

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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This thesis examines the motivations of ecological restoration volunteers with the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. This study helps fill in voids left by a lack of research on the motivations of ecological restoration volunteers. Studies that have explored restoration volunteer motivation relied largely on surveys that revealed altruistic motivations for volunteering.

I conducted participant observation at thirteen work parties and ethnographic interviews with eighteen volunteers from June 2005 through October 2005 with three main objectives: 1) to determine the motivations of work party volunteers, 2) to determine the likes and dislikes of those volunteers that pertain directly to work parties and the volunteer program, and 3) to make recommendations to the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy about ways to increase volunteer recruitment and retention at work parties. I then analyzed field and interview notes using thematic analysis to identify the personal motivations of each volunteer.

Data analysis revealed three distinct categories of motivations: start-up motivations, motivations that played a primary role in continuing volunteer participation, and motivations that played a supporting role in continuing participation as well as volunteer satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work parties. Although many

motivations played a role in volunteer participation on work parties, the results of this study suggest that both tangible and intangible personal gains play a greater role in volunteer commitment than purely altruistic motives.

Ten recommendations stem from the findings of this study. In order to increase volunteer recruitment, I recommend the following: 1) emphasize benefits of volunteering in brochures and advertisements; 2) encourage current volunteers to bring friends and family on work parties; 3) present more pictures of preserves in brochures and advertisements; 4) appeal to potential volunteers' need for recreational experiences; 5) create partnerships with local schools and teachers in order to encourage more students to participate. In order to increase volunteer retention, I recommend the following: 6) provide more opportunities for recreation during work parties; 7) increase opportunities for volunteers to socialize; 8) take more time to educate volunteers prior to and during work parties; 9) present volunteers with information (oral and visual) about accomplishments of work parties at preserves; 10) stewards need to understand their personal role in increasing volunteer satisfaction.

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Why They Volunteer: A Study of Participants at Nature Conservancy Work Parties

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Kevin L. Hastings III, Author

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Why They Volunteer: A Study of Participants at Nature Conservancy Work Parties

Chapter 1 – Introduction

I have become increasingly interested and concerned about environmental issues over the past five years. After completing my undergraduate degree in environmental studies, I started a massive job hunt in the environmental field. To my dismay, nobody was hiring; however, during my job hunt I found that most organizations had numerous volunteer opportunities. When I started the Master's degree of which this thesis is a part, I knew I wanted to research some type of human interaction with the environment. Volunteering immediately stood out to me as a viable option.

In 1997 there were nearly 3000 environmental nonprofit organizations, most of which relied heavily on volunteers even if they had a paid workforce (O'Neill 2002). Volunteers have played and continue to play a critical role in the environmental movement; without their efforts, it is likely that most environmental organizations would cease to exist. Many of the improvements that have been made in the quality of the environment in the past few decades have been the result of the hard work of volunteers (Ryan 2001).

Shortly after starting my graduate program I decided to research volunteer motivation. I wanted to do research that might, in some way, shed some light on pro-environmental behavior and attitudes. I also wanted to do something that could lead to improvements in environmental quality. I felt that a greater understanding of why people volunteer for environmental organizations might help those organizations

utilize their volunteer base more effectively and therefore contribute more to improving the environment.

In February 2005 I contacted six environmental nonprofit organizations throughout Oregon. I offered to volunteer over thirty hours a week in exchange for their permission to conduct my research with their volunteers. In addition, I offered a copy of my thesis, including recommendations about improvements to their program. The volunteer director of the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy was the first and only person to accept my offer. I began designing my research with five main questions in mind: Why do people give up their free time to volunteer? What do they get out of volunteering? Is the work that they are doing contributing to the environment? Are their services being used efficiently? How can volunteer hours be increased?

I narrowed down my search and began field research in June 2005 with three main objectives:

1. To determine the motivations of work party volunteers
2. To determine the likes and dislikes of those volunteers that pertain directly to work parties and the volunteer program
3. To make recommendations to the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy about ways to increase volunteer recruitment and retention at work parties.

This thesis aims to evaluate volunteer motivations discovered through field research conducted during the summer and fall of 2005 and to use that evaluation to make recommendations to the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The purpose of this study is not to make broad generalizations about volunteer motivations; rather, its purpose is to provide an intimate look at the motivations of a specific set of volunteers.

In chapter two I give background on volunteering in the United States. In addition, I provide a brief history and description of the operations of The Nature Conservancy as well as an outline of the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy and its volunteer program.

Chapter three provides a review of relevant literature on volunteerism. The debate over altruistic versus egoistic actions is discussed. A review of the literature on human and social service volunteerism will assist in an understanding of volunteer motivations. Chapter three concludes with a review of the literature on ecological restoration volunteerism.

Chapter four describes the ethnographic methods employed during this research. I also discuss reasons for choosing these methods and the limitations of this study.

Chapter five presents the findings of this research. Three main categories of motivations are discussed: start-up motivations, primary continuing motivations, and supporting continuing motivations.

Chapter six provides a discussion of the findings of this research. I provide a comparison of the results of my research to the results of other similar studies and discuss the reasons for discrepancies in findings.

In chapter seven I make recommendations to the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Recommendations cover ways to recruit more volunteers as well as increase the retention of their current volunteer base.

Chapter 2 – Background

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background of volunteering in the United States. I will begin with some definitions of volunteering and recent statistics of volunteering in the United States. This chapter will also provide a brief history of The Nature Conservancy and a description of its mission as well as how the organization carries out that mission. I will also provide an in-depth look at the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy, including history, operations, the volunteer program and work parties.

Volunteers and Volunteering

According to a joint United Nations Volunteers and Independent Sector report, there are four generally accepted types of volunteering (Dingle 2001). The first is called mutual aid, or self-help. In the United States, it includes organizations that are set-up by a group of people who are all affected by the same problem. The second form of volunteering is service to others. Service to others involves giving some type of service to the whole community, rather than to a specific group to which the volunteer belongs. The third form of volunteerism is campaigning and advocacy. When people volunteer for an organization or cause that seeks social change and justice, it is called advocacy volunteering. This type of volunteering includes volunteering for environmental groups. The fourth and final type of volunteering is participation and self-governance; this type includes people who become involved in the process of governance (Dingle 2001).

The UN Volunteers and Independent Sector report listed three criteria for an action to be considered volunteering. Variations exist in the criteria for volunteering,

but most include some form of the following: volunteering must be carried out primarily for reasons other than financial gain; the volunteers must be acting on their own free will; and, a third party must benefit from the action (Dingle 2001). King (1998) summed-up this definition by describing volunteers as people who “donate their time to further an organizational cause without concern for monetary compensation.”

To be considered a volunteer, financial reimbursement must not exceed the market value of the work involved. In other words, a volunteer can get paid, but only for the expenses accrued during volunteering. The second criterion does not exclude people who volunteer because of social pressure, or requirements for a class or job. Rather, it means that in order to be called a volunteer, the final decision to act must come from the volunteer; the action to volunteer cannot be forced. Also, a third party (which can include family, friends, neighbors, communities, and the environment) must benefit from the action for it to be deemed volunteering.

Measuring volunteering has proved to be a difficult task. According to a study conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005), approximately 29% of the United States population, or 64.5 million people, volunteered at least once through or for an organization between September 2004 and September 2005. The study found that volunteers spent a median of 50 hours on volunteer activities during that time period. Forty percent of volunteers sought out an organization themselves, while 43% were asked directly by an organization or acquaintance to volunteer (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005).

A study by Independent Sector in 2001 found that 44% of adults older than 21 volunteered with a formal organization in 2001; of which 63% reported that they volunteered at least once a month. The study also compared philanthropic actions among adults in the United States. According to the study, 46% of adults gave money, 42% of adults gave money and volunteered, 2% of adults volunteered only, and 10% of adults did neither during 2001 (Independent Sector 2001). It was estimated that 83.9 million adults volunteered approximately 15.5 billion hours during the previous year. This amounted to the equivalent of nine million full time employees or \$239 billion (Independent Sector 2001). Adults who volunteered averaged 3.6 hours per week.

Oregon's volunteering rates have typically been above the national rates. For example, in 2002 the national percentage of people over 16 years of age who volunteered was 27.4%; Oregon's volunteering rate for 2002 was 32.4% (Points of Light 2004). Volunteering rates rose slightly in 2003 to a national percentage of 28.8 and an Oregon rate of 33.1% (Points of Light 2004).

The value of volunteer time has also slowly risen. In 2002, the national value of volunteer time was estimated to be \$16.74 per hour; the value of volunteer time in Oregon the same year was \$15.15 per hour (Independent Sector 2005). The national value of volunteer time rose by almost a dollar to \$17.55 per hour in 2004.

The Nature Conservancy

In 1915, a group of ecologists formed the Ecological Society of America. From its inception, there were disagreements within the group as to whether it should exist for the sole purpose of publishing research and supporting scientists or whether it

should actively pursue the preservation of natural habitats (Grove 1992, The Nature Conservancy 2006). The differences resulted in a split within the group; those who thought the group should pursue the preservation of natural areas formed another group, The Ecologist's Union, in 1946.

Following the advice of Dick Pough, a member, engineer and conservationist, the group changed its name to The Nature Conservancy in 1951 (Grove 1992). Pough tapped some of his wealthy acquaintances to help The Nature Conservancy buy natural areas and the group made their first purchase, albeit a modest one, of a piece of land in New York in 1955 (Grove 1992). The Nature Conservancy initially focused on just buying land and, because of a relative lack of funds, they were confined to purchasing cheap, unusable land. However, the organization changed its focus to buying pieces of land that were deemed under threat of disappearing.

Today, The Nature Conservancy is an

“international nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and water that they need to survive” (Endicott 1993:17).

Since 1951, The Nature Conservancy has protected 15 million acres of habitat in the United States. With partners, The Nature Conservancy has safeguarded another 102 million acres around the world. Today, they are present in all 50 states and in 28 countries (The Nature Conservancy 2005).

In order to achieve their motto of “saving the last great places on Earth”, The Nature Conservancy incorporates a strategy called “conservation by design.” According to this strategy, “each of the local, state and country programs act on a shared understanding of what constitutes success...they work as one conservancy

while still taking advantage of their decentralized organizational structure” (The Nature Conservancy 2006). The main programs that work to achieve this goal are the conservation program, protection program, stewardship program, and development program.

The conservation program is also known as the planning program. It is responsible for identifying sensitive areas in need of protection. The Nature Conservancy employs a strategy called ecoregional-based conservation. They design portfolios of conservation areas within and across different ecoregions to identify the lands and waters in need of protection. With concentrated conservation attention, these lands and waters would protect susceptible native species and ecological systems. This system assumes that the natural distribution of species occurs more closely aligned with ecoregions rather than with geopolitical boundaries (The Nature Conservancy 2006).

The next step in the planning process is called conservation area planning. The purpose of conservation area planning is to identify strategies and actions necessary to conserve species and habitat on each parcel of land and water. This process helps inform another program, the stewardship program, which will be discussed later.

Once threatened areas have been targeted and prioritized by the conservation program, the protection program begins its process of safeguarding them. The Nature Conservancy uses four main methods of protecting threatened parcels of land and water. The first method of protection is acquisition; The Nature Conservancy uses funds to purchase the land outright. The second method of protection is cooperative projects. The Nature Conservancy works with private and public agencies to ensure

the protection of a property not owned by The Nature Conservancy. The third method of protection is registry; this is a process where land owners are encouraged to register their land and enter into a voluntary protection agreement. The final method of protection is conservation easements. Under this method, land owners retain ownership of their land, but enter into a legal agreement with The Nature Conservancy by which they voluntarily restrict or limit the type and amount of development that takes place on the land.

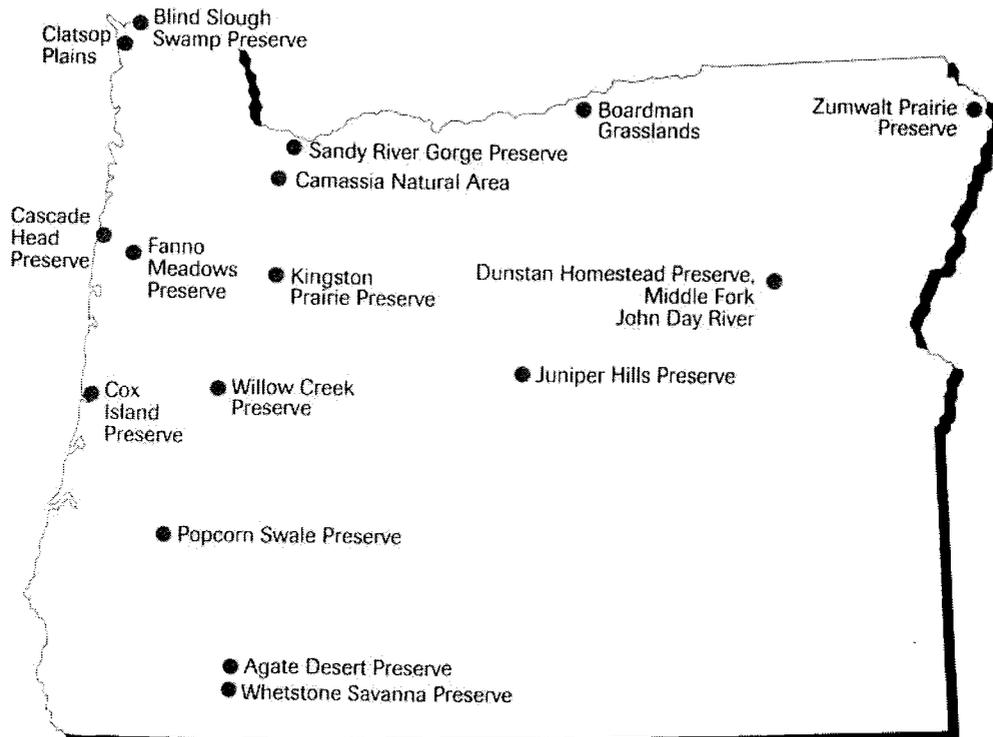
Once the land has come under the protection of The Nature Conservancy, the stewardship program uses conservation area planning to create a site conservation plan. The site conservation plan has many functions among which are: the control and removal of non-native species, the development of native plant sources for grassland restoration projects, returning critical processes to preserves, welcoming visitors, working with neighbors, community-based conservation and measuring the success of conservation goals (The Nature Conservancy 2006).

