. Prior to that she was the Volunteer /Special Events Coordinator for the Provincial Museum of Alberta for 5 years. She has participated in developing educational materials on volunteerism for Grant MacEwan college.*

## URBAN PARTNERSHIP

by Alanna Carmichael, Erin Desautels and Stacey Rosa

The City of Surrey's Parks Department is committed to providing environmentally focused volunteer opportunities to all residents. City of Surrey staff support our volunteers through guidance and training, the provision of supplies and materials and rewarding groups and individuals in a variety of ways. The City of Surrey's Parks Department is comprised of several volunteer services, some of which are highlighted below including: Lend-A-Hand, Friends of the Forest, Bin Keepers, Releaf and Surrey Youth Stewardship Squad. These inclusive volunteer services focus on the outdoors and allow volunteers to contribute to their community while increasing their knowledge and respect for the environment.

Maintaining partnerships with local schools is important to the City of Surrey and one such partnership is the **Lend-A-Hand** program. Lend-A-Hand is a great way for students to continue beautifying the environment throughout the year as students assist in maintaining a park adjacent to their school by picking up litter once a week for six months. We currently have 13 elementary schools and 14 high schools involved in the program enabling hundreds of students to foster environmental stewardship while taking a leadership role in their community. Participating classes are provided with an interactive workshop and are rewarded at the end of the program.

**Friends of the Forest** are individuals, families, neighbours, community groups and schools who are concerned about Surrey's natural area parks and want to ensure that they are protected, respected and enhanced. A *natural area* is parkland that has been left to grow as nature allows with minimal development. It contains native trees and vegetation and is used by wildlife as habitat. Examples include forests, marshes and meadows. Often natural areas are abused and as a result, can become degraded and overgrown with invasive and unwanted plants.

Friends of the Forest (Friends) do the important job of caring for natural areas that may be overlooked as important habitat for local plants and animals. Friends can choose small projects in various parks or they may adopt a specific park and take on larger, ongoing projects. Friends are involved in many stewardship activities in natural areas, including: cleaning up litter and yard waste, removing graffiti from trees, removing invasive plants and planting native trees and shrubs, distributing information to neighbours and looking out for vandalism. Natural areas have undergone amazing transformations thanks to these dedicated volunteers.

The **Bin Keeper** program, in operation since 1991, allows residents to maintain a garbage or recycling bin in a park of their choice. Bin Keeper volunteers are responsible for the removal of accumulating garbage or recycling and dispose of this through their household waste. Most Bin Keepers empty their bins once a week in the winter and twice a week in the summer. The program currently hosts 89 Bin Keepers who volunteer countless hours throughout Surrey's parks. This program allows residents to get involved with their community and to help keep their park clean, safe, healthy and beautiful. In an effort to catapult Surrey into an even higher sustainability-conscious city, a new Recycling Bin Keeper initiative has been implemented to limit the amount of recycling products making their way into landfills. The first Recycling Bin was set up in December of 2009. Although young, the Recycling Bin Keeper initiative is growing quickly.

The **Releaf** tree-planting program is a unique partnership between the City of Surrey and community volunteers. The three components of Releaf include habitat enhancement plantings, shade and boulevard tree plantings and finally, education. The Releaf program as a whole restores Surrey's natural areas, enhances neighbourhoods and local parks by providing shade, improves air quality and increases the natural beauty of the park. In-class programs for secondary school classes teach students the decision-making process arborists use to ensure that they are planting "the right tree in the right place". Since 1991, tens of thousands of trees have been planted in parks and along boulevards by thousands of Releaf volunteers including community groups, schools, local businesses and individuals. Their involvement and dedication strengthens a sense of stewardship in the community.

The **Surrey Youth Stewardship Squad** (SYSS) is a year-round volunteer club allowing youth to come together and care for Surrey's Parks, meet new friends, make a positive impact on their community and find out what it takes to be an environmental leader. These volunteers work alongside City of Surrey staff earning practical work experience in City parks by learning skills in habitat restoration techniques, principles of ecology, plant identification and respect for natural areas. Some of the activities SYSS are involved in include removing invasive plants and planting native species, removing litter and creating habitat for wildlife. New this year is the "SYSS Film Squad" combining a passion for the environment with video technology. Members are regularly involved with community special events that emphasize free, family fun in nature. SYSS also works with other volunteers and members of local environmental groups who actively advocate for Surrey's healthy environment.

City of Surrey volunteers have a unique opportunity to make positive changes in their community along with enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.

