

# HEALING WATERS WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

## *Volunteer Orientation*

**Welcome.**

*“I was treated with loving care. My physical limitations respected, such  
grace. I was in good hands”  
-- Healing Waters Trip Participant*

After reading notes like these, you can see that we mean when we say that you are the heart of this organization. These trips would not be possible without you.

**Thank you.**

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### **Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures**

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Letter from a participant:

I would like to thank Healing Waters for the wonderful kayaking trip to China Camp and Tomales Bay. I really enjoyed the opportunity to get out of the city and meet new people. The instant camaraderie that comes from people with a common background was very uplifting. It gave me a chance to be able to experience an empowering weekend at a cost that made it possible. Being on a disability income limits what I can and can't do.

I used to do a lot of outdoor activities such as camping, hiking etc. It has been a long time since I have done those things. Having energetic volunteers, equipment, clothing, and food provided was truly a remarkable gift.

I would especially like to give thanks and appreciation to the three volunteers; Amanda, Rory, and Jessica. Amanda, who did all the driving, dealt with rangers at China Camp and fellow at Olema campground. To Rory, who has endless energy and enthusiasm. Jessica was fun and down to earth. Also, for cooks who did a great job. All of them put 100% of themselves into this trip. It's amazing that they put so much work and effort into what they did for us. They are volunteers that have a huge heart and much compassion. I never once felt awkward or out of place. I felt very safe and secure around the whole group.

It was a wonderful experience I will not soon forget.

This was my first trip with Healing Waters; I look forward to more adventures with you. I would also love to be a volunteer with you.

Thank you.

*-- A Participant*

## **A Brief History of Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures**

Healing Waters was started in the fall of 1996 by Cale Siler, then a young raft guide, who had a brush with his own mortality when he thought he might have contracted HIV. After testing negative, he decided he would devote his career to fighting the devastating psychological, emotional, and spiritual effects of AIDS.

Healing Waters began with humbly with two trips in 1996.

In 2007 we served over 400 participants, including some 15 youth in our third youth kayak camp Liquid, on trips including backpacking, rafting, camping and sea kayaking!

**And none of this would be possible without your help!**

### **Our Mission**

Our mission is to empower, inspire and enrich the lives of people challenging AIDS through wilderness adventures.

### **Staff**

Healing Waters / HWWA is currently entirely volunteer run by an active Board of Directors, volunteers and interns.

## **HWWA – the Basics**

Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures has designed its programming to meet the needs of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. We offer transportation for those who are no longer able to afford maintaining a car and insurance. We provide outdoor clothing and gear to individuals who do not have such items and for whom it would cost-prohibitive to acquire them. We have teamed up with nutritionists to ensure that we provide meals that meet the dietary needs of individuals living with HIV and AIDS. We offer our trips on a sliding scale basis and are able to provide full scholarships if necessary to ensure that we are able to serve those who need us the most.

Over the course of the year, HWWA also conducts various events and participates in different street fairs – all of which are staffed by volunteers.

Our office also relies on the support and help of volunteers with everything from basic IT to graphic design and accounting.

## **Types of Trips we offer:**

We offer rafting on the South Fork of the American River and an 8-day whitewater kayaking school for teens with HIV called Liquid.

A typical weekend trip includes up to 8 volunteers and up to 24 participants for a maximum total of 32. We are able to provide transportation to 11 individuals; we therefore must ask that some participants and most volunteers provide their own transportation. We HIGHLY encourage and help to coordinate carpooling. The 7-8 volunteers include trip hosts, guides, and cooks. We typically have 3 – 4 “head” volunteers who are experienced with HWWA trips and 2 – 3 assistant cooks, hosts and guides who are either new to our program or working towards gaining experience or certifications. Cooks, Guides and Hosts may use their own equipment and bedding or our own, where appropriate and when available. And depending on the activity, volunteer cooks and hosts may or may not be able to participate in the actual activity.