In order to fulfill its mission, The Nature Conservancy must have funds for operations and purchasing land. The development program is responsible for acquiring these funds. The first source of funding is individual memberships. The Nature Conservancy has close to one million members and supporters worldwide. Community sponsors, those who contribute between \$250 and \$999, and corporate memberships, those who contribute more than \$1,000, are other sources of funding (The Nature Conservancy 2006). Individuals and organizations can also give gifts of stocks, bonds and real estate to The Nature Conservancy. The development program also secures funding from a variety of foundations.

The Oregon Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

The Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy was founded in 1961 by a group of volunteers. Today, the Oregon chapter has grown to more than 24,000 member households. The Oregon chapter currently protects 48 preserves and managed areas scattered throughout the state. Figure 1 shows a map of some of the key preserves in the state of Oregon. More than 133,000 acres are being managed by the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy and more than 483,000 acres protected in Oregon (The Nature Conservancy of Oregon 2005). The Oregon chapter works under the same “conservation by design” framework mentioned above. The remainder of this section will focus on the Oregon chapter’s volunteer program.

Figure 1 – Map of Preserves in Oregon (Courtesy of TNC Oregon)



Volunteer Program

Volunteers have played a critical role in the operations of the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy since it was founded. According to the Oregon chapter of

The Nature Conservancy's website, volunteers contribute an average of 35,000 hours of work to the Oregon chapter annually. This time is approximately the equivalent of sixteen full time employees. The Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy hired its first full time volunteer programs manager in 1993 and currently employs one full time volunteer director as well as a part time volunteer coordinator. The volunteer program in Oregon is one of the largest of all the chapters, and Oregon is the only chapter that employs more than one person dedicated to the volunteer program (Dougherty pers. comm.).

The total revenue for the Oregon chapter for the fiscal year 2006 was \$6,122,608; the total expenses were \$6,882,614. The volunteer program's budget for the fiscal year 2006 was \$116,919. This budget included approximately \$15,000 allocated to sponsor work crews; the remainder of the budget covered salary and benefits for the two employees, recognition events, work party transportation and food, Wednesday volunteer night food, volunteer training costs including first aid and CPR, safety equipment and tools (Dougherty pers. comm.).

According to the Director of Volunteer programs, approximately 900 volunteers contributed more than 29,000 hours during the fiscal year 2005 (Dougherty pers. comm.). This was a significant increase from 1999 when they reported 500 active volunteers contributing 12,000 hours. Of the volunteers tracked out of the Portland office, 176 volunteers attended work parties and contributed 1,949 hours during the fiscal year 2005. This was down from fiscal year 2004 when 196 volunteers contributed 2,944 hours, but higher than a four-year average (FY 2001 – FY 2005) of 146 volunteers contributing 3,071 hours per year.

Volunteers perform many tasks for the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. They work in the office, out of their homes, and at preserves doing a variety of tasks including: preserve maintenance, invasive species control, scientific research and monitoring, interpretive naturalists, seed collection and native plantings, GIS systems data input, endangered species data management, legal work, public outreach, event coordination, leading work crews, photography, and administration and reception support.

The volunteer program recruits volunteers in a variety of ways. Some of the main recruitment methods include a newsletter mailed to the full membership, The Nature Conservancy of Oregon's website, and an e-mail listserv distributed to more than 300 active and potential volunteers. They also advertise volunteering opportunities on volunteermatch.com, CNRG listserv, Metro Greenscene, local radio and newspapers, and targeted recruitment for specific positions at universities and schools. The volunteer program also relies very heavily on word of mouth from current volunteers.

The Oregon chapter has a strong volunteer recognition program to retain volunteers. The recognition program includes several local recognition events, a yearly state-wide volunteer recognition and awards event, and targeted correspondence with volunteers who have a certain number of hours in a given year. They also provide opportunities for volunteer promotion or growth to leadership and skills development positions. A volunteer newsletter and e-mail listserv also maintain regular communication with Oregon's pool of potential and active volunteers.

Work Parties

The area of volunteering with which this thesis is concerned is the work parties attended by volunteers on weekends. The volunteer program facilitates more than fifty volunteer work parties at approximately eighteen preserves each year (The Nature Conservancy of Oregon 2005). They are led by Conservancy stewards or ecologists from each preserve and one or two volunteer crew leaders. Work parties are held from February through November each year. One-day work parties on Saturdays and Sundays as well as weekend-long work parties are offered. Transportation is usually provided for a limited number of volunteers from the Portland office to work parties (except for those in SW Oregon and Eugene).

Generally, between ten and twenty volunteers attend each work party (although for the work parties in which I was in attendance, the lowest number was three and the highest was fourteen). Volunteers perform a number of activities at work parties including native seed collection, invasive species removal, trail maintenance, cabin and building restoration, garbage removal, and preparation for prescribed burns.

Work parties usually begin between 8 am and 10 am. Those that last a full day break for lunch and end between 3 pm and 5 pm. Volunteers for weekend-long work parties typically arrive on site Friday evening, work a full day Saturday and a half-day Sunday. Weekend work parties typically involve two nights of camping.

Chapter 3 – Literature Review

Research on ecological restoration volunteers is relatively sparse. Only a handful of major studies focus on the motivations of volunteers participating in ecological restoration projects. The literature that does exist on the topic seems to provide evidence that the different motivations for volunteering are usually multifaceted and interrelated. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the main studies on volunteer motivation and the approaches that have been taken to research those motivations. Since most of the literature reveals two main types of motivations, altruistic and egoistic, I will begin with a brief review of those concepts. Then, I will provide a review of major studies within the realm of human/social service volunteers. Given the lack of literature relevant to my study, I feel that a review of other types of volunteering will be useful. Last, I will provide a review of some of the major studies on ecological restoration volunteers.

Altruism versus Egoism

The first person to make a clear distinction between egoistic and altruistic motives was Auguste Comte, who was also credited with creating the term “altruism” (Batson 1991). He defined egoism as the impulse to seek self-benefit and self-gratification; altruism was defined as a motivation to benefit others. However, there was a debate during Comte’s time¹ that true altruism did not exist. Everything that seemed altruistic on the surface could be found, upon closer inspection, to have concealed, selfish motives (Piliavin & Charng 1990). Those who believed in the idea of universal egoism alleged that “everything we do, no matter how noble and

¹ The debate began around the time Comte coined the term “altruism” in the 1850’s and continues today.

beneficial to others, is really directed toward the ultimate goal of self benefit” (Batson 1991:3). Proponents of universal egoism believed that acting for self benefit was unavoidable, not just sensible.

Horton-Smith (1981) rejected what he called “absolute altruism” by stating that there can be no such thing as a true altruism because, even in the most seemingly altruistic actions, people receive psychological benefits such as feeling good or personal satisfaction. Believing that selfishness is present in all activities, he used the term “relative” altruism rather than “absolute” altruism. He defined “relative” altruism as:

“an aspect of human motivation that is present to the degree that the individual derives intrinsic satisfaction or psychic rewards from attempting to optimize the intrinsic satisfaction of one or more other persons without the conscious expectation of participating in an exchange relationship whereby those ‘others’ would be obligated to make similar/related satisfaction optimization efforts in return” (Horton-Smith 1981:23).

This definition allowed for altruistic activities to give the doer personal satisfaction or benefits, providing the doer is performing those activities to benefit others without expectation of reciprocation from the receivers of the action.

Piliavin and Charng (1990) were on the opposite end of the spectrum from Horton-Smith and the proponents of universal egoism. They stated that altruism is in fact part of human nature. One of the characteristics that they gave to altruism was that it is a “behavior that is costly to the actor” while they are performing acts in the interest of others (Piliavin & Charng 1990). In order to classify behavior as altruistic, they, along with others who focus on motivational aspects of altruism, state:

“[the behavior] must benefit another person; must be performed voluntarily; must be performed intentionally; [the] benefit must be the

goal by itself; [and the behavior] must be performed without expecting an external reward” (Piliavin & Charng 1990:30).

Batson (1991) lies in the middle of the spectrum, claiming that it is the ultimate goal of the action, rather than the strength of the motive to perform that action, that distinguishes an action or behavior as being altruistic or egoistic. If an actor was motivated to perform an action with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of another party, then that action or behavior was considered to be altruistic. Altruism, according to Batson (1991) does not necessarily involve self-sacrifice on the part of the actor. If an actor was motivated to perform an action with the ultimate goal of increasing his own welfare, then that action or behavior is considered to be egoistic.

Monroe’s (1996) definition of altruism differs from Batson (1991). Monroe’s definition of altruism contains six elements: 1) an action must occur; 2) the action must be directed towards a goal; 3) the goal must be to increase the welfare of another entity; 4) the intention is more important than the results of the action; 5) the act must carry some form of decrease in welfare of the actor; and, 6) there must be no anticipation of reward for one’s actions (Monroe 1996:6). It is the fifth element of Monroe’s definition that sets it apart from Batson’s. She contends that an act that increases the welfare of both the actor and the recipient of the action is not an altruistic act; rather, falls into the category of collective welfare.

Motivations in Social and Human Service Volunteering

A review of the literature concerning volunteers in social and human service organizations provides a beneficial introduction to volunteer motivations. While there are many different types of volunteering, I believe that the findings in the literature on social and human service volunteering closely parallel the findings in the literature on

ecological restoration volunteering. My review of the former might fill in the gaps left by the lack of studies on ecological restoration volunteers.

In his own review of the literature, Phillips (1982) found that, while there are many motivations for volunteering, the ones that were most often highlighted by volunteers and researchers were altruistic. However, many professionals have started to realize that self-interest motivations also play a role in volunteering; such self-interest motives include learning, self-actualization, and increased social status. In his evaluation of the Friendly Town Program, a rural exchange program for inner city children, Phillips (1982) used social exchange theory to evaluate the motives of host families. According to social exchange theory, all volunteer interactions are based upon the exchange of costs and rewards, or the altruistic and egoistic aspects of volunteering (Phillips 1982). If an organization is interested in retaining a volunteer over a long period of time, then they need to make sure that the rewards to the volunteer at least equal the costs to the volunteer.

Phillips (1982) claimed that the interaction between altruistic and egoistic motivations was tailored by two aspects of the volunteer process: whether or not, and to what extent, the expectations of the volunteer were met by the organization and volunteering effort; and, the phase of the volunteering process. Host families in the Friendly Town program revealed that altruistic motivations played a larger role than egoistic motivations in their initial involvement with the program; however, as they became more familiar with the benefits of the program, host families were primarily motivated by egoistic motives (Phillips 1982). One reason for the Friendly Town program being successful was that it provided rewards for the host families that were

greater than initially expected. Phillips (1982) concluded that the initial motivations of families were altruistic, but at a later time, when deciding whether to continue in the program, host families considered the decision consistent with the social exchange model.

Murk & Stephan (1991) identified four areas of motivation besides helping people. Those areas were: good of society; socializing skills, which included getting out of the house, meeting new friends, and being with old friends; personal development skills; and employment related motives. They also recognized the back-and-forth relationship between altruistic and egoistic motives by stating that the primary motives for people to volunteer are for the good of society and for self-enhancement (Murk & Stephan 1991).

This back-and-forth relationship was also echoed by Kollmuss and Agyman (2002) who hypothesized that altruistic and pro-social motives are usually covered up by motives which evolve around the volunteer's needs. In many instances, volunteers had given altruistic reasons for becoming involved in a volunteer activity despite also being highly motivated by many self-oriented motives (Piliavin & Charng 1990). Horton-Smith (1981) also agreed that most volunteer activity was the result of multiple motives; however, he believed that altruistic motives (those related to intangible rewards that come from helping others) have a relatively minor affect on a volunteer's decision to take part in an activity when compared to egoistic motives (those related to tangible rewards).

In a study of volunteers in health and mental institutions, Gidron (1978) determined that volunteer work was not a purely altruistic activity; rather, there were

many rewards for volunteers including social (inter-personal relationships), personal (self-improvement) and indirectly economic (job training, experience, and networking) rewards. His study used “exchange theory”, which was developed to understand why paid workers leave their jobs or are absent from them. According to Gidron (1978), the theory provides “the explanation for why a paid worker leaves his job...can be found in the discrepancy between expectations for rewards and between the actual rewards that the worker receives in light of other alternatives” (19).

This framework was applied to volunteers to determine what rewards they received from their volunteer activities and the strength of their expectations for those rewards. Rewards were separated into two categories: extrinsic rewards and intrinsic rewards. Gidron (1978) found five extrinsic rewards and six intrinsic rewards related to volunteer activity and tested their relative importance to the volunteers in his study.

Extrinsic rewards, which included learning and self-development, social interaction, symbols of social recognition, praise, and authority, did not rate high among the volunteers in his study. On the other hand, intrinsic rewards, including one’s other orientation², self-development, learning, variety in life, social interaction, fulfilling and obligation, social recognition, and connection with paid work rated high among his participants. The highest rated rewards were connected with interpersonal relationships and, older volunteers expressed more concern for these types of rewards than rewards dealing with learning and self-development (Gidron 1978). He concluded that volunteers expected tangible rewards for their efforts and higher commitment volunteers either had their expectations met from the beginning or

² Gidron uses “other orientation” to refer to a volunteer’s desire to help or do work for other people

tailored their expectations to match the rewards received from that activity. Dresbach (1992) reaffirmed this belief and described commitment as “a process that yields a positive net balance of rewards over costs” (38).

A functional approach was another method used in assessing volunteer motivation. The functional approach reasons that different people engage in the same activities for different reasons, with different expected outcomes, and receive different rewards (Omoto & Snyder 1995). In other words, people can perform the same activities to fulfill completely different motives. Clary and Snyder (1999) described the functional approach as a “motivational perspective that directs inquiry into the personal and social processes that initiate, direct, and sustain action” (156).

Clary and Snyder (1999) used the functional approach to create the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), a tool to assess each of the six functions that can be served by volunteering. These six functions were identified in a review of the literature and the researchers' own studies. The functions identified by the VFI were: values (volunteers express or act upon values important to them), understanding (volunteers want to learn more about the world or use their existing skills), enhancement (volunteers wish to grow and develop psychologically), career (volunteers want to gain career-related experience), social (volunteers want to develop and strengthen their social relationships), and protective (volunteers want to reduce negative feelings or address personal problems). The findings of the VFI helped bring to attention the multifaceted nature of volunteer motivation (Clary & Snyder 1995).

