



CHARLIE CRIST
Governor

SECRETARY MICHAEL W. SOLE
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

DAVID HALSTEAD
State Coordinating Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 5, 2010

MEDIA CONTACT

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service
Mary Griffith, Communications Coordinator
(850) 251-2834
ESF 14 Public Information
(850) 921-0217

VOLUNTEER FLORIDA THANKS VOLUNTEERS FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO THE OIL SPILL

~ Comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions designed to help volunteer identify areas of needs~

TALLAHASSEE – The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Florida) lauded the tremendous outpouring of volunteer support to prepare Florida's coast for the imminent impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To date, nearly 2,700 volunteers have served over 11,500 hours, and 135 miles of beaches have been cleaned.

In order to ensure the safety and health of participating volunteers, no volunteers can engage in any activity that involves direct contact of oil-contaminated materials. Trained, paid workers, including Qualified Community Responders hired from the local community and BP pre-approved contractors, will be the only responders allowed to handle oil-contaminated materials. Volunteers interested in supporting these efforts can get additional information at www.nwrawildlife.org.

"As we anticipate the Deepwater Horizon oil spill impacting our shores, the consequences for Florida's coastline is largely unknown," said Wendy Spencer, CEO of Volunteer Florida. "The best way for individuals to help is to get registered and trained with a local organization. Those volunteers who have registered and meet the requirements of the need will be notified first."

Though roles of volunteers are limited at this time, volunteers are still needed for meaningful activities to help protect Florida's beaches and communities. Volunteers can support organizations participating in oil spill disaster relief efforts by engaging in activities such as [Coast Watch](#), fundraising, and meeting other needs of responding organizations. In an abundance of caution, beach clean ups should only be conducted according to specified guidelines and under the supervision of a person familiar with beach-nesting birds to ensure the preservation of nests.

"Audubon of Florida expects significant impacts to beach nesting and colonial wading birds," said Eric Draper, Executive Director of Audubon of Florida. "That makes it especially important that nesting areas unaffected by the spill are protected so that birds from those areas can colonize impacted areas after cleanup has taken place."

Volunteers specifically interested in supporting wildlife relief efforts can visit www.nwrawildlife.org. A comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions addressing the pressing concerns of volunteers, such as where they are needed and what they can do to help can be found at www.VolunteerFloridaDisaster.org/Deepwater/OilSpillFAQs.html.

The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Volunteer Florida, was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youths to seniors to people with disabilities; coordinates volunteerism in disaster preparedness, response and recovery; and helps to strengthen and expand volunteer engagement.

#