## **Expectations of a HWWA Volunteer**

- ◆ **There is no minimum yearly volunteer commitment to fulfill.**
- ◆ If you commit to a trip or a task and find you cannot make it, please give at least 14 days notice. If you cannot give 2 weeks notice, you will be responsible for finding a replacement volunteer. Rosters and resources will be provided to you to do this.
- ◆ Show up on time, and with the proper equipment (raft guides must keep their own PFD with whistle, knife, prussiks, etc.).
- ◆ As much as possible, ride with participants to the destination in our vans.
- ◆ HWWA participant trips are alcohol and drug free, please do not bring alcohol or buy alcohol during our participant trips
- ◆ We expect our volunteers to be involved during the entire trip. While quiet or alone time is understandable, please do not abandon the trip to go out and see friends, run errands, or catch up on your kayaking, etc. Please make a point of speaking with each of our participants for at least 5 minutes!
- ◆ During a trip, please protect our participant's anonymity by not revealing their HIV status to passers by with questions. If someone asks what HWWA does, please reply using the phrase "Trips for people in the city" or refer the question to the Host.
- ◆ Volunteers will not engage in sexual behavior with participants during Healing Waters trips
- ◆ Treat our equipment with the utmost respect at all times.
- ◆ Maintain a positive, team-work oriented attitude towards fellow volunteers and participants at all times.
- ◆ Complete trip paperwork after each trip, and leave equipment and kitchen in order and clean at the end of each trip.
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality following volunteer event.
- ◆ It may be possible to bring a personal guest on the trip, but please check with office beforehand. Should a guest accompany you on the trip, please inform them of our expectation that they contribute to the group as well as assist volunteers with their tasks.

## Ways to Get Involved with HWWA

<u>Type of Volunteer</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>	<u>Minimum Requirements</u>
<b>Host: Weekend programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picks up the van at the beginning of the trip</li> <li>• Drives throughout the trip</li> <li>• Keeps the trip running on time</li> <li>• Makes safe decisions</li> <li>• Provides motivation and direction</li> <li>• Fills out appropriate paperwork at end of trip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CA State Class B License</li> <li>• Chains training</li> <li>• Clean driving record</li> <li>• CPR and Wilderness First Aid (WFA)</li> <li>• Sensitivity training</li> <li>• Goes on 3 trips as an “assistant” Host</li> </ul>
<b>Trip Cook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooks the meals using sound sanitary techniques</li> <li>• Is responsible for getting Saturday’s lunch prepped on time</li> <li>• Inventories food</li> <li>• Leaves kitchen impeccably clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitivity training</li> <li>• Cook’s training</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs up for 4hrs/week for 3 months</li> <li>• Enters information into database</li> <li>• Answers phones and makes phone calls</li> <li>• Other fun tasks!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic computer literacy</li> <li>• Basic phone skills and good phone manners</li> </ul>
<b>Special Events Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folsom Street Fair</li> <li>• Pride Parade</li> <li>• Dory Alley Fair</li> <li>• Other events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes to people watch and have fun!</li> </ul>
<b>Field Assistant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help prepare trips by taking one of the following responsibilities for one month:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shop for food on Thursday or Friday</li> <li>○ Do a load of laundry mid-week</li> <li>○ Help pack trips on Friday afternoon</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely reliable</li> <li>• Has email that is checked regularly</li> <li>• To help with packing you must have mid-day (afternoon) availability on Fridays.</li> </ul>

\* See Specific Skills sheet for explanation of equivalent training. Please provide a reference or a letter of recommendation for your technical ability from your training organization. Sensitivity training is included in a Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures guide school as well as offered as a stand-alone training once a season.

## Specific Skill Requirements for Guides

## **Rafting**

- ◆ Competent class 3 river guide, familiar with the South Fork of the American
- ◆ Stern rig experience
- ◆ Two seasons rafting experience
- ◆ Comfortable giving a safety talk, teaching basic paddle strokes
- ◆ Can detect and manage signs of early hypothermia in participants

## **Responsibilities and Training for HWWA Volunteers**

The following section is a detailed description of all volunteer and staff responsibilities followed by a section on the training of volunteers.

### **HOSTS:**

All Hosts are responsible for the safety and well being of their participants from the moment that they pick them up until they are dropped off at their individual locations at the end of the trip.