Clary and Snyder (1995) also used the Volunteer Functions Inventory to develop their “matching hypothesis”, which was a reflection of some of the findings of

the aforementioned studies by Gidron (1978) and Phillips (1982). The matching hypothesis postulated that initial and sustained volunteering depends upon a match between the motivations of the volunteer and the rewards offered by the volunteering experience. In other words, a volunteer will choose an activity and continue with that activity if and only if the rewards match their expectations.

Omoto and Snyder (1995) also used a functional approach in their evaluation of the motivations of AIDS healthcare volunteers. This approach led to the discovery of five major, recurring themes that they claimed could be applied to a variety of forms of volunteerism. Those five themes were: values, understanding (included education), personal development (included social as well as personal reasons), community concern, and esteem enhancement.

Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) also developed a wide-ranging scale of volunteer motivations based on a literature review of human service volunteers. They found twenty-eight of the most frequently suggested motives to volunteer. When those motives to volunteer were tested among their own sample of human service volunteers, they found that the highest rated motives were the opportunity to do something worthwhile and feeling better about themselves. The lowest ranking motives were loneliness and gaining practical experience toward paid work. The results of the study led them to believe that motivations to volunteer were on a unidimensional scale because “volunteers do not distinguish between types of motivations, rather, they volunteer because of a general rewarding experience...they are both altruistic and egoistic” (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen 1991:281).

One study of the motivations of college students participating in service organizations separated motivations into three broad categories: altruistic, egoistic, and social obligation (Winniford et al. 1995). This study used a questionnaire that consisted of three parts. The first two parts were closed-form questions used to determine demographic information and motivations that attract and retain students in service programs. In my opinion, it was the third part of this questionnaire that made this study unique. It consisted of three open-ended questions that were designed to supplement the data gathered in the previous parts of the questionnaire. Students were asked to describe their motives for initiating and continuing service as well as their main motivation for volunteering.

Analysis on the closed-form questions revealed that altruistic motives ranked the highest of the three categories. This was followed by egoistic and then social obligation motives. While egoistic and social obligation motives were ranked high, the researcher concluded that they were not crucial to the initial decision to volunteer or the decision to continue volunteering (Winniford et al. 1995). Furthermore, they found that there was no significant difference between motivations for initial and continuing involvement.

Analysis of the open-ended questions revealed significantly different findings from analysis of the closed-form questions. The open-ended questions revealed that motives for staying involved differed from those for becoming involved. Altruistic motives were found to be equally important for initial and continuing involvement; but egoistic motives were mentioned much more frequently as being important for continuing involvement. The most frequently cited motivations in the open-ended

section were related to friendships and interaction with other people (Winniford et al. 1995).

Motivations in Ecological Restoration Volunteering

Although a review of the literature on social and human service volunteerism is useful for a general background on volunteer motivation, ecological restoration volunteerism is a different activity and needs further elaboration. The most obvious difference is that the receiver of the action is the environment, and not necessarily other individuals or society. Another main difference is that ecological restoration takes place in an outdoor setting, often in a natural area. This brings another aspect into the evaluation of motivation because people might be drawn to the specific place rather than the volunteer opportunity. Once people have experienced a natural place, they often develop a strong attachment to that place (Ryan 2000). This section will provide a review of the major studies on motivation in ecological restoration volunteerism.

Westphal (1993) conducted a study on the motivations of urban forestry volunteers. Her participants were from an organization in Chicago called "Treekeepers." Her methods included a survey designed to determine motivations and particular values associated with trees. She did participant observation in which she attended workdays and class sessions, and conducted ten interviews with participants in their neighborhoods to get a feel for their motivations as affected by their immediate surroundings. She found three main factors that fostered a motivation to get involved; however, she cautioned that those three areas were highly complex and intertwined. The three factors were the ability to perform a tangible task that helps the

environment, improving their connection with nature, and the recognition of the aesthetic and emotional benefits of nature (Westphal 1993).

In a study of a similar group of urban forestry volunteers, Still and Gerhold (1997) used a mail survey that was distributed to more than one thousand volunteers from five different organizations throughout the Northeast. Based on analysis of the 630 returned surveys, they separated their participants' motivations into three groups. The first group was a desire for education about trees and nature; this group included learning about trees, learning new skills, educating oneself, working with plants, and bringing oneself closer to nature. The second group was desire for social interaction and included meeting new people, getting to know neighbors and working with people. The third group was desire for neighborhood improvement, which included beautifying and improving the neighborhood, and improving the environment. This final category was distinguished from the previous two because it was dominantly altruistic; whereas the previous two would be categorized as egoistic (Still & Gerhold 1997).

They found that the main reason urban forestry volunteers participated in projects was altruistic. They had a strong desire to improve their neighborhoods and the environment. The desire to learn more about the trees and environment also rated high, but was not as strong of a motive as improving the neighborhood. The desire for social interaction was found to be only a peripheral motivation that was not necessary for commitment (Still & Gerhold 1997).

In an attempt to determine the motivations, values, and rewards of volunteers with the Volunteer Stewardship Network (VSN), an association of stewardship groups

coordinated by the Illinois chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Schroeder (2000) examined periodic newsletters written by volunteers and distributed to several stewardship groups. He read and systematically identified twenty-seven issues found in VSN publications between 1991 and 1995.

Schroeder (2000) found nine different themes that were persistent throughout each of the newsletters: the purpose of volunteer work, the current state of nature, metaphors of invasion and war, making a difference, personal rewards of restoration, social dimensions of restoration, volunteers as people, feelings towards nature, and sources of ideas and inspiration. He found that the volunteers who wrote the newsletters felt that the purpose of volunteer work was to preserve, protect and restore nature, biodiversity, and native, original landscape. These writers also believed that the current state of nature was bleak. They viewed nature as “small, isolated remnants” that were struggling to survive and in desperate need of help (Schroeder 2000). Volunteers felt that they were making a difference by acting locally and being a small part of a larger effort.

Schroeder (2000) was also able to identify many personal rewards and social dimensions that were a direct result of restoration work. He listed the rewards of restoration as follows: having a satisfying experience, seeing tangible results, learning and sharing knowledge, enjoying the outdoors, being surprised, getting excited, and having fun. Volunteers were also rewarded by the social dimension of restoration work, which included socializing with fellow volunteers, developing a “sense of community” and attachment to a certain group of volunteers, and working with admirable leaders (Schroeder 2000).

Schroeder (2000) concluded from his study that ecological restoration volunteers with the VSN were highly motivated by three interrelated factors. The first was the motivation derived from a high sense of urgency that the volunteers felt about the state of nature and its need for help. The second factor was a strong belief that their work was making a real difference in preventing the loss of native habitats and species. The third factor was the ability to see tangible results from their work in a relatively short amount of time. This third factor was also found to be a major motivating factor for VSN volunteers in a study by Ross (1994). Schroeder (2000) also determined that minor motivations were found in the knowledge that they gained and shared with other volunteers, and the enjoyable outdoor and social activities in which they took part.

Two other studies by Miles et al. (1998) and Grese et al. (2000) used participants of the Volunteer Stewardship Network to determine the psychological benefits of volunteering. Miles et al. (1998) focused on the satisfaction gained by volunteers participating in prairie restoration projects in Chicago. Analysis was performed on questionnaire responses from 263 individuals who were part of the VSN. The questions were derived from a review of literature performed by the researchers. For each volunteer four different measures were used: satisfactions related to restoration activities, level of involvement in restoration activities, life satisfaction, and life functioning. The questionnaire also included several open-ended questions with the purpose of allowing participants to comment on their restoration experiences and further enrich their answers (Miles et al. 1998).

The analysis focused on the benefits of participation in restoration work and the factors that had an effect on those benefits. The researchers found six different categories of satisfaction. All categories rated high, which was an indicator that each volunteer derived multiple sources of satisfaction from the restoration experience (Miles et al. 1998). The two categories that received the highest ratings were meaningful action and fascination with nature (which included learning about nature). These categories were followed by, in descending order, participation (broadening one's experiences), chance to be away, physical (personal health and physical fitness), and personal growth (improving the volunteer's well-being and spiritual development). They found no relationship between volunteer tenure³ and heightened levels of satisfaction, attributing this to the immediacy of the satisfactions (Miles et al. 1998). They did find a relationship between frequency⁴ of participation and the benefits of the experience; volunteers who participated at a higher frequency also received more benefits from participation.

Grese et al. (2000) found very different results when they examined the psychological benefits of volunteering in stewardship groups. They analyzed surveys (developed from four base interviews) from 190 individuals from five separate groups in the Volunteer Stewardship Network. Motivations were placed into four distinct groups. They found that helping the environment ranked as the highest motivation of their participants. Following, in descending order, were exploration, spirituality, and personal/social benefits. Personal and social benefits were not strongly valued by the

³ Length of time (usually in years) the participant has volunteered.

⁴ Amount of time participant spends volunteering (e.g. three times per month, once a week, etc...)

participants in this study (Grese et al. 2000). The results of this study were similar to those of Miles et al. (1998), except for the lack of strong personal and social benefits.

Ryan et al. (2001) researched the relationship that existed between motivations to volunteer for ecological restoration projects and the level of commitment of ecological restoration volunteers. Survey data was analyzed from 148 volunteers. The volunteers were long-term participants from three different restoration organizations in Michigan. The survey used in this study was designed based on a review of factors that might have an affect on volunteer commitment. The survey was designed to determine the role that each of the factors had on the decision to volunteer on a long-term basis. The factors that were tested were learning, helping the environment, social factors, reflection, and project organization.

Ryan et al. (2001) found that age, sex, time spent, travel time and activity had no relation to volunteer commitment, frequency or duration; volunteer level of expertise and the type of activity were found to be related to ongoing participation. Of the aforementioned factors, helping the environment and learning were given the highest ratings of motives that led to ongoing participation. They found that the continued learning experiences derived from volunteering played a large role in commitment for long-term volunteers (Ryan et al. 2001). Project organization received the next highest ranking. Social⁵ and reflection⁶ factors (personal or emotional benefits) were given the third and fourth highest rankings, respectively.

⁵ Interaction with other volunteers.

⁶ The researchers included four subcategories within reflection: the chance to reflect, the opportunity to work at one's own pace, doing something physical and feeling peace of mind.

They also found that volunteering gave participants a chance to explore parts of local preserves that they might not have encountered if they had not volunteered. Other studies also found that the desire to escape urban stressors was an important motivation for exploring preserves (Hartig et al. 1994). Their final conclusion was that social factors and project organization were significant predictors of volunteer commitment (Ryan et al. 2001). Ryan et al. (2001) also claimed that their study suggested that volunteer programs that focus on volunteer motivation at various stages of the volunteer process can effectively “nurture personal growth while fostering a powerful constituency for the environment among their volunteers.”

Another study, which focused on an environmental stewardship group in Canada, examined the differences between active and non-active members of the group. Donald (1997) analyzed surveys from 108 active and non-active members of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don. The results showed that active and non-active members did not differ in their initial motivations for joining the group. They joined the group for ideological and helping reasons, not egoistic reasons (Donald 1997). The differences between active and non-active members developed over time, possibly due to organizational factors (Donald 1997). The two reasons for staying with the group that were cited most among active members were that they had developed friendships and had much success with the work. Age, gender, income, level of education, and cultural background were all found to play no significant role in level of involvement (Donald 1997).

King and Lynch (1998) researched the motivations of volunteers with the Ohio chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Eighty-six surveys were completed by volunteers

and analyzed by King and Lynch. Motivation questions on the survey were separated into three categories of motivation that were determined after a review of the literature. Those three categories were altruistic, egoistic, and social motives. The results of this study led the researchers to believe that volunteer motivations were clearly predominately altruistic. The belief that motivations to volunteer are often multifaceted was supported because most volunteers indicated that they had multiple motives for volunteering (King & Lynch 1998).

Out of eighty-six respondents, eighty-two cited “doing something for nature” as a motivation for volunteering with The Nature Conservancy. Forty indicated that they volunteered to “allow [The Nature Conservancy] to provide goods and services [in their efforts to protect the environment] cheaper.” Thirty-six volunteers participated to learn new skills and thirty-five volunteered to stay active (King & Lynch 1998). Volunteers were also asked to indicate their strongest motive for volunteering. “To do something for nature” was marked by 63% of the respondents. Ten percent indicated that their main motive was to explore career options. Nine percent wanted to “create a better society” and seven percent wanted to allow the organization to provide cheaper goods and services (King & Lynch 1998).

Aull (2004) conducted a study of motivations with ecological restoration volunteers of the Oregon and Washington chapters of The Nature Conservancy. An internet-based survey involved 125 participants. The main purposes of this study were to test the hypothesis that volunteers would rate the volunteer experience as having characteristics similar to that of a leisure activity, and to evaluate the motivations of volunteers and the benefits of volunteering (Aull 2004). The main portion of the

survey consisted of three parts; the first part was an index designed to test the hypothesis that volunteers considered volunteering to be a leisure activity. The second part was designed to determine motivations for and benefits of volunteering. The third part was designed to measure the change in environmental outlook of the participants. The questions for each of the three parts were based on previous studies and the relevant literature.

Questions in the motivations/benefits section were grouped into five categories similar to the motivational categories presented in Miles et al. (1998) and Grese et al. (2000). Those categories were: meaningful action, a chance to be away, participation, personal growth, and physical fitness. The findings of this study suggested that volunteers did consider their volunteering to be a leisure activity. Components of leisure activity included having fun while participating, the ability to view restricted areas, and informational fun (Aull 2004). The category of meaningful action, considered to be the one altruistic category, rated the highest of the five categories, supporting the researcher's hypothesis that participants volunteered primarily for altruistic motives. He also suggested that egoistic motives were not a factor for his participants, even though physical fitness and learning, both of which had egoistic components, scored fairly high (Aull 2004).

Summary

In conclusion, a review of the literature on social and human service volunteerism helps fill in voids left by a general lack of literature on the subject of ecological restoration volunteerism. The literature on both types of volunteerism points to the multi-faceted nature of volunteer motivation. That is, volunteers rarely

volunteer for one single reason; rather, their motivations derive from many sources including the desire to volunteer for the benefit of oneself and the desire to volunteer for the benefit of another entity.

