

Volunteer Partnerships at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

by Peggy O'Dell

The National Park Service Volunteer in Parks Program has offered Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site an opportunity to expand into the community and tap resources otherwise unavailable to park managers. For the last two years we have been concentrating the efforts of the interpretive managers and the Museum Education Office to develop a quality program which will attract willing people in the community and let the community know of the resources available for its use.

Defining your goals and constraints is the first step involved in establishing a volunteer program. You must consider some basic questions. Do you really need volunteers to add to your existing programs? Will volunteers add the elements you need to improve the quality of your program? Will they be an *integral part* of your program? Remember, volunteers must feel needed or they will quickly lose interest in working.

To answer some of these questions we developed a list of activities which we feel volunteers can do well and which are important to the successful management of the park. They include:

- Giving programs in the Museum of Westward Expansion and the Old Courthouse, two areas dealing with the westward expansion movement of the American frontier.
- Providing roving interpretation in the two museums.
- Providing living history



The life and history of the Plains Indians come to life with the help of volunteers at the Museum of Westward Expansion.

Photo credit: Joseph Matthews

demonstrations of traditional crafts.

- Staffing the information desk and other visitor services functions within the visitor center.

Not all our volunteer work involves public contact. Many individuals have contributed immensely to the success of our program by researching topics, providing library services, co-curating special exhibits, writing educational materials to complement the interpretive program, analyzing visitor use patterns, and so on.

A particularly helpful group is our handicapped advisors. These individuals, who are disabled themselves in one way or another, serve as advisors, assisting Jefferson National Expansion Memorial's staff in defining and meeting the needs of disabled visitors.

Word-of-Mouth and Formal Recruitment Successful

Volunteers are able to do almost anything the paid interpretive staff can do but they may not be used to replace paid employees. The first thing we learned about recruiting

VIPs was to be open-minded and to publicize the program widely. Word-of-mouth is an especially valuable tool among volunteers. For instance, the grandmother of a former employee works here as a volunteer 20 hours each week. She recruited her sister, who has spread the word among the volunteer organization to which she belongs. That organization has proved to be another steady source of aid.

Recruitment along formal lines is also successful. Articles in the city and suburban newspapers have attracted a substantial number of interested candidates. Others have been contacted through churches, schools, and senior citizen groups. Even the unsuspecting visitor who mentions that he or she enjoys visiting the park, subsequently may be signed up as a volunteer.

Training and Personal Development

The level of expertise a volunteer program does not just happen. We select our volunteers in much the

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Recycling

Grist

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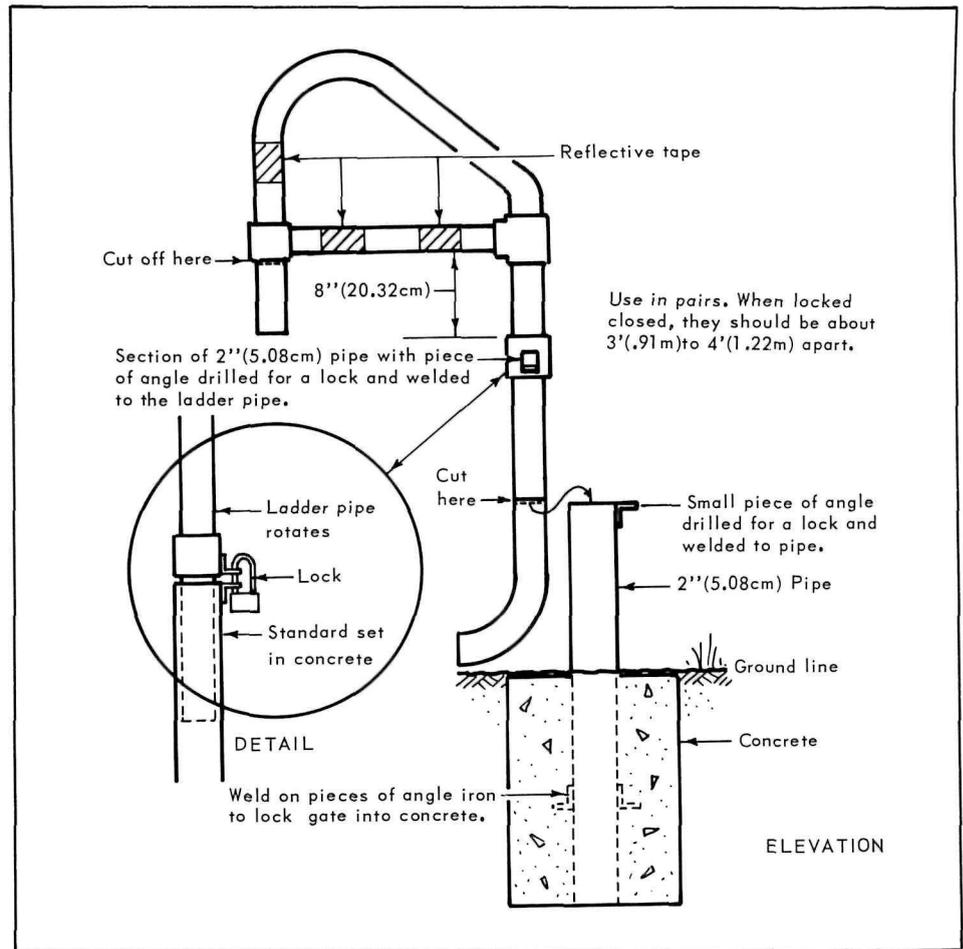
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FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

