Centralized versus Decentralized Volunteer Management, with a Case Study of the North Carolina Botanical Garden

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Abstract
Nonprofits play an important role in American society and volunteers are critical to their success, because nonprofits are often severely underfunded. However, many nonprofits are not utilizing volunteers to their fullest potential because they do not have a formal management structure in place for their volunteers. Previous research has defined the core components of volunteer management and identified various options for integrating them into an organization, including centralized, decentralized, and hybrid. The focus of this paper is to provide insight into how a nonprofit should decide which integration method to use. To help answer this question, a survey of volunteer managers was conducted to understand how their volunteer management programs are organized and how these structures came to be utilized. Results were also examined to determine if any correlations exist between organizations using the same approach. There were three key findings in this research. First, centralized management was the most prevalent management approach. Second, two-thirds of volunteer managers varied their management approach by function to some degree. Third, there were no strong correlations between the volunteer management approach and the size of the organization, the percent of the volunteer manager’s job spent on volunteer management, the experience of the volunteer manager, or the size and scope of the volunteer program. It is unclear if these findings can be considered as best practices for other volunteer managers to adopt because almost half of respondents said that either their approach to volunteer management evolved this way over time or they were not sure how it came to be this way.
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Introduction

Nonprofits are a vital component of American society and volunteers are critical to their success. Yet, few nonprofits have volunteer management structures in place, which hampers the effectiveness of their programs and lowers retention of volunteers. This paper evaluates several volunteer management approaches and, with the use of a survey of practicing volunteer managers, attempts to provide insight into how a nonprofit should select the volunteer management approach for their organization.

Role of Nonprofits in Society

Nonprofits play an important role in American society for several reasons. First, the goods and services offered by nonprofits will typically “fail” in a capitalistic marketplace. In other words, they are difficult to sell in a marketplace because they have social value but not a tangible economic value (Anheier, 2005). Second, nonprofits are advocates for those populations that cannot speak for or protect themselves (Pallotta, 2013). For human-services nonprofits, this could include minorities, children, refugees, and low-income families. For environmental-services organizations, this could include animals, trees, and rivers. The U.S. government has many agencies and departments that step in to fill the gap left by the marketplace or to protect specific populations. However, the government’s capacity in these roles is often limited by the fact that it relies on tax dollars and therefore, there are still voids and gaps, which nonprofits are designed to fill (Anheier, 2005). Third, nonprofits contribute to the economy. For example, McKeever & Pettijohn (2014) estimate that, in 2012, this sector added $887.3 billion to the U.S. economy.
Challenges Faced by Nonprofits

In spite of the importance of nonprofits to society, they are typically severely underfunded. Particularly impacted by underfunding are operational expenses within the nonprofit, which are considered indirect or overhead expenses. Administrative salaries, which support things like accounting, marketing, and human resources, are often considered overhead expenses (FAQs, 2016). Because these costs are indirectly linked to products and services provided, they are sometimes viewed as less valuable than those expenses and salaries that are directly related. Thus, when comparing the overheads of two charities, the one with the higher overhead is usually considered less efficient and less impactful relative to charities with lower overhead. This is known in the nonprofit world as the “myth of overhead,” which many in the nonprofit sector think is debilitating to nonprofits (FAQs, 2016). The salaries of nonprofit employees are limited by other factors as well. First, is the longstanding belief that people working in the nonprofit sector should not be “well”-compensated. Many people think this somehow takes advantage of the problems of others or that it goes against the definition of being a nonprofit (Pallatto, 2013). Second, is the “donative labor hypothesis” (Leete, 2001), which posits that people working for nonprofits should be willing to accept a lower income because they receive intrinsic value from working there and are in a sense donating their labor.

How Volunteers Help Address These Challenges

The underfunding of human resources at nonprofits leads to gaps between what needs to be done and the manpower or skills to accomplish it. This gap is filled to a large degree by volunteers. In 2013, volunteers completed approximately 8.1 billion hours and $163 billion worth of work (McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Many nonprofit organizations would not be as
effective without their volunteers and, indeed, many would not be able to continue operation at all (Hager and Brudney, 2008). Volunteer manpower is even more valuable if volunteers bring unique professional skills or experience to an organization that it may be lacking, such as graphic design or grant writing. Volunteers also contribute different perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds that may be useful in connecting with clients (if it is a human services organization) (Weinstein, 2009). Volunteers are also quite likely to be donors to an organization, being 66% more likely to donate money to a nonprofit than non-volunteers (Weinstein, 2009). As well as donating money themselves, volunteers can serve as fundraisers. Volunteers can have more credibility as fundraisers among the general public because they are seen as “neutral” third parties (Brudney, 2010).

**The Need for Volunteer Management**

Despite the importance of volunteerism to nonprofits, many do not have well developed (if any) management structures in place for their volunteer workers (Hager and Brudney, 2008). Even those organizations that have volunteer management programs in place may still undervalue the role it can play in their organizations (Lynch and Russell, 2016).

We rarely underestimate the good that one individual can do for another person, a family or a community when he or she volunteers. Why is it then that we in the philanthropic circles too often fail to appreciate the skills, planning, and support needed to harness the full potential of that volunteer (UPS Foundation, 2016)?

What defines volunteer management? According to Safrit and Schmiesing (2012), it is a “systematic and logical process of working with and through volunteers to achieve an organization’s objectives in an ever-changing environment.” Organizations may not recognize
when volunteer management is lacking. However, a startling 40% of volunteers have stopped volunteering because of a poorly managed program (UPS Foundation, 2016).

**Implementing a Volunteer Management Program**

There are a number of core functions that are recognized as best practices in the day-to-day management of volunteers: recruiting, interviewing, screening, task assignment, orientation, training, written policies, scheduling, recording hours, communication, recognition, relationship building, retention, and evaluation (Brudney & Meijs, 2014; Lipp, 2009). According to a 2003 survey of 1354 charities that use volunteers (but not necessarily volunteer managers), the choice to utilize each function should be based on specific needs and characteristics of each charity. The primary variables influencing adoption of the core functions were identified as size of organization, scope of volunteer usage, and tasks that volunteers performed (Hager and Brudney 2008). These core functions can be integrated into an organization in several different ways (Brudney, 2010). This paper will focus on centralized, decentralized, and hybrid approaches.

