



Office of
Environment
& Heritage



ROYAL COAST TRACK
ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

MAINTENANCE STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

2015-2020

25 June 2015

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Acronyms and Abbreviations used in this Strategy

EOI	Expressions of Interest
Friends of Royal / the Friends	Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated
JSA	Job Safety Analysis
JSB	Job Safety Briefing
MSW Region	Metropolitan South West Region
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
OEH	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PUF	Park Use Fee
PWG	Parks & Wildlife Group
RCT	Royal Coast Track
RNP	Royal National Park
VOPP	Volunteer Operational Policy & Procedures
VPMS	Volunteer Program Management System
WHS	Work Health & Safety

Introduction

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is building capacity to implement quality volunteer programs to make it easier for people to participate in national parks and reserves. This “Royal Coast Track Maintenance Strategy for Volunteer Involvement 2015-2020” describes one project that facilitates this corporate aim.

Royal National Park (RNP) lies within the management of Royal Area in the NPWS reserve system. It is part of the Metropolitan South West Region within the Metropolitan & Mountains Branch of the Parks & Wildlife Group (PWG) of the NSW Government’s Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH). PWG however is still commonly referred to by most staff and the community as the NPWS.

Volunteer opportunities were informal (except for some Cabins Coastcare projects) before the early 1990s. After Jan 1994 bush regeneration projects were developed and have grown. In 2015 a rich mix of community projects exist, coordinated under the umbrella of the “Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated” that were incorporated in 2009, and volunteers now contribute either via NPWS-supervised activities, or as authorised and supported skilled groups, such as the Coastal Cabins Landcare Groups, Royal Bushies, and several ‘lone-ranger’ groups and individuals not formally affiliated with any one particular group. All are covered under Volunteer Agreements and Volunteer Registrations.

In this 2015-20 Strategy Royal Area aims to meet volunteering targets and to contribute to the NSW Government’s *NSW 2021* corporate goals, including Royal local interests in the following:

- Goal 22: Protect our natural environment.
- Goal 23: Increase opportunities for people to look after their own neighbourhoods and environments
- Goal 24: Make it easier for people to be involved in their communities – increase the proportion of the NSW population involved in volunteering to exceed the national average by 2016
- Goal 25: Increase opportunities for seniors in NSW to fully participate in community life

For greater detail www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/nsw_2021_plan or www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/howeare/130847CorpPlan2013

RNP is supported by the Visitor Experience & Education Unit (based in the Hurstville NPWS office) using the **Volunteer Operational Policy and Procedures (VOPP)** to steer all aspects of volunteer engagement. The VOPP and Volunteer Coordination staff assist Areas to increase the profile of volunteer programs, recruitment, recognition, investigating & developing innovative projects, training staff in administration & reporting using the **Volunteer Program Management System (VPMS)** and in preparing successful grants to support volunteer projects.

The upgrade of the **Royal Coast Track (RCT)** is a recognised high priority for the Area, Region and Branch – it is also part of the NSW Environment Minister’s focus from La Perouse to Wollongong. This Strategy addresses the recommendation that came out of the “Royal Coast Track Strategic Framework” (2012) to integrate repairs along the Coast Track with NPWS professional track crews, specialist contractors, and opportunities for volunteer involvement.

NPWS Volunteer Operational Policy and Procedures (VOPP)

The VOPP administers all NPWS volunteer programs and the Volunteer Program Management System (VPMS) is a purpose built database that assists staff reporting and managing these projects.

The 2013 redraft included changes to some OEH policies, state legislations, regulations, and programs:

- OEH Child Safe and Friendly Environment policy
- Work Health & Safety Act (2011)
- Working with Children Act (2012)
- NPWS VPMS
- Streamlining of the volunteer registration process
- Supplementary Pest Control

Volunteer Program Management System (VPMS)

The VPMS system replaces the paper administration templates and State of Parks reporting for volunteer activities. It also replaces unwieldy Consent documents that were full of legalistic jargon. Through centrally collated information, the VPMS:

1. Allows for electronic program administration and approval under the VOPP
2. Improves NPWS efficiency in tracking the number of volunteer programs and contributed hours.
3. Allows information about volunteer programs to be systematically considered as part of the development of Regional Operation Plans
4. Supports a systematic approach to identifying and managing risk
5. Improves NPWS ability to systematically report on volunteer participation for corporate reporting needs.