Most studies have focused on these altruistic and egoistic motivations for volunteering and the evidence for dominantly altruistic or egoistic motives is mixed. Some studies, such as Winniford et al. (1995), Westphal (1993), King & Lynch (1998), and Aull (2004), suggested that altruistic motivations are dominant while other studies, such as Gidron (1978), Phillips (1982), and Donald (1997), suggested that egoistic motivations are dominant. There were no patterns in the literature to suggest that different types of volunteering would have an affect on the outcome of a study. Rather, it seems as if types of motivations are specific to volunteer samples.

Based on a review of the literature, I define altruistic motivations as follows: motivations with the primary objective of providing benefits to another entity. In the case of ecological restoration volunteers, that entity might be a specific organization or the environment. Egoistic motivations will be defined as motivations with the primary objective of providing benefits to the doer of the action; in this study, the doer of the action is the volunteer.

Chapter 4 – Methods

The purpose of this section is to describe the methods used in this study. The goal of this study was to examine the motivations of work party volunteers from the perspective of the volunteers rather than the researcher. To accomplish this task, I collected qualitative data from the emic⁷ perspective. The studies presented in the previous chapter collected predominately quantitative data from an etic⁸ perspective. Data was collected via unstructured interviews and participant observation from June through October during the 2005 work party field season. This section will discuss methods of data collection and analysis. I will conclude this section with a discussion of the reasons why I chose ethnographic methods and the limitations of this study.

Participants

Participants in this study were randomly chosen during the work parties in which I was in attendance. I used the work party sign-in sheet on which volunteers put their names, usually in order of arrival, and a random number set to select volunteers at each work party. For example, if five was the next number on my random number set, then the fifth volunteer to sign-in was asked to participate in the study. One volunteer was selected per work party per day; however, for larger work parties (8 or more in attendance), two volunteers were chosen per work party per day.

Overall, nineteen participants were selected. Due to scheduling difficulties, only eighteen volunteers were interviewed. Ages of participants ranged from 21 to 65

⁷ Emic refers to the perspective of the participants; an analysis or description that reflects the values and viewpoints of the informants.

⁸ Etic refers to the perspective of the observer; an analysis or description that reflects the values and viewpoints of the researcher.

with seven participants in their 20's, four in their 30's, four in their 40's, one in his 50's, and two in their 60's. I interviewed ten females and eight males. Participants also varied in their annual commitment with The Nature Conservancy (number of work parties attended per year) and the length of time they have been volunteering with The Nature Conservancy. Figure 2 provides a summary of the participants' age, gender, commitment and length of time volunteering. The names represented here are pseudonyms assigned by the researcher and will be used throughout the rest of this study.

Figure 2 – Participant Demographics

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	AGE	# YRS w/ TNC	COMMITMENT (per season)
Allison	F	26	1	9
Betty	F	44	4	22
Carol	F	39	1	2
Dennis	M	49	20	10
Erin	F	29	2	10
Frank	M	27	1	3
Gabby	F	early 30's	1	3
Harry	M	21	1	2
Ian	M	40's	6	2
John	M	39	1	11
Kyle	M	25	1	3
Linda	F	22	1	5
Mary	F	43	4	2
Nate	M	late 50's	10	4
Odele	F	24	1	3
Patty	F	early 60's	1	2
Rita	F	33	5	3
Sam	M	65	10	3

Interviews

Unstructured ethnographic interviews were conducted with each of the selected participants. Ilsley (1981) suggested that such interviews are a valuable tool in the evaluation of volunteer-based programs. Some of the advantages of unstructured

interviews are their inherent flexibility to allow for important questions and probing, and a decreased chance of misinterpreting a question or answer (Ilsley 1981:112).

Unstructured interviews are “based on a clear plan that [the researcher] keeps constantly in mind, but are also characterized by a minimum of control over people’s responses” (Bernard 2002:205).

This format was vital to achieve my goal of determining the motivations of participants through an emic perspective. I based interviews on five general categories of information that I wanted to obtain, but I allowed the structure and exact content of the interviews to be determined by the participants. The five general categories were motivations for volunteering, likes/attractions and dislikes/deterrents of the volunteer program and work parties, ways to retain current volunteers, and ways to attract more volunteers. This free-flowing format allowed me to determine not only why the participants volunteered, but also which motivations were most important to them. Participants opened up about the things that were important to them, and talked about things in their own words and at their own pace (Bernard 2002).

With few exceptions, I asked open-ended questions so that the participants would be encouraged to respond with descriptive answers. This also ensured that the answers were based solely on what the volunteers felt was important to them. The only times I changed the course of an interview were when the subject matter started to go well beyond the scope of this study and when I felt the matter had been exhausted and it was time to move on to a new area or question. Because the interviews were predominately directed by the participants, no two interviews were exactly the same.

The majority of interviews were conducted in a conference room at The Nature Conservancy's office in Portland. However, some interviews were conducted at coffee shops, homes, the public library, and at campsites on overnight work parties. I allowed the participants to choose the venue that was most convenient and comfortable for them. Interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder so that I could concentrate on the conversation and take notes at a later time. I chose not to take notes during the interview so that it would be a more relaxed atmosphere, resembling a conversation more than a formal interview. Interviews ranged in length from 37 minutes to 74 minutes.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is an extremely valuable tool in ethnographic studies. In this study, participant observation served three main purposes: it increased my knowledge of the structure, language, tools, and activities of a work party; it helped me to build a strong rapport with many volunteers; and, it let me examine the difference between front and backstage performances.

Rather than just observing volunteers at work, or interviewing them without any form of observation, I chose to volunteer at the work parties while conducting my research. I wanted to get a sense of how the work parties were carried out. This turned out to be an essential part of my research because it greatly increased my familiarity with the content of the interviews. For example, when a volunteer described pulling blackberry at Sandy River, I was able to relate to the volunteer because I had been through the same thing. I gained familiarity with the types of work undertaken, tools used, plants involved, and preserves in which the work was

completed. This aided the interview process by giving me a greater sense of the types of questions to ask. In addition, it helped the interviews move smoothly by eliminating any need for explanation of the aforementioned areas by the participant.

Participant observation also gave me an “in” with the group. After a few work parties, I knew most of the volunteers with whom I was working. I built strong friendships and gained the trust of many volunteers. Some of my participants told me during the interview that they would not have agreed to take part in the study if I was not at the work party. The rapport that was generated by participant observation also increased the comfort level of participants during interviews. The level of rapport I had built helped the interview feel more like a conversation between two acquaintances rather than an interview between a subject and researcher. I think that this allowed participants to open up and give full, honest answers without pressure to answer questions in a certain way to improve their image or please the researcher.

Participant observation also gave me the opportunity to evaluate volunteers’ attitudes, comments and behaviors at work parties and contrast those with the comments and attitudes of volunteers during interviews. For example, let’s say volunteer X spent the whole work party sitting more than working, complaining that it was too hot and the work was hard. Then during the interview volunteer X claimed that they volunteer because they love to be outside working hard. This would show me that perhaps they were not being completely honest and I would weigh that when analyzing what was said during the interview.

Methods of Analysis

Interview notes were analyzed using thematic analysis or, as it is sometimes called, grounded theory (Bernard 2002). Thematic analysis involves the coding of notes and the analysis of data for themes that run throughout the interviews. I devised a coding scheme for my notes that was developed from the interviews; therefore, the categories represented in the coding scheme evolved from the volunteers' own vocabulary. Data was coded based on concepts that were persistent throughout the interviews to manage information and group them into like categories. The five major coding categories for analysis were: motivations, likes/attractions of the volunteer program and work parties, dislikes/deterrents of the volunteer program and work parties, ways to retain current volunteers, and ways to attract more volunteers.

While all categories were important to this study, the motivation category was most heavily considered during analysis. The like/attractions and dislikes/deterrents categories were primarily used to give me a sense of what the volunteers valued within the work parties and to bolster analysis. The categories of ways to recruit and retain volunteers were also used to give me a better sense of volunteer motivations and attitudes, but they were primarily used to make recommendations to The Nature Conservancy. During analysis of volunteer motivations, I separated volunteer motivations into start-up motivations (why they started volunteering), primary continuing motivations (the main reason(s) they continue to volunteer), and supporting continuing motivations (motivations that fall into neither of the aforementioned categories, but are based on work party experiences and play a large role in volunteer satisfaction).

Reasons for Conducting Qualitative Ethnographic Research

The majority of research on volunteer motivations is conducted with the use of surveys and questionnaires, and I feel that an ethnographic study can add something different to the study of volunteer motivation. Conducting a study on a specific group of volunteers, as this study does, is particularly useful because it gives volunteer coordinators an in-depth look at their volunteer base not possible in a survey. The very nature of ethnographic research also means that every part of the study including the questions, coding, analysis, and write-up are the product of volunteers' comments, vocabulary, beliefs, and attitudes.

This type of study has been criticized as being "sophomoric and pedestrian" because it only tells us motivational vocabulary and tends to receive only altruistic answers (Horton-Smith 1981). Horton-Smith (1981) has suggested that volunteers only give altruistic answers in these types of studies because they want to look favorable to the researcher and avoid long explanations. However, as I will show in the next chapter and discuss later, my research does not support the assumptions of Horton-Smith.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study that are worth pointing out. First of all, although the study is presented as an evaluation of volunteers with the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy, in actuality, it does not cover the entire Oregon volunteer base. With the exception of one work party and two participants, this study was performed with the volunteers managed by the Portland office. While this does account for an overwhelming majority of the Nature Conservancy's volunteers in

Oregon, it leaves out volunteers managed at two smaller Nature Conservancy offices in Eugene and Medford.

Another limitation of this study involves the size and scope of this study. Due to the small sample size and specificity of the location, I doubt that this research can be generalized throughout the world of environmental or ecological restoration volunteerism. However, I think that it provides a rich analysis of volunteer motivations for the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and serves as a useful template for other studies conducted with specific volunteer organizations.

The final limitation of this study is volunteer reporting of their commitments and preserve-specific information. Interviews were conducted throughout the summer of 2005. Participants interviewed at the beginning of the study might not have been able to give an accurate estimate of their annual commitment because they had not finished their participation for the field season.

Chapter 5 – Findings

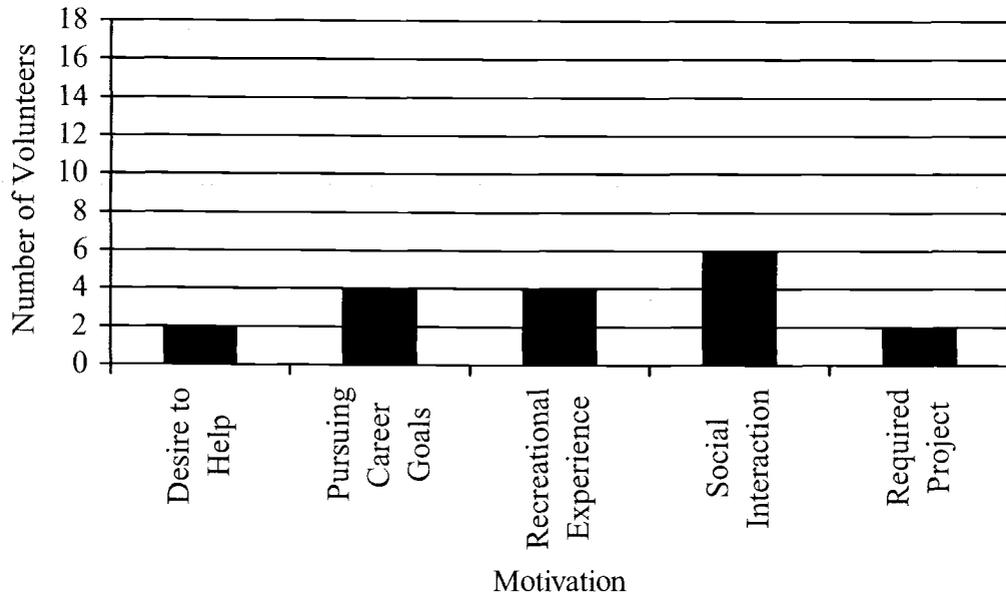
The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of my study. Data in this chapter are the results of analysis of eighteen interviews and participant observation at thirteen work parties during the 2005 field season. This chapter will be divided into three separate sections: start-up motivations, primary continuing motivations for volunteering, and supporting continuing motivations for volunteering. Some motivations will appear in several sections. This is because a primary motivation for one volunteer might be a supporting motivation for another; or a motivation that causes one to start participation might be a primary reason for continuation of participation for another.

Start-up Motivations

Start-up motivations are defined as the reason(s) why volunteers decided to start volunteering on work parties with the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The first questions that I usually asked during interviews were “When did you start volunteering with TNC” and “Why did you start.” The motivations represented in this section were largely determined through the answers to the aforementioned questions. The answers to those questions were varied; however, many responses were similar and easily grouped into common categories. Five categories of start-up motivations were identified during analysis: desire to help, pursuing career goals, recreational experience, social interaction, and required project. Figure 3 provides a summary of start-up motivations and the number of volunteers that were grouped into each category. Each of the participants in this study revealed only one start-up motivation. Some of these motivations were only start-up motivations,

responsible for initiating participation, then fading away as other benefits of volunteering took over. Others were strong enough to continue and remain a primary motivation for continued participation.

Figure 3 – Start-up Motivations



Desire to Help

This category includes motivations to help the environment and The Nature Conservancy. They are largely altruistic motivations, that is, motivations with the main purpose being to help another entity. The motivation could have been a strong desire to help the environment, and the belief that The Nature Conservancy was the most effective group through which to accomplish this; or, the motivation could have been a particular attraction to The Nature Conservancy and its mission.

Two volunteers initiated their participation for helping reasons. Nate, an older volunteer of ten years, had been a member of The Nature Conservancy for many years before volunteering. According to Nate,

“[I had] been a member [of TNC] for years, and wanted to do something for them...and the environment... [I liked] being able to participate and do things...contribute the skills that I have and feel like I am accomplishing something.”

Patty, an older first-year volunteer, recently had more spare time and thought volunteering was “a good thing to start doing.” Referring to a coastal preserve known to be a habitat for an endangered species of butterfly, Patty said, “if there’s a motivation behind [volunteering] to save something, I think that its great...it really gets me going.” That sense of saving and protecting something was a strong motivation for Patty. She expressed dissatisfaction with another work party because she had “no sense of what was being protected.”

