



Volunteer Handbook



Includes Policy Manual and Pledge

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your interest in volunteering with Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation (WQW). This handbook is loaded with information to help you learn about WQW's history, programs, and policies. It will serve as your guide as you begin your volunteer service.



Volunteers Make a Difference

Every year hundreds of WQW volunteers open their hearts and donate their time (over 12,000 hours annually!) in service to our nation's post-9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones. With a volunteer program that aims to empower individuals to make a difference in meaningful ways, there are many ways you can help – and even more personal rewards.

When asked, “**Why volunteer?**” most profess their *desire to give back to a cause they believe in* and *to help somebody else*. It is our hope that you will join us in the spirit of partnership and that your volunteer work is successful and fulfilling. WQW relies on volunteers like you to fulfill our mission.

Our Mission

Through the experience of fly fishing in Montana, WQW is a catalyst for positive change in the lives of post-9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones.

Our Vision

We envision an America in which a new generation of traumatically injured combat veterans successfully reintegrates into society.

About Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation

History

WQW was founded in 2007 by a small group of dedicated volunteers. During this time they brought the foundation's first two groups of traumatically injured combat veterans to Bozeman. Along with a welcomed break from surgeries, rehab therapy, doctors, and hospital routines, the 14 Soldiers, Marines, and Sailors from the Naval Medical Center in San Diego were given: top-of-the-line fishing gear, float trips on blue ribbon waters, fly

fishing instruction from world-class professional guides, delicious home-cooked meals by loving volunteer “moms,” and comfortable accommodations in beautiful surroundings.

The less tangible yet more meaningful benefits they reported receiving were feelings of security, serenity, resilience, hope, and camaraderie that formed positive memories to last a lifetime. The volunteer group knew they had a model that worked incredibly well and began planning for 2008 and beyond.



WQW remained a volunteer-run organization until 2013. At that time WQW hired its first paid staff members to oversee program operations, fundraising, and community relations.

The Need

In 2019 the Department of Defense (DOD) estimates more than 52,000 Americans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom had been injured in combat. Among the wounded are some 29,000 severely injured casualties who would have died on the battlefield just a generation ago. Medical and technological advances are saving more than ninety percent of all those who fall in battle.

The wounded statistics reflect only physical wounds. The unseen injuries of war – including post-traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) – are not included and are harder to track. Since 2002, the DOD has recorded more than 50,000 patients diagnosed with TBI, but many more have gone undiagnosed. The



Department of Veterans Affairs is taking in thousands of new cases of PTS each month. Because many of the wounded are young, they will need decades of help. WQW believes we are part of the solution regarding our nation’s injured defenders by providing a respite from the stresses of war and reintegration.

The Impact

Success has historically been measured by freely offered alumni testimonials. In an effort to quantifiably measure the short- and long-term impact of WQW’s therapeutic programs,

WQW has developed a pre- and post-FX survey for participants under the counsel of Dr. Aaron Sawyer, clinical psychologist and contractor for the DOD. This non-invasive survey was implemented in 2016.

Short-Term Outcomes of Program

Warrior participants often demonstrate:

- Improved mood
- Enhanced sense of camaraderie
- Greater trust in others
- Deeper desire for positive change in their future



Long-Term Objectives of Program

Warrior participants often report:

- Better mental health
- Improved employability
- Healthier relationships
- Greater sense of purpose

Quiet Waters Ranch

Located near the base of the Bridger Mountain Range, the 112 peaceful acres that comprise Quiet Waters Ranch (QWR) offer a serene respite for warriors, spouses, and military caregivers seeking a place to recharge. After undergoing numerous ADA-accessible renovations, Barnard Lodge (the main home at QWR, pictured here) guarantees every program participant an experience devoid of physical barriers, in which to promote healing and resilience throughout participation in a WQW Fishing Experience (FX). The vast majority of programs are based out of QWR. There are three stocked ponds on site, and wildlife abounds.