Regional Operation Plans (ROP)

The Metropolitan & Mountains Branch has a volunteer strategy that guides volunteer programs across the Branch, and outlines how the state-wide strategy is implemented. Strategies identify funding opportunities, both internal and external, opportunities for volunteer capacity building, recognition of volunteer contributions, partnership opportunities, and innovative ways to support staff delivery of volunteer programs, and additional regional/branch resources that may exist. The NPWS' Metropolitan South West Region has a Regional Operations Plan (ROP) that includes "Community Participation & Volunteering" as a key theme.

In Royal Area, opportunities identified in the 2015-16 ROP of relevance to this Strategy include:

1. *Create more opportunities and partnerships, particularly with Aboriginal people, to access and protect our heritage.*
2. *Establish volunteer program(s) that meet corporate priorities, staff resources and volunteer satisfaction.*
3. *Continue to implement erosion control at priority sites along Royal Coast Track*
4. *Work with Cabins Consultative Group to develop vegetation management plans which can be implemented by cabin community members*
5. *Facilitate and support activities of the Friends of the Royal National Park and the Volunteer bush regeneration group to undertake works consistent with the Regional Pest Management System critical priorities including Big Marley and Jibbon sites.*
6. *support Friends of the Royal National Park to become a self-managing group.*

And relevant for Remedial Works by Staff (see below) on the Royal Coast Track in 2015-16:

1. *Implement \$1.2M of works on the RCT including Garie Headland, Marley staircase and upgrade sections from Bundeena to Marley Beach.*

Grants

The NPWS Volunteer Grants Program has promoted innovation in volunteering and contributed to an increase in the quality and sustainability of volunteer programs throughout NPWS since 2009. On-going commitments of funds is included in each year's volunteering budget. Grants are provided to NPWS volunteer projects that engage the community for the mutual benefit of NPWS, the environment, and the health & well-being of volunteers & their communities.

In 2015 other grant opportunities such as "Find It & Fix It" - programs for critical biodiversity and natural heritage conservation, as well as tourism grants will be applied for to support some Royal Area projects that have some volunteer involvement.

Royal Coast Track

Location

The Royal Coast Track (RCT) links Bundeena to Otford, approximately 26km of bush track that crosses the busy visitor precincts of Wattamolla and Garie and the Cabins communities of Little Garie, South Era and Burning Palms. It crosses numerous waterways and rivulets, seepage lines, sandy beaches, freshwater and saline lagoons, headlands, and valleys as it transects through Hawkesbury Sandstone heath & forest, and Narrabeen Shale grasslands, forested slopes and rainforests.

Usage patterns

The majority of day visitors access the RCT from the north, either incorporating the Jibbon Headland, or from starting at Beachcomber Ave (or Eric St) in Bundeena.

When the entire length is walked visitors either get dropped off or travel by public transport to the start of the track. The walk is usually done in its entirety from north to south, but can be done either way. Public transport can deliver you by train to Cronulla and a private ferry operates to Bundeena. Public train services run from Otford south to Wollongong or north back to Sydney.

In summer walkers can complete the full length in daylight hours (approx. 10hours) but in winter NPWS advise to break the walk into a 2-day walk with a North Era camping stopover, or to do it in sections from Bundeena to Wattamolla/Garie, or Wattamolla/Garie to Otford on separate days.

There are a number of circuit links of walking tracks and fire management trails that feed into the RCT, including Jibbon Pt, Shelley Beach, Deer Pool, Marley, Curra Moors, and The Burgh Track.