Pursuing Career Goals

This category can be split into two clear subcategories: those who wanted a job, and those who were making a career change and saw volunteering with The Nature Conservancy as a logical and relevant next step towards entering a new career field. Volunteers who were looking for a job either wanted to work fulltime with The Nature Conservancy and felt that volunteering was a good way to “get their foot in the door”, or they wanted to bolster their resume with volunteer experience from The Nature Conservancy.

One volunteer started participation due to changing careers and the work being in the field he was entering. Ian, a six year volunteer, switched from a career in computer programming to a career teaching science. He started volunteering while in graduate school because “it was more of what [he] wanted to do.” According to Ian, he was just following “what [he] thought was interesting and fun” to do for a career.

Three of the participants in this study started volunteering because they wanted a job with The Nature Conservancy, or they thought that volunteering could be a springboard for employment in this type of work, or with an organization like The Nature Conservancy. After returning from several years of volunteer work overseas, Allison wanted to find some type of work to “boost” her resume. Allison said,

“I wanted to get involved with [The Nature Conservancy] because I was looking for a job in the environmental field and considering [The Nature Conservancy] as a place that I might want to work someday...volunteering is definitely a way to start.”

Erin, in her second year volunteering with The Nature Conservancy, had a Master’s degree but no experience. She had trouble getting a job and thought that volunteering would give her the experience she needed to get a job in her field. Erin said, “The Nature Conservancy was also the one place that I would really like to work someday.” Volunteering, according to Erin, gave her the opportunity to talk with people in the organization.

Mary also expressed a strong desire to obtain a job specifically with The Nature Conservancy. Her dream job was to be a land steward for The Nature Conservancy. Mary felt that volunteering was the best way to get a stewardship job with The Nature Conservancy because they might recognize her name when she applies for an available job.

Recreational Experience

Volunteers in this category started participation for several specific reasons. Among them was the desire to do something out of their normal routine, the desire to get outside, the desire to get out of their hometown, and the desire to go to different

preserves owned by The Nature Conservancy. Four participants were grouped into this category; two males and two females of varying ages and levels of commitment.

Carol, a first year volunteer, started volunteering with The Nature Conservancy because it gave her the opportunity to get out of the city and go to places that she might not have gone to otherwise. She had recently begun hiking and camping more often and said that volunteering on the work parties was like a “free vacation” and it constituted her “weekend playtime.”

For John, a second-season volunteer, volunteering with The Nature Conservancy offered an escape from his otherwise demanding work schedule. John owned his own business and, as a result, worked six, sometimes seven, days a week many months of the year. John said, “I got to the point where I just needed to get out and do something else...do a different kind of thing...meet a different group of people...volunteering allowed me to see something I don’t normally get to see.”

Odele started volunteering because she needed a way to get out of Portland. When she signed up for a work party, it was a commitment (and opportunity) to go somewhere new and get outside. She said that when she signed up for a work party she was committed; “I sign up and I’m going...if I hadn’t signed up, I don’t know if I would ever go to The Nature Conservancy’s preserves in Oregon.”

Sam, a recently retired volunteer of ten years, said that since he has retired, he has “a lot of time and needs something to do.” Volunteering gave him a chance to “get out of the city and into the country.” It was “something fun to do” and “somewhere fun to go.”

Social Interaction

This category can be split into two clearly different subcategories. The first subcategory consists of the people who volunteered because they wanted to meet new people or have more social interaction. The second subcategory consists of people who started volunteering because they were asked to do so by a friend or significant other; or, they started because a friend or significant other was a volunteer and they wanted to join them. Six volunteers indicated social motivations for starting participation with The Nature Conservancy; two started because they wanted to meet people and four because a friend or significant other was already participating or asked them to join them.

Both Rita, 33, and Linda, 22, moved to Portland (although not together) and knew no one in town save for their significant others. Rita arrived in Portland and wanted meet people of similar mindset to her own. She recalled thinking “what can I do where I can meet people who are interested in the same things that I am...and get outside and do something fun at the same time.” She searched for volunteer opportunities and found that The Nature Conservancy had many. Linda was interested in meeting other young people while doing something that she liked; she felt that volunteering for The Nature Conservancy was the perfect way to accomplish that.

The other subcategory is really quite clear-cut. Each of the four participants who cited this motivation had been approached by a friend, girlfriend, or boyfriend about volunteering. All volunteered, with some trepidation, and reported having a great time.

Required Project

This category is also very straight-forward. Many courses, middle schools, high schools, and colleges have volunteer requirements for their students. Most volunteer requirements are not organization-specific; however, in some cases teachers were also volunteers for The Nature Conservancy and “highly recommended” it to their students. Both of the volunteers who started participation because of a school requirement started with an independent project⁹ with The Nature Conservancy. Both participants enjoyed the project so much that they decided to continue volunteering beyond their school requirements at work parties.

There are mixed opinions about whether people who volunteer because of a school requirement should be considered volunteers. I have decided to include this category as a motivation to volunteer because the final decision to complete the requirement was made by the participant. Furthermore, this category represents only the reason they began participation; both volunteers in this category continued participation beyond their course requirements for reasons described in the next section.

Primary Continuing Motivations

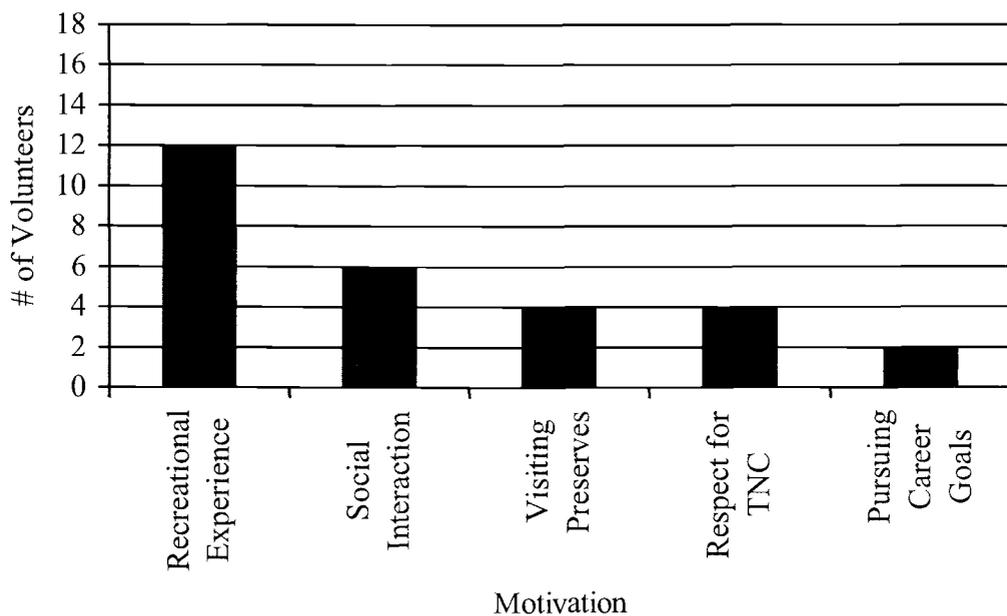
The motivations in this section represent the main motivations for volunteers’ continuing participation. This section does not cover the full range of volunteer motivations; rather, it covers the motivations that were most strongly expressed by the volunteers. Some volunteers indicated during interviews that one primary motivation

⁹ The Nature Conservancy provides opportunities for some volunteers to participate in individual projects outside of work parties. Both of the volunteers in this section performed plant monitoring projects by themselves under the supervision of a preserve steward.

was their main reason for volunteering. For those that did not indicate a primary motivation, it was apparent which motivations prevailed over others from analyzing the content of the interviews.

Due to the multi-motivational aspects of volunteering, many volunteers fit into more than one of the following primary continuing motivation categories. Some volunteers only had one primary continuing motivation while others had two or three. Five categories of primary continuing motivations were found during analysis: recreational experience, social interaction, visiting preserves, respect for The Nature Conservancy, and pursuing career goals. For the remainder of this section, I will provide a discussion of each of those motivational categories. Figure 4 provides a summary of primary continuing motivations and the number of volunteers that were grouped into each category. Many volunteers were grouped into more than one category due to multiple primary motivations for continuing participation.

Figure 4 – Primary Continuing Motivations



Recreational Experience

Twelve individuals expressed a recreational experience motivation as one primary reason for continuing participation. There are two different types of recreational experience motivations represented in this category: the motivation to volunteer because it provides an opportunity for outdoor recreation (camping, hiking, getting outside), and the motivation to volunteer because it provides volunteers with the opportunity to do something out of their normal routine.

Frank, a first year volunteer, decided to volunteer on an overnight work party because he spent every weekday working 9 am to 5 pm in an office, sitting in front of a computer; it felt good to get outside and breathe in the fresh air. I met Frank on his first overnight work party. Frank described the overnight work party as an “inexpensive way of enjoying a camping trip... [I] didn’t need to worry about bringing anything...didn’t have to plan anything, [I] just show up at the site, work for the day, and then camp out.” He had wanted to participate in more outdoor activities and, when asked if the work party satisfied his urge to recreate outdoors, he said, “I didn’t mind the work...at the end of the day I wasn’t anymore tired than I would have been if I had spent the day hiking.”

The work party really did feel like a camping trip in the evening. Frank had brought along an astronomy book and a group of us consulted the book and spent a majority of the night star-gazing and drinking. However, the daytime was all work – clearing invasive weeds rather than hiking. Although he didn’t mind the work, Frank admitted that, at times, it was a little tedious. When I asked him what he thought of the work, Frank replied,

“I was surprised by how grueling the work was...it was tougher than I thought it would be...Swinging a machete for six hours was a little much...pulling Medusa Head¹⁰ was too tedious...and the pyrometers¹¹ took too much concentration... But, it can't do anything but help me...sweat a bit.”

One of the big recreational experience-related themes that was evident after analyzing interviews was the view that the work party was a suitable replacement for hiking and other forms of outdoor recreation. Frank did not mind pulling invasive plants instead of hiking because he figured they both involved the same amount of work. Other volunteers also expressed their contentment with working instead of hiking. Linda described the work parties as “a slightly more productive way to get outside.” Kyle said,

“I get more satisfaction from pulling invasive plants and physical labor than backpacking...because I get to give something back to the environment rather than just hike and take away from it...it is a privilege to be in the area and I might as well contribute to its well-being while I enjoy it.”

Many of the volunteers, like Frank, saw the work parties as a way to get away from their normal routine and an opportunity to get outdoors. They spent all week in an office and the work parties provided a great release. Carol, who had started doing more hiking and backpacking, said that she liked the work parties because she was able to “get outdoors and play.” Linda also thought that the work parties were a very “fun way to get outside.” Odele said, “[she] loves going out and checking new things out” and that the work parties get her outside and out of Portland.

¹⁰ Medusa Head is a non-native plant that TNC tries to eradicate from various preserves.

¹¹ Pyrometers are devices used to gauge the temperature of a fire. Some participants at this work party helped make pyrometers for a prescribed fire conducted by TNC.

No one seemed to mind the fact that they were indeed working because they viewed the work parties as outdoor recreation, not physical labor. This was especially true on weekend-long work parties that typically involved two nights of camping; but, it was still evident on the single day work parties. I noticed that most volunteers worked steadily and did not treat the work-time as a recreation-like activity. Most of the enjoyment that volunteers seemed to get during work-time was the result of social interaction, not the work.

Once the work stopped, for a break or at the end of the day, the atmosphere relaxed and the activity seemed much more recreation-like. Volunteers explored the site, took pictures, or just relaxed and enjoyed the scenery. At the Sandy River work party, in the Columbia Gorge area, the work took place almost entirely in a forested area. The work was very physically demanding and often frustrating. The volunteers often complained about getting pricked by blackberry thorns and seemed frustrated by the work and rainy weather. During the lunch break the steward led us on a hike to a waterfall within the preserve, and the mood of the volunteers completely changed. They relaxed and seemed, for the first time, to enjoy themselves.

The same was true of a work party in central Oregon. The work was very demanding and I heard much complaining by the volunteers. Some complained that the work was too tough and others that it was senseless. However, as soon as the work ended, everyone started to enjoy the day. Volunteers explored the immediate vicinity of the work site, and after dinner the steward drove everyone to another location to explore local geological features.

Volunteers also participated in work parties for the opportunity to do something out of their normal routine. Unlike the volunteers mentioned above, these volunteers did not participate for outdoor recreation. They simply wanted to be able to do something new; they wanted to get away from their hometowns and jobs and experience something like a “mini-vacation.” Work parties offered them a chance to get away and try something new, often in a beautiful and natural area with great people.

John, a second-season volunteer, volunteered to escape from his typical routine. As mentioned earlier, John owned his own business in the mid-Willamette Valley. He typically worked six or seven days a week during his company’s peak season. In his own words, he “just got to the point where [he] needed to get out and do something else...do a different kind of thing...meet a different group of people.” He decided to take the time to volunteer at a work party every month. In addition, he also did a few independent projects and was hoping to take on many more.

Patty, an older first-year volunteer, said that she liked helping The Nature Conservancy, but she would not want to be “sitting in an office stuffing envelopes.” She wanted to be “outside doing something.” Rita also expressed a desire to volunteer so that she could “get outside and do something fun at the same time.” Nate, a volunteer of ten years, appreciated the chance to get out and enjoy the work parties, which he compared to “vacations.”

Sam, a recently retired volunteer of ten years, started volunteering because he was working less and had a lot of spare time. Speaking about retirement, Sam said,

“I just got to the point where I needed something to do...somewhere to go...because, when you’re retired, you need to have something to look

forward to... [I chose TNC] not because it is grandiose, worthwhile stuff, more of, I just needed something to do. It doesn't really matter what I do...the trip is a reward in and of itself."

Betty also quit her job and retired. Like Sam, she had a lot of spare time and needed something interesting to do.

Carol described her reason for volunteering as "getting out of the city and enjoying my weekend playtime." Gabby, whose day job was in an office in the southern Willamette Valley, enjoyed the work parties because they were her chance to "get out and do something on the ground...rather than being stuck in a chair" all day.

