

Working with UNH Cooperative Extension Volunteers

To further support the value volunteers bring to UNHCE, the strategic plan put forth in 2007 (see <http://extension.unh.edu/AboutUs/StrPlan.pdf>) outlines top-priority strategies related to volunteers, as follows:

Objective 4 – Volunteers extend the reach of UNH Cooperative Extension, multiplying the educational effect and increasing visibility of the organization.

Strategic Action A – Recruit high-quality volunteers and retain them by offering continuing education and recognition.

Strategic Action B – Provide better access to facilities, equipment and other resources for volunteers to carry out their duties.

Strategic Action C – Determine how volunteer management can be made more effective to achieve the desired outcomes.

This reference is meant to serve as a resource. Much research went into developing useful materials to enable UNHCE staff achieve the goal of better supporting our volunteers and their efforts. The process of thinking carefully and diligently about all aspects of volunteerism in Extension will broaden our outreach, strengthen our volunteers' commitment to UNHCE and enrich our volunteers' lives.

Each year, approximately 5,000 individuals volunteer their time, talent and services in the delivery of Extension programming such as forest stewardship and wildlife conservation, 4-H youth development, gardening and the operation of the Family, Home and Garden Education Center, as well as marine and freshwater stewardship. These volunteers are a vital part of UNHCE. How we can efficiently and effectively nurture our volunteer programs - and our volunteers - is what this resource is all about.

Purposes of this Resource:

- To guide the management of all UNHCE volunteer programs, and to enumerate and explain policies that relate to volunteers. It is for use by all UNHCE staff who work with volunteers, including all volunteer program coordinators and administrators.
- To define and outline steps to take in the management of risk when working with volunteers.

As part of the nationwide Land-Grant University System, UNH Cooperative Extension is a major outreach program of the University of New Hampshire. Cooperative Extension provides a direct link between UNH and people throughout the state. Volunteers help UNHCE reach more people and achieve our mission.

UNHCE Mission:

UNH Cooperative Extension provides New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources and improves the economy.

There are four strategies identified in the UNHCE strategic plan needed to create a more effective and cohesive organization that supports base programming, as well as initiatives addressing critical and emerging needs. Volunteer management is one of those four key strategies, specifically, expanding roles for volunteers in program delivery, where appropriate, and maintaining systems for recruiting, screening, training, supervising and recognizing our volunteers.

Volunteers are a key part of the delivery system of UNH Cooperative Extension educational and youth development programs. UNHCE is committed to working with volunteers for the many values they bring to the organization, such as:

- Volunteers are essential and integral partners in carrying out Extension's mission.
- Volunteers extend and multiply the educational capacity of paid staff. Their efforts contribute highly to the overall success of UNH Cooperative Extension.
- Volunteers provide a critical link to the individuals and communities we serve. They inform, complement and enhance the work of UNH Cooperative Extension Staff.
- Staff/volunteer partnerships are based on mutual support, respect and the commitment to learning and growth.

Authorship of this Resource

We hope this resource will be a living document, one that is periodically updated to meet the changing needs of the organization and our volunteers, and which can help you in your volunteer management efforts.

The team is comprised of volunteer administrators for the following programs: NH Coverts Project (Malin Clyde), Master Gardeners and the Family, Home and Garden Education Center (Margaret Hagen and Alice Mullen), 4-H Youth Development (Deborah Cheever and Robin Luther), NH Community Tree Stewards Program (Mary Tebo Davis), and Marine Education and Stewardship (Mark Wiley).

Contributing Editor: Wendy Brock, Program Leader, 4-H Youth Development

Editor and for more information, contact:

Paul M. Bonaparte-Krogh, Extension Specialist,
Volunteer Development & Management
UNH Cooperative Extension
Taylor Hall, 59 College Road
Durham, NH 03824-2621
Email: paul.bk@unh.edu
603-862-4544