To learn more about our volunteer services please visit [www.parks.surrey.ca](http://www.parks.surrey.ca).

*Alanna Carmichael has an extensive event planning background within the non-profit sector and over four years of municipal government experience. She joined the Partners in Parks North team in the fall of 2009 and currently oversees the education and volunteer programs.*

*Erin Desautels' work with the Sierra Club of Canada's Education Team and then the City of Surrey as their Environmental Stewardship Coordinator gave her the chance to work with many volunteers. Erin is currently the Programs Coordinator of the Surrey Nature Centre.*

*Stacey Rosa has worked in environmental consulting and in the summer of 2009 she joined the City of Surrey's Environmental Programs staff, focussing on outreach and education.*

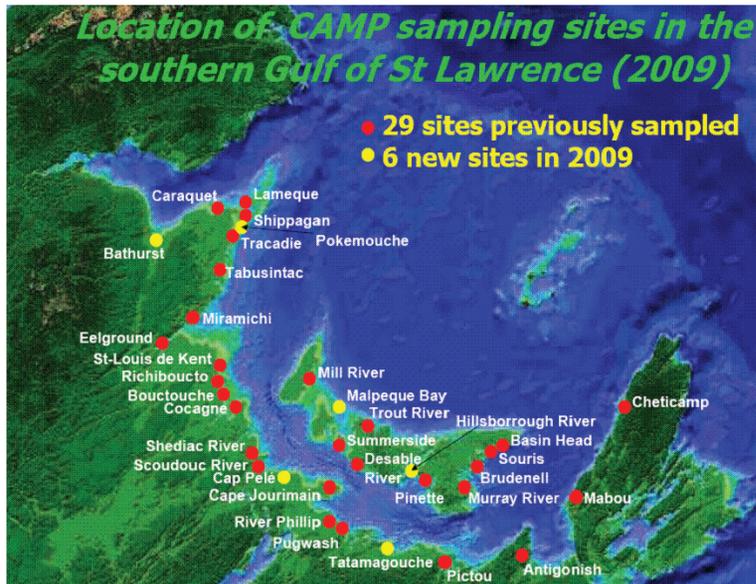
## **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COMMUNITY AQUATIC MONITORING PROGRAM**

by Chantal Gagnon

Attracting and motivating volunteers to participate in an environmental initiative is sometimes a challenging task. Yet, in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence one initiative is gaining in popularity among coastal communities – the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program (CAMP).

CAMP is an initiative of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and is carried out in partnership with the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability (Coalition-SGSL). The Coalition-SGSL's mission is to promote the long-term viability of the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence's ecosystem and communities.

The Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence territory stretches from the Gaspé Peninsula to Cape Breton, encompassing the northern shores of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and all of Prince Edward Island and the Magdalene Islands. The Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence is a very dynamic and ecologically important ecosystem. However, its coastal communities face many challenges including rural depopulation, loss of wetlands, fish declines, deforestation and climate change impacts such as coastal erosion and sea-level rise.



CAMP began in 2003 as a stewardship initiative to raise awareness of the ecology of estuaries and coastal areas in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, to collect baseline data on coastal species and to test whether healthy coastlines are characterized by a particular number and type of fish, crustaceans and submerged aquatic plants. CAMP grew from four pilot sites to up to 35 sites sampled within the three Maritime Provinces in 2009 with the participation of over 29 environmental non-government organizations (ENGO). The Coalition-SGSL's role in the program is to promote it, facilitate community and volunteer involvement through the employment of summer coordinators and, when possible, leverage other sources of funding to assist the continued implementation of the program. DFO's role is to provide scientific oversight and maintain the monitoring equipment, gather the collected data and interpret the final results over time.

The role of the manager of volunteers for each community group is to advertise the program, coordinate volunteer activities and provide feedback to the partners. The volunteer's role is to go out in the field once a month from May to September to the community's designated monitoring sites with the partners and other volunteers to sample, collect and record the data. The sampling activity includes transporting equipment from one site to the next, pulling a beach seine (net) in the water, identifying and counting species, collecting different water quality parameters and data recording out in the field. Best of all, all of the species are returned live back to the water.

CAMP has reached its seventh year and the results are being analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the data in indicating the health of the estuaries.

Simultaneously, the Coalition-SGSL is reviewing the operational process of the program to determine where improvements can be made. We interviewed two volunteers in Mabou, Nova Scotia to identify some strengths and weaknesses of the program.

