



Volunteer Stewardship Planning

*“Maximizing Volunteer
Participation on Public Lands”*



OSI Outdoor Stewardship Institute

- In July 2007 the Colorado Outdoor Training Initiative (COTI) and merged with Volunteers for Outdoor (VOC)
- The finalized merger plan created the Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI), a sponsored program of VOC, and formed the Outdoor Stewardship Institute Advisory Board.



The logo for the Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI) is displayed in a large, brown, handwritten-style font. The letters 'OSI' are significantly larger than the words 'Outdoor Stewardship Institute'. The background of the slide features a faded, grayscale photograph of several people wearing hats and working in a wooded area, likely engaged in a conservation project.

OSI Outdoor Stewardship Institute

- OSI provides a variety of collaborative services to help non-profits and agencies effectively plan, organize and implement their own volunteer projects.
- The purpose of OSI is to increase and strengthen volunteer outdoor stewardship in the state and nationally by providing training, educational resources, and technical assistance.
- OSI is in the business of helping volunteers to become long-term “Citizen Stewards.”

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Training

OSI's Training Programs are designed to emphasize leadership, safety and technical skills as well as prepare participants to work with any organization or agency, on any stewardship project. The OSI Training Menu falls into three categories:

- **Conservation Leadership Training.** OSI offers two-day trainings designed to prepare individuals to lead crews working on stewardship projects including Crew Leader Training for Trails and Crew Leader Training for Ecological Restoration.
- **Land Stewardship Skills Workshops.** OSI offers a variety of technical workshops throughout the year that teach the essential on-the-ground stewardship skills.
- **Additional Training Opportunities.** Individuals with prior crew leadership and teaching experience can apply to become an Instructor. OSI also organizes specific workshops through our network of training providers, and offers certification for crew leaders.

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Volunteer Outdoors Website

Volunteer Outdoors (V Outdoors) is a web-based volunteer clearinghouse and volunteer management database.

- The goal of V Outdoors is to substantially increase the number of citizens engaged in the protection and preservation of Colorado's public lands.
- Volunteers find and register for opportunities, posted by over 100 agencies and non-profit organizations that match their skills and interests.
- Agencies are able to easily manage registrations, communicate with volunteers, gather data and generate reports.
- Promotional messaging supports V Outdoors and builds awareness of the opportunity to Volunteer Outdoors

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OSI Outdoor Stewardship Institute

Technical Assistance and Stewardship Planning

- OSI will provide direct and referral-based technical assistance to land managers, not for profit organizations, and volunteers interested in building locally based outdoor volunteer capacity for stewardship projects.
- OSI will assist agencies and organizations in the planning and delivery of outdoor stewardship programs and projects.

Why Use Volunteers

- Reduced or inadequate budget
- Reduced or inadequate staffing
- Projects can be accomplished easier through the use of volunteers
- Project won't get done without volunteers
- Build constituency and support for programs
- Work with local enthusiast groups



Objectives of Volunteer Planning

- Work is accomplished in a safe manner
- High quality work is accomplished by volunteers
- A sufficient quantity of work is accomplished
- The volunteer effort saves money for the agency
- The volunteer effort saves staff time for the agency
- The volunteer effort involves the community and other important constituencies
- The volunteers have a good experience
- The volunteers will help support agency activities

Constituency Building

Stewardship Activities

- Trail- design, construction, maintenance
- Ecological restoration- design, construction, long-term care
- General park-open space maintenance
- Monitoring- resource, trails, wildlife
- Invasive species-weed control
- Environmental education- interpretation
- Public contact-trail stewards, patrol



Volunteer Stewardship Planning

- Increasingly public land management agencies must rely on volunteers to provide the labor and expertise for outdoor stewardship projects.
- Many public land agencies are not prepared to manage volunteer projects or provide the necessary resources for project planning, design, and oversight.
- Volunteer-based non-profit organizations can successfully build local capacity and organize volunteers.
- Critical that agencies approve and facilitate volunteer participation on public lands.

How is Volunteer Stewardship Planning a Different Approach?

