

## **Volunteering at Somerville Lake**

Over the years the Corps of Engineers at Somerville Lake has been fortunate to have some useful and needed projects completed by volunteers. Contributions made by the participants in the Volunteer Program have improved wildlife habitat, promoted conservation ethics on the part of young people, enriched the experiences of the many thousands of visitors who come annually to the reservoir's shores, parks and trails and provided a worthwhile and rewarding experience for themselves.

### **The Reservoir:**

Somerville Lake is located in rural Central Texas. It is midway between Houston and Austin thirteen miles north of Brenham on Texas Highway 36. The reservoir was completed in 1967 and is a multi-purpose reservoir with flood control and water conservation being the historic primary functions. Outdoor recreation has steadily grown to be one of the major functions. Our strengths lie in fishing and family camping. During the past five years interests in observing wildlife and hiking have become popular. Although definitely rural, the lake is only eighty miles from the largest city in the state in one direction and the state capital city in the other. We seem to have the best of both worlds.

### **The Seasons:**

There are two Seasons as related to the recreation functions of the lake. The recreation season lasts approximately from Memorial day through Labor Day. Somerville Lake is a popular summer outdoor water based recreation destination in Central Texas. Recreation visitor numbers often exceed one million. During the recreation season Rangers and Volunteers prepare and provide summer interpretive programs for lake visitors. These include hikes and wildflower walks, water and camping safety programs, camping and cooking demonstrations. The other season, which approximates the school year is called locally the Scout season because of the long term partnership between the Somerville Lake Office and Girl and Boy Scouts in the environmental and conservation education programs that each of the organizations offers their youth members. Recently school groups have become involved in similar environmental education activities at the reservoir. The Scout season lasts from September 15 through the end of March. There are pre and post season tasks associated with each season.

### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

Volunteer service opportunities are available in the Scouting Program, the Environmental Education Program, the Summer Interpretive Program and the Trails Program as well as those general visitor services often associated with campground hosts. There are opportunities for trail maintenance work as well as teaching and supervising the work of other volunteers, youth and adult members of the scout groups. While very helpful, previous experience as an adult volunteer in Boy or Girl Scouting is not required. During a scout

season we can expect to have from 800 to 1,000 youth and adults come to the lake to complete a service project or to participate in a workshop.

During the months of December and January relatively few campers visit the parks on the reservoir. There are generally only a few requests for school or scout programs. This is a stand down time for us in many ways. During the Holiday Season, Volunteers often schedule time to visit loved ones or return to a home base to check on things. Volunteers may leave their trailers or motor homes on their volunteer camping site during this time if they wish. Volunteers who decide to stay at the reservoir during this time are customarily invited to participate in the holiday celebrations at the Reservoir Office and with organizations and families in the area.

**Benefits:**

Corps of Engineer Volunteers receive a water, electric and sewer hook up equipped camping site during their period of service. Park keys, a uniform vest and vehicle identification tags are issued. A uniform cap and a name badge are provided. Whenever possible training and professional development opportunities in the form of workshops and symposiums are made available for volunteers working in interpretive services and outreach programs.

**Work Schedule:**

In general, the work we do with scout organizations and with members of the public takes place on Friday and Saturday, with some tasks on Sunday. Due to the recent interest from area schools in environmental education opportunities, we anticipate more contact hours during weekdays in the future. In general twenty hours of service is the time volunteer commitment per week, but at Somerville we must calculate that over the entire service period. Sometimes we are very busy and other times we can be more relaxed. Travel time, time doing research for programs and preparation time is included in the calculation of volunteer hours per week.

At the reservoir, there is a contract cleaning crew, and public facilities cleaning is done through this contract.

**Telephone and Mail:**

Verizon (formerly General Telephone and Electric, GTE) is the company that offers telephone service in at Overlook, Yegua Creek and Rocky Creek Parks. If there is a telephone line installed at your campsite pad the company will be able to connect a phone for you. There is a fee for the hook up service. The telephone number for phone service is 1-800-483-4400.

The U.S. Post Office in Somerville, Texas is closest to all the park areas. Although the physical address of the parks and campsites is Brenham or Burton, Texas, mail is not delivered by the U.S. Postal Service to campsites in the parks. The physical address is necessary for telephone service and for 9-1-1 Emergency Service. Post Office boxes can be rented for periods as short as six months for \$13.00 (26.00 per year) with a returnable deposit of \$1.00 for each key.

General Delivery is an option for shorter periods of volunteer service. To request General Delivery Service, complete the U.S. Postal Service Form PS-1527, "Application for General Delivery Service" and mail it to the Postmaster in Somerville, Texas 77879, or complete the form once you arrive at the reservoir. There is no fee for general delivery service, but mail is available only when the post office is open, 9:00 am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday and 9:00 am to 11:00 am on Saturday. A post office box is available twenty-four hours per day. The telephone number at the Somerville Post Office is 979-596-1613.