*Margaret MacDonald manages the volunteers on behalf of the Mabou Harbour Coastal Management Planning Committee.*

Q: What is it about the approach used by the Coalition-SGSL and DFO that motivated you to join?

A: It is a great opportunity to increase our organization's capacity. The Coalition-SGSL does an excellent job acting as a liaison between the community group and DFO. Employing a summer CAMP coordinator facilitated this process and made it extremely easy to schedule and organize CAMP events, because the summer student was always available and fully capable.

Q: What would you recommend to professional managers of volunteers if they want to involve volunteers in an environmental initiative?

A: I think that when involving volunteers in an environmental initiative it is important to have a clear task at hand. This will serve several purposes. The volunteer will know what the task is: it will allow them to feel more comfortable because they know what is ahead of them and it serves to motivate them – they will feel that they are contributing to a good cause. I think that partaking in an event like CAMP or other field work is attractive because it enables the volunteer to get their hands dirty. Doing volunteer field work also requires people to take up different roles. Therefore it allows everyone to contribute in some form. It always helps to have a social event after a volunteer work day. This adds an additional element of fun to the event. It also builds camaraderie which will allow the organization to maintain a healthy volunteer base and recruit more individuals.

Q: What are the strengths and weaknesses of CAMP from a volunteer recruitment point of view?

A: The work is fairly simplistic. Volunteers get to experience first hand the biodiversity that is right in our backyard. Working with a variety of groups and individuals allows all parties involved to learn from others. I think that it is a great partnership between community environmental groups and DFO. It enables community groups to develop partnerships with government organizations while at the same time collecting valuable information. One weakness may be that the resources need to be improved. For example, species identification keys should

be more clearly marked and there should be regional training sessions each year for managers of volunteers to ensure they are following the necessary protocols.

*Jeff Lee is one of the long time volunteers in Mabou and president of the Mabou Harbour Coastal Management Planning Committee*

Q: Why did you get involved as a volunteer in the CAMP environmental initiative?

A: As an oyster grower, I have been interested in improving the quality of the harbour water. CAMP provided a good way of keeping track of the health of the ecosystem and involving the community. It provided lots of interest for lots of different folks to participate and coincided with the coastal planning committee's desire to start monitoring the health of the ecosystem. It is a very good thing to do and a very educational program.

Q: As a volunteer what are the positive aspects of the program that make you want to come back every year and ask new people to join?

A: Thinking you are making a difference and making the community a better place. Having a healthier ecosystem means having a healthier community. I like going out in the water in and around the harbour to the six different sites. It is fun and seeing what is out there will surprise you. There is always something interesting to observe. It helps to become informed and that is a good thing. The diversity of the ecosystem amazes you. Through CAMP you see a whole other world than what you see from looking at the harbour from the road or the land. Life is more interesting when you know what is going on out there.

Q: As a volunteer what are some aspects of the program that make you want to stop volunteering?

A: The problem we had at the beginning was with working with a fixed schedule with our partners at DFO in Antigonish. The days to go out were picked according to availability, which didn't necessarily coincide with sunny and warm days. In fact, we used to go often on cold and rainy days. That makes the experience much more difficult and less attractive. Now we have more flexibility, because we do it ourselves. We have gained the experience and have a coordinator to get us organized. DFO leaves the gear with us and we can go when the weather is good.

Q: What is the most attractive aspect of this volunteer program that keeps you coming back?

A: The learning aspect and being out there is the most attractive feature. It is also a social event. Having a coordinator makes a big difference. At times we

have had to turn folks away because only so many folks can do the activity at once. We now have a waiting list. There is a snowball effect once you get enough folks interested and curious. The flexibility gives us that potential to be known by more people in the community, be seen in action and what fun we have. If the volunteering becomes a chore no one wants to do it. The partnerships in providing knowledge and resources, the flexibility in our being able to do it ourselves, the added help of the coordinator and the excitement related to this activity really makes it an attractive initiative to be part of.