1. Hosts should be aware of their group. Know where each participant is when engaged in outdoor activities (sea kayaking, rafting, backpacking). It is part of the mission of Healing Waters Wilderness Adventures to maintain and create a comfortable community. Please be aware of the group, but not overly controlling. After the group has returned to camp in the early evening (before/after dinner, in the morning, etc.) it is okay for participants to seek some quiet time on their own.
2. Hosts should be familiar with all safety procedures and the HWWA Risk Management Manual. They should also be familiar with the illnesses of the participants and accommodate for their needs.
3. Hosts will check participants for physical ability and adequate equipment (rain gear, water, etc.) Do not ask participants to do more physical activities than they feel comfortable doing.
4. Hosts are responsible for reading and checking the weather and water conditions for the day, depending on the activity. It is the responsibility of the experienced leader to determine what is safe and what is not for the day's activity. When rafting, water conditions can be checked at the Camp Lotus River Store or by phone.
5. Hosts will point out main safety risks before all activities.
6. Hosts will set realistic turn around times. Keep in mind that caution can be overdone. Accurately assess risk and minimize to an acceptable level, not eliminate it entirely
7. Hosts are expected to inform guides of participant needs and issues.
8. Hosts will report and document all incidents and document. With this documentation, we can change things for the future and we can protect ourselves from negligence and carelessness.
9. Hosts will ensure that all HWWA Participants have a safe and enjoyable experience, Hosts must be able to assess and reduce hazards in the field, as well as respond effectively in the event of an emergency.
10. Hosts will be aware of time frames. It is imperative that the participants are back from the day's activity with enough time to prepare for dinner and their evening. Since participants take medications, it is important that the Host takes this into consideration and communicates clearly with the participants by asking if they need more time. It is also important for the leader to explain clearly at the beginning of the day what the day will look like as far as time goes. However, as much as possible, we do not want the trip to seem rushed.

11. Hosts will have all your first aid equipment with you. HWWA cell phone, first-aid kit, CPR mask and gloves are all your professional responsibility. Act within the limits of your first aid training and follow all taught protocol.
12. Hosts will know how to contact all HWWA staff while out in the field. Utilize the cell phone and emergency pager. In locations where the cell phone does not connect, know beforehand where the nearest pay phones are and how to contact emergency services.
13. Hosts and Guides should be proactive in promoting a sense of community and should steer the group and volunteers away from cliques.

### **GUIDES (Rafting)**

1. Guides should be familiar with all safety procedures and the HWWA Risk Management Manual. They should also be familiar with the illnesses of the participants and accommodate for their needs.
2. Guides are accountable for the supervision and control of their group on all activities (rafting, backpacking, cross-country skiing, kayaking, day hikes, etc.)
3. One guide must be located at the front and another must be at the rear of the group while participating in any activity so that all participants remain accounted for and safe.
4. Guides should continually assess the group's needs, strengths, and weaknesses and respond accordingly (water, warmth/clothing, fatigue, etc.).
5. Guides should be proactive in promoting a sense of community and should steer the group and volunteers away from cliques.
6. Guides should constantly be aware of natural conditions (changing weather patterns, water levels, etc.)
7. Guides must be knowledgeable of the area's hazardous plants and wildlife before a trip.

### **COOKS:**

Cooks are responsible for the timely preparation and serving of nutritional meals for participants.

1. Cooks must follow sanitary standards to ensure that all food is properly cooked and that all prep equipment is properly cleaned.
2. Cooks must pack lunches and snacks (when appropriate for the activity) to ensure that food is available as needed for individuals taking medication
3. Cooks are responsible for administering first aid and/or CPR is in the event that a Host or guide is not present.

## **SUPPORT STAFF (Office Volunteers)**

1. Office volunteers should be invested in helping out on any number of types of office based projects, including but not limited to: assisting with mailings, data entry, phone calls to participants, letter writing, assistance with gear, laundry task force. We will try to not ask someone to help out on a project that they are not interested in doing, but please realize that everything helps.
2. Volunteers will select a shift time and must arrive or give advance notice of absence.