**Centralized Management Approach.** In a centralized management approach, a volunteer manager handles all the volunteer management tasks for all volunteers/volunteer groups and for all needs. This approach is the most comprehensive of all approaches. The advantages to centralized volunteer management include (Fash et al., 2010; Brudney, 2010):

- Provides more expertise in the core functions of volunteer management.
- Allows for a bigger picture view of organization as a whole and gives the ability to balance organizational needs and volunteer needs.
● Provides an advocate/representative for the volunteers.
● Provides a single point of contact for volunteers, the organization, and the public.
● Frees other members of the organization to do more of their primary job duties.
● Allows for some extent of control and consistency amongst volunteer experience.
● Consolidates similar activities into one person instead of having various staff members duplicating the same task.
● Allows for centralized and consistent tracking and reporting of things like number of volunteers and volunteer hours worked.

**Decentralized Management Approach.** In a decentralized approach, there is not a volunteer manager. Rather, a group leader leads each small groups of volunteers and the various group leaders handle all of these tasks for each volunteer group. The advantages to decentralized volunteer management include (Fash et al., 2010; Brudney, 2010):

- Each department has freedom to design the volunteer process to best suit their needs and those of their volunteers.
- Volunteers may build stronger relationships with the staff people managing them.
- Keeping volunteer management interspersed with other staff duties does not add a tangible salary cost of a volunteer manager.

**Hybrid Management Approach.** In a hybrid approach, each volunteer group or function could be handled differently. For example, a group leader could handle offsite groups and a central volunteer manager could handle onsite groups. Alternatively, a central volunteer
manager could do orientation and the group leaders could handle recording of volunteer hours and all other tasks. A hybrid approach could provide several advantages (Brudney, 2010).

- Allows flexibility to meet an organization’s specific needs.
- Adaptable over time as the organization’s volunteer needs change or evolve
- Captures the “best of both worlds”, utilizing the strengths of both centralized and decentralized approaches and minimizing weaknesses.

Research Focus

Previous research has established the core functions of volunteer management and identified various approaches for integrating them into an organization. The focus of this paper is to provide insight into how a nonprofit should decide which approach to use. To help accomplish this goal, this study:

1. Explores volunteer management at various nonprofits to better understand the structure of their programs and how these structures came to be utilized.
2. Examines survey data to determine if organizations using similar approaches have any correlations in number of employees, percent of time volunteer manager spends on volunteer management, job experience of volunteer manager, number of volunteers, number of volunteer hours worked per year, number of groups, or retention of volunteers.
Methodology

Data Collection

Information about volunteer management practices was collected via an online survey administered on Qualtrics.com. The survey (Appendix B) consisted of 21 questions of varying formats (such as, select an answer and free text). An informed consent form, all questions, and recruitment materials were submitted to the Institutional Review Board at North Carolina State University and approved for use on January 19, 2017. “Display logic”, which makes the visibility of questions dependent on the answers to other questions, was used on five questions. So not all respondents saw all questions. This combined with the fact that all questions were optional, means the number of respondents for each question varies. The number of respondents for each question is noted in Appendix B. Some potential data outliers were detected amongst survey responses. However, because of the small sample size, these were not deleted. Excel was used to calculate the correlation coefficients in Table 1. Small adjustments were made to allow calculation; these adjustments are described in the footnotes to Table 1.

The survey was made available to two groups of acting volunteer managers at various nonprofits in the United States. From these two groups, there were 35 “complete” responses. Partial responses were deleted. One group consisted of volunteer managers that are members of the American Public Garden Association (APGA), which has member organizations across the United States. The survey invitation was posted to the APGA volunteer manager group forum, which has an estimated 50 users. This was posted on January 23, 2017 and responses were requested by February 7, 2017. The second group consisted of members of the North Carolina Association of Volunteer Administrators (NCAVA), which number approximately 150. The
survey was sent via email invitation from the Vice President of Communications at the NCAVA. This email was sent on January 26, 2017 and responses were requested by February 8, 2017.

Results and Discussion

First, a brief overview of the respondents, the organizations they represent, and the size and scope of their volunteer programs is provided to allow context for discussion. Next, the volunteer programs and management approaches of respondents are described. Finally, data is examined to see if there were any correlations between the volunteer management approach and the size of the organization, the time spent on volunteer management, the experience of the volunteer manager, the size and scope of the volunteer program, and retention of volunteers.

Overview

Volunteer Managers and their Organizations. Most organizations represented were well established, with 79% having been in operation 25 years or more. The number of staff varied widely, but a majority (60%) of the organizations had less than 25 full-time employees and less than 10 part-time employees. Almost all the respondents (86%) were full-time paid staff and a majority (60%) had been handling volunteer management duties longer than 5 years. About half of respondents spent three quarters to one hundred percent of their time on volunteer management. About 25% spent a quarter of their time on volunteer management.

Size and Scope of Volunteer Programs. All respondents had regular active volunteers, which was defined in the survey as those who worked at least once a month. The number of regular
active volunteers varied largely across respondents from 10 to 1750, but a majority (45%) had between 100 and 500. The number of hours worked per year by regular active volunteers varied widely, ranging from 50-148,500. Fifty-four percent of regular active volunteers had a median age of 60 years or above. Only 6% said they had regular volunteers under 40 years of age. Two-thirds of respondents had at least 75% of regular active volunteers returning from year-to-year. (Twenty percent of respondents did not know their retention rate.) Eighty percent of respondents had volunteers who only worked once or twice a year for special events, annual workdays, etc. Two-thirds of these respondents had less than 200 of these volunteers.

