



Maximizing  
partnerships •

Maintaining  
independence

# Cooperating Associations, Nonprofit Partners, & Volunteers in Parks

# Objectives

1. Identify best practices for working with cooperating associations and other nonprofit partners
2. Identify the rationale for separate management of the two programs
3. Describe the different roles of staff, volunteers, and association leaders
4. Describe the role of the Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL) and how it varies from the role of the Volunteer Coordinator

# How does State Parks Partner With Nonprofits?



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## Types of Partnerships

1. Co-managers/operators  
Ex. Jack London Park Partners
2. Donation of volunteer services  
(donor agreement)  
Ex. American River Bike Patrol
3. CSPF – Park Champions
4. DPR208B – Volunteer Group  
Services Agreement
5. Cooperating Associations



# What Are Cooperating Associations?

# The W's

A cooperating association is a **private, non-profit, public benefit California corporation** [IRS 501(c) (3)] with the purpose of **supporting** interpretation and education in state parks

Cooperating associations are **independent** organizations, but **interdependent** with California State Parks

Governed by a volunteer board of directors and may have paid staff

Began in the early 1970s with the goal of supporting interpretive and educational programs

The majority of the 279 park units have an association.

Associations provide a connection to the community around the park.



# ...Why

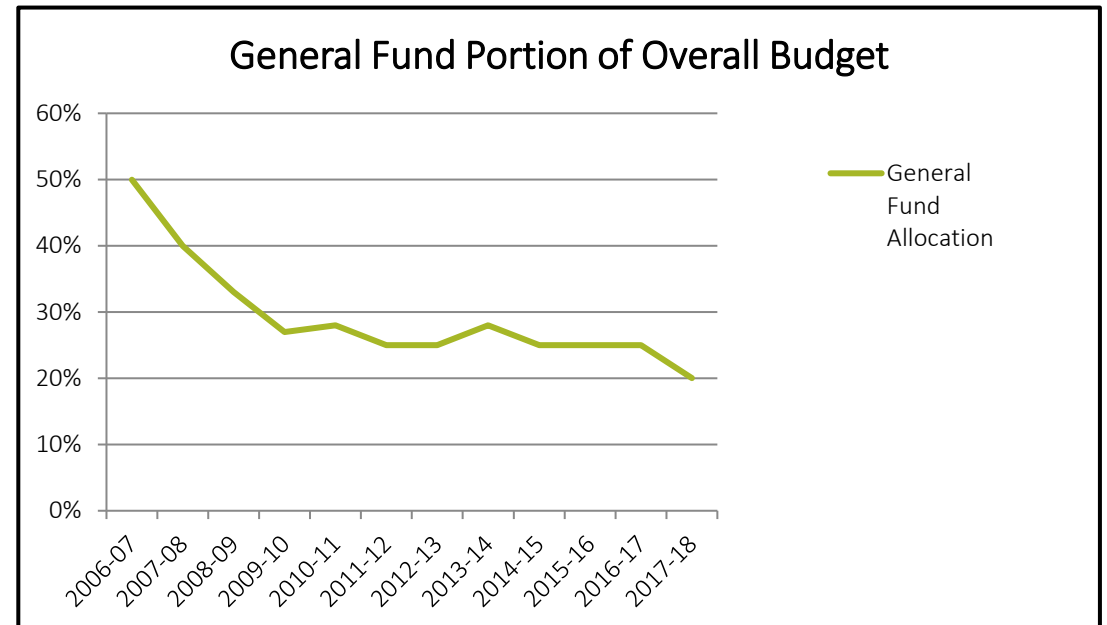
Formed out of a need for more interpretive support

Leverage funding opportunities

Advocates for our parks

Partners in programming

Community image





# Legal Authority

Public Resources Code 513

“Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation”

The Articles of Incorporation state that the specific purpose is to provide support for educational and interpretive programs of the state park system, or portion of the system

Has a cooperating association contract w/DPR

In compliance with policies and guidelines regarding cooperating associations and has obtained DPR approval for its materials and services





# Benefits to the Association

Contractual relationship, generally 5 year terms

DPR may provide the services of department personnel and space, if available, at DPR discretion

Raise funds using an affiliation with State Parks

Mutual increased capacity

- Recruitment

- Increased interpretation to visitors

- Services (website hosting, social media, etc.)

# Assuming the Risk of Volunteers

The Volunteers in Park Program (VIPPP) is the only arrangement where State Parks takes on the liability of volunteers working in parks.