All ideas and suggestions shared in the pages of *GRIST* are presented as guidelines, not final working blueprints. Be sure to check any device or plan you want to adapt for compliance with national, state and local safety codes.

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Reusing Old Pool Ladders

Before junking old pool ladders, consider this idea sent by Walter Carpenter, maintenance repairman at Tippecanoe River State Park, Indiana: convert them into vehicle barrier gates, which will allow pedestrian and bicycle traffic while keeping vehicles off service roads leading into playgrounds and picnic areas.

Remove the ladder's steps, keeping the two side frames. Cut off the bottom parts of the frame at the desired length. Weld a larger piece of pipe onto the leg of the ladder approx-

imately 8" (20 cm) below the lateral pipe support. Slip the pipe down into a pipe of a larger dimension where it will meet the welded pipe sleeve. Then set the bottom pipe in concrete. Weld two angle irons on each pipe with predrilled holes in each for locks. Determine the distance needed for pedestrian traffic and repeat directly opposite from the first gate.

After both gates are painted, add strips of highway reflective tape for night visibility.

Our thanks to John Bergman, property manager of the park, for sharing Carpenter's clever idea with *GRIST!*

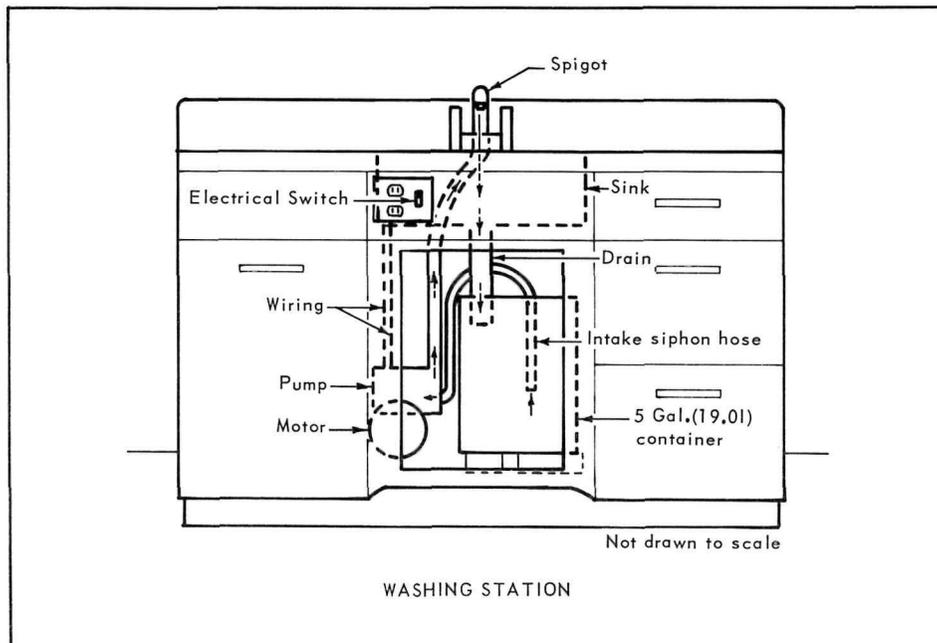
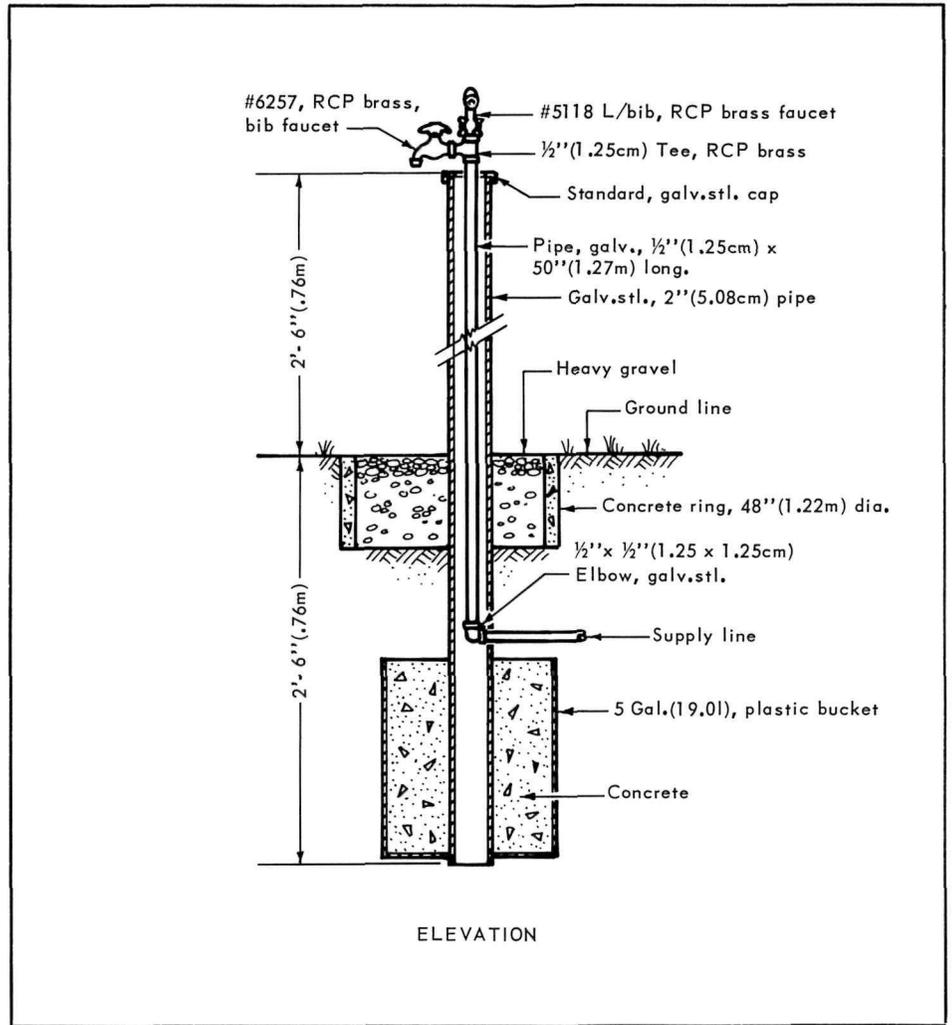
Grease Washing Station Captures Hand Cleaner for Reuse

Money down the drain is a thing of the past at Canoe Creek State Park, Pennsylvania, since foreman Dave Hanna designed and constructed a grease washing station.

The station consists of a cabinet sink, electric motor, in-line water pump, 5-gallon (19 l) container, filter screen and hoses, and cleaning fluid.

A switch on the front of the sink is turned on; the electric motor starts the pump; the faucet is opened and cleaning fluid is drawn out of the 5-gallon (19 l) container. The siphon hose, placed off the bottom about one-fourth of the depth of the container, is screened.