A majority of volunteer managers (65%) reported that their volunteers work both independently and in groups. Of the organizations that used groups, about a third had 10 or fewer groups and a third had between 11 and 24 groups. Staff led forty-two percent of the groups and volunteers led twenty seven percent of the groups. The factor that most influenced whether a group was led by the volunteer manager or a group leader was whether the task was highly specialized. This indicates special skills or training is necessary to perform and supervise the task. Another highly influential factor was if there was a strong synergy between the group leader and the volunteers. This might mean the group was in existence before the volunteer manager came on board and that it would disrupt the productivity, participation, and morale of the group to have the group taken over by the volunteer manager. Other factors are summarized in Figure 1.
Approaches to Volunteer Management

**By Respondent.** Eight of the thirty-five respondents (23%) marked every function as being handled on a centralized basis. The next highest approach selected was the hybrid approach, with three respondents (8.5% of total respondents) reporting that they handled all functions this way. The decentralized approach was only selected a small percent of the time, with only one volunteer manager (3% of total respondents) reporting a majority of their functions being handled this way. A small percent of time, it was indicated that a function was not performed at an organization.

**By Function.** Next, data is analyzed by function (Figure 2) to see how each function is performed across all surveys. Seventy-seven percent of respondents are conducting all ten of
the functions, which is strong corroboration for prior research on core functions of volunteer management.

![Figure 2: Management Approach for Core Volunteer Management Functions](image)

Recruiting, interviewing, and screening were reported as being handled on a centralized basis by more than half of respondents. This indicates there is a centralized “gatekeeper” at most of the organizations, who brings in and assesses new volunteers. Recording hours, recognition, written policies, and evaluation were also reported as being handled with a centralized approach by a majority of respondents. Evaluation was reported as being performed by only 77% of respondents. It is surprising that evaluation was not reported as
being done more on a decentralized basis, since the people directly supervising the volunteers would have the best idea of their performance.

Training, scheduling, and communications were about equally split between centralized and hybrid approaches. These tasks require more hands-on interaction between the volunteers and their direct supervisors, so it is not surprising that they would be less centralized than other functions. Relationship building was reported by the majority as being handled with a hybrid approach. Surprisingly, no tasks are performed at a decentralized level (indicated by yellow on the graph) by a majority of respondents. The highest score on decentralized tasks was Training at 17% of respondents. The next highest were Scheduling, Communications, and Evaluation each at 8.5%; then Recording Hours at 5.7%.

**How These Approaches Came to be Utilized**

Almost half of respondents said that either their approach to volunteer management evolved this way over time or they were not sure how it came to be this way. This indicates that they are not necessarily making high level, strategic decisions regarding their approach. However, evolution of any process over time could be argued to bring about the most efficient approach.

**Correlations**

As can be seen from Table 1, there are little to no correlations between the volunteer management approach and number of employees, percent of time volunteer manager spends on volunteer management, job experience of volunteer manager, number of volunteer hours worked per year, number of groups, or retention of volunteers. Weak relationships exist in the
following cases:

- As the percent of time the respondent spends on volunteer management increases there is an increase in the percent conducted with the decentralized approach.
- As the number of volunteers increases, the percent of time the centralized approach is used decreases slightly and the percent of time the decentralized approach is used increases slightly.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients Between Selected Data and Percent of Time Each Management Approach is Utilized for the 10 Core Functions^

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Staff*</th>
<th>Percent of Time Volunteer Manager Spends on Volunteer Management</th>
<th>Volunteer Manager’s Years Experience with Volunteer Management*</th>
<th>Number of Regular Volunteers</th>
<th>Yearly Hours worked by Regular Volunteers</th>
<th>Retention Rate of Regular Volunteer</th>
<th>Number of Volunteer Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized Approach</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Approach</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized Approach</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Numbers rounded to the tenth decimal place

*Full-time staff and part-time staff numbers consolidated into one number by adding full-time number plus half the part time number.

+Answers were reported as ranges of time, so each range was coded to a number to allow calculation. < 1 year was coded as 1, 1-3 years was coded as 2, 3-5 years was coded as 3, and 5+ years was coded as 4.

**Conclusion**

Various approaches to integrating core functions of volunteer management into an organization have been suggested in previous research. The goals of this paper were to provide insight into how a nonprofit should decide which approach to use. To accomplish this, a survey
of volunteer managers was conducted. Approaches at various nonprofits were explored and data was examined to determine if organizations using similar approaches have commonalities in their organization, volunteer manager, or size/scope of volunteer program.

**Key Findings**

There were three key findings in this research. (1) Function by function, centralized management was the most commonly used approach for volunteer management, but the hybrid approach was also prevalently used. The decentralized approach was rarely utilized. (2) Three-quarters of respondents varied their approach by function, which indicates that a hybrid approach is necessary to allow for this flexibility. (3) There were little to no correlations between the volunteer management approach and the size of the organization, the percent of the volunteer manager’s job spent on volunteer management, the experience of the volunteer manager, or the size and scope of the volunteer program. Therefore, it is possible that these factors are not as strong of a driver as is core function in making decisions about volunteer management approach.

It is unclear if these findings can be considered as best practices for other volunteer managers to adopt because almost half of respondents said that either their approach to volunteer management evolved this way over time or they were not sure how it came to be this way.

**Limitations**

Some limitations were placed on the research by the fact that it was anonymous. Useful follow-up data could have been gathered by speaking with the volunteer managers in more
depth. For example, one organization noted that they were reconfiguring from a decentralized model to a centralized model, but it is unknown what drove that decision.

Limitations were also present because of the qualitative nature of the survey. It is uncertain if patterns between various data did not emerge because there were not enough responses or if the relationships did not exist. In addition, because of the small sample size of the survey results do not necessarily have broad implications for the field of volunteer management. However, these findings could indicate trends, and therefore, be of interest to volunteer managers and those conducting new research on volunteer management.