*Chantal Gagnon is the Executive Director for the Southern Gulf of St-Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability. Prior to this she was the Conservation Projects Coordinator for the cross-border conservation organization Two Countries, One Forest. She graduated with a Master's degree in Resource and Environmental Management from the School for Resources and Environmental Studies of Dalhousie University.*

## **VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING – CATCHING THE NEW WAVE OF VOLUNTEERS**

*The benefits for volunteers, your organization and the environment*

by Isabelle Lewis

We know that the volunteer base throughout Canada is dwindling. Baby Boomers are moving into retirement and young families are often juggling full time jobs, children and a plethora of other responsibilities. Although these trends are troubling, there are some other emerging trends that can assist us in reevaluating our volunteer programs in order to meet the demands of society today. Statistics Canada evaluated the screen-time habits of 57,000 Canadians who responded to the 2007 Community Health Survey. The results demonstrated that many Canadians are now watching less television and spending more time on the computer. Computer ownership climbed from 40 per cent of households in 1997 to 75 per cent in 2006, and Internet access soared to 68 per cent, from 17 per cent of households in the same time frame.<sup>1</sup>

If youth are moving towards using the computer in their leisure time, usually in the evenings, why not encourage them to use their time and their computer skills in a constructive way that helps their community? Many tasks such as database management, graphic design and website maintenance can be done online and high level, busy professionals can also be engaged to help organizations from the comfort of their own homes.

Developing virtual volunteering opportunities may mean “letting go” of some of the tasks that we often take ownership of, such as marketing or editing, and it may require thinking creatively about volunteer positions. Start by taking a look at the current opportunities within your organization. Can any of your existing volunteer tasks be done online? If not, can they be revised to make them accessible for those who would like to volunteer from home? Can some staff responsibilities be delegated to volunteers, allowing more staff time to take on other aspects of a project or program? Keep in mind that “virtual volunteering” is not specific to computer or IT functions but includes anything that can be accomplished off-site.

It is critical to follow the same procedures for screening, selecting, supporting and appreciating virtual volunteers. “Out of sight, out of mind” cannot apply here. We must ensure that position descriptions are clear and concise, that we screen volunteers in the same manner we would for any other opportunity and that we communicate with our virtual volunteers on a regular basis. Although the tasks are being completed virtually, an in-person call or meeting always helps to ensure that the volunteer is gaining something from the opportunity, that the quality of work meets the organization’s standards and that there is an opportunity to discuss any other concerns.

When recruiting virtual volunteers, consider the means and the message. A volunteer interested in contributing to a cause in their spare time from the convenience of their home is likely going to seek that opportunity from the same vantage point. Ensure that information is available online and that contact information or application forms can be easily accessed. Appreciation of virtual volunteers is no different. Including virtual volunteers in regular appreciation initiatives would be a good idea but it would also be worth considering other more “virtual” options such as an e-card for birthdays and Christmas. Keeping virtual volunteers up to date with the impact of the project or activity they are working on is also a crucial way to recognize their work as they will not have the satisfaction of having everyday feedback from staff, clients or other volunteers.

When attempting to measure the impact of virtual volunteering on an organization, there are several factors to consider. To date, there is very little information on the environmental benefits of virtual volunteering. However, we can certainly see the potential for a reduction of our carbon footprint if we can encourage less travel for volunteering, particularly in rural communities. Even if an existing volunteer program manages to convert 20 per cent of tasks to be performed off site, this has potential for enormous impact. For example, Organization X has 50 volunteers that contribute two hours each per week, or 100 hours in total. Each volunteer travels an average of 15 minutes each way (30 minutes round trip) to volunteer two hours of time. If we can convert 20 per

cent, or 20 hours per week, to virtual tasks, we have reduced travel time for Organization X by five hours per week. This equates to a reduction of 53.4 kilograms of carbon emissions.<sup>2</sup> If each nonprofit attempted to convert even a small percentage of existing volunteer tasks to virtual ones, we can see the potential for substantial benefit to the environment. The time saved in reduction in travel is also an important factor to consider. If 30 minutes are saved by not traveling to and from an organization, that time can also be spent volunteering.

Virtual volunteering will also reduce costs which are incurred through in-house volunteering. These could include printed material, facility costs for volunteering which takes place outside of traditional work hours and snacks and coffee for volunteers. Time is money and efficiency and productivity are key to ensuring our agencies are sustainable in any economic climate.

Consider virtual volunteering as a valuable addition to any existing volunteer programs. It may prove crucial to accessing skilled volunteer support and meeting the organization’s objectives. As with all other aspects of our work, we must change and adapt in order to maintain a viable volunteer base and to ensure that our volunteers are understood and appreciated as well as challenged to use their skills for the betterment of the community. We can also be the leaders in creatively addressing environmental issues and developing means to provide the best possible programs and services with a reduction in our ecological impact.

There is no doubt that virtual volunteering is a highly effective means to engage volunteers, benefit the organization and positively impact the environment. Why not take the 20 per cent challenge today?