Social Interaction

Six volunteers expressed a social interaction motivation as a primary reason for volunteering on work parties with The Nature Conservancy. The very nature of the work parties gave individuals the prospect of socializing with other potentially like-minded individuals. There were many opportunities for volunteers to socialize at the work parties. There was often time before the work parties began for old friends to catch up and new volunteers to meet the others. An introduction at the beginning of most work parties (a few work parties I joined had no introduction) gave volunteers the chance to introduce themselves to the group. The hike to the worksite typically was filled with chatter between volunteers and continued through the work day. A 30 to 45 minute lunch break was given in which volunteers relaxed and conversed with one another. Overnight work parties provided even more chances for socializing during a cookout and later around a campfire.

No matter what motivated them to start volunteering, most volunteers realized that there were strong social benefits that resulted from participation. Although only

six volunteers expressed social interaction as a primary continuing motivation, the section on supporting continuing motivations will show that many more were partially motivated by this category. The volunteers in this category were typically motivated by the opportunity to meet new people and the chance to catch up with old friends from previous work parties.

Erin really enjoyed the people she met. The work parties gave her the opportunity to meet new people constantly and to see the friends that she had made during her volunteer experience. During the 2005 field season, Erin saw more young volunteers than she did before, which she liked. She commented that a lot of “young people were coming to work parties, not meeting people their age, and deciding that the experience is not meeting their social needs.”

Erin would have been happier on overnight work parties if the group had thought of something fun to do rather than just eat and go to bed. Erin stayed away from single day work parties because they did not fulfill her social needs. She also stayed away from particular work parties. For example, when describing her experience at Blind Slough, a work party that involved canoeing to spots to pull invasive plants, Erin stated:

“All we did was pull purple loosestrife and canoe with the same person for the entire day. I didn’t get to talk to anyone else. I didn’t learn anything. Blind Slough didn’t fit any of my needs and I never want to go back. If that had been the only [The Nature Conservancy] trip I’d gone on, I would not have gone back.”

Although Erin revealed in her interview that social interaction played a primary role in her decision to volunteer, this did not agree with my observations of her at work parties. Erin was often the hardest worker and, while she did talk to her

fellow volunteers, it was often brief. She typically reserved conversation for breaks and the free time before and after work.

Sam, who was discussed in the previous section, also viewed his volunteer experience as a “social outlet.” Throughout his years with The Nature Conservancy he “made some pretty good friends and has enjoyed bonding with other volunteers and the stewards” at particular preserves. Gabby, who continued to volunteer because her significant other was a preserve steward, was also trying to get other people from her office to go out with her, but was so far unsuccessful.

Linda, who moved to Oregon the previous year, enjoyed the work parties because they were a great opportunity to meet “more of the folks around” Oregon. During our interview, Linda told me that she preferred working with volunteers her own age and did not really want to socialize with the older volunteers. However, I noticed that Linda did not avoid socializing with any age group in particular. In fact, she usually carried on long conversations with most of the volunteers in attendance, regardless of age.

Dennis, a volunteer of twenty years with The Nature Conservancy said that he had “more friendships in Portland through The Nature Conservancy” than he did in his home town. He enjoyed getting together with a “bunch of people that agree with [him].” Allison, a first-year volunteer, also liked the people and said that “being around a group of people with a similar mindset was a big part of it.” Allison exchanged phone numbers with many of her fellow volunteers on several occasions and said that she had met people that she would “hang out with” outside of the work parties.

I observed that social interaction was an extremely important part of the work parties, both single-day and over-night. Even when the work was tough or the weather was cold and wet, volunteers always conversed with one another. Conversation topics included previous work parties, past life experiences, careers, the current work party and preserve, and future plans.

Social interaction seemed to make the experience enjoyable no matter how the work party was going. One particular work day at Cox Island, a coastal preserve, was very rainy. It was the wettest work party I attended. Almost all of the tents were flooded, and we could not get a tarp set up to keep dry, but this did not stop participants from making the best of the situation. All of the volunteers congregated in the back of our rental van, drinking and talking in the parking spot of the campsite for most of the evening.

Visiting Preserves

During the 2005 field season, work parties were held at over a dozen preserves throughout the state. Four participants in this study continued volunteering primarily because of the preserves at which the work parties were held. Allison, for example, volunteered because of the opportunity to visit “gorgeous natural places.” She immediately appreciated that The Nature Conservancy was attached to “awesome” places where she could work. When I asked if she would still volunteer if the preserves were less attractive, she responded, “No, that wouldn’t appeal to me...if The Nature Conservancy’s preserves were not as beautiful, I would find another place to volunteer.” Being in the beautiful preserves was very “spiritually healing” for Allison. According to Allison,

“Something about being in natural places and physical labor is inherently spiritually healing...it all ties together because I get all of those things from volunteering with The Nature Conservancy.”

One big theme from this category was the perception that volunteers had about gaining access to the preserves, even though many of The Nature Conservancy’s preserves are open to the public. Ian, a volunteer of six years, said, “I liked going to all of the different parts of Oregon...especially the [The Nature Conservancy] properties that I normally wouldn’t get to go to.”

Volunteers also appreciated that the work parties traveled to preserves in Eastern and Central Oregon, a drive of seven to eight hours from Portland. Volunteers believed that if they had not volunteered for a work party, they most likely would never have traveled to Eastern or Central Oregon. Linda continued to volunteer because she “saw the work parties as a good way to see the different preserves.” Ian also described his favorite part of the work parties as “arriving at a new place that I haven’t been to before.” Nate said, “a big draw was to go see these places that I probably wouldn’t go to if I hadn’t had the work party.”

Respect for The Nature Conservancy

Four participants were grouped into this category. This category is based upon a primary motivation to continue volunteering specifically because of The Nature Conservancy. Coincidentally, all four volunteers grouped into this category also expressed other dominant motivations to volunteer. No other category had this characteristic. The volunteers in this category either identified with the values and mission of The Nature Conservancy, or had a strong affinity for the organization.

Betty, a fourth-year volunteer, enjoyed volunteering for the organization because they gave her independent projects and were very accommodating to her level of commitment. “The Nature Conservancy is cool because they let me do scientific projects...up to me and how much I am willing to do” said Betty about her work for The Nature Conservancy. Betty tried working with other organizations in the area, but she said, “they were set up to support [physical] labor...not set up to taking people with professional skills.” The Nature Conservancy fulfilled Betty’s desire to work on “scientific”, independent projects.

Betty admitted,

“I have no strong motivations to give back...no strong ideals...but [The Nature Conservancy] is very committed to preservation...and that is something very dear to my heart...I feel that the best thing that we can do is to preserve these places and I do good work for [The Nature Conservancy]...I fit well with [The Nature Conservancy].”

When she volunteered, Betty wanted to feel her effort was going towards something good, that her time was well spent. She felt that The Nature Conservancy was able to “manage on best science and practices” and that they were “qualified people.” Betty very strongly identified with the values and mission of The Nature Conservancy and felt that The Nature Conservancy did not waste “precious volunteer hours.”

Nate, who was mentioned in the previous section on start-up motivations, had volunteered for ten years. One of his main reasons for volunteering was that he “had been a member for years and wanted to do something else to help The Nature Conservancy.” He really liked the organization and felt the need to contribute his time and skills to help The Nature Conservancy accomplish its mission.

John, who was also mentioned earlier, liked being able to tell his clients that he volunteered for The Nature Conservancy because they don't "flip out." He liked The Nature Conservancy's projects and people and appreciated that they stayed out of conflict. John also had read up on The Nature Conservancy and felt that they were a good organization. When I asked him why he decided to volunteer with The Nature Conservancy in particular, he said,

"they stay out of conflict and have fewer grubby pleas for money...the fact that they stay away from mass mailings and other stuff was helpful in my decision to start...and, look, I'm a businessman...I can tell people that I volunteer for The Nature Conservancy and they don't flip out...everyone gets something good out of it."

Also, John said, "I wouldn't volunteer if I didn't feel that The Nature Conservancy was dealing with preserves successfully."

Allison also cited "The Nature Conservancy name" as a big reason for her commitment to the organization. They are a "well-known organization" and she felt as if her values were aligned with those of the organization. She also knew the work that The Nature Conservancy did and felt that it was good work and that her participation was accomplishing something.

The Nature Conservancy was not mentioned as a reason for volunteering by fourteen volunteers. Two volunteers stated specifically that helping the organization and The Nature Conservancy name were not their reasons for volunteering. Sam admitted that his choice to volunteer had nothing to do with "helping the environment or future generations." Sam stated, "[The Nature Conservancy's] purpose had no effect on my choice to volunteer...I can't even describe The Nature Conservancy's

goals to you.” Carol also described her reason for volunteering as being “at least 50% selfish.” She also said, “volunteers benefit more than the organization.”

Pursuing Career Goals

This category differs from the other categories in that the volunteers in this category were not grouped into any other primary continuing motivation categories. This means that they were primarily motivated by career concerns, and that motivation alone. Two volunteers were grouped into this category. Like the volunteers who started participation because of career concerns, those in this category felt that volunteering was the best way to get a job.

Mary, a fourth-year volunteer, felt that volunteering would get her “foot in the door” at The Nature Conservancy. She said that her dream job was to be a land steward for The Nature Conservancy. Every employee whom she had met said that they started out by volunteering. Mary decided to be a crew leader and lead two work parties a season. She would have loved to do more, but it was not feasible for her because she had a full-time job and had just purchased a house that required a lot of attention. Mary was very honest about her reason for volunteering. When I asked her what she liked about the work parties, her reply was,

“It is very self centered...I want them to remember my name when a job comes up...I have fun, like the people, but this is my main reason...I would still go to one work party a year if I was not able to get a job, but I wouldn't do the crew leader thing.”

Harry was primarily concerned with how volunteering with The Nature Conservancy would look on his resume. According to Harry,

“You need to do a lot of volunteer work to get a job [and this is] a great way to meet people to make connections and network...and these opportunities are really important for picking up new career skills.”

Mary and Harry both said the main reason they volunteered was for career enhancement; however, they both seemed to really enjoy the work parties and said they would continue even if they got a job, albeit with less frequency. I observed that Mary definitely had fun on the work parties. She was always smiling and joking and giving other volunteers a “hard time.” She took over the grilling around the campfire and always conversed with everyone there. On the surface, it did not seem as if she was solely interested in a job with The Nature Conservancy. The way she acted indicated to me that she genuinely enjoyed participating for a multitude of reasons, not solely to get a job.

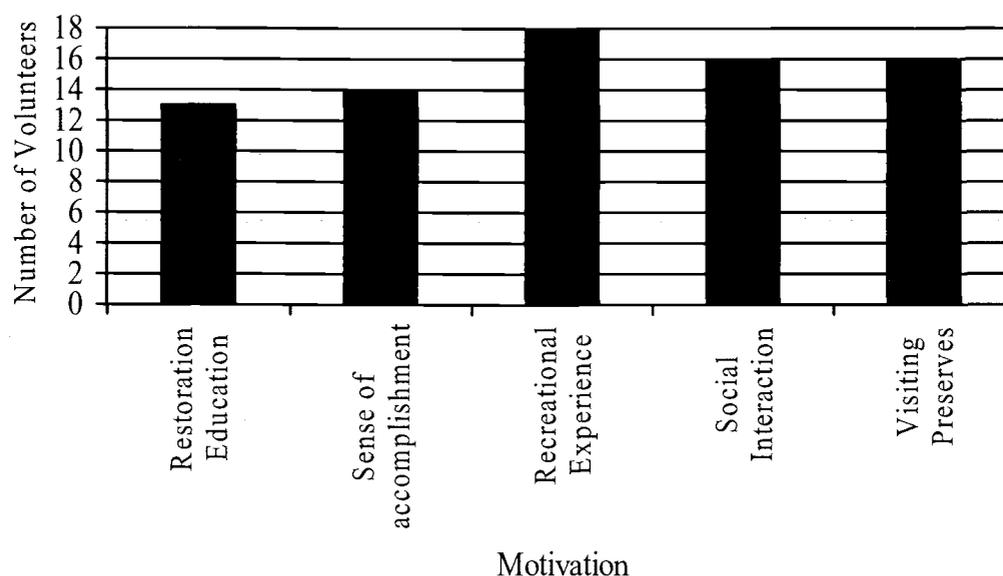
Supporting Continuing Motivations

The purpose of this section is to present a category of motivations I have termed “supporting” continuing motivations. Supporting motivations are based on experiences during work parties. Supporting motivations are not necessarily essential for participation; however, they contribute greatly to volunteer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Some of the following categories of motivations are repeated from the sections on start-up motivations and primary continuing motivations. This repetition occurs because the motivations were shared by many volunteers, only a proportion of which considered them to be primary reasons for continuing volunteering.

In this section, I will provide a brief description of the supporting motivations and a discussion, using data from interviews and participant observation. The main supporting motivations are: recreational experience, social interaction, visiting preserves, restoration education, and sense of accomplishment. I will also discuss an additional category that plays a major role in volunteer motivations – preserve

stewards. Figure 5 provides a summary of supporting continuing motivations and the number of volunteers who were grouped within each category.

Figure 5 – Supporting Continuing Motivations



Recreational Experience

All eighteen volunteers in this study mentioned recreational experience as a motivation for volunteering. In addition to the twelve volunteers who were primarily motivated by the opportunity for recreation, six more volunteers mentioned that recreation was a big draw for them. The responses from those six were basically the same as responses from those in the primary continuing motivation section, although they did not express the recreation motivation as strongly.

Volunteers realized the recreational component of the work parties and greatly appreciated the opportunity to get outside and out of their home area. Many volunteers, when asked how to recruit more volunteers for The Nature Conservancy, said that the volunteer program should emphasize the recreational aspects of the work

parties such as free food, free travel, free beer, working outside, and a generally “fun” experience. All of the volunteers who had been on overnight work parties preferred them to single-day work parties. Volunteers seemed to relax more after the work was completed, which would explain why overnight work parties were preferred to single-day work parties by all of the participants who attended an overnight work party; single-day work parties provided very little time for relaxation and recreation-like activities.

Social Interaction

While only six volunteers were primarily motivated for social reasons, sixteen volunteers altogether mentioned social interaction as a motivation factor. Social interaction seemed to be important for most volunteers. The two volunteers who did not mention a social motivation said they recognized and appreciated the social aspect of the work parties, but it was not a big deal for them.

Socializing, even if not the primary reason for participation, certainly had a strong affect on volunteer satisfaction. Frank described the overnight work parties as “little family reunions” because a lot of the people knew each other. Frank did not feel uncomfortable being the “new guy” because everyone was so friendly, and he got to “hang out with people [he] normally wouldn’t hang out with.”