Suggestions for future research

In this study, no patterns or trends were found linking the volunteer management approach to characteristics of the organization, volunteer program size, or volunteer manager. It is unclear if this is because of the small sample size. So a larger study is recommended to see if this finding can be applied to the general population of volunteer managers.

Group characteristics were found to influence the management choice to some degree. Further research is recommended to determine how strongly the following group characteristics influence management approach for the group: task specialization, group work location, “in-the-field” group leaders, technology preference of volunteers in each group, strength of identification of the group to the organization, and group synergy.
Works Cited


Fash, Robert; Rodriguez, Jose; Washington, Bertral; and Whitesides, Heather, "Volunteer Management Analysis for the City of Las Vegas" (2010). *UNLV Theses/Dissertations/Professional Papers/Capstones*. Paper 393.


Appendix A: Case Study of The North Carolina Botanical Garden

Introduction

The goals of this case study are to provide an in-depth look at volunteer management at one nonprofit and, if applicable, to apply best practices from the volunteer manager survey to the volunteer program at this nonprofit.

Case Study Selection: North Carolina Botanical Garden

The North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) is a conservation-focused public garden in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, which opened in 1966. Its mission is, “To inspire understanding, appreciation, and conservation of plants and to advance a sustainable relationship between people and nature”. This organization was chosen as a case study for several reasons. First, the structure of the NCBG is distinctive since, in addition to the main “display” gardens, the NCBG staff manages numerous other properties and locations (Figure A1) owned by the University of North Carolina (UNC). Examples of these include an education center, an arboretum, nature trails in several locations, an herbarium, a biological reserve, and an amphitheater. In total, the NCBG manages over 1000 acres of land in the Chapel Hill area. Extensive education and outreach programs engage UNC students, elementary schools, and the community in general.

Second, due to the unique structure of the NCBG, the volunteer program is relatively large with an array of physical locations, activities performed, programs, skill sets, and volunteer demographics. The management of this large and complex volunteer program could potentially benefit from the application of best practices from other volunteer programs.

Third, the NCBG hired this author as a full-time volunteer manager in September 2016,
replacing a part-time volunteer manager who was a volunteer. This staffing decision demonstrates a significant investment in the volunteer program and makes it an ideal time to assess current state and make strategic plans for the future. The fact that I am an employee of the NCBG provides unique internal access to process and decision-making.

**Figure A1**: Map of North Carolina Botanical Garden Lands where volunteers can potentially volunteer

### Assessment of NCBG volunteer program in Fall 2016

The volunteer program at the NCBG has about 150 regular, active participants who volunteer at least once a week. It also has about 200 people who only volunteer once a year. Twenty-five unique teams in five broad areas utilize volunteers, including education,
conservation, horticulture, administration, and land stewardship. These groups are well established and have very low turnover, which means that some of the core volunteer management functions are not needed as much as if the program were steadily growing or had high turnover. Consistently since the fall of 2016, only a few of the 25 groups have needed volunteers, so not much time is required for recruiting. Even if more volunteers are required, the NCBG enjoys a steady stream of volunteer applications, so recruiting is not typically necessary. With few openings, there are numerous applicants, but few placements. Because few new people are starting, there is not a lot of training required and there is no organizational-level orientation. Most groups meet the same day and time each week, so not much time is required for scheduling. Volunteers are asked to record their own hours within the volunteer software and group leaders are recording hours in some instances. However, hours are not being recorded consistently, so there is potentially a need to reevaluate this process. Communication was primarily within groups, but there are some “all-volunteer” communications. Two all-volunteer appreciation events are held each year, with some groups doing additional year-end potlucks. Relationship building is primarily done within groups and evaluation is not done on a formal basis.

In summary, if I were I to have taken the volunteer manager survey, I would have said that the centralized approach is used for recruiting (when needed), interviewing/screening, task assignment, and written policies. The decentralized approach is used for scheduling (when needed), training (when needed), communication, relationship building, recording hours (when not done by volunteer), and evaluation. The hybrid approach is used for recognition.

Going forward, management at the NCBG would like to grow the volunteer program,
including new volunteer groups and more volunteers in existing groups. This goal will require some of the volunteer management functions to be performed on a more frequent and perhaps different basis.

**Recommendations to NCBG**

It was hoped that data from the volunteer manager survey could be used to help guide the volunteer program growth at the NCBG. Unfortunately, no conclusive recommendations can be made from the survey of volunteer managers. In spite of this limitation, I will offer recommendations to the NCBG based on my own 9-month observation and experience as the volunteer manager there. A summary of these recommendations is presented in Table A1.

When making decisions about whether a volunteer management program should be centralized, decentralized, or hybrid, there are two ways the approach could be applied across a program: by function and/or by group.

**By Function.** Some functions are performed virtually the same for a majority of volunteers and are not dependent on characteristics of the particular groups. These include recruiting, interviewing, screening, task assignment, orientation, written policies, and recognition. At the NCBG, it is recommended these functions be performed primarily by the volunteer manager because it is more efficient for one person to do them than for each group leader to be conducting them on their own. Group leaders can provide input or assistance to the volunteer manager in particular circumstances.

**By Group.** Other functions, including training, evaluation, communication, scheduling, and recording hours, are strongly influenced by characteristics of the particular group. More
study needs to be conducted on these and other characteristics. However, I believe the following to be influential to at least some degree: task specialization, group work location, “in-the-field” group leaders, technology preference of group volunteers, strength of identification of the group to the organization, and group synergy. These characteristics are discussed below in the context of the NCGB.

Task Specialization. At the NCBG, the volunteer tasks are extremely varied, including things like reception, gardening, seed propagation, trail maintenance, and plant specimen preservation. Due to this variability, it is recommended that all training and evaluation remain at a decentralized level because it would be challenging, if not impossible, for one volunteer manager to have all the necessary knowledge and experience to conduct these functions.