All other partnerships shift the liability of risk to volunteers on the organization or individual.

## Volunteers in Parks Program and the California State Government Volunteers Act

*“The spirit of citizen initiative and self-reliance that has prevailed throughout the United States for over the past two centuries needs to be recognized and fostered whenever possible in meeting the basic human needs in the state.” -- Government Code 3112(b)*

In compliance with the Volunteers Act, all volunteers are required to adhere to DPR and Volunteers in Parks Program policies. Volunteers shall undertake no actions within any park property or identify themselves as representatives of the Department or the State of California without prior approval from the district superintendent, headquarters division chief, or designee.

# Requirements for VIPs

Reports to a VIP Coordinator – State Parks Staff

Volunteer Service Agreement (DPR 208)

Signs a specific duty statement to define their role

Completes a background check (fingerprinting), if required by the district

Completes Bear In Mind training



# Maximizing the Cooperating Association Partnership

# How the Relationship Works

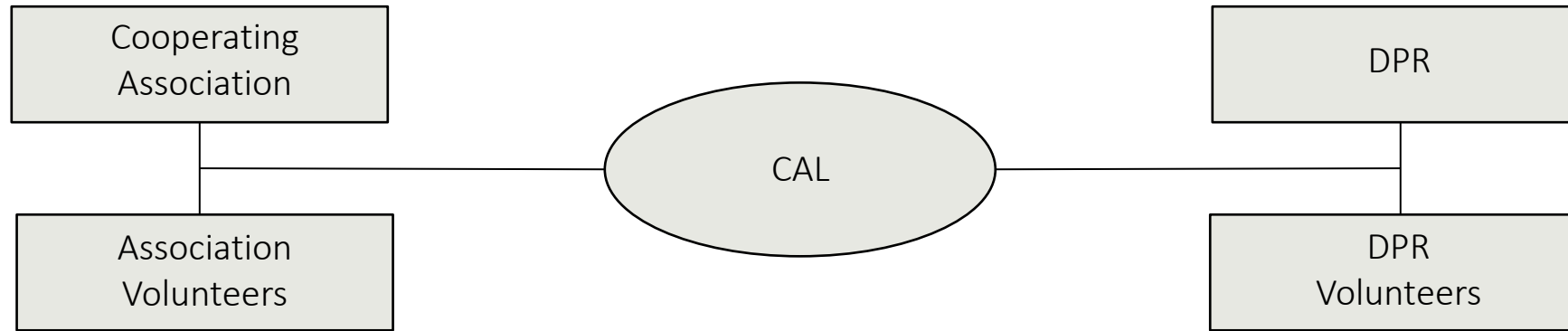
## Roles

### Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL)

- Attends association board meetings
- Maintains communications on activities and priorities
- Oversees implementation of the agreement
- Grants or gains approval from department, as needed
- Coordinates services of department personnel
- Facilitates license and logo use

### Volunteer Coordinator

- Register volunteers
- Prepare volunteer duty statements
- Volunteer assessment and review
- Volunteer training
- ...and more



