



THE DEC POLICY SYSTEM

PROGRAM POLICY		Department ID: ONR - 1	Program ID: N/A
Title: Adopt-a-Natural Resource			
Issuing Authority:		Originating Unit:	
Name: Peter S. Duncan		Office/Division: Natural Resources/ Lands & Forests	
Title: Deputy Commissioner		Unit: Public Lands	
Signature:	Date:	Phone: (518) 457-7433	
Issuance Date: May 1, 1998		Latest Review Date (Office Use):	

Abstract: This policy provides the system for the Department to enter into stewardship agreements with individuals and organizations for activities which help preserve or enhance natural resources on lands under its jurisdiction.

Related References: Environmental Conservation Law Section 9-0113.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to foster public participation in the Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Stewardship Program authorized by Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

II. BACKGROUND

The Department of Environmental Conservation is responsible for the management of natural resources on lands under its jurisdiction. With the intent of improving the environmental quality of those natural resources at minimum cost to the state, 1995 legislation established an Adopt-A- Natural Resource Stewardship Program (Section 9-0113, ECL) effective July 28, 1995.

Volunteerism is the cornerstone of this program. It is a means for completing work that helps preserve, maintain and enhance natural resources at minimum cost to the state. Individuals and groups interested in

providing volunteer services are afforded a formal opportunity to propose activities that meet management needs of state-owned natural resources. Such activities may involve remediating vandalism, picking up litter and trash, establishing or maintaining access or nature trails, providing interpretive services for school groups and other citizens, managing fish and wildlife habitats, and otherwise providing positive benefits to the natural resource.

The statute authorizes the Department to use a stewardship agreement for activities it approves for the preservation, maintenance, or enhancement of state-owned natural resources. Application procedures must be established for the Department's use in considering stewardship proposals. At its discretion, the Department may provide the assistance of personnel, facilities and supplies in support of activities in the stewardship agreement. Consistent with all other laws and regulations, stewardship activities shall be recognized through placement of appropriate signs on or near the adopted natural resource. Other forms of recognition, including but not limited to certificates, press releases, and newsletters may be provided, as the Department deems appropriate.

The stewardship agreement may be modified upon mutual agreement by the Department and the Steward. Stewards shall have the option to renew agreements subject to approval by the Department and its continuation of the program. Agreements may be terminated if the Department determines that conditions of the agreements are not being met.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Environmental Conservation to foster public participation in the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Stewardship Program to help preserve, maintain and enhance natural resources on lands under its jurisdiction at minimum cost to the state

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for interpretation and update of this document, and overall management shall reside with the Office of Natural Resources, or its successor.

V. DEFINITIONS

- 1) Natural Resource - for the purpose of this program, natural resource shall mean all natural areas and related assets under the jurisdiction of the Department.
- 2) Respective Management Authority - The Program Division within the Department of Environmental Conservation which has the administrative authority for the adopted natural resource.
- 3) Steward - The person who signs the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Stewardship Agreement as an individual; or organization or group, acting by or through its duly authorized representative, which assumes responsibility for the activities and related conditions stated therein.
- 4) Adopted Natural Resource - A natural area or asset, owned by the State of New York, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation, and covered by an agreement under the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Stewardship Program.

5) Department - The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

VI. PROCEDURE

The Department will invite and encourage individuals and groups to become active supporters of natural resource management through participation in the program. They will be informed about the purpose of the program, the procedures for entering into stewardship agreements and the responsibilities of undertaking a stewardship agreement.

These implementation efforts are to ensure public understanding that any stewardship activities undertaken through this program must help the Department meet its natural resource management objectives at minimum cost to the state. Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Stewardship Program applications should be submitted to the appropriate Respective Management Authority.

The following guidelines provide the basis for Respective Management Authority review of stewardship proposals to render judgment of their suitability, the prospect for satisfactory completion and the availability of Department staff for oversight and support.

A. APPLICATION

1. Individuals or groups who wish to adopt a state-owned natural resource shall be given an application and information describing the stewardship program.
2. Applications for natural resource adoption shall be submitted to the Respective Management Authority.
3. Applicants shall provide the names and social security numbers of all individuals who participate in the project. The Respective Management Authority shall complete a HR-3 form for each project. The starting and ending dates of proposed activities shall be shown on the application. This information is needed to afford liability and workers' compensation protection to the participants.
4. Activities must be in conformance with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and approved Unit Management Plans. In the absence of a plan, interim authorization of activities may be given by the Respective Management Authority. The Department may consider factors such as safety, environmental sensitivity, need, cost and other factors deemed relevant in determining which natural resource or activities may be eligible or appropriate for a stewardship agreement.

B. AGREEMENT

1. Upon approval of the application, the Respective Management Authority and the Steward shall review the proposed stewardship activities and other conditions of the agreement.
2. A Stewardship Agreement shall be completed and signed by both the Department and the Steward for each approved Adopted Natural Resource. Project specific conditions shall be a part of all agreements.

