



Summary of 2017 End-of-Season Volunteer Survey Results

Volunteers are valued and respected contributors to the Alberta Parks team. The content that follows represents a summary of input received from a provincial online survey of volunteers who assisted with Park operations and programming in 2017.

Alberta Parks will use this information to inform, shape and improve volunteer program areas such as training, Occupational Health and Safety procedures, and availability of opportunities.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

Using email and personal contact information, Alberta Parks invited volunteers to anonymously complete a short online survey to gain understanding about their experience as a volunteer. The survey was open from November 16 to December 6, 2017.

The survey received ninety-five individual responses, with the majority coming from Alberta Parks' Kananaskis region (45%), Central region (27%) and South region (17%).

The survey was conducted using Opinio6 software and contained up to 15 questions depending on the type of volunteer involvement.

Survey respondents identified themselves with the following program areas: Stewards (40%), Campground Hosts (20%), ecology (17%), trail care (10%), Wildlife Ambassador (6%), Social Media Ambassador (4%) and "other" (3%).

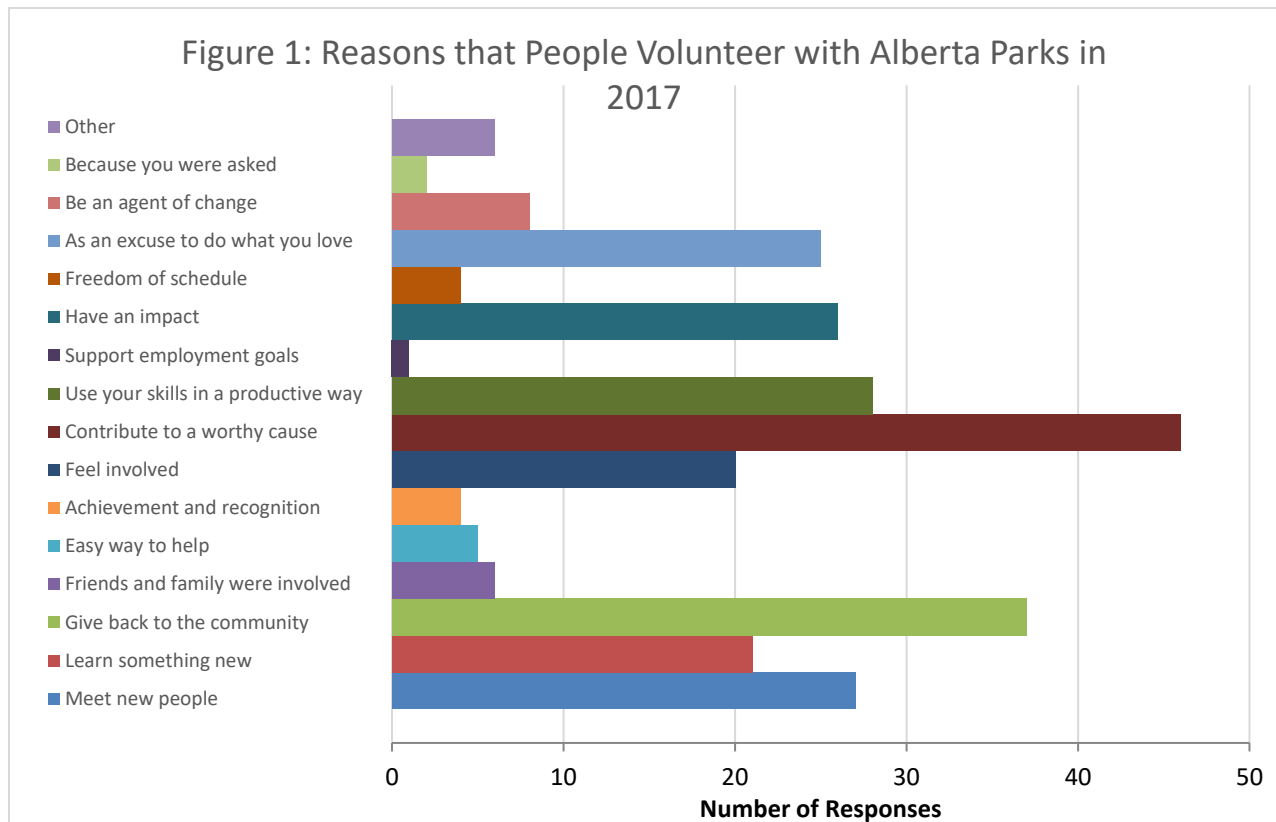
This is the first year that evaluation feedback was solicited at a provincial scale. In addition to this survey, the majority (60%) of survey respondents indicated that they had participated in local and/or regional evaluation processes.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Why Do Our Volunteers Choose to Volunteer?