Budget and Fundraising

- WQW is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- The majority of donations to WQW are from individuals, businesses, family foundations, and grants
- WQW does not accept federal funding

- The direct program cost to WQW for each warrior experience is approximately \$5,000
- Donations are tax-deductible. Certain types of gifts may also qualify for a Montana Tax Endowment Credit

Some of What Makes WQW Unique

- WQW provides round-trip airfare, local travel, lodging, and meals all at no cost to participants
- WQW partners each participant with a licensed-professional guide
- WQW provides each participant with fly fishing equipment to keep, and professional instruction. By returning home equipped with gear and a solid foundation of knowledge, the odds are increased that participants can continue to fly fish independently and with confidence
- For couples and single parents, WQW subsidizes the cost of childcare by a trusted friend or family member. For military caregivers, WQW subsidizes the expense for in-home healthcare. These increase the chances that participating individuals, will feel comfortable spending six days away from home, focused on self-care...and fly fishing
- **WQW is an independent foundation based solely in Bozeman, Montana. WQW does not have chapters or affiliates.**
- Volunteers are instrumental to facilitating a program that provides love, camaraderie, support, and a fun, family-like atmosphere.

Through no fault of their own, people regularly confuse WQW with other therapeutic recreation groups across the country. As a WQW volunteer, you are some of the foundation's top ambassadors for its therapeutic programs. People will ask you questions about WQW's programs and operations. Now that you've read this informative handbook, help us distinguish ourselves as a "gold star" organization by sharing with others what you have learned, your experience, or referring them to our website- WarriorsAndQuietWaters.org.

The Program

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Through outreach and select strategic partnerships, WQW attempts to identify individuals who can benefit most from a WQW Fishing Experience (FX). Military service documents (i.e. DD214's, disability ratings, etc.), applications, and inquiries are thoroughly evaluated by WQW's Director and Deputy Director of Warrior Services.

WQW's current program criteria requires applicants to:

- Be a Post-9/11 combat veteran
- Provide DD214 Member-4 copy at time of application or inquiry (If applicant is active duty, we will request other service documentation or current command as necessary)
- Be committed to creating positive change in one's life
- Be approved for program by WQW's Department of Warrior Services



Selection for a WQW event is NOT GUARANTEED even if all suggested program criteria is met. *This applies to alumni as well.* Selection is at WQW's discretion and we appreciate your understanding.

Additional Program Information:

- WQW has an active **ZERO ALCOHOL** policy during all programs
- WQW encourages **LEGITIMATE SERVICE DOGS** to accompany their owner on an FX
- Limited mobility/wheelchair-bound individuals are highly encouraged to apply

WQW's recruiting methods are constantly evolving as service members transition into the civilian population. In addition to serving warrior spouses and military caregivers, WQW has expanded programming to serve active duty special operations military personnel, recognizing the positive impact an FX has upon service members who continue to experience high-stress and kinetic environments.

Standard Program Models

Solo Fishing Experience

A Solo Fishing Experience (FX) brings six first-time warrior participants together for a week of camaraderie. Participation in an FX may be the first time a warrior has asked for, or accepted, help.

Couples Fishing Experience

A Couples FX brings six couples together to share their common experiences for six uninterrupted days. Couples events recognize the unique challenge of post-combat relationships.

Military Caregiver Fishing Experience

The Caregiver FX is specifically for primary caregivers of post-9/11 combat veterans. Similar format as a Solo FX but with additional opportunities for compassionate self-care built in.

Women's Fishing Experience

The Women's FX brings six female post-9/11 combat veterans together to share their common experience for six days. This FX is supported by all female volunteers and follows the same structure as a Solo FX.

Gold Star Teen Experience

In 2019 Warriors and Quiet Waters partnered with the Travis Manion Foundation to bring a group of Gold Star Teens who, through a local service project, honor the memory of a fallen family member. We are excited to continue this partnership and to use QWR as a home base for this expedition.

Coaching Experience

The Coaching Experience pairs four combat veterans with four professional coaches for a 4-day intensive working weekend during which participants identify an ambitious goal to accomplish over the course of one year. During the subsequent eleven months, warriors will participate in monthly coaching calls to help hold them accountable. Warriors and coaches return after one year's time for a Coaching Reunion, a formal debrief of their experience.

Volunteer Information

Volunteer Opportunities

From the care of Quiet Waters Ranch to help in the office, with special events, and community outreach, volunteers are part of every facet of WQW.