3. Stewardship activities may be amended in the agreement upon mutual agreement by the Department and the Steward.
4. The Department may suspend all activities immediately and may revoke the agreement on thirty days written notice to the Steward, at any time during the duration of the agreement, if the conditions of the agreement are not being met. The Steward shall provide the Department thirty (30) days written notice prior to terminating the agreement.
5. Stewardship activities shall be evaluated by the Respective Management Authority annually to determine whether they merit continuation or modification.
6. As volunteers, participants in the program are accorded the same liability and workers' compensation protection as salaried state employees, provided they are acting within the scope of the agreement.
7. The Department shall provide recognition of the stewardship activities by appropriate signage on or near the adopted natural resource and may provide recognition by such other measures as it may determine to be appropriate.
8. The Commissioner authorizes the Regional Directors to enter into stewardship agreements on his behalf.
9. Generally stewardship agreements will be issued regionally. However, an agreement involving more than one region may be issued, provided it is signed by the Director of each region involved.
10. Copies of all approved stewardship agreements shall be forwarded to the appropriate Division's Central Office.

APPENDIX I

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION ADOPT-A-NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

APPLICATION

Participation in the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Stewardship Program is subject to:

1) completion of this application, 2) submission to the Department Office of the Respective Management Authority indicated below, and 3) review and approval by that office. The accompanying information on the program should be read carefully before completing this application.

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Telephone (home): _____ (work)

The activities of the Steward will be performed as (check one) :

an individual; _____ an organization or group.

If activities are to be performed as an organization, or group, please indicate its :

Group Name: _____

Group Address: _____

Your office or authority: _____

Please describe the activities you would like to perform as the Steward of a natural resource :

In addition to this application, it may be necessary to complete administrative forms and provide a copy of the by-laws or charter where formal organizations are involved.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

This application should be submitted to the following DEC Office:

APPENDIX II

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Stewardship No. _____

Project _____

Acres _____

ADOPT-A-NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

This agreement, made between _____, residing at

_____,
hereinafter called the "Steward"; and the Department of Environmental Conservation of the State of New York,
hereinafter called the "Department".

WHEREAS, Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law authorizes a stewardship program between the Commissioner and an individual, group or organization for the purpose of preserving, maintaining or enhancing a state-owned natural resource or portion thereof in accordance with the policies of the Department; and,

WHEREAS, there is need for the services and support of volunteers provided through this new stewardship opportunity to aid the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of state-owned natural resources at minimum cost to the state:

NOW, THEREFORE, it is agreed that this Stewardship Agreement for a period of _____ years from the date hereof, shall provide that the natural resource named in this agreement be preserved and maintained in its natural state or managed to enhance or restore the natural resource values it provides, involving the activities specified in this agreement and consistent with the policies of the Department.

This natural resource is located on that certain tract of land known as _____,
, and situated in the Township of _____, County of _____,
, and the State of New York containing _____ acres more or less.

IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED THAT :

1) Activities

Activities of the Steward permitted on this natural resource are :

(Use additional sheets and attach as a part of this agreement, if necessary)

2) Technical Services

Assistance provided by the Department shall consist of :

3) Responsibilities

The Steward is responsible for :

- a) completing the activities in the matter agreed upon with the Department.
- b) providing the identification of each volunteer, including Social Security number, in advance of the performance of activities. This information is needed to afford the participants liability and workers' compensation protection. (The participant list shall be kept current and attached as part of the agreement).
- c) complying with the Child Labor Law, as it pertains to under-aged volunteers; parent signature is required for volunteers under the age of 18 and volunteers under 16 may only participate in yard/household type work activities (no machinery) as part of an organization.
- d) reporting to the Department annually, on work accomplished and number of volunteer hours spent on activities.
- e) discussing with the Department's contact person any problems, disagreements, questions of interpretation regarding the agreement or other concerns as soon as possible.

The Department is responsible for :

- a) completing a HR-3 form (Volunteer/IPA Application).
- b) evaluating stewardship activities annually to determine their merit for continuation.
- c) discussing with the Steward's contact person any problems, disagreements, questions of interpretation regarding the agreement or other concerns as soon as possible.

4) Contacts

The contact person for the Steward is _____, who may be reached at the following address and telephone number _____.

_____. The contact person for the Department is _____, who may be reached at the following address and telephone number _____.

5) Recognition

The Department shall provide recognition of the stewardship activities by appropriate signage on or near the adopted natural resource and may provide recognition by such other measures as it may determine appropriate.

6) Land Use

Nothing contained herein shall prevent or hinder the Department from carrying out its regular activities on, nor alter or change the traditional access to and public use of the lands covered by this agreement.