All volunteers were asked to select their top three reasons for volunteering with Alberta Parks in 2017 (Figure 1). Overall, the top three reasons included:

- Contribute to a worthy cause
- Give back to the community
- Use skills in a productive way

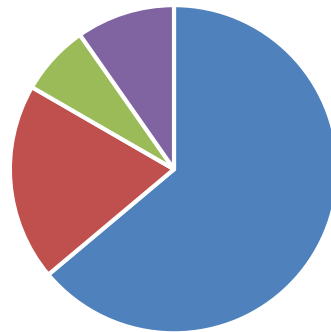


Amount of Time Spent Volunteering

Two questions in the survey focused on the amount of time spent volunteering in 2017. Results indicated:

- Volunteers were active throughout the year.
- The highest number of volunteer hours worked occurred through the summer months.
- Majority of respondents felt that they volunteered as much time as they would like to (Figure 2).
- In the event that a volunteer participated less time than they would have liked, the majority of responses indicated that this was due to personal reasons (e.g. schedule conflicts, health) rather than a lack of opportunity to volunteer.

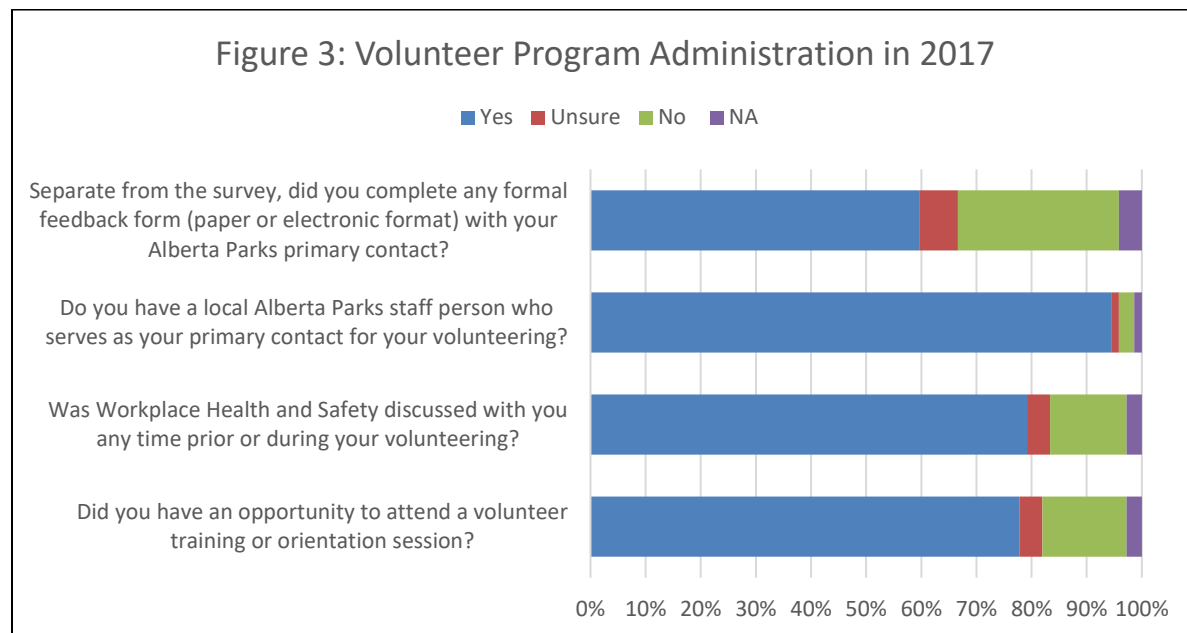
Figure 2: Amount of time that volunteers spent working in 2017



- Just enough time (it's as much time as I would like)
- Too little time (I want to volunteer more, but I personally am unable)
- Too little time (I want to volunteer more, but I don't know how)
- Other

Provincial Program Administration

Five questions within the survey focused on elements of administration that are required throughout all provincial volunteer programs (Figure 3). Results were as follows:



Nearly all respondents (97%) indicated that the materials and information provided for their volunteer roles was adequate for their needs.