As the operator washes machine parts or his hands, the grease and sediments settle to the bottom of the container. As a result, the hand cleaner rises to the top, and can be recycled back through the pump.



Fresh Water Supply

Recreation areas need a supply of fresh, clean drinking water, but how

to provide it is a challenging problem.

One design solution has been suggested by Clark E. Travepiece, recreation development assistant with Pennsylvania Power & Light Company (PP&L). The company owns and operates numerous campgrounds, picnic areas, and boat launching sites that require potable water distribution systems.

Travepiece reports that PP&L has tried a number of different designs and has found this particular one to be very effective because all piping in the design is enclosed in the larger 2" (5 cm) galvanized pipe, which is vandal-proof.

During the off-season, Travepiece says hose bibs and bubblers are removed and a 1/2" (1.25 cm) galvanized cap is installed on the riser piping.

The approximate cost of each completed unit is \$100.

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same way as we do our paid staff. We have found that volunteers require and deserve the same kind of training, encouragement, and personal development as paid staff members. Of course, the complexity of the task and the individual's own expertise determine the amount of time involved in training.

For example, our volunteer interpreters go through the same rigorous two-week training course as paid technicians do. This familiarizes them with the park mission, the concept of interpretation, the content of the museums, and the thematic content of the interpretive program.

If volunteers are going to represent your park, they must demonstrate the quality necessary to uphold your organization's reputation. That may mean spending the same portion of your time working with new volunteers as with any new employee. In the long run it does pay off. We also have found that the volunteers appreciate involvement with the paid staff; it helps them gain the same degree of "professionalism." We all learn from each other.

After the initial training period, we encourage our volunteers to continue their personal growth. It can be difficult to maintain skills and enthusiasm for a job where you have to remember a century of American history but only work two or three days a week. Volunteers need help and encouragement to continue learning and expanding their field of knowledge. Individual counselling, periodic group meetings, in-service training, and a pat on the back all serve important roles in the development of our volunteer staff.

Commitment

We arrange specific work schedules with the volunteers which they must follow. They are expected to report conscientiously for the hours mutu-



Volunteer gives an interpretive talk in the Pioneer Cabin at the Old Courthouse.

Photo credit: Joseph Matthews

ally agreed upon. They realize that they have accepted a responsibility and that we rely upon them. They know they are important members of the staff.

Pride in their work and an intense commitment to the park often develop. At the Arch and the Old Courthouse, we recently saw 100 percent turnover in the paid staff of interpreters in one year. In contrast, volunteers who started when the courthouse opened its living history rooms in 1970 are still with us, still meeting their monthly commitment of service. They provide an extremely stable work force.

Recognition

It is important to recognize the contributions of these individuals. At Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, we hold our annual luncheon in the fall. Each volunteer is given a token gift and a certificate of appreciation. This small thanks for the services received is appreciated but often the real reward is intrinsic: knowledge of a service rendered, a job well done, and continued personal growth.

Once the volunteers are comfortable with a job, we find they often want to expand their involvement. Individuals who formerly were intimidated by the thought of standing up in front of a group and talking for thirty minutes now are distressed when groups cancel their tour reservations!

Jefferson National Expansion Memorial now has a staff of thirty-seven volunteers which donates an average of 1,000 hours of service monthly. The volunteers provide direct services for the park visitors, relief for the paid staff, clerical assistance, research and library aid, and dozens of other services. The quality of a visitor's experience in the park is directly influenced by our VIPs. They are indeed very important people.

Peggy O'Dell is a Supervisory Park Ranger at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial NHS. Ms. O'Dell is Supervisor of the Gateway Arch, which includes the Museum of Westward Expansion and the Visitor Center. A graduate of the University of Missouri, Ms. O'Dell worked as a summer seasonal at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and as a Park Ranger with the Corps of Engineers. She assumed her present position with the National Park Service in 1977.

Safety

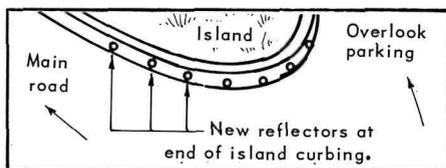
Making Traffic Islands Safe

While traffic islands are useful and necessary road safety features, they also can be hazards, as the island at Lane Pinnacle Overlook along the Blue Ridge Parkway in western North Carolina proved.