Mary also talked about the social benefits of the work parties. When I asked her how to get people interested in the work parties, she said,

“You probably can’t sell the day trips...they are kind of boring. The only interesting part of a day trip is that you get to meet interesting people and chat with them. Instead, emphasize the weekend thing...like a mini-vacation...you have to do a little work, but it’s with other people...have dinner cooked for you...don’t have to pay for anything...sleep in your own tent.”

Both Linda and Odele had negative social experiences that affected their enjoyment of work parties. Linda, who was hoping to meet other young volunteers, said she was greatly disappointed when she was assigned to a group of predominately older volunteers. On one small work party at the coast, Odele was grouped with just two other people, neither of whom was “very social.” She felt very uncomfortable, and it was the only work experience where she did not “have fun.”

John saw the work parties as a good way to get more customers for his business. He enjoyed meeting people outside his normal social circle and hanging out with the stewards. He also described the other volunteers and The Nature Conservancy staff as “potential sells.”

Work parties where there was more social interaction were spoken of more fondly by volunteers. A bad experience with a fellow volunteer, or a “socially dull” work party led to volunteer dissatisfaction and unwillingness to return to that work site. For example, at one work party in the southern Willamette Valley, volunteers were spread out and did not talk nearly as much as I observed at other work parties. The overall enjoyment level of the work party was not very high. Furthermore, the two volunteers from that work party, both of whom were regulars, de-emphasized the social benefits of volunteering during interviews.

Visiting Preserves

This supporting category was fairly straight-forward, and the sentiments strongly resembled those expressed in the primary continuing motivation section. While only four volunteers cited the preserves as a primary continuing motivation,

sixteen volunteers altogether cited the preserves as one of their motivations for continuing participation. Most of the volunteers in this study enjoyed going to beautiful, natural areas where they normally would not have visited. I observed that a preserve in a great location on a beautiful day almost always increased volunteer satisfaction. Three volunteers reported that they had “adopted” certain preserves; they made sure to go to work parties at that preserve year after year because they had a special appreciation for that preserve and enjoyed seeing it change over time.

Both of the volunteers who failed to mention preserves as a motivation were new volunteers. Gabby had only attended three work parties at the time of our interview and all three were at the same preserve. She indicated that she did not want to go to any other preserve because it would be too far to travel. Patty, also a first year volunteer, only attended two work parties during the 2005 field season. She mentioned that she loves the coast of Oregon because it is beautiful, but she did not mention being drawn to either of the preserves where she had worked.

Sense of Accomplishment

Fourteen volunteers expressed a motivation to volunteer that resulted from feeling that they had accomplished something during work parties. They felt that the work they performed was worth the effort and time.

Dennis, who volunteered for twenty years with The Nature Conservancy, enjoyed seeing the changes and accomplishments at preserves like Cascade Head and Cox Island over the years. Nate, a volunteer for ten years, said that seeing the changes at Cascade Head was sufficient to “drive him to go back.” Betty, who wanted her effort to go towards something good, felt that her time on work parties was “time well

spent”, and she was still “continuously surprised by how much work actually gets done at the work parties.” When I asked Erin if she felt a sense of accomplishment during work parties, she replied, “I feel very rewarded...I get to see what I’ve done at the end of the day. I love it.”

A sense of accomplishment helped overshadow the difficulty of the work for some volunteers. Although Frank found the work to be a little tedious, he stated that it was time well spent, and well worth the effort. Harry also said that the work was worth it and that he was accomplishing something, even though he described the work as “laborious.” Ian said “I even enjoy strenuous work because I have been able to see work getting done over time...restoration work is important because it lets people see what is getting done firsthand.” Kyle felt that the tough work he performed in Eastern Oregon accomplished a lot, and he expressed satisfaction that he was able to “give back to the area.”

Speaking about seed collection at a preserve in the Southern Willamette Valley, Gabby said,

“Collecting seeds isn’t too tough...it’s not rocket science...it makes me feel like I am getting a lot accomplished...I collect half a bag of seeds...it’s a tangible thing in my hands and they tell us that those seeds are going to a nursery to propagate more seeds... [My] little part is going to help launch this native seed production.”

John, who volunteered at the same work party as Gabby, also found seed collecting to be a very rewarding experience.

Rita found her volunteer time at Cascade Head to be particularly rewarding because it was a well-managed site. Rita said, “it was really nice to see [the work]...where you feel like you’ve really contributed something to the management at

a site.” Sam also said that it was very rewarding to feel that he was contributing and “doing something worthwhile.”

I personally experienced much more satisfaction at work parties when I felt that I had accomplished something. For example, on a work party near Cascade Head, I cut down a large area of scotch broom. At the end of the day, I could see a large open area in place of what used to be a thickly packed scotch broom stand. I felt very satisfied. A few weeks later, at a preserve north of Cascade Head, I pulled “baby” scotch broom plants. Since they were quite small, I could not see evidence of my work and felt largely unsatisfied.

During a training for crew leaders in April 2005, volunteers removed a patch of bright yellow scotch broom from Kingston Prairie preserve. Allison described her reaction and that of her fellow volunteers by saying,

“It was great...the scotch broom was so bright [yellow] when we got there, then you could really see what you accomplished when you’re done because it was all gone from the area we were working.”

After the work was finished, the volunteers stood in the parking lot amazed at the visible results of their hard work. Mary, who was also at the Kingston work party, said that she loves going to Kingston because of such visible accomplishments.

Three volunteers, Allison, Mary, and Nate, felt that their work accomplished something specific at the preserves, but relatively little in the bigger picture. Allison said that she “feels like [she is] accomplishing a little with TNC, but will accomplish more someday.” Mary also said that she “doesn’t really know if [she is] accomplishing anything for the better good.” Nate said that while he feels like he is

doing something worthwhile “it’s still just a drop in the bucket...for example, Queen Anne’s Lace will never be eradicated from Oregon, but we still pull it.”

Linda said,

“The majority of my feelings of accomplishment are personal. I definitely feel like I am accomplishing something for myself...like being outdoors and socializing and getting some exercise and seeing some beautiful places...but in terms of making a difference, yeah, that’s a little mixed.”

Restoration Education

Although no volunteers cited education as a primary continuing motivation, thirteen volunteers expressed a strong motivation related to educational opportunities. Education often played a large role in volunteer satisfaction and a volunteer’s decision to return to a specific preserve or steward. Volunteers were interested in increasing their knowledge about many aspects of the work party or the preserve, including plant and animal identification, natural history, ecology, stewardship techniques and history, and specific improvements made at the preserve.

At every work party I attended volunteers asked numerous questions about the preserve and the work that they were doing. Allison, who asked many questions about plant identification and management practices, said, “I want to feel like my knowledge is increasing at the work parties... and I was looking to advance my scientific and outdoor knowledge.” Ian also asked many questions about plants and said that he “learns about new plants every time.”

Erin, who probably expressed the strongest education motivation, described the work parties as “weekend long crash courses in this natural area and what the problems are”, she said “if I’m not learning anything, I’m not going to go back to that

preserve because it's a waste of my time." Patty, a first year volunteer, echoed this by saying that she "would come back to more work parties if education was added to it...if I'm helping, what am I helping?"

Gabby said that going to work parties had educated her more about the preserve and problems associated with it. Going to the work parties and learning about the preserves "made [her] care more about it." John also said, "that's how they hooked me...they taught me stuff." Betty and Nate enjoyed the educational component of work parties because they wanted to be more aware of the area where they were working. Education at the work parties also helped increase their appreciation of the preserves. Linda and Odele wanted to familiarize themselves with the "local habitat." Linda said that increased education "could be a real gift to the volunteers."

Education was not limited to plants and animals. Volunteers also wanted to learn about the stewardship techniques at preserves and improvements made over time. Harry, a first year volunteer and college student, said,

"I would have liked both of the work parties I attended better if there had been more focus by the leaders on plant identification...and I would have gotten more satisfaction if I had known exactly how past work parties had impacted the area."

Allison wanted more explanation during the work parties about the studies being done and methods used at preserves. Carol liked learning about plants, but she was even more interested in stewardship techniques. Carol said that she "learned something new every time" she went on a work party. Odele liked learning about the preserves because it gave her a "better sense of what was going on" and why they needed to do

the work. Rita also enjoyed finding out about the preserves and why her work was important.

Education during the work parties often increased the motivation to work. The steward at a preserve in the mid-Willamette Valley began each work party with an educational demonstration to explain the history of the preserve, the types of projects going on at the preserve, and the major plant species at the preserve. I saw clearly that volunteers were excited to learn about the preserve and were more eager to work once they knew its purpose.

Another work party in central Oregon was quite the opposite, providing no introduction to the preserve's history or purpose, and no education about ecosystems or plants on the preserve. I observed that the volunteers at that work party were unsatisfied with the work.

Preserve Stewards

The preserve stewards were an important motivating factor for volunteers because they controlled the work parties. The stewards decided what work was to be done and played a significant role in educating the volunteers. Stewards could "make or break" a work party, depending on whether or not they were friendly, knowledgeable, and forthcoming with information.

Regarding the stewards, Allison said,

"Having them there is a big part of the appeal for me... [they are] very knowledgeable and enthusiastic...I think The Nature Conservancy would retain more volunteers if the stewards explained more about their studies, methods, etc."

Betty also said that the stewards were "one highlight that The Nature Conservancy brings to this... [it] sets The Nature Conservancy apart from other groups." Carol also

appreciated the stewards because they were “people that really know about the area where [the volunteers] were working.” Ian also appreciated having the stewards present because they “are really knowledgeable” and “usually sensitive to the needs of the volunteers and what they are willing and able to do.” Odele really liked “gaining a relationship with a knowledgeable person.”

Harry said that the ability to talk with the stewards about the preserves was a draw for him. He commented that the stewards at two work parties were “great, kind, knowledgeable people.” However, he felt that neither of them volunteered information, and neither focused on education or what the volunteers were experiencing as they worked. Linda appreciated the ability to ask questions of stewards, but also complained that “they don’t seem to recognize the educational component” of the work parties.

Some volunteers felt a strong connection to a particular steward. They repeatedly volunteered at a specific preserve because they enjoyed the steward. Other volunteers avoided work parties because of the steward. Many of the reactions about stewards were based on the volunteers’ personal beliefs about the qualifications of a good steward. For example, Jack (steward) drew mixed reactions from volunteers. Mary really liked Jack because he was the only steward whom she could “give a hard time to and get it back.” In contrast, Patty and Odele, who attended the same work party as Mary, described Jack as a “slave-driver” who “didn’t seem to appreciate their work.”

Cynthia (steward) was well-liked by most volunteers. Many went to her preserves expressly for the purpose of seeing her. However, both Mary and Erin

avoided her work parties. Mary said Cynthia just “rubbed her the wrong way” and Erin “didn’t like the way she ran work parties.”

The mixed reactions to the preserve stewards seemed to be experience-driven. If the volunteers enjoyed the work party, they tended to have a good impression of the steward. However, if they had a negative experience at a work party, it usually reflected negatively on the steward.

Summary

Many motivations played a role in volunteer participation on work parties. Motivations were divided into three distinct categories: start-up motivations, motivations which played a primary role in continuing volunteer participation, and motivations which played a supporting role in continuing participation as well as volunteer satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work parties.

Analysis revealed five distinct start-up motivations: desire to help, pursuing career goals, recreational experience, social interaction, and required project. Two volunteers were grouped within the desire to help category because of a desire to help the environment or The Nature Conservancy. Desire to help represents the only truly altruistic motivation in this study because participants volunteered to help an entity other than themselves. Four volunteers started participation because they wanted to obtain a job with The Nature Conservancy or a similar organization, or because it would give them experience relevant to a career change. Four volunteers were grouped into the recreational experience category because of their desire to get out of town, escape their normal routine, or get outside. The social interaction category consisted of six volunteers who started volunteering to meet new people or because

they were asked to participate by a friend or significant other. Finally, two participants started participation because they were required to do so by their school.

An overwhelming majority of the volunteers in this sample started participation because of the desire to gain something from the experience. The most obviously egoistic motivation was the pursuing career goals motivation; volunteering for the sole purpose of obtaining a job, or for career experience. Recreational experience and social interaction motivations are also considered egoistic because the reasons for starting participation were not to help, but rather to experience social contact with other people, or to recreate in the outdoors. The final motivation for initiating participation was also egoistic because the volunteer was satisfying a personal requirement.

Analysis revealed five motivations as primary motivations for continuing to volunteer: recreational experience, social interaction, visiting preserves, respect for The Nature Conservancy, and pursuing career goals. Seven participants were grouped into multiple categories because several motivations played a major role in their decision to continue volunteering. The recreational experience category consisted of twelve individuals who continued their participation to escape their normal routines or to get outside. Six volunteers continued participation because they enjoyed socializing with other volunteers at work parties. Four volunteers continued participation because of the ability to travel to preserves owned by The Nature Conservancy. Four volunteers continued participation because of their respect for The Nature Conservancy, three of which did so because their values were aligned with those of The Nature Conservancy. The fourth volunteer in that category expressed a

specific desire to help The Nature Conservancy; this represents the only altruistic motivation for continuing to volunteer. Finally, two volunteers continued their participation to bolster their resume or to obtain a job with The Nature Conservancy.

Analysis also revealed five categories of supporting continuing motivations and an additional category that was an important factor in volunteer motivation. The five supporting motivations were: recreational experience, social interaction, visiting preserves, sense of accomplishment, and restoration education. Recreational experience, social interaction and visiting preserves categories contained eighteen, sixteen, and sixteen volunteers, respectively. Fourteen volunteers reported a satisfaction from seeing the results of their hard work, or the belief that their work had made a difference. In addition, thirteen volunteers were motivated by the education they received while attending work parties. This study also found that preserve stewards played an important role in volunteer motivation during work parties.

Only one supporting motivation could be considered altruistic. Fourteen volunteers were motivated by a sense of accomplishment. This category could be considered altruistic because the volunteers appreciated and were motivated by the benefit to the preserve, The Nature Conservancy, or the environment. On the other hand, some might consider this an egoistic motivation because the volunteers benefited from the personal satisfaction of accomplishment. The other categories within supporting motivations were less ambiguous; they were all clear representations of egoistic motivations.

Figure 6 provides a summary of volunteer motivations from this study. The division of categories and specific motivations were the direct result of participants' statements and motivations.