Issues

The condition of the walking tracks in Royal Area range from good to poor depending on the parent material or substrate and its erosive potential. 75% of the Royal Coast Track is on Hawkesbury Sandstone with seepage lines and clay lenses creating boggy sections and highly erosive watercourses. The remaining 25% has a Narrabeen shale substrate that holds moisture more readily and more lush vegetation can grow that stabilises the soil. However, grazing pressures by native and exotic herbivores (especially Rusa Deer) are greater in the shale valleys and slopes in the south of the RCT.

High visitor numbers, erosion, vandalism, littering, overgrown vegetation obscuring signage and way-finding, track braiding (track networks being created around obstacles), inappropriate toileting, and weed invasion in some locations combine to create a major cyclic maintenance challenge for staff for the 26km track and associated sections of link trails.

Coupled with this the highly reactive nature of the duties the Royal National Park staff given high visitation rates and funding shortfalls to adequately support the maintenance demands often lead to neglect of less popular tracks, or remoter sections of the Royal Coast Track.

Integrated Management

Since its inception in 2009 the Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated (herewith called 'the Friends') has offered assistance for Royal Area management, and recent discussions with the Area Manager about possible 'adoption' of sections of the Royal Coast Track for minor maintenance works has led to the development of this Strategy. It is aimed to build a sense of ownership and achievement by the broad volunteer community with the Friends of Royal as a lead stakeholder, advising and collating feedback about its effectiveness. Concurrently, as a catalyst to recruit more on-ground volunteers, this

strategy will allow community members to see a specific project with measurable goals as an opportunity to become more engaged with Friends of Royal.

Volunteers will not replace staff with professional skills, but volunteer tasks will be meaningful and significant and sit alongside the major track remediation works being undertaken.

Remedial Works by Staff

Major remedial work in isolated sections of the RCT are undertaken in most years but some major funding was gained and several major works were undertaken in 2014-15, involving helicopter-delivered loads of viewing platforms, raised walkway mesh, steps, sandstone block culverts, crushed sandstone track surface material, directional signage, security fencing, bags of cement, timber steps and power tools. These features were installed by staff and contractors at Jibbon Pt, Wedding Cake Rock, Marley Head, Garie Head, Thelma Head, Burning Palms and the Palm Jungle.

In 2015-16 major projects will continue with steps and staircases at Garie and Marley Headlands, and upgrading RCT sections between Bundeena and Marley, as per ROP priorities and funding..

Staff regularly undertake vegetation trimming and slashing along the RCT using mechanical brush-cutters such as the 'Tritter' or 'Tigra' flail mulchers. Where mechanical access is difficult ground crews regularly use chain-saws, brush-cutters, whipper-snippers, rake-hoes and hand-saws to maintain the RCT route and to clear away excess drainage & sediment, and to secure unsafe steps and railings, or where precarious cliff-edge views threaten visitor safety. Vandalism, graffiti, rubbish and weeds are also regularly attended to by staff.

All staff are fully trained and accredited for these tasks and use of specialised equipment, and for working safely around aircraft.

Remedial Works by Volunteers

Volunteers could play a significant role in addition to staff works where vegetation encroaches, or along inaccessible sections where machinery can't reach, or where signage is getting obscured. In these ways Volunteers can take a significant lead in assisting public safety and visitor enjoyment, as well as in the sustainable use of the RCT to avoid secondary and tertiary tracks being created by walkers wishing to by-pass cryptic, boggy or problem areas.

Regular work being undertaken by volunteers will act as 'pre-emptive strikes' on areas where way-finding has become confusing, or where drainage lines have emerged or been diverted by local events – these situations can alert staff to any problematic zones before they become unsustainable.

Table 1 - Identified sections for Volunteer Maintenance

14 sections have been identified in Table 1 where community volunteers could potentially undertake minor track maintenance works, based on degree of access, quality of task, achievability, appropriateness, and diversity of experience.