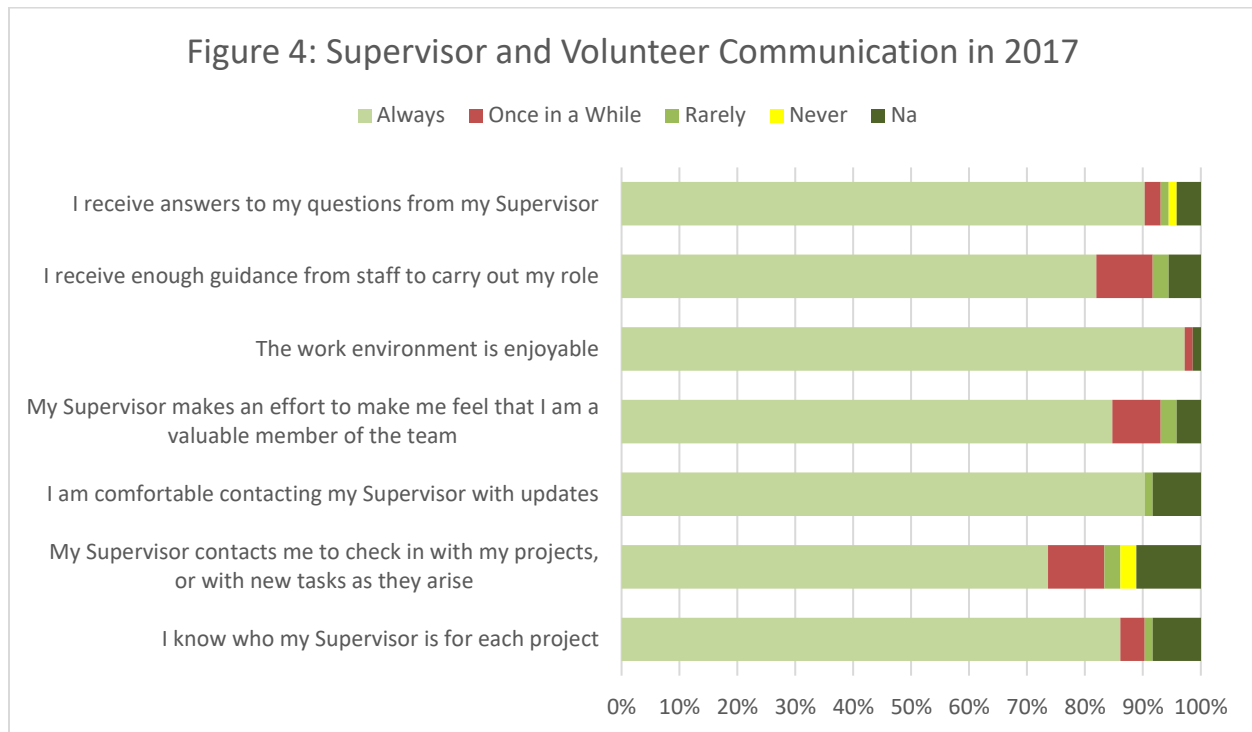
When asked about their experiences throughout the 2017 volunteer season, 19% of survey respondents identified topics or situations for which they felt underprepared. Responses varied slightly with different roles, but often related to ensuring clarity of duties and responsibilities early in the volunteering process.

Several respondents mentioned site-specific suggestions for how to improve site operation and some respondents felt that they could have been better prepared and/or supported with strategies when encountering instances of public non-compliance with park regulations. Better information about emergency protocols in inclement weather was a specific item to improve across all program areas and regions.

The remaining 81% of survey respondents did not identify specific topics for which they felt unprepared.