At night, the island was hard to spot, and in fog, which is common to the area, it was impossible to see. As a result, maintenance crews spent many work hours repairing the island, and it was a safety threat to drivers.

Parkway Maintenance Mechanic Donald H. Guise suggested a simple solution: install reflectors on the 5" (12.5 cm) high curb at each end and on the roadway side of the island.

Because his suggestion helped eliminate a hazard and prevent accidents, Guise was presented a \$50 National Park Service incentive award.



Linseed Oil for Axe Heads

To keep axe heads from becoming loose on the handle, Maintenance Worker R. E. Norman of Homestead National Monument, Nebraska, suggests storing axes head down in a container with about 3 to 4 inches (7.5-10 cm) of raw linseed oil.

The oil swells the wood, making a tight fit between head and handle, and also keeps the head from rusting.

In addition to providing a safer tool, this practice will prolong the life of the axe.



When 2-Wheel Drives Can't Get There

Remote beach areas are often popular visitor areas. This can create special problems of safe emergency transportation of injured persons, especially those sustaining back or neck injuries, fractures, or requiring cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Assateague Island, Virginia, is a case in point. Melvin L. Olsen, supervisory park ranger, reports how the situation is handled there:

"Assateague Island is 37 miles (59.2 km) long. Of that distance, only about 6 miles (9.6 km) is adjacent to roads accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles (normal ambulances). The remaining 31 miles (49.6 km), even though accessible only by 4-wheel drive and foot, are still heavily used by the public.

"This off-road visitor use presents a potentially serious problem in the event spine board or other types of ambulance services are needed. No off-road 4-wheel drive ambulances are available.

"This past summer all Tom's Cove District protection 4-wheel drive pickups were modified to carry a spine board in such a way that it would be secure and positioned so that CPR and other necessary first aid

treatments could be safely and satisfactorily administered during transportation of the victim from the beach to the ambulance.

"Two holes were drilled in each side of the pickup's bed. Two proportional holes were drilled in each end of all District spine boards. Paint marks were made on the holes of the spine boards and pickup bed sides for quick and correct spine board placement. Once in place, 'I' bolts were inserted in each hole securing the spine board to the pickup's bed.

"A variety of tests were conducted simulating actual situations. The tests consistently demonstrated that a spine board victim could be moved from the ground to the pickup's bed and completely secured in approximately 10 seconds. This means there would be only a 10-second delay in CPR application as compared to all the delays and problems associated with the administration of CPR to a hand-carried victim.

"The spine board/pickup setup also proved that one person, if necessary, could secure the victim to the pickup bed and safely transport the victim to an ambulance."

Remote areas that are inaccessible by 2-wheel drive ambulances could benefit greatly from this simple spine board/pickup modification, and, if the spine boards already are available, the only cost is the purchase of four "I" bolts.