Each section has been graded for difficulty (Easy, Medium to Hard) are indicated in Table 1. Half or Full day workdays are suggested. 2WD or 4WD requirements, parking locations, approx distance to start of work, approx length of section, location of closest formal toilet, and emergency escape routes are also referenced.

Table 1: Identified Sectors of the Royal Coast Track where Community Volunteers may assist with minor Trackwork and Maintenance:

Sector No.	Sector name	Access	2WD or 4WD	km to start of sector from access pt	Approx length of sector (km)	Start of sector	End of sector	Rating Easy Med Hard	Half day or Full day	Closest toilet facility	RCT or link track
1	Jibbon	Neil St/Loftus St Bundeena	2WD	1.2km	3	Eastern-most end of Jibbon Beach	Jibbon Beach at junction of Shelley Beach track	E	Half day	Bundeena shops	link
2	Beachcomber Trackhead to Big Marley Beach	Beachcomber Ave Bundeena or southern end of Big Marley FT	2WD or 4WD	1.5km from Beachcomber, or 20m from Big Marley FT	5	Eastern end of The Balconies FT, or from Big Marley FT	Marley Beach at base of steps	M	Half or full	Bundeena shops	RCT
3	Marley Walking Track (via Deer Pool)	Bundeena Dve Car Park	2WD	20m	6.5	carpark	Little Marley FT	M	Full	Bundeena	link
4	Little Marley to Wattamolla	Wattamolla	2WD	100m across creek	3	Wattamolla creek	Little Marley Beach	M	Half or full	Wattamolla	RCT
5	Watta to Curra'ang	Wattamolla top carpark	2WD	200m south	1	Wattamolla carpark	Curracurrang Gully	E	half	Wattamolla	RCT

Sector No.	Sector name	Access	2WD or 4WD	km to start of sector from access pt	Approx length of sector (km)	Start of sector	End of sector	Rating Easy Med Hard	Half day or Full day	Closest toilet facility	RCT or link track
6	Curra Curra to Curra Moors FT	Watta top carpark, or eastern end of Curra Moors FT	2WD or 4WD	1.2km walk to Curra Curra	2	Curra Curra	Curra Moors FT junction with RCT	M	Full	Wattamolla	RCT
7	Curra Moors loop walking Track	SBS Dve carpark	2WD	At car	2	Curra Moors car park on Sir Bertram Stevens Dve	Curra Moors car park on Sir Bertram Stevens Dve	E	Half or full	Garie	link
8	Curra Moors FT junction with RCT to Garie Beach	Eastern end of Curra Moors FT	4WD	At car	4	Curra Moors FT junction with RCT	Garie Beach at base of Garie Head steps	M/H	Half or Full	Garie	RCT
9	Little Garie to Nth Era (via Thelma Head)	Garie	2WD	100m	1	50m south of Little Garie cabins	North Era camping ground	M	Half or Full	Garie or North Era camp ground	RCT

Sector No.	Sector name	Access	2WD or 4WD	km to start of sector from access pt	Approx length of sector (km)	Start of sector	End of sector	Rating Easy Med Hard	Half day or Full day	Closest toilet facility	RCT or link track
10	Burgh Ridge to Sth Era & Burning Palms	Garrawarra Farm	2WD	100m	2	Garra Farm	South Era valley	M/H	Full	Garie or Garra Farm port-a-loo	RCT
11	Burning Palms to Palm Jungle	Garrawarra Farm	2WD	1	4	Eastern end of Burgh Ridge	Werrong Pt, at bend south of the Palm Jungle	H	Full	Burning Palms SLSC, by neg.	RCT
12	Palm Jungle (upper section)	Cliff Track junction with Palm Jungle	4WD	At car	1	walking Tk & Cliff Tk FT junction	bend south of Palm Jungle	E	Half	Garie or Garrawarra Farm	RCT
13	Otford Lookout to Cliff Track FT	Otford Gap (or end of FT)	2WD	50m	1.5	Otford Lookout	junction of Cliff Tk FT & Palm Jungle track	E/M	Half	Otford Station	RCT
14	The Burgh Track	Garrawarra Farm	2WD	At car	5	NW corner of Garrawarra Farm	Eastern end of H'burg tip	M	Full	Garra Farm portaloos, or H'burg or Otford stations	Link

Volunteer Project Management

The following section is paraphrased from the VOPP for this project.