## **EVENT VOLUNTEERS**

1. Event volunteers must be willing to attend any mandatory third party trainings.
2. Volunteers must arrive on time for shift and stay until dismissed.

## How to Get on the Schedule!

When you come to a Volunteer Orientation, you are added to the appropriate email list(s). I have separate lists for each type of guide, cooks, hosts, class B drivers, and others.

Once you are on the email list, there are two ways to get scheduled:

✿🌿 **Mass scheduling:** We will send out an email with all of the available holes for each trip, and you sign up online. Simply click on the volunteer button on the main page of HW ([www.hwaters.org](http://www.hwaters.org)) and enter the password. The password will be emailed to you once you submit a volunteer application and it is reviewed by the Board of Healing Waters. Priority is given to guides, Hosts, and cooks over assistant guides, Hosts, and cooks. (I.e. Priority is given to volunteers with class B licenses, CPR, sensitivity training, cook's training, Wilderness First Aid training (or better), and volunteers with experience in our program.) Timely completion of trip paperwork, and keeping gear and kitchen equipment clean and orderly at the end of your trips will help your priority level. We also give priority to volunteers and supporters who have demonstrated exceptional dedication.

Two other things into account: synergy (who works well together, pairing experienced with non-experienced people) and timing of the reply (first come, first served). Schedules are also revised periodically to reflect updates.

✿🌿 **Individual scheduling:** Individual scheduling generally occurs when someone does not make it onto any given 3 – 4 month block schedule because it has filled up. If this is the case, the volunteer gets priority over guides with the same background the following block (i.e. an assistant guide would not receive priority over a guide in this case). Recent graduates of guide/instructor training programs (in general) can be added to any trip on an individual basis and where possible. This is because you need the experience to build your skills, and it's a great way to meet current instructors and become familiar with trips without having the full responsibility of instructorship.

Once you have signed up, we will send you an informational email with all the information you will need to know to go on a trip. ***We will send this email out one time only, and it arrives 2 weeks before the trip.*** It includes: where to meet, what to pack, whether you need to drive, what is known about the participants, who the other guides, cooks and Hosts are, and any other information that may be useful to you (i.e., weather, tides, etc. if applicable). **You must reply to these emails to let us know you have received it and where you will be meeting the van.**

If you are a new guide or cook, your first experience with our group will be as an “assistant” guide, cook or Host and you will be paired with experienced HWWA volunteers. This will allow us to better understand your fit with our organization in terms of both your hard and soft skills. If you do not have previous outdoor experience, we encourage you to take one of our guide/instructor trainings. They are great fun and will give you the necessary skills to be a HWWA guide! We can also train you and help you to become a Class B driver.

If you cannot make it to your scheduled trip, you **must** give us 2 weeks notice. If you do not give us that notice, you will need to find yourself a replacement -- we can let you know how to do this.

## **What is the Next Step?**

- ◆ **Decide how you want to be involved, fill out the volunteer application and both email it in and print it out and mail it in!**
- ◆ Determine what, if any, additional training you need to become a guide, cook, or Host. Sign up for a training and go!
- ◆ Send us a copy of your WFA, WFR, CPR, Driver's license (for class B license), or River Rescue cards! Our address is 167 Fell Street, SF, CA 94102.
- ◆ If you are an experienced guide, we will need to see a reference or a letter of recommendation. Send them to: 167 Fell Street, SF, CA 94102. The letter or reference should vouch for your technical skills. We'll get our teaching curriculum to you in time for the trip you are guiding.
- ◆ For field assistants, sign up for a month of shopping, laundry or helping to pack.
- ◆ For administrative volunteers, sign up for a 4 hr/week, three month commitment.
- ◆ For special events volunteers, sign up to receive email announcements.
- ◆ Answer scheduling emails and announcements to get on the calendar.
- ◆ While you are acquiring your skills, you can act as an assistant guide, cook or Host, however you will not receive priority in the scheduling until you have the skills and credentials to be a guide.
- ◆ Until you have completed your first HW trip, you are an assistant guide or cook regardless of your technical ability or experience level. Hosts need to complete 3 HW trips as an assistant Host.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!**