### **Electronic Mail:**

The line dividing the two telephone toll areas is through the middle of the lake. Although separated only by a few miles geographically, telephone communication between the Somerville Lake Office and telephones located in the parks requires a long distance charge. For this reason, most of the communication between the volunteers living in the parks and the lake office is done through email. There are several Internet providers in the area.

Bluebonnet Internet	888-622-2583	<a href="http://www.bluebon.net">www.bluebon.net</a>
Computers on Line [Stratosurf]	800-704-8294	<a href="http://www.stratosurf.net">www.stratosurf.net</a>
Comwerx	888-884-2210	<a href="http://www.brenhamonline.com">www.brenhamonline.com</a>
GKG	800-617-0412	<a href="http://www.gkg.net">www.gkg.net</a> or <a href="http://www.nettexas.net">www.nettexas.net</a>

### **Area Information:**

Additional information about the area around Somerville Dam and Reservoir is available from area Chambers of Commerce. The Corps of Engineers Office is located in Burleson County and the parks in which Corps Volunteer activities take place are located in Washington County.

Washington County Chamber of Commerce, 979-836-3695, toll free 888-273-6426  
314 Austin Street [www.brenhamtexas.com](http://www.brenhamtexas.com)  
Brenham, Texas 77833

Burleson County Chamber of Commerce, 979-567-3218  
212-A West Buck Street  
Caldwell, Texas 77836

### **Point of Contact:**

If questions arise, please contact Ranger Bill Keienburg who serves as the Volunteer Program Coordinator for the Somerville Lake Office. The mailing address is Volunteer Program, Post Office Box 549, Somerville, Texas 77879-0549. The telephone number is 979-596-1622. The cell phone number is 979-324-3817. The email address is [john.w.keienburg@swf02.usace.army.mil](mailto:john.w.keienburg@swf02.usace.army.mil)

Somerville Lake Office  
Capitol Area Region

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
Interpretive Services and Outreach Program (ISOP)  
Volunteer Year (VY) 2007-2008

Name:

Months in which (I am) (we are) interested in Volunteering during the **VY 2007-2008**.

**Summer Season:** Volunteers assist with the weekend Summer Interpretive Program Presentations and serve as Campground Hosts providing information and assistance to campers. Some opportunities exist for volunteers to work with groups of scouts participating in the National Summertime Pack Award for Cub Scouts. Volunteers conduct trail patrols on foot in a utility vehicle, make repairs to wayside trail signs and complete trail maintenance projects. In August Volunteers conduct daylight census reports for whitetail deer.

\_\_\_\_\_ May 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ June 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ July 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ August 2007

**Fall Season:** Volunteers assist with Girl Scout (all levels) and Boy Scout (all levels) conservation and environmental education projects, conduct portions of scout workshops, serve as registrar for scout events, compile data, make copies of brochures and handouts. Volunteers conduct trail patrols on foot and in a utility vehicle, make repairs to wayside trail signs and complete trail maintenance projects, monitor and pick up litter at minimally developed recreation areas, make recommendations for area repairs, wildlife food plots, continue the daylight census reports for whitetail deer through mid-September and assist in the development of plans for future events and projects. To a lesser degree than in the summer Volunteers serve as Campground Hosts providing information and assistance to campers.

\_\_\_\_\_ September 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ October 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ November 2007

**Interim Season:** Volunteers assist with the wheelchair hunter deer hunt, serve as registrar for scout events, compile data and make copies of brochures and handouts. Volunteers conduct trail patrols on foot and in a utility vehicle, make repairs to wayside trail signs and complete trail maintenance projects. Volunteers often take time to visit family and friends during the holiday season. Members of the Volunteer group are customarily invited to attend area service club holiday parties and dinners and the office holiday luncheon. Volunteers begin the monitoring of the bluebird nesting boxes.

\_\_\_\_\_ December 2007

\_\_\_\_\_ January 2008

**Spring Season:** Volunteers assist with Girl Scout (all levels) and Boy Scout (all levels) conservation and environmental education projects, conduct portions of scout workshops, serve as registrar for scout events, compile data, make copies of brochures and handouts. Volunteers assist in staffing the agency's booth at area wide scout events. Volunteers conduct portions of school group programs in water safety and in environmental education. School programs take place both at the reservoir and off site. Volunteers conduct trail patrols on foot and in a utility vehicle, make repairs to wayside trail signs and complete trail maintenance projects, monitor and pick up litter at minimally developed recreation areas, make recommendations for area repairs, monitor wildlife food plots and assist in the development of plans for future events and projects. To a lesser degree than in the summer Volunteers serve as Campground Hosts providing information and assistance to campers. Volunteers continue the monitoring of bluebird nesting boxes through the end of the nesting season.