Volunteer Statement of Duties

- minor trackwork for sediment and erosion control, including clearing drainage lines and culverts, and repositioning of strategic timbers and small rocks, realigning the track camber.
- clarification of track routes and directional signage by removal of encroaching vegetation
- closure of side-tracks by inserting local branch material from trimming
- using tools to undertake vegetation trimming including hand-saws, loppers and secateurs. NB Any use of power tools or any other tools is not encouraged by NPWS or if approved, must be undertaken with all appropriate and relevant training credentials and safety.
- seed collection for future sowing or strewing into degraded areas, or for propagation for future revegetation works
- weeding out of invasive species along the track.
- Litter collection using disposable gloves, washable garden gloves and pick-up sticks.
- other duties as directed by staff; including track realignment away from flat boggy sections to <10% side-hill slope or onto rock platforms to reduce erosion or water-ponding, and to facilitate keeping people on-track, or for the insertion of mixed soil textures to reduce erodability of an area especially if too sandy or too clayey.
- Effective communication with NPWS staff
- all these activities must ensure volunteer and public safety to other RCT users.

Supervision & Staff Training

Several volunteer groups have been operating effectively and autonomously in Royal National Park for many years. Such groups have demonstrated either recognised prior learning, or have undertaken training in bush regeneration, and have complied responsibly with all WH&S guidelines and reporting requirements NPWS have requested. Notwithstanding these, most volunteer projects are supervised by staff where possible. Such staff have completed a WH&S for Supervisors course, hold current First Aid Certificates, and have appropriate volunteer supervision skills.

Project Planning

Volunteers will not be used to replace the work of paid staff. Volunteers are NOT to engage in law enforcement, use firearms, undertake tree-felling, or any activity in which the Volunteer does not meet internal WH&S requirements on that activity. All activities will be consistent with the Royal Plan of Management and Royal Area Regional Operations Plan.

The NPWS supervisor will undertake a site visit with representatives of the respective volunteer groups for each of the RCT sectors prior to commencing work, to discuss the particularities and issues of those sectors. The NPWS supervisor will enter details into the VPMS and maintain reports for Area and Regional requirements. They will also prepare and deliver a Job Safety Analysis for all projects, as well as a schedule of works for the Royal Area Operations Coordinator to include and consider in other on-park activities.

Culture & Heritage

All projects will acknowledge Aboriginal People and Country. The NPWS Supervisor will consider if the project might impact on cultural and heritage values.

Environmental Impacts, including Threatened Spp

Several threatened species and ecologically endangered communities are represented along the coastal strip where the Royal Coast Track traverses, including Kurnell Dune Forest, Littoral Rainforest, *Prostanthera densa*, *Commersonia hermanniifolia*, *Wilsonia rotundifolia*, *Eucalyptus camfieldii*, *Boronia serrulata*, and *Themeda* grasslands. Several fauna species rely on this habitat.

It is possible that significant species or associations may be found along any of the 14 sectors described in the Strategy. Vegetation surveys are to be undertaken prior to works commencing and Recovery Plans for significant species and communities followed for site protection requirements. Friends of Royal and associated botanical experts (e.g Fairley, Keith, Miller) and Saving our Species officers (Hinds, MacKenzie) are interested and available to assist in surveying from August 2015. Funding is being sought under the SoS Find it & Fix it Program.

Where Recovery Plans are not in place this project may proceed with caution to minimise impacts on the environment, including geological features, landscapes, erosion potential, soil pathogens, hygiene, noise, as well as upon threatened animal or plant species.

The NPWS supervisor will highlight these possibilities and adjust site works accordingly.

Project Administration

The NPWS Supervisor to maintain all records of volunteers, hours, and works undertaken.

