

## Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Breakout Group Discussion Points

### Celebrating our Advances Survey Summary

Has your lake group developed or been involved with the following "Communication and Volunteer Recruitment" activities? Please check all that apply.						
Answer Options	Yes	No	Plan to in 1 year	Plan to in 2+ years	Looking for help on how to get started	Response Count
Newsletter	31	0	0	0	1	32
Email	28	3	0	0	1	32
Website	26	2	1	0	1	30
Mail-outs	26	3	0	0	1	30
Door-to-door/ dock-to-dock canvassing	17	7	2	0	1	27
Volunteer Recruitment Program	13	9	5	0	1	27
Other	3	13	0	0	1	17
Twitter	0	18	0	0	1	19
Facebook	0	17	1	0	2	20
<i>answered question</i>						<b>33</b>

### Recruitment

Energy expended by current leaders to recruit is worthwhile! Volunteers are critical to committee growth, sharing of responsibilities and sustaining projects.

Why recruit?

- To help spread the work among residents
- To keep the organization alive
- For new ideas
- To get the work done

### Prospective volunteers need:

- A reason to participate,
- To be invited personally,
- To be offered a specific role(s),
- To have issues identified so their interests can be matched (e.g. as often occurs in visioning exercises),
- To feel valued.

## It may be beneficial to:

- Offer a variety of social events that encourage participation ,
  - diversify the seasons and types of social events offered,
- Create lists of potential volunteers based on interest shown and event sign-ups ,
- Make note of talents, expertise, professional experiences of residents and areas in which there would be an interest in learning more (informal discussions, networking),
- Include families in some activities to broaden age range of involvement and lake commitment ,
- Use the lake association membership as the “entry” to special events for residents (e.g. fish fry),
- Invite road organizers (or designates) to join committees to broaden scope and demonstrate inclusionary practices,
- Dedicate a person to recruitment,
- Ensure effective and varied communication (e.g. newsletter, website, use of media, business advertisements/special offers to members,
- Welcome new residents to the lake personally and possibly provide a bag of “goodies”,
- Break down lake barriers through a visioning activity (templates available from RVCA and several lake associations),
- Provide in-service or information sessions to become more inclusionary (e.g. lower the bar of prior knowledge and attract those with a “budding” interest),
- Creating a water quality focus for the present and future generations,
- Develop a group of district counselors to make personal contact, share information, ensure a personal contact on behalf of the association.
- Provide an information input opportunity (e.g. one lake has a monthly “coffee house” with a sign indicating next gathering ~ a sharing of ideas, information, etc.)
- Include durations in the lake constitution for executive role participation that encourages “new blood” and regular turn-over
- Review association fees regarding amount (e.g. \$10, \$15, \$20, \$30, \$50) and value provided (e.g. special events, summer programs, etc.)
- Network, network, network!

## Challenges may include:

- A critical mass becoming responsibility for all tasks,
- Exhaustion of members,
- A lack of initiatives due to complacency or frustration,
- Participants representing a specific age grouping (e.g. over 60 yrs. of age),
- Motivating seasonal residents to assume roles,
- Engaging those with full time employ,
- Lack of knowledgeable volunteers,
- A fluctuating or declining membership in lake organizations due to aging land owners/multiple family properties/perception of those providing organization leadership,
- Associations being seen as “police states”.

## Additional recruitment tips:

- Get all active volunteers involved in thinking up new methods for recruiting. Pool these ideas.
- Use every available source: radio, television, newspapers, personal contact.
- Offer stimulating orientation sessions/information backgrounds so volunteers can get “up to speed” and feel valued.
- The best volunteer recruiters are volunteers who are happy with your organization.
- People are attracted to positive, honest, enthusiastic appeals.
- Recognize efforts. Smiles and “thanks” go a long way.

## Retention is critical to lessen recruitment demands!

- Acknowledge commitment and tasks completed.
- Reward your volunteers with perks.
- Celebrate team successes. (Food is always appreciated!)
- Extend “thanks” personally and frequently.
- Give credit publicly (e.g. acknowledge at AGM/committee meeting, in the newsletter, on the website) in an honest and sincere manner.
- Value input and include members in decision-making.
- Maintain effective communication so all feel involved.