

Debrecen (HU), Hortobágy NP

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WORKSHOP N°12

***Volunteering in protected areas:
benefits for nature, benefits for people.***

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Origins and development

Volunteering project in Foreste Casentinesi starts on May 2011, on the “footprints” of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise NP historical experience, and thanks to an initial private donation.



The first year of activities consists of two camps; in 2012 there are six, and in 2013 the number grows to ten, for a total amount of 120 volunteers employed in 3 years.



In the current year the Park successfully tests special turns for families and for veterans.

How does the project work?

Beginning of the year: the Park plans a calendar and starts promoting it through web channels, Park's visitors centres, University faculties.

A webpage and a mailbox are devoted to make applicant volunteers download rules and registration form, answer their questions, get their enrolments.



The Park evaluates CV and selects candidates, asking them to pay the registration fee (50 €) to cover accomodation and insurance policy. An initial food and hygienical-sanitary material furniture is provided too.

There is a preliminary planning for building up the daily programme, and a final phase concerning reports and certificates.

Benefits for nature: what do the volunteers do for the Park?



Cleaning and monitoring paths and facilities.



Tourists assistance.



N2000 habitats restoring.

Fauna/flora signals advising.



Fire watching and water keeping surveillance.

... so volunteers are:

A precious and helpful presence on territory
("hands for what has to be done,
eyes and hears for what goes wrong").

A precious help in citizenship involvement
and environmental consciousness.



Benefits for people: what does the Park do for volunteers?

Initial formation training.



Education and supervision.

Discovering of a protected area.



Interacting with Park employees and trainees.

... so volunteers get:

Understanding how does a Park work, and what for.

Feeling part of something bigger and well organized for nature protection, through an unforgettable experience.



Facing problems and criticalities

Difficulties on promotion and research of good new ways for it.



Difficulties in building up a long-term project.

Lack of communication with local communities and their involvement.



Difficulties in finding sufficient fundings to have an organized and motivated staff working on the project, and necessary equipments.

Main general topics and questions



How to plan the “right” programme?

How to balance limits and challenges inside it?

How to know people before meeting them,
in order to build it?

What about feedbacks and exit strategies,
in order not to lose what has been built up?



What are the
working/studying gains
for people after
volunteering?



The future: improvement opportunities

Connection and confrontation of different experiences (from long-term to short camps, from weekends with local communities to EVS).

Creation of a unique net respecting diversity (needs and capabilities of different realities).

EU stimulation (the example of Grundtvig Europarc project).



EU-grundtvig project: a case study

“Volunteer management in European Parks” (2010-13):

Palma de Maiorca (ES) 18-22 March 2013:

**International Training for volunteer coordinators
in EU Protected Areas** (by The Conservation Volunteers UK)



The project: aims and activities



Aims:

Highly skilled volunteer coordinators in EU protected areas who can deliver effective opportunities for people to volunteer in protected areas, sustainable high quality and efficient volunteer management in protected areas.

Learning opportunities for volunteers, park staff and hosting protected areas that enhance practical and vocational skills, communication, inter-personal and project organisation skills, opportunities for volunteers and park staff to broaden their horizons in educational and cultural terms.

Promotion of the culture of active citizenship (volunteering in parks as active and creative means of being EU citizens).

Higher park and public awareness about the value of volunteering, higher quality and acceptance of informal lifelong learning through volunteering.



The project: aims and activities



Activities:

International workshops for volunteer coordinators in parks.

Compilation of learning material for volunteer coordinators.

International exchange of volunteers in parks and park staff.

Elaboration of quality standards for volunteer management in EU parks.

Research on the impact of volunteering in protected areas.

Communication and dissemination.



Training for coordinators

Planning projects:

Basic details and timeline

Resources and capacities

Limits and challenges

Objectives and alternative plans



Managing volunteers:

Motivation

Managing expectations

Supervision

Evaluation and feedback

Exit strategy

Relationship:

Authority – Responsibility – Accountability – Power – Control

Training for coordinators

Guidelines for quality volunteer management:

Expressed commitment

Appropriate resources

Recruiting volunteers

Role of volunteers

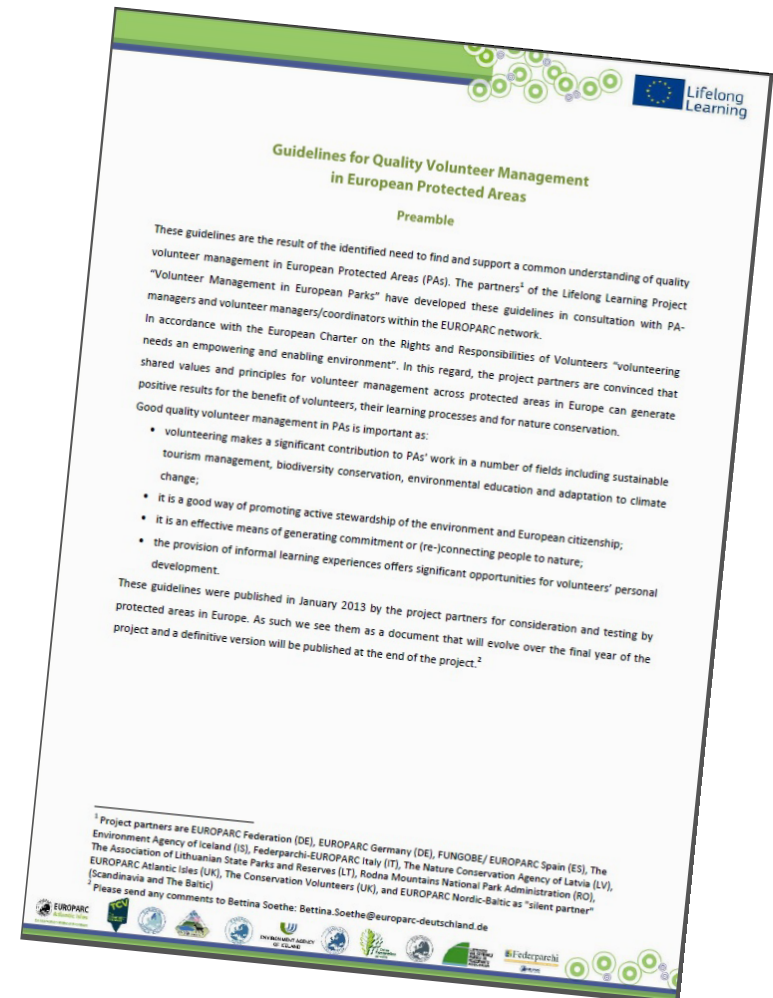
Safety and risk insurance

Recruitment process

Training for volunteers

Support and supervision

Recognition



**Many thanks for
your attention ...**



**... and long live
the volunteers!!!**