



A few facts:

Baby-boomers volunteer more than any other age group.

The majority of Earth Team volunteers are working individuals.

Volunteerism by minorities is on the rise.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Earth Team frequently asked questions

Volunteers are a hassle. Why bother?

Volunteerism is the foundation of NRCS. Employees and partners are volunteers, as are customers who voluntarily apply conservation practices on their lands. The Earth Team has been a part of NRCS since 1982 (authorized by Congress in 1985). The Earth Team requires very little paperwork. Once a volunteer signs-up and receives an ID card, a simple timesheet is all that is needed to track time and attendance. Remember, volunteers that have favorable work experiences become “good will ambassadors” for NRCS.

So what do volunteers do, anyway?

To date, NRCS has benefited from the service of more than 300,000 volunteers who have contributed more than 10 million hours of service, valued at more than \$167.2 million (based on the \$16.54 per hour valuation established by Points of Light Foundation).

My spouse helps out around the office. Is he/she a volunteer?

Yes! Get the Earth Team application filled out and help ensure every volunteer is recognized for his or her contributions to the agency. Additionally, Earth Team volunteers are covered by Worker’s Compensation and protected from tort claims while representing the agency.

What if I just need help on one project?

Volunteer work assignments cover a wide variety of jobs that vary from a few hours to long term commitments. Just balance agency needs with volunteer interests and availability.

Don’t I need more staff and not volunteers?

Earth Team volunteers are NOT substitutes for full-time NRCS employees.



What can the Earth Team pay for?

Although volunteers cannot be paid, NRCS provides training and can pay for commuting expenses, travel and per diem, transportation, and equipment costs.

My supervisor says I have to have a volunteer in my office.

The use of volunteers should be based on **NEED**. A needs assessment should precede any volunteer recruiting effort. A needs assessment asks:

1. What are do we do that can be done by volunteers?
2. What needs to get done but we don't have the time for?
3. What tasks can be done better by a volunteer?

How do I recruit volunteers?

ASK! The four most powerful words in the English language are "I need your help." When asked to volunteer, more than 80 percent of adults say "yes."

Where can I find volunteers?

Volunteers come from all walks of life including retirees, students, the unemployed, conservationists and environmentalists, civic-minded groups or individuals, professionals seeking change of pace, NRCS district staff, and NRCS family members. Volunteerism in America is at its highest level and the Earth Team fills a need in our communities and in our offices.

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