Recruiting Volunteers

NPWS will continue to increase its promotion of volunteering for the purposes of recruitment of new volunteers and timely acknowledgment of existing volunteer contribution.

All volunteers will be provided with an induction and complete a Volunteer Registration. Volunteers will be engaged in an equitable manner (and if necessary, using merit selection if more than 1 group wish to adopt the same sector). The NPWS Supervisor has the discretion to exclude volunteers from participation on health and safety grounds. Volunteers will be engaged for specific approved projects for a maximum of 15 hours per week for a specified time (up to 3 years for Individuals, or for the 5 year term of this Strategy as an MOU with Friends of the Royal). Volunteer personal information is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

Working with Children and Young People

Children and Young People under 18 years of age are very welcome to participate in this Strategy, but it is necessary that parental or guardian consent, as well as on-site supervision, are provided.

If The Friends Group has members under 18 (or are accompanied by their children or grandchildren under 18) it is the responsibility of The Friends to ensure the older members working alongside the younger ones have completed Working with Children Checks.

NPWS will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the Child Safe and Friendly Environment Policy and Code of Conduct.

Insurance

All registered volunteers are covered by OEH as Individual Volunteers. Alternatively, the Friends or Cabins Landcare Groups' personal accident and public liability insurance may cover its members before they commence work with NPWS. Approved OEH volunteer projects such as this one are covered through the Treasury Managed Fund for the period of engagement as recorded on the sign-on sheet. If their own policy is preferred, then the Friends will present NPWS with its current insurance policy for public liability for at least \$10million and personal accident cover for each member, and they will indemnify OEH against any loss or liability arising from the activities of its members whilst undertaking a volunteer project.

Volunteer Identification

Individual and Community Group volunteers will be issued with an NPWS Volunteer Card when they sign a Volunteer Agreement. The card number will be registered on their Agreement. Volunteers will carry their volunteer card whenever volunteering on a NPWS project.

The ID card may be photocopied and displayed on dashboards of private cars for identification of parked vehicles in authorised carparks. While undertaking Volunteer work in the NPWS reserves a Park Use Fee (PUF) is waived so the ID card can communicate this to Visitor Services Officers, and other staff, who may be checking PUF compliance.

Volunteers will not be issued with NPWS uniforms but may be issued with other clothing, which identifies them as NPWS volunteers.

Health & Safety

All volunteers will comply with Work Health & Safety regulations, including:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that their own conduct does not adversely affect others
- comply with NPWS instruction
- participate in training as required
- comply with all volunteer statements of duties and agreements.

NPWS has a primary duty of care to ensure volunteers are not exposed to any risk to their health and safety. NPWS may issue Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including hats, sunscreen, gloves as required. All volunteers working in tick-prone areas should be aware of OEH guidelines for managing tick related health issues.

Injury or Near-Miss reporting

All injuries or near miss accidents are to be reported to the NPWS Supervisor if they are not present at the exact location of the incident. Witnesses to verify the unsafe task and recommendations to avert future injury will be factored in to the reporting and into future JSA conditions. Injuries will be reported via Work Safe Online by the NPWS Supervisor.

Access and Fire Trail Keys

Fire trails are 4WD only and access for non-staff requires authorisation and a key. Where possible staff will meet and greet the volunteer teams at the fire-trail gate with a key. When staff are unavailable, or deployed to another site, the team can attain their own key from the Audley Visitor Centre from 8.30am any day of the week. Ideally, it should be returned by 4.30pm that same day or the closest day possible. A deposit of \$100 is required and shall be returned as the key is returned. A name will be entered in a registry to account for the key.

Tools & Equipment

The use of powered tools, equipment, heavy plant or light plant is limited to activities assessed as safe for volunteers in the JSA, and where the training & certification requirements and procedures are in place to the level required of staff.