7) Agreement and Renewal

This agreement may be modified in scope or altered in any other manner, upon mutual agreement by the Department and the Steward. The Steward shall have the option of renewing the agreement with the approval of the Department and subject to the continuation by the Department of the Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Stewardship program.

8) Termination

The Department may terminate this agreement and remove signs upon thirty (30) days written notice, if in its sole judgment it finds and determines that the Steward or anyone working thereunder are not meeting the terms and conditions of this agreement. The Steward shall provide the Department thirty (30) days written notice prior to terminating this agreement.

9) Liability Protection

As volunteers, participants in the program are accorded the same liability and workers' compensation protection as salaried state employees, provided they are acting within the scope of the agreement.

10) Special Conditions

Special conditions of this agreement are : _____

Date of Agreement _____

STEWARD _____

(Print)

Address _____

Signature _____

(Individual or Authorized Representative)

Date _____

COMMISSIONER OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

By: _____

Title: _____

(Authorized Representative)

Signature _____

Date:

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
ADOPT-A-NATURAL-RESOURCE PARTICIPANT LIST

Stewardship No. _____
Project _____

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Social Security No. _____

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Social Security No. _____

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Social Security No. _____

Name: _____
Signature: _____
Social Security No. _____

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Social Security No. _____

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**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**ADOPT-A-NATURAL RESOURCE
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

APPLICATION

Participation in the Adopt-A-Natural Resource Stewardship Program is subject to:

- 1) Completion of this application.
- 2) Submission to the Department Office of the Respective Management Authority indicated below.
- 3) Review and approval by that office. The accompanying information on the program should be read carefully before completing this application.

Your Name: _____
(Print)

Your Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____

The activities of the Steward will be performed as (check one):
An Individual _____; An Organization or Group _____

If activities are to be performed as an organization or group, please indicate its:

Group Name: _____

Group Address: _____

Your office or authority: _____

Please describe the activities you would like to perform as the Steward of a natural resource:

(Use additional sheets and attach as a part of this application, if necessary)

In addition to this application, it may be necessary to complete administrative forms and provide a copy of the by-laws or charter where formal organizations are involved.

This application should be submitted to the following DEC Office:

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**ADOPT-A-NATURAL-RESOURCE
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

PARTICIPANT LIST

Stewardship No: _____

Project: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security: _____ Social Security: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security: _____ Social Security: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security: _____ Social Security: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security: _____ Social Security: _____

Name: _____ Name: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Social Security: _____ Social Security: _____

**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**ADOPT-A-NATURAL RESOURCE
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

AGREEMENT

Stewardship No: _____
Project: _____
Acres: _____

This agreement, made between _____, residing at _____, hereinafter called the "Steward"; and the Department of Environmental Conservation of the State of New York, hereinafter called the "Department".

WHEREAS, Section 9-0113 of the Environmental Conservation Law authorizes a stewardship program between the Commissioner and an individual, group or organization for the purpose of preserving, maintaining or enhancing a state-owned natural resource or portion thereof in accordance with the policies of the Department; and,

WHEREAS, there is need for the services and support of volunteers provided through this new stewardship opportunity to aid the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of state-owned natural resources at minimum cost to the state:

NOW, THEREFORE, it is agreed that this Stewardship Agreement for a period of _____ years from the date hereof, shall provide that the natural resource named in this agreement be preserved and maintained in its natural state or managed to enhance or restore the natural resource values it provides, involving the activities specified in this agreement and consistent with the policies of the Department.

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Activities of the Steward permitted on this natural resource are:

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3) Responsibilities

The Steward is responsible for:

- a) Completing the activities in the matter agreed upon with the Department.
- b) Providing the identification of each volunteer, including Social Security number, in advance of the performance of activities. This information is needed to afford the participants liability and workers' compensation protection. (The participant list shall be kept current and attached as part of the agreement).
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- d) Reporting to the Department annually, on work accomplished and number of volunteer hours spent on activities.
- e) Discussing with the Department's contact person any problems, disagreements, questions of interpretation regarding the agreement or other concerns as soon as possible.

The Department is responsible for:

- a) Completing a HR-3 form (Volunteer/IPA Application).
- b) Evaluating stewardship activities annually to determine their merit for continuation.
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4) Contacts

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_____ The contact person for the Department is _____, who may be reached at the following address and telephone number _____.

_____.

5) Recognition

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As volunteers, participants in the program are accorded the same liability and workers' compensation protection as salaried state employees, provided they are acting within the scope of the agreement.

10) Special Conditions

Special conditions of this agreement are: _____

(Use additional sheets and attach as a part of this agreement, if necessary)

Date of Agreement _____

STEWARD

By:

(Print)

Address:

Signature:

(Individual or Authorized Representative)

Date:

COMMISSIONER OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

By:

(Print)

Signature

(Authorized Representative)

Title

Date:
