

WS Directive

4.105 08/26/11

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for using volunteers within the Wildlife Services (WS) program.

2. BACKGROUND

WS has authority to accept the services of volunteers under 5 CFR Section 308.103, 7 U.S.C. Section 2272 and Departmental Regulation DR 4230-1. A volunteer as defined in 7 U.S.C. Section 2272 is an individual who offers his or her services without compensation and who performs those services in furtherance of the programs of USDA agencies. WS has a long standing practice of using volunteers. In addition to program support, WS' volunteer use provides valuable experience to students and others interested in pursuing a career with the program.

3. DEFINITIONS

a. Director. Regional Director and Assistant Directors, State Director, National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) Director and Assistant Directors, Operational Support Staff (OSS) Director and Deputy Directors, National Program Coordinator and Assistant Coordinators.

b. Supervisor. District Supervisor, NWRC Project Leaders, and other WS Supervisors.

4. POLICY

a. Per DR 4230-1, agencies should designate a coordinator who will be responsible for issuing agency guidelines, monitoring the volunteer program, and serving as the agency contact. WS will designate a National Volunteer Coordinator with volunteer program points-of-contact (POC) designated for each Region, NWRC, and OSS/Headquarters.

b. Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resources-Form 301a (attachment 1) and Individual Volunteer Sign-In Record-Form 126b (attachment 2) will be used. Upon completion, Form 301a will be submitted to the National Volunteer Coordinator and Form 126b will be submitted to the National Volunteer Coordinator quarterly. Copies of both Forms should be submitted to the POCs. Instructions for completing and submitting both forms are located in Attachment 3.

c. The following information should be included as a written attachment to Form 301a.

1. Volunteer Service Performed. Include brief description of duties, skills required, training required, time and schedule commitment.

2. Firearms Use. If the volunteer is to use a firearm, include the following mandatory information: training completion date for each type of firearm to be used, drug test date, and background check date. Volunteer must attest in writing that he/she is not a convicted felon and has not been convicted of a domestic violence crime. Volunteer must also acknowledge in writing that he/she has received WS Directive 2.615, Firearm Use and Safety.

3. Operating Government Vehicle (GOV). If the volunteer is to use a GOV, include the following mandatory information: driver license number, state, expiration date, defensive driving training completion date and renewal date if applicable.

4. Specialized Equipment. If the volunteer is to use ATV, watercraft, pyrotechnics, machinery, etc., include the following mandatory information: type of training and completion dates for training and proficiency checks.

5. Volunteer Internship Agreement. If the volunteer is receiving college credit, a volunteer internship agreement form must be completed with the volunteer and credit granting institution.

d. Volunteers will be given an overview of the WS program, mission and goals by the Supervisor or Director and a thorough description of the duties and responsibilities will be listed under "Volunteer Service Performed" on the written attachment to Form 301a.

e. Volunteers are not federal employees for any purpose except for the purposes of 5 U.S.C. Chapter 81 (relating to compensation and injury), and 28 U.S.C. Chapter 171, Sections 2672-2680 (relating to tort claims).

f. Volunteers may not be used to displace any WS employee nor may they be used to perform any work which is inherently a government function as per Departmental Regulation DR4230-1 and as defined by OMB Circular A-76. An inherently government function is defined as an activity that is so intimately related to the public interest as to mandate performance by government personnel. These activities require the exercise of substantial discretion in applying government authority and/or in making decisions for the government.

g. Volunteers must be at least 16 years-of-age unless special exemption is given by the Director (written justification to be attached to Form 301a). Volunteers may not be younger than 14 years-of-age, per Departmental Regulation DR4230-1. Directors must adhere to appropriate Federal, State or local laws and standards regarding employment of minors.

h. Volunteers who use firearms must be 18 years-of-age, unless special exemption is given by the Director (written justification to be attached to Form 301a), and they must complete mandatory firearms training, be drug tested, and receive an appropriate background check. Expenses for the drug test and background check will be paid by the State or program area using the volunteer. The Supervisor or Director will provide the volunteer with a copy of the WS Directive 2.615, Firearm Use and Safety, which must be adhered to. The Supervisor or Director must indicate the use of firearms under

“Volunteer Service Performed” and provide the mandatory information on the written attachment to Form 301a. Firearms used by a volunteer are to be inspected prior to use by the Supervisor in accordance with WS Directive 2.615.

i. Volunteers who drive a GOV must have completed the required Defensive Driver Training and must possess a valid state driver’s license. All relevant mandatory training and specialized equipment proficiency checks must be completed for use of an ATV, watercraft and similar equipment. The Supervisor or Director must indicate the use of the specialized equipment under “Volunteer Service Performed” and provide the mandatory information, on the written attachment to Form 301a.

j. Volunteers working in a particularly hazardous area or using power-driven machinery not mentioned in the Section above must have written approval from the Supervisor or Director. The Supervisor or Director must indicate the hazardous working area or the use of the power-driven machinery under “Volunteer Service Performed” and provide the mandatory information on the written attachment to Form 301a.

k. Volunteers may not photograph or make video or audio recordings (including the use of personal cell phones or other recording devices) of any WS operational activities without Supervisor approval.

l. The Supervisor or Director will provide the volunteer a current copy of the WS Directive 1.301, Code of Ethics. The volunteer is expected to adhere to all WS Directives.

m. The Supervisor or Director will assure the volunteer is equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), supplies and other equipment appropriate for their duty assignment.

n. At the Director’s discretion, the State or program is responsible to pay for incidental expenses the volunteer may incur.