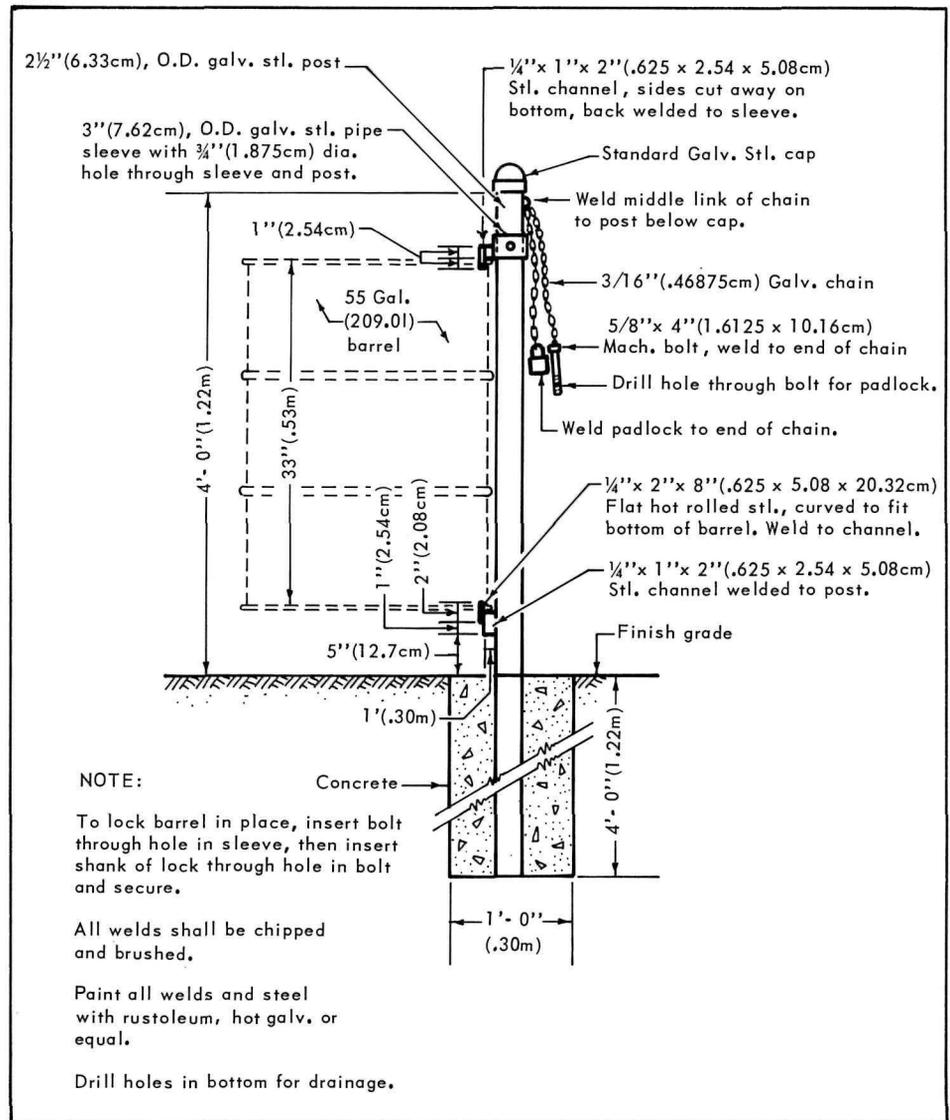
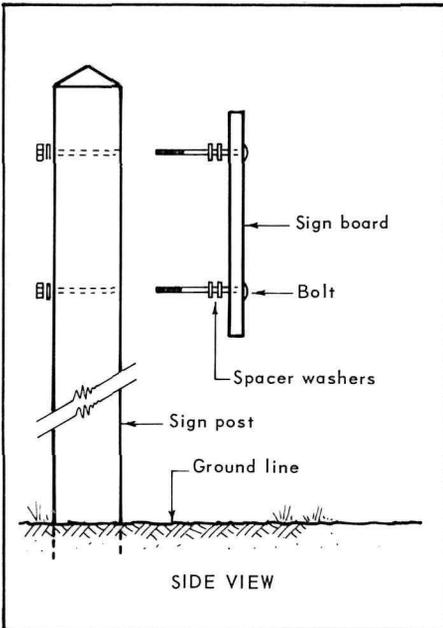
Prevent Sign Rot

Good signs lend themselves to the surroundings, provide information, and help the flow of traffic in parks. But they're also expensive.

To help preserve signs, William Dougal, unit manager at Lake Waramaug State Park, Connecticut, suggests using several space washers on bolts between the post and signboard.

For just a few pennies, the life of an expensive sign can be prolonged by making space for water to drain away and by letting air get in to dry out moisture.

Dougal says that without the space washers, invariably rot occurs where the signboard and the post meet. And he should know; he is a signmaker.



No-Spill Trash Cans

Many work hours are spent cleaning up garbage from tipped-over trash receptacles.

To save wasted effort and frustration, Rudolph H. Hozak, senior landscape architect with the city of Flint, Michigan, suggests using a 55-gallon

(209 l) drum on a locking post.

The locking post was designed for use at rest areas along the Flint River Bikeway after Hozak tried unsuccessfully to find a suitable one commercially made.

A number of the receptacles have been in use for three years, Hozak reports, and they have held up well. The park areas are neater, too.