*For further information and resources about establishing a virtual volunteering program within your organization, please contact Isabelle Lewis, Coordinator of CONTACT’s Volunteer South Simcoe at [isabelle@contactsouthsimcoe.ca](mailto:isabelle@contactsouthsimcoe.ca). Isabelle is a graduate of McGill University and has 10 years of experience working in the not-for-profit sector.*

1 Shield, Margot and Tremblay, Mark S.: “Sedentary Behaviour and Obesity”. Statistics Canada. June 2008.  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2008002/article/10599-eng.pdf>

2 Datamonitor. Greening Fujitsu Services: How Virtual Meetings Can Improve Your Carbon Footprint and Your Bottom Line”. December 2007. Fujitsu. 27 January 2010 <  
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## 10 TIPS TO GREENING YOUR OFFICE

by Katie Fullerton

Reducing. Reusing. Recycling. Repurposing. There are so many things that you are doing around the home to lighten your footprint on this planet, but what about outside the home? Just think of the benefits if you applied these same green principles at your office! Mind you, getting your office mates to go greener may be more complicated than getting your family to change. To help you get started, here are ten tips and some resources to incorporate those “Rs” into everyday work life.

### Tip # 1: Form a Green Team

A green team will be the catalyst group. They can assess needs, determine best green actions, inspire, cajole. In other words, they will create the green initiatives, educate their colleagues and facilitate the buy-in.

Make sure you have representation from all areas of the office. Each department's representative will have a different perspective and will act as the green deputy for their area. Include accounting (they love the cost savings), purchasing, maintenance, IT, human resources and other cheerleaders (the passionate ones) and the hard core “greeners”.

For inspiration, read about the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society's great team work at [www.vircs.bc.ca/environment/greenteam.php](http://www.vircs.bc.ca/environment/greenteam.php).

### Tip # 2: Do an Eco Audit or Walkabout of the Office

In large organizations it would be smart to hire a professional eco auditor. Not only do they bring experience but they can also provide a nice report that details the cost savings as well as the energy savings. Nothing gets a project moving faster than finding out that the changes will pay for themselves in a short period of time.

In a smaller office, get the team to do an “eco walkabout”. Your assessment should include: purchasing, waste, paper use, indoor air quality, energy efficiency, lighting, meetings and transportation. Do not forget the kitchen area!

For information on conducting an audit, check out [www.greenworkplace.ca/green-workplace-consulting/](http://www.greenworkplace.ca/green-workplace-consulting/).

Also look at David Suzuki's super ideas:  
[http://www.davidsuzuki.org/naturechallenge/at\\_work](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/naturechallenge/at_work).

### Tip # 3: Eco Survey

Have the green team create an “eco survey” for all of the office. This is a great way to communicate the team's goals and it will also educate and facilitate buy-in by providing a forum for input. For future comparisons, make sure your survey includes questions on present practices.

Follow up the survey with suggestions and goals. You might use this information to create an inter-office challenge: “who is the greenest of all?”

### Tip # 4: Green Purchasing

All purchasing should aim to be environmentally responsible. Good questions to ask yourself when buying include: is it reusable, refillable, rechargeable, recycled (and recyclable), energy saving and/or non-toxic?

Some guidelines follow:

- Aim for chlorine-free, high percentage post-consumer-waste recycled paper products including binders and envelopes. Any increased costs can be offset through paper efficiencies (see waste section below).
- Look for the Energy Star label on equipment and for settings or software that can facilitate energy savings (e.g. power management settings).
- Buy bulk, fair trade and local kitchen supplies.
- Go natural for all cleaning supplies. These will also improve office air quality.

For a good source of products and ideas check out: [www.frogfile.com](http://www.frogfile.com).

### Tip # 5: Paper Use

A key area for greening the office and one of the easiest to act on is paper saving. Here are some suggestions for cutting back on paper:

- Use the double sided feature to print and copy (post how-to tips at all desks and copiers). Narrow your margins and single space for even more savings. Edit, edit, edit on-screen to avoid multiple drafts.
- Re-use one side printed paper for notes, drafts and internal documents. Put a box at each copier with a “RE-USE” sign.
- Ask yourself, repeatedly, “Do I really need to print that?” Send memos by e-mail and post notices in high traffic areas. File your own copy of documents in folders on your computer, not in a drawer.

### **Tip # 6: Waste**

Encourage recycling by having blue boxes for paper at every desk. Put garbage and recycling bins for containers at a central location in the office. Too often pitching waste is an absent-minded behaviour.

