

- Mentors/role models help, knowing or not.
- A volunteer coordinator can make your life much simpler.
- Listen to outsiders.
- Signs to watch for: They show up at a meeting. They ask lots of questions. They criticize or complain--but don't ask them to take over! They return a questionnaire. They attend an Excom meeting. They hover nearby.

**Manage Well (but don't over control):** Match the people to the job and visa versa.

Caveats:

- You can't motivate them to do everything.
- Make them a part of the team.
- Let them become members of the tribe. (You're one of us, we care about you.)
- Don't let a rising star get isolated.
- Don't deprive them of their sweat equity.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate, but DON'T abdicate.
- Monitor, follow-up, evaluate beginning to end.
- Learn their payoffs; provide those payoffs; and don't assume their payoffs are the same as yours.
- Give them feedback.

*The assistance of the Sierra Club Council's discretionary fund in providing money for the printing and distribution of these pamphlets is gratefully acknowledged.*

*Printed on Recycled Paper*

**ORGANIZER'S LIBRARY (\$5 each)**

- Volunteer Leadership
- Conservation Action
- Membership Idea Book
- Grassroots Fundraising
- Political Action
- Training for Effectiveness

Order from:

Sierra Club  
Office of Volunteer Development  
730 Polk St.  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Ship to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_

A GREP (GrassRoots Effectiveness Project) 'Organizer's Flyer'. For more information about Organizer's Flyers and the Organizer's Library of handbooks for Sierra Club leaders, contact:

Sierra Club, Office of Volunteer Development  
730 Polk St.  
San Francisco CA 94109  
(415) 776-2211

# Recruiting and Activating Volunteers

**... because two heads are better than one, and four are better still!**

## How tos of Volunteer Motivation

- *Definitions*
- *Recruitment techniques: potlucks, member orientation, outings, newsletters, regular meetings*
- *Activation: how to be the most powerful person in the Sierra Club*
- *Management*
  - entry level
  - questionnaires
  - job descriptions
  - signs to watch for

# Recruiting and Activating Volunteers

**"Two Heads are Better Than One.....and Four Are Better Still!"**

## **Our biggest need:**

Surveys have told us that getting people involved, motivating and managing volunteers, and effective committees top the list of needs expressed by grassroots leaders in ALL the Club's programs.

## **Definitions:**

Recruitment = Get 'em in the door.

Activation = Get 'em involved or more involved

## **Recruitment:**

It is best done at the GROUP level. What are our advantages?

- Our agenda appeals to people: Conservation, Outings
- Our image: People like winners, especially those who are underdogs.

Specific techniques—building on what many groups are already doing:

- Potlucks (No long speeches or pressure. Introduce leaders. Have it in a small house to guarantee "overflow" crowd. Make it fun. But remember that some won't come to the home of a stranger.)
- Member Orientations (Have refreshments. Put lots of leaders' faces in front of the group. Upbeat emcee. Quick presentations. Details at tables later. All must be positive. No business transacted among

leaders.)

- Outings (Have a conservation focus when appropriate. Place stories and photos in community weekly newspapers. Ditto for group/chapter newsletters. No macho image portrayed in pictures.)
- Newsletters (Policy decision as to whether they are to be a recruitment tool. If so, distribute widely. Content, tone, and balance must be inviting to the non-member. Handling dissent is especially delicate. A tremendous source of entry level jobs as simple as labeling for bulk mailing.)
- Regular Meetings (Advertise them in the newsletter, weekly papers, public radio, community bulletin boards, PSAs, etc. Even at the cost of facility rental, they're worth the money. Use a public building. Private homes are okay for committees. Refreshments are a must. Keep procedural stuff to a minimum. Don't let them run too long, leave time to mingle. Must have an upbeat "conductor"—not necessarily the Chair. Everything should be positive. Clear announcements in advance. Awards and rewards send important signals to prospective members/activists. Color-coded nametags. Get names AND addresses of all new people. Follow-up letter and newsletter to

visitors. Committee tables. Letter writing tables with varied paper, pens and stamps provided. Lot of faces in front of the meeting. Recognize outings leaders. Invite news-makers and the press will follow. Write it up afterward.

## **Activation:**

You're trying to make a connection. What motivates people anyway?

- Recognition, accomplishment, friends, anger, contributions, power, ego, travel, money, food, sex, sense of belonging. The Club can meet many of these needs. Motivation is best possible when you think of yourself as an ENABLER.
- The most powerful person in the Sierra Club is the one walking around with a list of small, do-able tasks in his/her pocket.
- It's best when it's personal: (You don't get milk from a cow by sending it a letter.)
- Entry level—keep jobs small at first. Look for "I can do that." Don't ask them to Chair a campaign at the first expression of interest.
- Questionnaires are also useful. GOOD follow-up needed. USE the results.
- Job descriptions are a must.

*continued....*