Figure 6 – Summary of Motivations

Start-up Motivations	Primary Continuing Motivations	Supporting Continuing Motivations
Desire to Help (2)	-	-
Required Project (2)	-	-
Pursuing Career Goals (4)	Pursuing Career Goals (2)	-
Recreational Experience (4)	Recreational Experience (12)	Recreational Experience (18)
Social Interaction (6)	Social Interaction (6)	Social Interaction (16)
-	Visiting Preserves (4)	Visiting Preserves (16)
-	Respect for TNC (4)	-
-	-	Restoration Education (13)
-	-	Sense of Accomplishment (14)

Chapter 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study were similar in some ways to the results from previous studies on volunteer motivation. The main area of similarity was the multifaceted nature of volunteer motivation. Many researchers (Phillips 1982; Murk & Stephan 1991; Omoto & Snyder 1995; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen 1991; Westphal 1993; Schroeder 2000; Ryan et al. 2001; King & Lynch 1998) found that volunteers participated for a multitude of motivations, rather than just one. In this study, all eighteen participants had multiple motivations, including at least one primary continuing motivation and at least one supporting motivation.

Some studies found that volunteer decisions to participate were directly related to the benefits gained while volunteering (Philips 1982, Murk 1991, Gidron 1978, Clary 1999). Philips (1982) and Gidron (1978) used exchange theory to examine the relationship between benefits received from participation and volunteer commitment. The results of my study also support exchange theory. No matter the specific rewards, volunteers received tangible and intangible benefits that outweighed any possible costs accrued by the volunteer.

Some studies in ecological restoration volunteerism suggested that altruistic motivations were the most important motivations (Westphal 1993, Still & Gerhold 1997, King & Lynch 1998, Grese et al. 2000, Donald 1997, Aull 2004); other studies suggested that egoistic motivations did not play a large role in volunteer motivation (King & Lynch 1998, Grese et al. 2000, Aull 2004).

The results of my investigation directly contradict the results of these studies. My investigation assigned at most a peripheral role to altruistic motivations. Horton-

Smith (1981) stated that studies similar to mine would receive only altruistic answers from participants. Many factors might explain the contradiction between my study and the aforementioned studies including locality (research was performed on different stewardship groups in different locations), type of work (urban forestry, streamside restoration, prairie restoration, etc...), and perhaps the demographics of volunteers for certain groups.

However, the main difference between my study and the aforementioned studies was the methods employed. The studies that found altruistic motivations to rank highest used surveys designed with preordained categories derived from the literature in circular fashion. The results were categories that came from etic rather than emic perspectives.

The disadvantages of relying on large surveys to evaluate volunteer motivations are evident. The first disadvantage is that the questions are developed by the researcher, using the researcher's vocabulary and concepts. Survey material is developed largely from an etic perspective and participants have to answer questions that might not effectively express their motivations. The second disadvantage is that large surveys are very impersonal and tend to evoke only altruistic answers because the respondent might want to look favorable to the researcher or avoid long, confusing questions (Horton-Smith 1981). A third disadvantage is that surveys do not allow the volunteer to expand on or explain answers. If a question does not adequately explain a volunteer's motivation, the volunteer is forced to respond with the best possible match.

The ethnographic methods employed in this study avoided many of the problems that arise in surveys. First, questions asked during interviews were not uniform and they were developed to conform to the vocabulary of interviewees. By learning from participant observation, I was able to ask questions in a way that would make sense to the volunteer. Vocabulary and concepts used in interviews were direct reflections of vocabulary and concepts used at work parties. Interview material was developed from the emic perspective and motivational categories were derived from analysis of volunteers' perspectives rather than my own. Participant observation also afforded me the opportunity to see multiple motivations at work, even ones that were not mentioned during interviews.

Second, I formed solid personal relationships with participants and interviews were very personal. I think that participants did not feel the need to impress me or answer questions in misleading ways. They gave very honest, blunt answers to questions. As shown in the previous chapter, some volunteers told me that they "did not care about the helping the environment", or "didn't even know what the goals of The Nature Conservancy were."

Third, volunteers were given as much time as they needed to answer every question asked and their responses were spontaneous rather than forced. Interviews were controlled by the participant; my role was simply to guide them and keep them on course. Information gathered during interviews was a direct manifestation of the values and important motivations of the volunteers.

This is a plausible explanation for the drastic differences in results between my study and the study conducted by Aull (2004) showing that participants volunteered

primarily for altruistic motivations. Both studies used the same kind of sample (ecological restoration volunteers with the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy) and were conducted within two years of one another. However, Aull's study used an internet survey distributed to volunteers, whereas I used ethnographic methods. The difference in methodology is the best explanation for the discrepancy between the two studies, and ethnographic methods are the most adept at determining the real perspectives of volunteers.

The methods employed in this study resulted in a higher level of complexity and accuracy than its survey-based counterparts. With few exceptions (Winniford et al. 1995; Ryan 2001; Donald 1997), survey studies did not differentiate between start-up motivations and continuing motivations; none of the studies discussed in chapter three discovered both primary and supporting motivations. The divisions between types of motivations found in this study came from participants' statements.

The results of this study have many implications for volunteer management and the study of volunteer motivation. Understanding that volunteer motivation is multifaceted should lead volunteer managers to manage their volunteers based on a broad set of benefits. Volunteer managers should attempt to attract a wide array of participants by appealing to a broad set of motivations.

Egoism does not imply selfishness; volunteers who participate for egoistic motivations are not bad people. They are motivated primarily by the benefits they receive while volunteering. An understanding of the kinds of rewards volunteers expect for their participation could lead to higher retention levels and commitment from volunteers. Even if volunteers primarily participate for altruistic reasons,

increased benefits would not deter participation and would most likely have a positive influence on commitment.

Chapter 7 – Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to present recommendations to the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The following recommendations were derived from the findings of this research and serve to advise the Oregon chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

In order to increase volunteer recruitment, I make the following suggestions:

1. Emphasize benefits of volunteering in brochures and advertisements
2. Encourage current volunteers to bring friends and family on work parties
3. Present more pictures of preserves in brochures and advertisements
4. Appeal to potential volunteers' need for recreational experiences
5. Create partnerships with local schools and teachers in order to encourage more students to participate

In order to increase retention of the current volunteer base, I make the following suggestions:

6. Provide more opportunities for recreation during work parties
7. Increase opportunities for volunteers to socialize
8. Take more time to educate volunteers prior to and during work parties
9. Present volunteers with information (oral and visual) about accomplishments of work parties at preserves
10. Stewards need to understand their personal role in increasing volunteer satisfaction

1. Sixteen volunteers in this study started volunteering because they expected certain benefits to result from participation. Recruitment advertising should focus on the benefits of participation presented in this study rather than appealing to potential volunteers' desire to help The Nature Conservancy and the environment. Current brochures and advertisements pay some attention to the rewards of volunteering; however, they focus on the benefits gained by The Nature Conservancy from volunteer work. Instead, focus on the benefits gained by the volunteer.

2. Four volunteers in this study started volunteering because they were asked to do so by a friend, family member, or significant other. Word-of-mouth is a great way to spread word of volunteer opportunities. An individual might start volunteering because a friend asked her, but she will also discover their own personal rewards from participation. If those rewards are met, she will continue to volunteer and will perhaps try to recruit more friends and family.

3. Current volunteer brochures present many pictures that depict typical volunteer work. However, there are very few pictures that show the preserve at which work is performed. Sixteen volunteers expressed a motivation to visit the preserves owned or managed by The Nature Conservancy. Visually appealing pictures of preserves would attract those who want to work in beautiful natural areas.

4. Recreational experience played a large role in volunteer motivation. Four participants started volunteering for the recreational experience they expected to receive. The recreational experience of work parties should be among the benefits presented in brochures and advertisements. In a brochure designed to reveal the benefits of volunteering, a good recreation-related title might say, "Get outside and try something new."

5. Both participants who started volunteering because of a required project continued their participation beyond the requirements of their school. Volunteers who participate because it is required of them will likely discover their own personal rewards and continue volunteering if those rewards are met. By encouraging local teachers and schools to promote volunteering among their students, The Nature Conservancy can increase their volunteer base while providing a valuable benefit to

students in the form of career-related experience and much-needed volunteer work to include on resumes.

6. Recreation was a primary motivation for continuing participation for twelve participants in this study. Additionally, the remaining six volunteers all cited recreation as one of their motivations for participating in work parties. An increase in the recreational aspects of work parties will greatly increase volunteer satisfaction.

Increasing opportunities for recreation can be done in a variety of ways.

Organized hikes around the preserve during or after a work party will add a recreational feel to the work party, not to mention it would satisfy the sixteen volunteers in this study who volunteered because they like to visit the preserves. Also, extra time can be given during breaks for volunteers to explore the preserve on their own.

7. Socializing with other volunteers was a motivation for sixteen volunteers in this study. Social interaction among volunteers was high at most of the work parties I attended. The type of work performed at work parties usually allows for a high level of communication. Although work parties naturally facilitate social interaction, a higher level of social interaction would be beneficial. Increasing the opportunities to socialize with other volunteers would likely greatly increase the appeal of work parties for most in attendance.

8. Thirteen volunteers expressed a desire to learn about plants, animals, natural processes, and stewardship techniques on work parties. The volunteer program and many of the preserve stewards are aware of the role that education plays in volunteer

satisfaction. Preserve information is made available to crew leaders and stewards are encouraged to share their knowledge with volunteers.

I observed that some work parties were lacking in restoration education while others were far exceeding volunteer expectations. Restoration education needs to be included at all work parties. Providing consistent restoration education at work parties would be a fairly simple task. The best way to do this is to encourage volunteers to ask questions at the beginning of the work party; this way, they might feel more comfortable about later asking questions of the stewards or crew leaders. The volunteer program could also provide field guides to the volunteers for use during work parties.

9. Many volunteers felt a strong sense of satisfaction from the belief that the work they completed at a preserve was accomplishing something. Some volunteers who felt they were not accomplishing anything at specific preserves avoided those work parties. Providing volunteers with information about accomplishments at preserves might give them the sense that their work was worthwhile.

This can be done in several ways. First, before and after pictures can be provided to show how the preserve has changed over time as a result of work parties. Second, stewards can point out areas of accomplishment during the work party. For example, show volunteers a field of native grasses and describe how the entire field used to be covered with the yellow flowers of scotch broom plants. Third, stewards and crew leaders can verbally inform volunteers during and at the end of work parties about why the work they did was important. Finally, an “after work party” e-mail can be sent to volunteers telling them exactly what was accomplished. For example, “with

the eight hours that you contributed, you helped clear two acres of scotch broom.”

These actions can help communicate to the volunteers that their participation is valuable.

10. The volunteer director and coordinator can only do so much to prepare for the work parties and ensure that volunteers will be satisfied. Once the work party is under way, volunteer satisfaction is essentially in the hands of the preserve steward.

Stewards need to be sensitive to the needs of volunteers and understand that they are not just there to work; they are also there to gain personal rewards. By using the findings of this study about volunteer motivations, stewards can interact more effectively with volunteers by being sensitive to volunteers' needs. The volunteer program should provide the stewardship staff with a simple, two-page training brochure describing volunteer motivations as discussed in this study.

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APPENDIX

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	AGE	# YRS w/ TNC	COMMITMENT (PER SEASON)	START-UP MOTIVATIONS	PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS	SUPPORTING MOTIVATIONS
Allison	F	26	1	9	Pursuing Career Goals	Social Interaction Respect for TNC Visiting Preserves	Sense of Accomplishment Recreational Experience Restoration Education
Betty	F	44	4	22	Required Project	Recreational Experience Respect for TNC	Sense of Accomplishment Visiting Preserves Restoration Education
Carol	F	39	1	2	Recreational Experience	Recreational Experience	Social Interaction Visiting Preserves Restoration Education
Dennis	M	49	20	10	Social Interaction	Social Interaction	Sense of Accomplishment Recreational Experience
Erin	F	29	2	10	Pursuing Career Goals	Social Interaction	Sense of Accomplishment Recreational Experience Visiting Preserves Restoration Education
Frank	M	27	1	3	Social Interaction	Recreational Experience	Sense of Accomplishment Social Interaction Visiting Preserves

Figure 7 – Participant Demographics and Motivations

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	AGE	# YRS w/ TNC	COMMITMENT (PER SEASON)	START-UP MOTIVATIONS	PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS	SUPPORTING MOTIVATIONS
Gabby	F	early 30's	1	3	Social Interaction	Recreational Experience Social Interaction	Sense of Accomplishment Restoration Education
Harry	M	21	1	2	Required Project	Pursuing Career Goals	Sense of Accomplishment Restoration Education Recreational Experience Visiting Preserves
Ian	M	40's	6	2	Pursuing Career Goals	Visiting Preserves	Sense of Accomplishment Restoration Education Social Interaction Recreational Experience
John	M	39	1	11	Recreational Experience	Recreational Experience Respect for TNC	Sense of Accomplishment Restoration Education Social Interaction Visiting Preserves
Kyle	M	25	1	3	Social Interaction	Recreational Experience	Sense of Accomplishment Visiting Preserves Social Interaction
Linda	F	22	1	5	Social Interaction	Recreational Experience Social Interaction Visiting Preserves	Restoration Education

Figure 7 – Participant Demographics and Motivations Continued

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	AGE	# YRS w/ TNC	COMMITMENT (PER SEASON)	START-UP MOTIVATIONS	PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS	SUPPORTING MOTIVATIONS
Mary	F	43	4	2	Pursuing Career Goals	Pursuing Career Goals	Sense of Accomplishment Recreational Experience Social Interaction Visiting Preserves
Nate	M	late 50's	10	4	Desire to Help	Recreational Experience Respect for TNC Visiting Preserves	Sense of Accomplishment Social Interaction Restoration Education
Odele	F	24	1	3	Recreational Experience	Recreational Experience	Social Interaction Visiting Preserves Restoration Education
Patty	F	early 60's	1	2	Desire to Help	Recreational Experience	Social Interaction Restoration Education
Rita	F	33	5	3	Social Interaction	Recreational Experience	Sense of Accomplishment Social Interaction Visiting Preserves Restoration Education
Sam	M	65	10	3	Recreational Experience	Recreational Experience Social Interaction	Sense of Accomplishment Visiting Preserves

Figure 7 – Participant Demographics and Motivations Continued