Group Work Location. The volunteer groups at the NCBG are in many different physical locations in and around Chapel Hill, NC and it is not practical for a volunteer manager to consistently visit these various locations. Also, the “offsite” groups do not necessarily feel a strong affiliation to the NCBG. For example, groups that work at gardens located on the UNC campus may identify more with UNC than with the NCBG. Therefore, for offsite groups, it is recommended that decentralized management continue to be utilized for communication and building relationships.

“In-the-Field” Group Leaders. At the NCBG, about half of employees do a majority of their work “in-the-field” instead of in an office environment. Some of this work is at the above-mentioned offsite locations doing land management or conducting educational programs. Other “in-the-field” work is outdoors taking care of plants and garden beds. This usually means they spend only a small proportion of their time behind a computer, doing paperwork, and
checking emails. Therefore, it is recommended that for groups where the group leader is
primarily “in the field” core functions that consist primarily of paperwork and computer work
be driven from a centralized level. These core functions are written policies and recording
hours, though recording hours may vary based on the group’s preference for technology.

Technology preference of group. Most volunteers at the NCBG have at least basic
familiarity with computers and use email regularly. However, some groups whose members are
much older than the average volunteer do not have the willingness or ability to use computers
for communication and recording hours. For these particular groups, it is recommended that
communication continue to be handled on a decentralized basis, because these volunteers will
not receive the information via email and it is not practical for the volunteer to communicate
information in person on a continual basis. It is recommended that recording hours be driven
from a centralized basis because these non-computer users will not use the software system to
record their hours and, because group leaders are most often working outside, it is not
guaranteed that the group leaders will do this.

Group Synergy. Some groups have a strong synergy or group loyalty, due to their length
of time working together, the uniqueness of their work location, or the charisma of the group
leader. For example, one group goes out to lunch with the group leader every week after they
have finished their volunteering. For groups with strong synergy, it is recommended that
communication be conducted at a decentralized level because the volunteers have a strong
relationship with their group leader and they are likely to know communication preferences.
Table A1: Summary of the recommended approaches to each core function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Recommended Approach</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Not necessary for most groups because of high interest in the community and low turnover of current volunteers. However, when it is necessary, conduct centrally. (The group leader can do limited recruiting if they know of clubs or others who might be interested in their specific group.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Input from group leader in specialized cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Assignment</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Input from group leader in specialized cases, also recommend a 2-session trial period to make sure the volunteer is a good fit. The group leader assesses this trial period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Covers the same high-level information for all volunteers. May not be necessary if the group is “offsite” and is not tightly associated with the NCBG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Policies</td>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>Because the NCBG is part of UNC and must follow UNC’s very detailed requirements for volunteer use, it is recommended that paperwork and policies be driven from a centralized level. May need assistance from group leader if violations occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Decentralized</td>
<td>Due to variability of the tasks conducted by volunteer groups, it is recommended that all training remain at a decentralized level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Decentralized</td>
<td>Scheduling is not necessary for most groups at the NCBG because they meet the same day and time each week. To the extent that it is necessary, the group leader should handle it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Hours</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Volunteers are asked to record their own hours in the volunteer online system. However, both the volunteer manager and the group leaders need to contribute to asking volunteers to record hours, validating that they did record hours, and providing technical assistance/training on using the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>High-level, organizational-wide communications can be done by the volunteer manager through emails or e-newsletters. However, the group leader may need to communicate critical information face-to-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>A hybrid approach is probably most appropriate for volunteer recognition. The centralized recognition can come from the organization as a whole and can include things like appreciation luncheons and recognition awards. Decentralized recognition can be on a more personal level from the people the volunteer works with the most. If the volunteer recognition preference is known, the decentralized recognition can be more personalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building/Retention</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Relationship building and retention can be handled both centrally and at the group level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decentralized evaluation is recommended for evaluation because the group leader spends the most time with each volunteer and best understands what the group is responsible for doing. The volunteer manager could assist with evaluation in cases where corrective action is needed.

**Case Study Conclusion**

As the NCBG grows its volunteer program, the approach to volunteer management should be hybrid and the decisions should be driven by each function and group characteristics. In spite of the fact that these recommendations are based on observation rather than data, it is hoped that they will be of use to practitioners at other organizations or as the basis of additional research.
Appendix B: Survey Questions and Responses

1. For comparison purposes, please answer the following questions about your organization.
   a. Number of full time staff people
   b. Number of part time staff people
   c. Years in operation

Table B1: Answers to Survey Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About the organization</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Staff</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>122.55</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time Staff</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>32.1875</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Operation</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Select job duties that apply to you
   a. Volunteer Manager/Coordinator
   b. Development/Membership
   c. Marketing/Communications
   d. Grant Writing
   e. Finances
   f. Education
   g. Other

Thirteen respondents reported their only duty as volunteer management/coordinator. The remaining 22 reported the following clusters of duties in addition to volunteer management:

Table B2: Answers to Survey Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Duty</th>
<th>Duties checked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer manager</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing and Communications</td>
<td>x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Membership</td>
<td>x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Indicate your employment status
   a. full time staff
   b. part time staff
   c. full time volunteer
   d. part time volunteer

Table B3: Answers to Survey Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Full Time Paid</th>
<th>Part Time Paid</th>
<th>Full Time Volunteer</th>
<th>Part Time Volunteer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30 (85.7%)</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
<td>1 (2.857%)</td>
<td>1 (2.857%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If volunteer management is not your only job duty, what proportion of your time is spent on volunteer management?
   a. a quarter
   b. one-third
   c. half
   d. Two-thirds
   e. Three-quarters

Table B4: Answers to Survey Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of time spent on volunteer management</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>a quarter</th>
<th>one-third</th>
<th>half</th>
<th>two-thirds</th>
<th>three-quarters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>6 (30%)</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How long have you been handling volunteer management duties?
   a. less than one year
   b. 1-3 years
c. 3-5 years
d. 5+ years