Herbicide Use

Glyphosate 360g/L is the main and only herbicide Royal Area allows Volunteers to use for weed control. No spraying is permitted by Volunteers. All volunteers using pesticides will comply with all legal and regulatory labels, permits or pesticide control orders. Volunteers will be supervised by a NPWS Supervisor with current ChemCert training. Volunteers are not to handle 1080 treated baits.

Wildlife Handling

All fauna encountered in the bush are not to be handled. Volunteers who handle animals must have relevant training, experience and demonstrated animal-handling proficiency and be supervised by an appropriately trained NPWS officer.

Vehicle use

Volunteers may be permitted to use NPWS vehicles for the purpose of the project with the prior approval of Royal Area Manager and will present a current and full drivers licence prior to vehicle use. If driving 4WD vehicles volunteers must provide evidence of accreditation that meet the standards of staff.

Volunteers will primarily be using their own vehicles on sealed and unsealed 2WD roads to reach the start of the sectors, and will park in authorised carparks, where available. A copy of the volunteer authorisation card **may** be placed on the dashboard to identify the car's owner, if required.

Volunteers may use their own 4WD vehicle on the fire-trails to gain closer access to some sectors with prior approval of the Royal Area Manager, and a letter of authority **must** be placed clearly in view to notify passers-by, who may be rightly concerned to see private cars along the fire-trails. Any damage incurred to a private vehicle through negligence of the volunteer will remain the responsibility of the volunteer. The volunteer will have comprehensive vehicle insurance and present this to NPWS Supervisor prior to vehicle use.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of previously agreed out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983.

Volunteer Appreciation, Recognition & Reward

NPWS appreciates the noble volunteer efforts that are offered and demonstrated, and will continue to support and reward volunteers on daily, seasonal and annual levels – especially at important times such as anniversaries and recruitment drives. NPWS supervisors keep track of important volunteer anniversaries, recognise significant contributions of time, and provide incentives for volunteer participation (e.g. equipment, supplies, etc.). All volunteer projects include an allocation for reward and recognition of volunteers.

Tasks described in the Volunteer Statement of Duties (above) are meaningful and interesting, and not belittling or overly simple. An objective of the Strategy is for increased stewardship so tasks will be relevant and engaging for all volunteers. Volunteers are entitled to one vehicle exemption pass to the area of volunteer project work for use while volunteering, as well as one All Park Pass after the completion of 50 hours of voluntary service per year. In addition, volunteers are entitled to a 10% discount in all NPWS Visitor Centres for the term of their Volunteer Agreement (subject to the presentation of a valid Volunteer ID Card)

Emergency Operations

All volunteers will be identified clearly in any emergency operation. The use and deployment of volunteers is at the discretion of the Incident Controller. Volunteers will only be engaged in emergencies according to their prior training, experience and suitability for the required task.

Resolving Difference

OEH internal grievance procedures do NOT apply to Volunteers but all effort will be made to resolve differences between Volunteers and other people. Where the difference is between a Volunteer and staff member either party should inform the Area Manager or Area Operations Coordinator to facilitate.

Project Evaluation

Projects will be evaluated against its aims and objectives of the original Project Planning Brief and entered into the VPMS by the NPWS Supervisor.

Reporting – Volunteer & Staff

A report on all volunteer projects will be made at the end of each project, or at the end of the financial year in the case of on-going projects. Project end-of-year data will be entered into the VPMS by the NPWS Supervisor.

Media

Volunteers will not make comments to any media regarding volunteer programs, but will refer any media questions to the NPWS Supervisor who will ensure the inquiry is directed to the proper channels. Use of images of Volunteers at work – whether Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, still photographs (digital or film), video – must have Volunteer permissions prior to being taken and/or used.

Expressions of Interest

Known or potential community volunteers (as identified in Table 2 below) are invited to express their interest in 'adopting' one or several identified sectors of the Royal Coast Track (RCT).

Table 1 (above) can be used to assess the various aspects of the 14 identified sectors to suit the group in question.

Group sizes and Minimum numbers: It is suggested that a group of at least 10 Volunteers commit to each sector. For safety of individuals a minimum of 3 volunteers should be present on site at any one time. Individuals, or a group of 2, may be authorised with prior agreement under special circumstances.