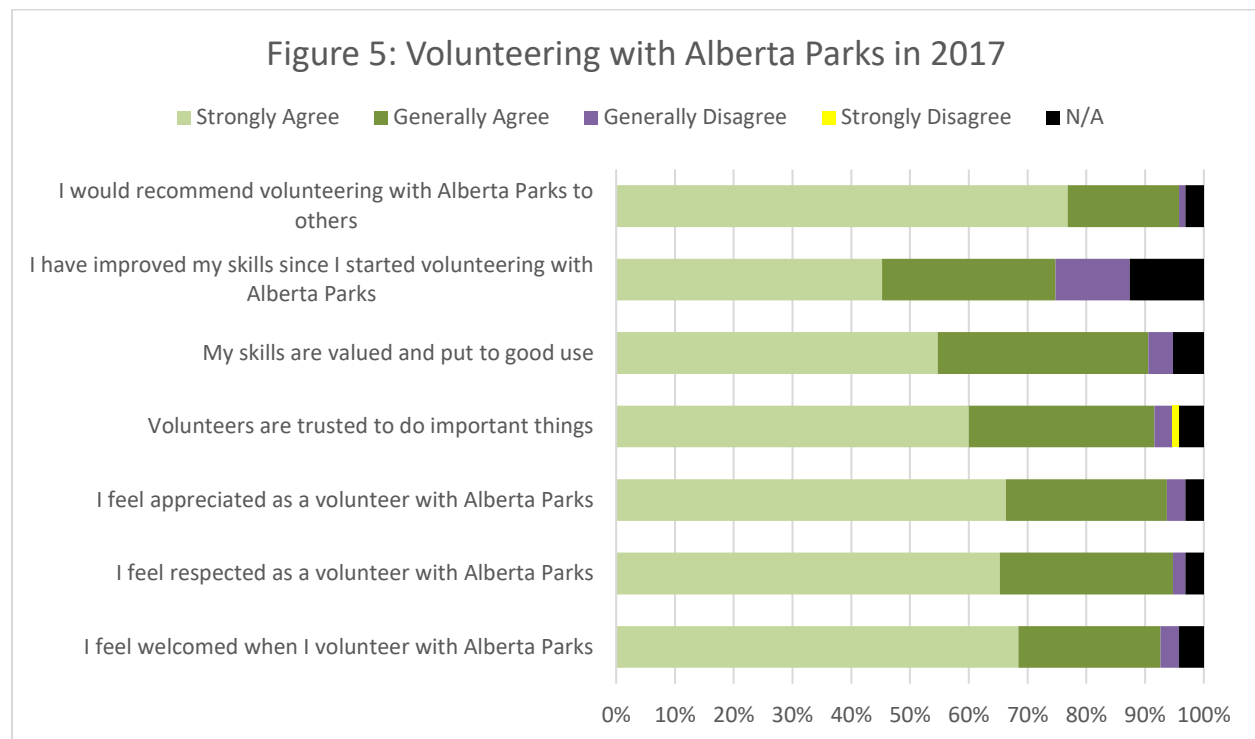
Supervisor Communication

Seven questions (Figure 4) focused on involvement and communication with volunteer supervisors throughout all provincial volunteer programs.



Overall Volunteering Experience

Seven questions (Figure 5) focused on the overall volunteer experience in all provincial volunteer programs with Alberta Parks in 2017.



When asked whether the survey respondent plans to continue as a volunteer with Alberta Parks for the next season, 90 out of 95 people said “Yes”. Personal unavailability (e.g. scheduling conflicts and health concerns) were primary reasons for not continuing.

All survey respondents were asked for closing remarks and final comments regarding their volunteer experiences. Broadly grouped, themes from this input included:

- Pride and appreciation for opportunities to volunteer
- Remarks reflecting how much volunteers enjoyed their experiences
- A desire to see an expansion of roles and opportunities
- Interest in expanded training opportunities for volunteers and not-for-profit groups
- Encouragement for additional staff support and strengthened relationships with staff
- Appreciation for the annual Volunteer Conference
- Program-specific and site-specific suggestions and comments
- Suggestions for volunteer incentives and improving volunteer recognition
- Interest in land management and regional planning matters.

Conclusion

Alberta Parks appreciates all volunteer program participant feedback. The engagement has been valuable in understanding Albertan's passion for volunteering with us. We are pleased that most of our volunteers had very positive experiences and plan to continue their involvement with us in 2018. As an organization committed to continuous improvement, we look forward to strengthening and refining areas such as orientation and training, Occupational Health and Safety procedures, roles and expectations, and the number and variety of volunteer opportunities available.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.



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