Table B5: Answers to Survey Question 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years handling volunteer management</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>4 (11.43%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Indicate how your performance as volunteer manager as measured by your supervisor.
   a. Increase in number volunteers or volunteer hours
   b. Overall satisfaction of volunteers
   c. Retention of volunteers from year-to-year
   d. Achievements/impact of volunteer
   e. Predetermined goals
   f. Other

Table B6: Answers to Survey Question 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How performance as volunteer management is measured</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in number of volunteers or volunteer hours</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction of volunteers</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention of volunteers from year to year</td>
<td>2 (5.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements / impacts of volunteer</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-determined Goals</td>
<td>9 (25.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please recommend best practices you think would be helpful for other volunteer managers (free text) n=27
   - Match volunteer interest and abilities with job. Make sure volunteers know what they are signing up for this helps them be happier and more effective. Not many like surprises.
   - Say thank you often and share positive guest feedback or financial gain when possible so they see the part they played in any event.
   - Network with other volunteer managers/coordinators. Volunteer guidelines. Set program goals and objectives involving volunteers in the process.
   - Having volunteer-related goals that are tied directly to the overall strategic plan of the
organization, so that they are properly resourced and not seen as peripheral to the organization's success.

- Centralized database for record keeping of volunteer information and hours. Preparing volunteer positions based on need of your organization/program, and being fully prepared to onboard and train new volunteers before you have them start volunteering. Background checks are a must for ongoing volunteers. Liability release form. Expressing appreciation to volunteers on a regular basis. Clear expectations of volunteer duties and responsibilities, and yearly performance evaluations.

- Provide lots of focused communication, including encouragement and appreciation. Share program achievements, provide opportunities for growth in volunteer roles, and offer unique opportunities that volunteers cannot get from other organizations.

- Job Descriptions, Screening, Training, Appreciation, Sharing Information

- Create systems that any volunteer manager can have access to, for instance recording/documenting volunteer hours, volunteer general handbook, volunteer appreciation ideas. This way each volunteer manager does not have to reinvent the wheel so to speak.

- Organized training program, consistent communication with volunteers

- Communicate frequently and be flexible.

- 1. Effective yet streamlined communication with volunteers. 2. Volunteer recognition 3. Establishing a relationship with as many volunteers as possible; this all depends on the number of volunteers you are working with.

- Treat all volunteers as professionals as they most likely have come from a professional job. Create position descriptions for all your types of volunteer jobs. Get to know you volunteers and appreciate them whenever you can. They are part of your team! Your organization would be nowhere without them. Never take them for granted...Be organized and communicate regularly with them. Get the support of your staff. Background checks are a must!

- Train volunteers well. Set clear expectations for volunteers Treat volunteers with respect Show volunteers appreciation

- Policies explained in handbook, orientation and training for volunteers Working with staff to ensure good communication, experiences with volunteers Good communication with volunteer manager and all staff regarding volunteer program

- Become certified in the field and make opportunity to interact with other VMS for education and support. Be sure to have a volunteer orientation schedule and a volunteer policy handbook.

- Flexibility. People will always cancel and have more important things going on. Passion. I think it’s difficult for volunteers to believe in and be inspired by your garden’s work if you are not happy, proud, and exciting about your garden's mission. Make low barriers to entry, fewer forms, fees, and training. If they like the taste, they'll stay for training. Family. Share the good and the bad at the organization. It makes your volunteer corp feel invested, trusted, and informed. Decentralization. The more touchpoints volunteers have with the whole staff, the more they know and work with, the longer they’ll stay. Use the B.E.E.R. method Behavior, effect, expectation, result method if you ever have to reassign or ask a volunteer to leave. Kennedy/Ask not. Turn it around and ask what they want to get out of their volunteer time, instead of asking what they want to give. Always schedule in pairs for back up and social benefits. Solo volunteers
don't stay. Build in social time so they can get to know each other, pancake breakfasts, happy hours, break times mid shift. IF they make friend with each other they will keep coming back. It's the best thing you can do for retention.

- Need an online volunteer database Join a volunteer organization (local and state) so that you are connected with other volunteer managers Take time to get certified in some way to build your professional development Be firm and lead
- Number one is to know your volunteers! Get to know each of them individually. If you are utilizing a volunteer for one event this isn't as necessary (though you never know who will turn into a great volunteer). For those managers who have consistent volunteers, you have to know them!
- recognition of volunteers frequent praise consistency in rules and applying them
- Timely responses to volunteer inquiries Solicit feedback from volunteers regarding their experiences Communicate with staff to find where their needs and volunteer skills intersect Find volunteers roles that benefit the volunteer and the organization Invest in volunteer supervisor training Find ways to appreciate your volunteers as often as possible
- Feedback from our volunteers supports our intent of providing good communication and opportunities with them along with providing a sense that they belong and their time is highly valued. Our staff is outstanding in getting to know volunteers.
- Screening Orientation Training Evaluation
- Strategic planning, involving all stakeholders in program development, model policies (as closely as possible) to staff policies, criminal background checks for staff and volunteers, participate in professional development workshops and opportunities, join a DOVIA or peer network group. Be consistent, fair and ethical.
- We have a robust volunteer program with 679 volunteers contributing 9,000 hours to our small garden in 2016. Here are a few practices that contribute to a successful volunteer program: Volunteers are aligned with your mission Proper orientation and training for volunteers so that expectations are clear Volunteers are treated like staff Personalization - make sure you remember volunteers names Proper recognition
- screening (application - interview) to make sure any potential volunteer is the right fit. Make sure that they know what is required of them. Provide adequate training and supervision.
- Provide a good mechanism for communications -- meetings, website, mailings or emailings etc. Offer fun activities to keep them engaged and recognize their accomplishments and participation in the organization.
- Finding the balance of empowering volunteers to take ownership and leadership for their area of interest but understanding that staff are ultimately in charge and have final say on all activities.