WQW offers opportunities for:

- **Groups**
 - Each spring WQW hosts a service day at Quiet Waters Ranch. Such events can be physically demanding. Additional group volunteer events may be arranged based on mutual needs and availability.
 - There is no minimum age for group volunteer events. However, minors must have a designated adult accompany their service.
- **Individuals**
 - Fishing Experience: Minimum age is 21 years old
 - Office: Minimum age is 16 years old

- Opportunities include and are not limited to:
 - Fundraising: events, donor stewardship, grant writing and management
 - Web development, graphic design
 - Trades: interior and exterior painting, landscaping
 - Therapeutic programs: volunteer companions, cooks, drivers, fly tying instructors



How to Become a Volunteer

- 1. Visit WarriorsAndQuietWaters.org/Volunteer**
- 2. Read Volunteer Handbook-Step two almost complete!**
- 3. Submit Volunteer Application**
 - a. Applications are accepted year-round
- 4. Schedule and Attend a Volunteer Interview**
 - a. Most interviews take place December 1 – February 31
 - b. Accommodations can be made for out-of-town volunteers
 - c. Based on interview, the Volunteer Manager will suggest a volunteer role in which you will be most successful.
- 5. Agree to the information and policies outlined in the WQW handbook and corresponding job descriptions**
- 6. Attend a Volunteer Orientation**
 - a. Volunteer orientations will be held throughout the year. Accommodations will be made for out of town volunteers.
 - b. Orientations are not required for group volunteer events or single days of service.
- 7. Volunteer!**
 - a. Unless otherwise directed, volunteer service will be scheduled with the Volunteer Manager.

Board and Staff Leadership – Who’s Who?

For the most up to date listing of WQW’s staff and board of directors, please visit the WQW website.

- Warriorsandquietwaters.org/about/staff/
- Warriorsandquietwaters.org/about/board-of-directors/

Organizational Hours and Contact Information

Office Address

351 Evergreen Drive, Suite A
Bozeman, MT 59715

Phone

(406) 585-9793

Office Hours

There is generally someone in the office Monday-Friday, 8AM-5PM

Program Policies

Age of Volunteers

Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation (WQW) staff supervisors evaluate the abilities and competency of all volunteers and assign appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. There are limited opportunities for volunteers under age 21. Volunteers under 18 must present a waiver of liability form signed by a parent or legal guardian and must be accompanied by an adult when volunteering for WQW. There is no maximum age for WQW volunteers.



Safety

You and WQW share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. WQW will attempt to ensure a safe work environment to comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, volunteers are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of your work activities. You are asked to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to a member of staff

Fly fishing has inherent risks, from unpredictable Montana elements, to moving water, drift boats, and remote fishing locations.

Use of hand-held communication devices is prohibited while driving. This includes texting.

On a Fishing Experience

Uniforms

- WQW provides each volunteer with a nametag, shirt and hat.
 - Additional shirts may be purchased at cost.
- Wear nametag at all times.
 - The experience of meeting numerous people can be overwhelming. Wearing your nametag helps warriors (and fellow volunteers!) to remember who is who.
- Volunteers must provide your own sunglasses.
- Please use common sense – no booty shorts please.

Interacting with Participants

- **Do Not Coddle**. WQW's programs are rooted in empowering participants, promoting independence and confidence. You are serving grown male and female combat veterans. They should be treated as such.
 - If you notice a warrior struggling – *prior to assisting*, ask if they want help or how you can best assist them. *Respect their wishes if the warrior says no.*
 - *Do not be repetitive in offering assistance.*
 - Respect a warrior's wishes unless (s)he is potentially going to harm themselves or others.
- Let participants guide the conversation. Warriors may or may not want to discuss their military background and combat experiences.
 - **Be a good listener**. Pay attention. If a participant wants to talk, be ready to listen.
- **DO NOT DISCUSS POLITICS** on a Fishing Experience. Ever. Period.
- Religion and spirituality are often deeply personal topics. If the topic does come up, navigate carefully as discussion may cause others to feel uncomfortable.
- If you sense the conversation is being steered in a negative direction – for example, you notice someone is getting agitated or that the topic of conversation is not positive – gently guide the conversation to something positive. Change the topic.
- **DO NOT PROBE OR PRESS SERVICE MEMBERS OR CAREGIVERS ABOUT DETAILS OF WOUNDS OR EXPERIENCES**. If a participant remains aloof or does not want to talk, they may just need personal space and time to adjust to surroundings.



Unseen Injuries

- **Trust** that each participant needs the WQW experience. Remember, all warriors have been thoroughly vetted by WQW's Warrior Services Department.

Service Dogs

- The best thing to do is to **ignore service dogs** and to assume they are working.
- If you absolutely can't help yourself and just have to pet the dog, *ask first*. Respect the handler's wishes if they say no.

Program Expectations

- **Adhere to the Sequence of Events (SOE)**
 - **Be on time**. *Preferably early.*
 - If deviations are necessary, privately coordinate directly with the Team Leader ASAP.