\_\_\_\_\_ February 2008

\_\_\_\_\_ March 2008

\_\_\_\_\_ April 2008

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

(Part II)

Volunteer Application for Natural Resources Agencies: **Somerville Lake Office**

1. Volunteer Position for which you are applying at Somerville Lake is an **Interpretive Services Volunteer**, working in the Scouting, Trails and Host Program areas.

2. Dates Available for Volunteering at Somerville Lake: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_  
(mm/dd/yy) (mm/dd/yy)

3. Driver's License Number : \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name of Person to Notify in Case of Emergency :

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:

City and Zip:

Telephone:

email address :

6. Previous Volunteer Experience:

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

List of Previous Volunteer Experience, continued:

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator or Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Please feel free to attach a resume or summary of additional pertinent information.

<b>Volunteer Application for Natural Resources Agencies</b>		Instructions: Mark "x" in the appropriate boxes. For other items, either print or type responses If extra space is needed use item 17.	
1. Name (Last, First, Middle)		2. Age	3. Telephone Number ( ) -
4. Email Address		5. Street Address (include apartment no., if any)	
6. City, State, and Zip Code		7. Which general volunteer work categories are you most interested in?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology <input type="checkbox"/> Botany <input type="checkbox"/> Campground Host <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Computers <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Education <input type="checkbox"/> Fish/Wildlife		<input type="checkbox"/> Historical/ Preservation <input type="checkbox"/> Pest/Disease Control <input type="checkbox"/> Minerals/ Geology <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Office/Clerical <input type="checkbox"/> Range/Livestock <input type="checkbox"/> Research/Librarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Soil/ Watershed <input type="checkbox"/> Timber/Fire Prevention <input type="checkbox"/> Trail/Campground Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guide/Interpretation <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor Information <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify)		8. What qualifications/skills/experience/education do you have that you would like to use in your volunteer work?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking/Camping <input type="checkbox"/> Biology <input type="checkbox"/> Boat Operation <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical/Office Machines <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting/Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Hand/Power Tools		<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Equipment Operation <input type="checkbox"/> Horses – Care/ Riding <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping/Reforestation <input type="checkbox"/> Land Surveying <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock/Ranching <input type="checkbox"/> Map reading <input type="checkbox"/> Mountaineering <input type="checkbox"/> Photography <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Research/Librarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign Language <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Other Trade skills (Please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Working with People <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Editing <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify)	
9. Based on boxes checked in items 7 and 8, what particular type of volunteer work would you like to do? (Please describe any specific qualifications, skills, experience, or education that apply.)			
<hr/>			
10 a. Have you volunteered before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
b. If Yes, please briefly describe your volunteer experience.			
11. Would you like to supervise other volunteers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
12. What are some of your objectives for working as a volunteer? (Optional)			
13. Please specify any physical limitations that may influence your volunteer work activities:			

14a. Which months would you be available for volunteer work?

- January     February     March     April     May     June  
 July     August     September     October     November     December

14b. How many hours per week would you be available for volunteer work? Hours

14c. Which days per week would you be available for volunteer work?

- Monday     Tuesday     Wednesday     Thursday     Friday     Saturday     Sunday

15. Specify at least three states or specific locations within a state where you would like to do volunteer work.

16. Specify your lodging requirements:

- I will furnish my own lodging (such as tent; camper; own, relative's, or friend's place)  
 I will require assistance in finding lodging

17. If a volunteer assignment is not available at the location specified in item 14, do you want your application forwarded to another location or Federal agency seeking volunteers with your background/interest?

- Yes     No (Please specify)

18. This is provided for more detailed responses. Please indicate the item numbers to which these responses apply:

#### Public Burden Statement

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1621 N. Kent Street, Room 800 RPE, Arlington, VA Attention: Clearance Officer; and to the Office of the Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (OMB# 0596-0080), Washington, DC 20503.

#### Notice to Volunteer

Volunteers are not considered to be Federal employees for any purposes other than tort claims and injury compensation. Volunteer service is not creditable for leave accrual or any other benefit. However, volunteer service is creditable work experience.

#### Privacy Act Statement

Following information is provided to comply with the Privacy Act (PL 93-579). 5 U.S.C. 301 and 7 CFR 260 authorize acceptance of the information requested on this form. The data will be used to contact applicants and to interview, screen, and select them for volunteer assignments. Furnishing this data is voluntary.

18. Signature (Sign in ink)

19. Date