8. **Do you have volunteers who volunteer on a regular and active basis, once a month or more?**
   a. Yes
   b. No
Table B7: Answers to Survey Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular Active Volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please answer the following questions about your regular, active volunteers
   a. Number of regular volunteers
   b. Number of hours worked per year by regular active volunteers at your organization
   c. Median age of regular active volunteers
   d. Percent of active volunteers who continue from year to year

Table B8: Answers to Survey Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Regular Active volunteers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>270.53</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hours worked per year by</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>148,500</td>
<td>18,553</td>
<td>3150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Active Volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age of Regular Volunteers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>75.17</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Do you have volunteers who only volunteer once or twice a year for special events, work days, etc?
    a. Yes
    b. No, we do not have events like this
    c. No, our regular active volunteers typically work these events

Table B9: Answers to Survey Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No, we don’t have events like this</th>
<th>No, our regular active volunteers typically work these events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11. If yes to question above
   a. Number of these volunteers
   b. Number of hours worked by these
   c. Median age of regular active volunteers

Table B10: Answers to Survey Question 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Episodic Volunteers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>368.34</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hours worked per year by Episodic volunteers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td>2954.56</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. As you may know from your own experience, the core functions of volunteer management can be broken down into the following categories: Recruiting/Screening, Training, Scheduling/Recording Hours, Written Policies for Volunteers, Communications, Recognition, Relationship Building/Retention, and Evaluation. There are many approaches to how these tasks are accomplished at each organization. In a purely centralized management approach, one volunteer manager handles all functions for all volunteers/volunteer groups. In a purely decentralized approach, there is not a volunteer manager and group leaders or various staff handle these functions for each volunteer group. Many organizations use a hybrid approach, which means each task and/or group is handled differently (i.e., some tasks or groups are handled by the volunteer manager and other tasks or groups are handled by the group leader).

What best describes your organization’s approach (centralized, decentralized, hybrid, or not done) to the core functions of volunteer management. The core functions were listed as recruiting, interview/screening, training, written policies, scheduling, recording hours, communications, recognition, relationship building/retention, and evaluation.
13. Please indicate how the process came to be this way
   a. It just evolved this way over time
   b. We found this to be the best way
   c. We found this to be the easiest way
   d. Dictated by time or budget constraints
   e. Not exactly sure how it came to be this way
   f. Other

Table B11: Answers to Survey Question 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the Volunteer Management Process Came to Be</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>It just evolved this way over time</th>
<th>We found this to be the best way</th>
<th>We found this to be the easiest way</th>
<th>Dictated by time or budget constraints</th>
<th>Not exactly sure how it came to be this way</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11 (31.43%)</td>
<td>11 (31.43%)</td>
<td>1 (2.86%)</td>
<td>1 (2.86%)</td>
<td>6 (17.14%)</td>
<td>5 (14.29%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do your volunteers typically work in groups or independently?
15. Please answer the following questions about the volunteer groups at your organization:
   a. Number of different groups volunteers assist with? (fill in the blank)
   b. How many of these groups do you manage? (fill in the blank)
   c. How many of these groups do group leaders manage? (fill in the blank)
   d. Are group leaders staff or volunteers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of groups volunteers assist with</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of these groups do you manage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many of these groups do group leaders manage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are group leaders staff or volunteers? (n=24)
50% responded staff, 29% responded volunteers, 21% responded both staff and volunteers

16. Which of the following factors do you feel most influence whether the volunteer manager or group leader leads the volunteer groups? (n=34)
   a. Location of the group is “offsite”
   b. Group’s tasks are highly specialized
   c. Group has strong synergy with its group leader
   d. Group demographics
   e. Group does not strongly identify with your organization
   f. Volunteer manager is the group leader
   g. I am uncertain
17. Score the following items according to how big a challenge it is for you as a volunteer manager
   a. lack of funds
   b. difficulty recruiting volunteers
   c. not enough time
   d. lack of training
   e. lack of organizational support/support from coworkers
   f. lack of infrastructure to volunteer management program
   g. difficulty retaining volunteers
   h. other

The challenges reported by respondents were quite varied. The most frequently reported challenge, with 40% reporting either very challenging or biggest challenge, was “not enough time to devote to volunteer management.” The 2nd highest, at 29% reporting very challenging or biggest challenge, was lack of infrastructure and the 3rd highest was difficulty recruiting volunteers.

Table B14: Answers to Survey Question 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not a Challenge</th>
<th>Somewhat Challenging</th>
<th>Very Challenging</th>
<th>Biggest Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time to devote to volunteer management</td>
<td>9 (25.71%)</td>
<td>12 (34.29%)</td>
<td>10 (28.57%)</td>
<td>4 (11.43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of infrastructure to volunteer</td>
<td>15 (42.86%)</td>
<td>10 (28.57%)</td>
<td>8 (22.86%)</td>
<td>2 (5.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty Recruiting Volunteers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have the capacity to manage more volunteers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Funds for Volunteer Management</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty retaining volunteers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of organizational support/support from coworkers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training to do my job</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. What are some ways you’ve tried to address your biggest challenges? (free text) n=6

- Streamlined processes and procedures and created a written development plan so that multiple staff can be volunteer coordinators without the presence of the main volunteer manager.
- TV program dedicated to volunteerism, newspaper articles, word-of-mouth, community presentations, conference/workshop attendance, networking, volunteer-lead recruitment, consistency in messaging, and persistence.
- I have tried to come up with ways that corporate groups can donate funds for supplies and then work directly with those supplies on projects when they come to volunteer. We work to raise money for our volunteer programs with a bake-off/sale and this year by wrapping gifts at Barnes & Noble over the holidays.
- I have tried coworker education and trying to enlist support of upper management
- Trying to transition from Excel spreadsheets recording keeping system to a volunteer management software system
- Working with management, updating staff job descriptions, surveying what other gardens do.