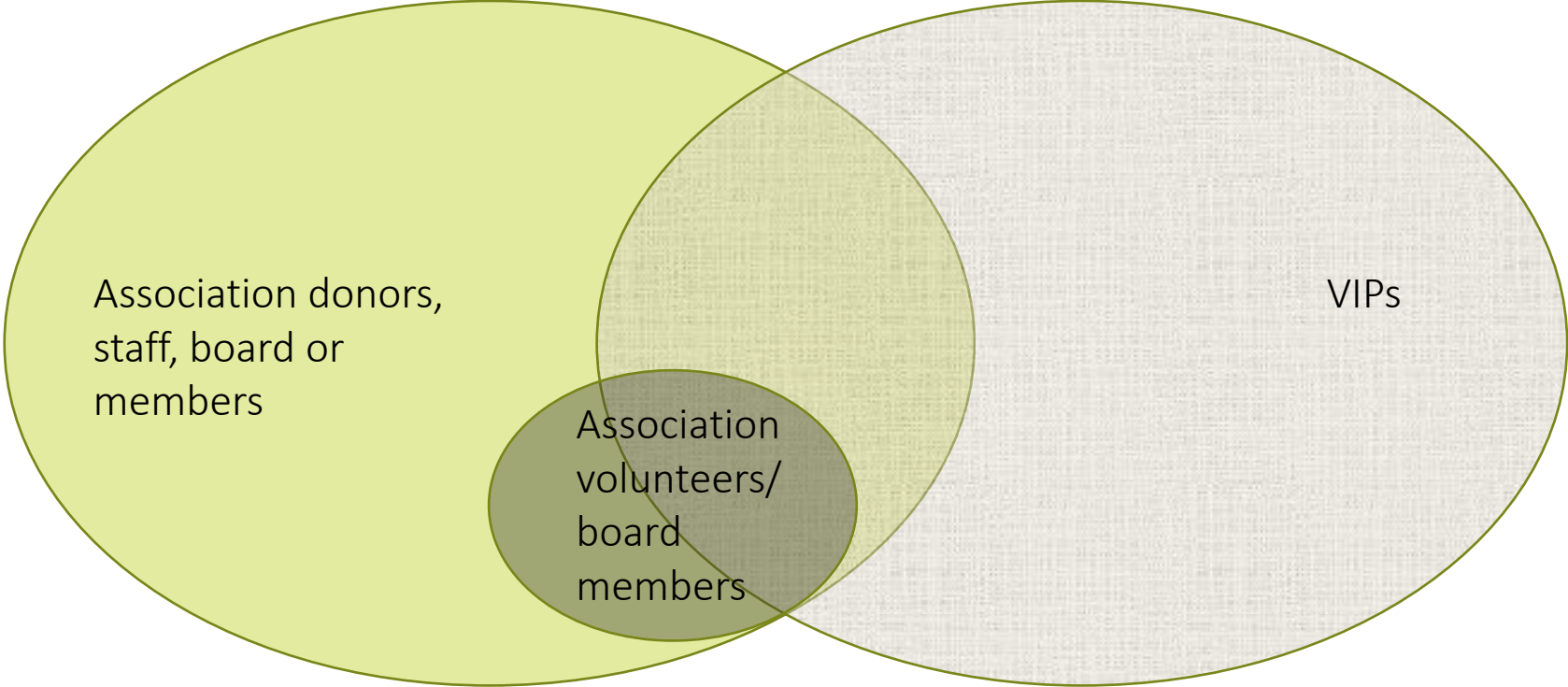
Co-op & VIP Programs are two distinct programs with separate program coordinators: **the Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL)** and **the Volunteer Coordinator**

*Volunteer (VIP) program management is a DPR function and responsibility*

Cooperating associations or other entities may not direct DPR docents/volunteers



# The Overlap







# Association Volunteers

An individual is a **STATE volunteer** when working on **state-owned and managed projects or programs**, where management decisions are made by the state.

An individual is an **ASSOCIATION volunteer** when working on **projects or programs owned and managed by the association**, and where management decisions are made by the association

This distinction defines which organization has the liability for the volunteer's action



# Quiz #1

The Best Park Association (BPA) is hosting their annual fundraising dinner in the park afterhours. The CAL for BPA asked you, the volunteer coordinator, to ask VIPs to assist BPA in their event in the following ways:

1. Docent-led tours of the historic home
2. Ring up visitor center sales for guests at the event
3. Set up tables and chairs for the event

Can you ask your VIPs to help BPA?

Should you?

What if they ask for VIPs to serve wine or beer?



# Criteria for VIPs Assisting Associations

Are VIPs available to assist?

Are VIPs assisting in a manner consistent with their duty statement?

Will VIPs be assisting onsite or offsite?

What are the potential risks to the VIP?

Others?

In all cases of recruiting VIPs for assistance to the cooperating association, **DOCUMENT which organization will direct the VIPs' work.**

Follow up with an email (copy to the CAL)

Include VIP needs in an event plan or annual plan

# Quiz #2

At the most recent volunteer meeting, one of your VIPs who is also on the association's board of directors, proposes using the association's annual contribution to fund brand new uniforms for all VIPs. The volunteers in the room all seem thrilled with this idea and the board member looks to you for your approval. What is your next step?

- a) Agree and thank the board member for such a generous and valuable contribution
- b) Thank the board member and say that you will discuss this idea with the CAL and report back to the volunteers
- c) Propose your own idea for new interpretive signs because that money can be better used in the visitor center



# Quiz #3

You recently had to sever a volunteer service agreement after you learned that one of your volunteers was recently added to the sex offender registry. After making this clear to the former volunteer, you notice that the same person is now volunteering for the cooperating association. What do you do?

- a) Contact your supervisor immediately and report your concern to him or her
- b) Contact the association's leadership to report the situation to him or her
- c) Ignore it because it is the responsibility of the association board



Questions?

“If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together.”



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