- **Carry a working cell phone at all times.** Not for tweeting or selfies, but for emergency purposes.
 - If something does come up that you need to use your phone for personal use during an FX, *excuse yourself and let your Team Leader know* you need to make a personal call.
- Be prepared for the elements. Volunteers must be prepared for whatever elements you might encounter while volunteering. This may include and is not limited to:
 - Sunglasses
 - Sun protection: sunscreen, long sleeve shirt, sun hat
 - Rain jacket, rain pants, or waders
 - Layers, gloves, warm hat
 - Water bottle to stay hydrated
 - Sturdy shoes for walking on uneven terrain. Flip flops are prohibited in the field.
- WQW encourages volunteer companions to fish with their paired warrior.
 - Volunteers must have a valid Montana fishing license
 - The Guide is the boss. Please do not give direction or coaching
 - You must be a self-sufficient fisherperson. The guide is for the warrior
 - Fishing is only allowed on public waters. No fishing on private property
 - **Fishing is not a requirement.** If you do not know how to, or want to fish during the FX, it is not expected, and you will still have a great time.

Transporting Participants: Car Insurance and Driver's License

Companions:

- Provide a clean, fully fueled vehicle
- Familiarize yourself with driving routes prior to volunteering
- Have a valid driver's license
- Have current car insurance coverage that meets the minimum state requirements.

Drivers:

- Must be confident driving a 12-passenger van and/or suburban
- Familiarize yourself with driving routes prior to volunteering
- Have a valid driver's license
- Have current car insurance coverage that meets the minimum state requirements.

Unless you are a volunteer Driver, WQW is not able to reimburse for gas expenses. Volunteers are responsible for tracking mileage and gas expenses for personal tax purposes.

Feedback/Coaching

Just as we hope you will provide us with feedback in an effort to continually improve the volunteer and warrior experience, we ask that all volunteers remain open to coaching. Coaching will be provided leading up to, during, and after your volunteer experience to ensure continued growth and the best experience possible for all. Team Leaders and Assistant Team Leaders complete a formal written performance evaluation of each volunteer.

Volunteer Pledge

As an applicant to WQW's volunteer program, I pledge to abide by the following principles:

Respect

- Respect others even though I may not agree with them.
- Display courtesy, sensitivity, consideration, and compassion for all participants.
- Use good judgment in recognizing the scope of authority of staff and volunteer leadership.

Safety

- Keep safety at the forefront of all volunteer activities.
- Follow the policies and schedule as presented to me in training.
- Respect and use equipment and supplies as they are intended.
- Report all injuries immediately to someone on staff in a timely fashion.

Quality

- Perform all tasks to the best of my ability.
- Recognize empathy, compassion, and non-judgment provide the best experience for program participants.
- Remain open to providing and receiving feedback so that we may ensure continued personal growth for all.

Self Discipline

- Recognize my limitations and those of others.
- Set boundaries for myself – know my limits.
- Hold myself accountable for the commitments I undertake.

Communication

- Recognize I communicate verbally and non-verbally.
- Listen to the needs of others.
- Ask questions when they arise.

Commitment

- Recognize that I have committed to serve as WQW deems most appropriate.
- Respect that program participants, staff, and fellow volunteers count on me to honor my commitments.
- Work collaboratively with WQW staff and volunteers to meet WQW's goals.

Welfare

- Value my role in the maintenance and growth of the organization.
- Strive to promote a positive environment.
- Respect and support all participants, volunteers, and staff.

Purpose

- Participants are here because WQW has determined they need to be here.
- This program is about service to others. It is not an opportunity to discuss my personal issues, beliefs, or opinions.
- The focus of the program and my part as a volunteer is always how to best help program participants achieve better mental health, healthier relationships, and greater self-efficacy.

Volunteer Acknowledgement

I am in receipt of the Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation (WQW) Volunteer Handbook. I understand I should consult with the WQW Community Engagement Manager should I have any questions about the policies or procedures contained therein.

I understand that from time to time there may be revisions to the Volunteer Handbook. Such revisions will be communicated to volunteers.

I have entered into my volunteer relationship with WQW voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of volunteer service. Accordingly, either WQW or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this manual is neither a contract of employment or volunteering, nor a legal document. Although some or all of the policies and procedures have been explained to me verbally, I understand that it is my responsibility to fully read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions to it. So that I may best serve others, I agree to abide by the volunteer pledge.

Volunteer Signature

Date Signed

Volunteer Name (print)