19. What trends or changes in volunteering have you noticed that might require an adaption in your volunteer management approach? (free text) n = 27

Three main themes presented themselves in the trends that respondents saw in volunteer management. The first was that the way people want to volunteer is not consistent with the volunteer opportunities they have available. Younger volunteers want short-term, episodic volunteering and also need to volunteer on the weekends as they have work or school during the week. Corporate and civic groups want one-time, all-day volunteer opportunities and most of the existing opportunities take place during short periods of time.
Second, it was noted that there is a lot more competition to obtain volunteers. People are working longer before retirement, so there are fewer volunteers to choose from. In addition, because there are so many nonprofits needing volunteers, prospective volunteers can choose something that is flexible and provides meaning.

Third, the aging of the volunteer force means they are not physically able to do as many activities. In addition, as these older volunteers age out of being able to participate at all, the core regular volunteers shrink in number.

20. How might you adapt your approach in order to be more responsive to these changing volunteer needs? (free text) n = 23
• Offer a variety of options that appeals to an array of background, styles, and ages.
• Providing more 1 time volunteer events
• Find ways for volunteers can join in on a project "for a day, half-day - on the job training vs. more commitment.
• Keep recruiting. Create weekend and one-time opportunities (but no one to manage).
• education in fields that our volunteers come from.
• That’s the conundrum.....how to find money for projects so that we have projects available for our volunteer groups.
• Offering more choice and flexibility in offering volunteer slots and see a good response to that. Also offering opportunities for longtime volunteers to "try something new".
• We have tried to offer more group interaction.
• Need more time for recruitment.
• Have to figure out more roles and ones that they can do one time that are beneficial to our organization.
• Try to provide those opportunities, but the real need is the committed highly trained client service volunteer
• Additional face time between volunteers and our staff security expert.
• More interdepartmental flexibility
• Our scheduling needs more flexibility.
• carefully select projects in which we are involved
• Show advantages of volunteer experience to younger volunteers
• We need to change our tactics to accommodate volunteers that work during the week
• We could offer more single event group activities like park wide clean-ups.
• Helping to support our current volunteer gardening and programming outreach by involving different organizational groups to help us with our educational demonstration gardens and community gardens. We have expanded to working with special needs audiences and youth at risk elementary, middle and high school students, educating them about gardening and nutrition. They also help to plan out garden beds, plant and maintain the beds. Volunteers working with the youth intergenerational. Involving local garden club members to help teach
Youth audiences.

- Understand that retention and loyalty don't mean what they did in the past. We need to work harder to recruit greater quantities of volunteers to meet our needs. Building in more educational opportunities for volunteers. First, so they are better equipped to represent and help us and second to meet their motivational desire to learn. We allow volunteers to determine their own schedule and take time off for travel, etc.
- They also need to find the work fulfilling, and in that regard we don't need to do anything different. The social aspects of our volunteer group seems to cross age barriers. We just need new methods to find them.
- Encourage change within the organization so that more of these roles can be created.
- We request coming over several days. We have tried to get these groups to "adopt a garden" that includes volunteer service and paid sponsorship. We ask these groups to bring their own tools.

21. Please share any other thoughts or recommendations related to volunteer management that were not captured in the questions above. n=14

- A good volunteer program requires a lot of time and energy. Volunteers are not free. In order for volunteers to be used effectively and for them to feel that what they do is of value requires a lot of planning and organizing. Without good organization, a volunteer program will fail.
- A volunteer department and its employees need to be flexible and ready to adapt to constantly changing situations. Volunteer satisfaction surveys help guide the planning and implementation of training, scheduling and recognition. Staff always need to be in tune with the needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteers and must find a balance that meets everyone's needs. Most important is a sense of humor.
- I think the biggest and most important aspect of my job is creating a sense of community and belonging among staff and volunteers. When the sentiment of "we are all in this together and working toward a common goal" is embraced by staff and conveyed to volunteers, we are most productive. Volunteers feel a sense of ownership and pride. This aids retention and keeps our trained and skilled volunteers coming back.
- In general, volunteer management is not a "degree" that one may get in college, so with the exception of continuing education classes or certifications, we tend to train ourselves within our positions. The ability to multi-task and take on different roles is essential. I have found networking with other volunteer managers from around my area/around the state very helpful.
- Not everyone who manages volunteers is really suited for that type of work. My position requires I be involved in every project even though someone else may be "coordinator"
- Our challenge is we are not a brick and mortar building. We are across the country so our staff that work with them are the direct contact vs. the volunteer services department.
- Our organization is going through a big period of change with our volunteers. We know how the program will run best and see the light at the end of the tunnel, but slowly have to nudge our current volunteer pool into that direction, which is challenging when people are attached to current systems and have a long history.
• Our program is unique in that the volunteer management office does not work directly with volunteers beyond the initial interview, placement, and recognition. We spend more time working with volunteer supervisors (paid staff).

• Record keeping is a key factor. We are celebrating our 46th season this year and previous volunteer managers had poor record keeping policies, which is unfortunate when wanting to recognize outstanding tenure and/or hours contributed by your volunteers. Also, volunteer benefits, recognition and/or enrichment is very important in creating retention in your program.

• Sharing information about grants and funding so that the volunteer management profession can learn about funding sources. Monthly meetings in NC that focus on advancing the profession, support for the managers, topics of interest.

• Upper management frequently doesn't understand the processes. My manager makes decisions about what resources I have based on what she THINKS I need, not on what I tell her I need.

• Volunteer motivation is more complex than employee motivation. There are challenging days when a staff person says, oh, well, it's a job. Volunteers don't have to stay "for a job." Making sure that their experience is meaningful, while making sure that our organization's needs are met is our challenge in a nutshell.

• Working with volunteers and seeing the difference they make in a life as well as how a volunteer's life is changed by giving is highly rewarding.
### Appendix C: Data used to calculate correlation coefficients in Table 1

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<th>Management Approach</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Organization, Volunteer Manager, and Volunteer Program</th>
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*Full-time staff and part-time staff numbers consolidated into one number by adding full time number plus half the part time number.