- Natural resource management and facility planning is nothing new.
- Many agencies have developed volunteer management plans, but most land management agencies are not proactively planning for ongoing stewardship projects.
- This effort is left to field personnel who often lack the time or expertise to complete these project planning efforts.
- Volunteers cannot work on public lands without agency approval.
- An untapped reservoir of volunteer labor is ready to participate on public land projects if the organization and agency approvals are forthcoming.
- Volunteer Stewardship Planning-is proactive planning for long-term volunteer stewardship

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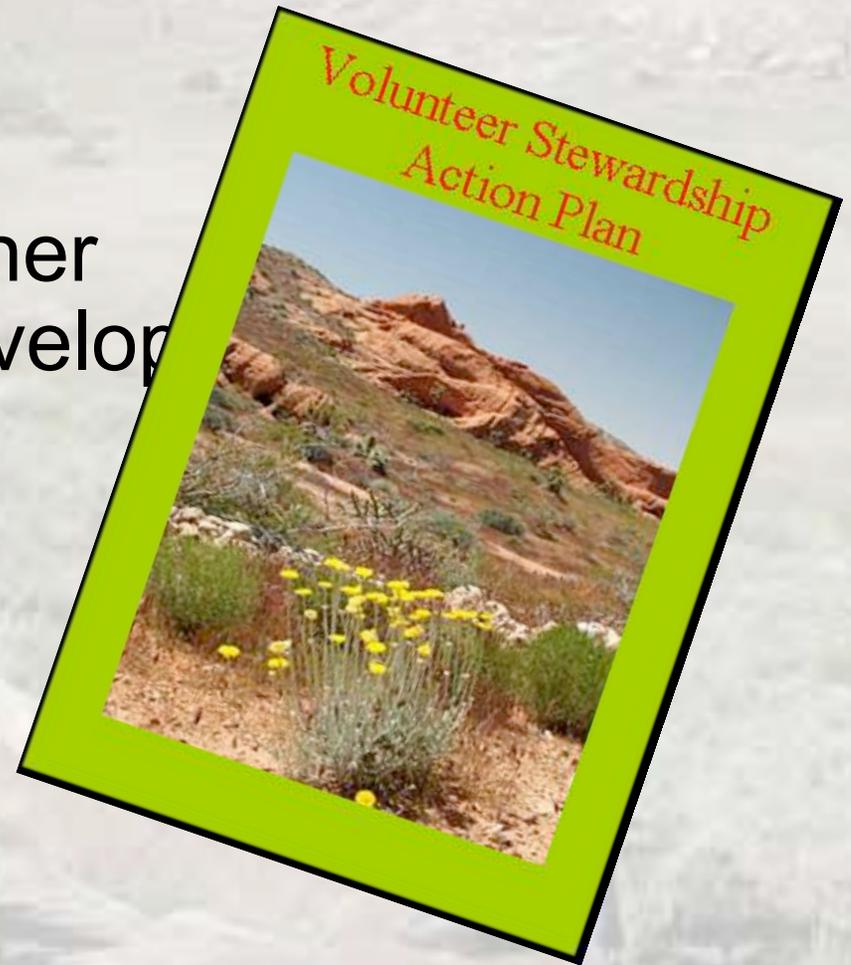
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Volunteer Stewardship Planning *the OSI Approach*

OSI staff (or OSI volunteers) work together with agency staff to develop

***Volunteer Stewardship
Action Plans (VSAPs).***



Volunteer Stewardship Action Plans

- Identify agency mission and objective: Identify primary agency contact.
- Establish the boundary or extent of the VSAP effort.
- Identify the time frame for completion (usually 2-5 years).
- Identify stewardship priorities for the agency.
- Collect map information, environmental data; make site visit (s).
- Identify stewardship priorities that can be completed by volunteers.
- Identify barriers or obstacles to volunteer participation.
- Complete site specific volunteer work plans.
- Formalize agency approval for volunteer work plan implementation.

Volunteer Stewardship Action Plans

- The VSAP can be presented to interested local groups and decision-makers if needed.
- OSI can share the VSAP with partner organizations.
- Volunteer projects are implemented through VOC and organizational partners.
- OSI works with agencies to build sustainable long-term capacity to support ongoing volunteer efforts: training, capacity, and outreach.
- OSI works with all partners to use the VSAP model to increase volunteer stewardship project delivery.

Building Sustainable Long-term Volunteer Capacity

- Planning
- Recruitment
- Training (volunteers and staff)
- Projects
- Events
- Leadership
- Commitment
- Citizen Stewards



Volunteer Stewardship Planning

- Once a VSAP is in place and approved, volunteers can move forward knowing they have agency approval and project guidelines are identified.
- Volunteer Stewardship Planning is a proactive process that identifies areas for ongoing stewardship and ensures agency support.



For more information on Volunteer Stewardship Planning

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