5. REFERENCES

[5 CFR Section 308.103, Volunteer Service-Authority \(8/31/79\)](#)

[7 U.S.C. Section 2272, Volunteers for Department of Agriculture Programs \(01/07/11\)](#)

[USDA Departmental Regulation DR 4230-1, Volunteer Programs \(06/05/97\)](#)

[5 U.S.C. Chapter 81, Compensation for Work Injuries \(01/07/11\)](#)

[28 U.S.C. Chapter 171, Section 2672-2680 \(2/1/11\)](#)

[OMB Circular No. A-76 Revised \(05/29/03\)](#)

[WS Directive 2.615 Firearm Use and Safety \(11/24/09\)](#)

[WS Directive 1.301 Code of Ethics \(08/31/10\)](#)



Deputy Administrator

25. **Check all that apply:** Description of service attached List of group participants/optional form 301b attached
 Job Hazard Analysis Valid Driver's License Verified (if required)

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR VOLUNTEER UNDER AGE 18

26. PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN (First, Last)	27. PHONE	28. EMAIL ADDRESS
	Home:	
	Mobile:	
29. STREET ADDRESS	30. CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE	

31. I affirm that I am the parent/guardian of the above named volunteer. I understand that the agency volunteer program does not provide compensation, except as otherwise provided by law; and that the service will not confer on the volunteer the status of a Federal employee. I have read the attached description of the service that the volunteer will perform. I give my permission for to participate in the specified volunteer activity.

 (NAME OF YOUTH)

32. Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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VOLUNTEER & GROUP LEADER AFFIRMATION

33. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for the above service and that volunteers are NOT considered Federal employees for any purpose other than tort claims and injury compensation. I understand that volunteer service is not creditable for leave accrual or any other employee benefits. I also understand that either the government or I may cancel this agreement at any time by notifying the other party. I understand that my volunteer position may require a reference check, background investigation, and/or a criminal history inquiry in order for me to perform my duties. I understand that all publications, films, slides, videos, artistic or similar endeavors, resulting from my volunteer services as specifically stated in the attached job description, will become the property of the United States, and as such, will be in the public domain and not subject to copyright laws. I understand the health and physical condition requirements for doing the work as described in the job description and at the project location, and certify that the statements I have checked below are true:

- I or group leader know of no medical condition or physical limitation that may adversely affect my or members of the group ability to provide this service. If a group see attached OF301b.
- I or a member of the group have a medical condition or physical limitation that may adversely affect my ability to provide this service and have informed the Government Representative. If a member of a group see attached OF301b.
- I or a member do not consent to being photographed or to the release of my photographic image. If a member of a group see attached OF301b.

I do hereby volunteer my services as described above, to assist in authorized activities at and I agree to follow all applicable safety guidelines. See attached OF301b if a member of a group. _____
 (NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY)

34. Signature of Volunteer or Group Leader	Date
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The above-named agency agrees, while this arrangement is in effect, to provide such materials, equipment, and facilities that are available and needed to perform the service described above, and to consider you as a Federal employee only for the purposes of tort claims, liability and injury compensation to the extent not covered by your volunteer group, if any.

35. Signature of Government Representative	Date
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TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

36. Agreement Terminated Date: _____ Total Hours Completed: _____

37. Signature of Government Representative
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Instructions for Completing

Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resources Agencies (Form 301a) Individual Volunteer Sign-In Record (Form 126b)

Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resources Agencies-Form 301a

- Must be completed for each volunteer.
- Per WS Directive 4.105, supervisor will include a written attachment with the following information: description of duties, mandatory firearms information, mandatory government vehicle information and specialized equipment use.
- Upon completion, form will be submitted to National Volunteer Coordinator. Supervisor should retain a copy of the completed form and forward a copy to the appropriate WS Volunteer Point-Of-Contact.

Individual Volunteer Sign-In Record-Form 126b

- Supervisors must keep a record of volunteer hours.
- Completed forms will be submitted to the National Volunteer Coordinator quarterly. Supervisor should retain a copy of the completed form and forward a copy to the appropriate WS Volunteer Point-Of-Contact.
- Completed forms should not be forwarded to Servicing Human Resources Assistant as indicated on the form.