OEH staff may target specific groups to specific sections but they will not be limited or bound to these suggestions. Selection and final agreement will be at the discretion of the Royal Area Manager.

There is no formal application form or format for the Expression of Interest (EOI) other than it be in writing – either as an email or letter - to lock in the commitment for the 5 year period **from July 2015-June 2020**.

If required, a staff member could undertake a site visit to any of the 14 RCT sectors prior to the commitment being submitted, to discuss the particularities and issues of those sectors.

Frequency - It is suggested that the frequency of activities be dependent on the degree of difficulty of the sector, and on the number and availability of community volunteers. Once a month for Hard sectors, once a quarter for Medium, and once a half-year for Easy sectors. Where this frequency is unachievable by any one group a collective of groups could negotiate to manage a sector between them.

There are 14 sectors and over 30 stakeholders identified here so there may need to be a selection process if interest is widespread.

The EOI is be due between Weds 1 July- Weds 29 July, 2015

It should be directed to Kane Weeks, Royal Area Manager
kane.weeks@environment.nsw.gov.au and copied to Ranger Patricia Nagle
patricia.nagle@environment.nsw.gov.au

Table 2: Invitation List to Known Community Volunteers

The Friends of the Royal National Park Incorporated - collective and individual networks including; RNP neighbours, cabin licensees, NPA, bush regenerators, historians, Streamwatch teams, conservationists, Aboriginal community & reconciliation advocates, eco-tour operators and other CTOs, roadside rubbish teams, ornithologists, botanists, fauna experts. **Coordination** - Friends of the Royal National Park will be the main focal point for the offer but the Royal Area Manager acknowledges that there are many other individuals and groups who are not members of the Friends' collective, so known others are suggested here.

'Royal Bushies' – RNP bush regeneration volunteer network

Cabins Landcare Groups @ Bulgo, Burning Palms, South Era, Little Garie

Cultural networks: Dharawal Community / LALC / Youth Groups / La Perouse & Malabar PS

Sutherland Shire Historic Society

Illawarra Prehistory Group

Helensburgh & District Landcare Group

Surf Education & Recreation groups: SLSC – Garie, South Era, Burning Palms, and Garie Boardriders

Bundeena community: Bundeena Progress Society, Bundeena and Maianbar Chamber of Commerce, Spring Gully Group

Schools: Bundeena Public School, Otford Public School, Heathcote High School, John Bosco High (Engadine), Cronulla High School, Woollooware High, Illawarra Multicultural Centre – Links to Learning program,

RNP Environmental Education Centre

Universities / TAFEs / Colleges: University of Wollongong – Biological Sciences School, UNSW / Sydney Uni / Macq Uni / UTS / CSU, Gympie, Yallah & Padstow TAFEs (CALM Cert III students, etc..)

Shire Life networks

Otford Progress Society

National Parks Association

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Sutherland Bushwalkers (Sutherland Bushwalking Club)

Billy's Bushies

Sutherland District Athletics Club

Scouts / Girl Guides / Rovers / Venturers / Boys Brigade networks

Mountain-bike networks (for Fire-trail sections only)

Botanical groups: Australian Plants Society (Sutherland Group, Helensburgh Group, Corrimal Group), Port Hacking Wildflower Group, Oatley Flora & Fauna Conservation Society, Menai Wildflower Group

OEH Wildlife Licensing Unit & Plant Ecology Unit volunteer networks

Commercial Tour operators: Sydney Coast Walks, Understanding Down Under, Wild Women on Top, Other eco-tour operators....

Recreational Fishing Groups

PCYC / Police / Water Police / Riverkeeper networks

Corporate Groups

Others....?

Strategy drafted by Ranger Patricia Nagle

for Kane Weeks

Manager, Royal Area, Metropolitan South West Region, Metro & Mtns Branch, Parks & Wildlife Group

Office of Environment & Heritage

25 June 2015