Have a centrally located “Used Goods” box for all office supplies, magazines, etc. – your NLNs (No Longer Needed) could be gold to someone else!

In the kitchen, ban disposables and supply reusable plates, cutlery, towels and containers. Bring lunches in refillable containers – go wasteless.

Send reusable, recyclable waste such as toners and e-waste to appropriate dealers. For example, batteries can be taken back to Home Depot or other retailers. Check with your municipality for information about local waste depots for items like cell phones and computer parts.

### **Tip # 7: Energy Conservation**

Replace all lighting with compact fluorescent products. Turn off all lights when leaving a room or install motion activated lighting where appropriate.

Use the “power save” modes on equipment and appliances. Switch off computers when not in use especially at the end of the day. To reduce phantom power drain, attach all equipment to power bars.

Reduce the temperature of the office in winter and raise it in the summer (sweaters are for winter not summer). Use fans to replace air conditioning and open windows on good days. Take advantage of passive solar energy by keeping blinds open in the winter and closing them in the summer for cooling.

### **Tip # 8: Green Meetings**

For internal meetings use reusable containers, bulk milk products and unpackaged snacks. Use whiteboards instead of flip charts and avoid printing what can be sent after the meeting. Look at [www.bluegreenmeetings.org](http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org) for other suggestions.

### **Tip # 9: Travel**

Avoid travelling to a meeting by arranging a teleconference or a videoconference. Carpool to outside meetings and training courses.

Promote the health benefits of sustainable commuting by setting up walking and cycling groups. Encourage carpooling by putting up a map for your cohorts to post their home location and link them up (maybe you will start a green romance).

### **Tip # 10: Have Fun being Green**

Celebrate the launch of Office Greening by throwing a Green Party (sorry Elizabeth May). Promise rewards for good green behaviour and celebrate each time you reach one of your goals!

Have fun going greener!

*Katie Fullerton works with Citizens Environment Watch as a Community Animator with the Live Green Toronto project. Her interest in all things environmental includes involvement with the East Toronto Climate Action Group and Transitions Toronto.*

## **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Please take a few minutes to answer our 2010 readers' survey at [www.cjvrm.org/survey.php](http://www.cjvrm.org/survey.php).

We would love to know what you think of the journal and what topics you want to read about next year.

By completing the survey, you can enter a draw for a \$100 gift certificate to Chapters/Indigo!

The survey will close on June 27th.

# JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

## Editorial Process and Guidelines for Authors

### Objective

The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management is intended:

1. to serve as a credible source of information on the management of volunteers in Canada;
2. to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among managers of volunteers;
3. to provide a professional development tool for managers of volunteers;
4. to recognize and encourage Canadian talent in the field of management of volunteers;
5. to include in each issue at least two articles that will consider different views on a specific and predetermined theme.

### Target Audience

The Journal's intended audience includes managers of volunteers, educators, media and funders of not-for-profit organizations across the country.

### Submissions

All manuscripts will be accepted on diskette or via e-mail in either Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Submissions should be written according to "Canadian Style - A Guide to Writing and Editing" - Secretary of State, Dundurn Press. External reviewers may be engaged to review content if deemed advisable by the committee.

The revised draft is edited for clarity and consistency by the Editorial Team.

The edited version is returned to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for signature.

The signed form is to be returned to the Editorial Team within a week along with any suggestions for final revisions.

### Format and Style

Authors are asked to respect the following word counts:

	Words	Pages
<b>Lead Article</b>	1000	5-6
<b>Secondary Article</b>	700-800	2-3
<b>Book Review</b>	150	1

The lead article will look at the topic in some depth and will normally require the author to conduct research into current trends and perspectives on the subject.

The secondary article will adopt a more practical approach, including personal experiences and opinions.

### Advertising

Limited advertising space will be allowed in the Journal, for materials of direct relevance to managers of volunteer service, and as long as it conforms to the guidelines set out by the Editorial Team.

### Guidelines:

1. Only ¼ page and ½ page ads will be accepted.
2. Ad must be camera-ready.
3. A maximum of one page of ads will be permitted per issue.
4. Job ads are not recommended.
5. Cost is to be determined by the Editorial Team.

## LOOKING AHEAD

CAVR - NLAVR Conference 2010  
May 30 - June 1.  
St. John's NL.  
[www.cavrcanada.org](http://www.cavrcanada.org)

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

Issue	Deadline	Theme
Volume 18.2	articles due end of May 2010	Advocacy
Volume 18.3	articles due end of August 2010	Recruitment and Screening