



# SAFETY CHECKLIST

## **Personal Safety of Wyoming Site Stewardship Program Volunteers (WYSSP)**

As a monitor you may encounter persons who are on public lands for illegal purposes such as drug cultivation or trafficking, felony theft, disposing of hazardous materials, or evidence of major crimes committed elsewhere. You may also encounter unauthorized activities involving the use of firearms and explosives. Persons participating in these activities may be very hostile and resistant to any official presence. Some people may have different ideas and value systems. These people may be hostile to the work you are doing or the agency you represent.

The following principles and procedures should help minimize situations where volunteers become involved in situations of jeopardy for which they are not fully trained or equipped. Not all risks can be avoided. However, volunteers should not take unnecessary risks that place them in a situation of personal jeopardy. Trained BLM or other public law enforcement officers should always be used for such situations.

## **Obligations as a WYSSP volunteer site steward**

Volunteers are to conduct their public contact with caution and prudence. BLM and state policy does not permit the use of volunteers in hazardous duty or law enforcement work. When encountering a person or persons behaving in a suspicious or hostile manner:

1. Leave the area immediately.
2. Discreetly note license plate number, description of violator, and other pertinent facts
3. Call trained law enforcement to deal with violators as soon as you may safely do so.

## **Wyoming Site Stewards are not law enforcement officers**

- A. Avoid confronting a person about a particular violation of a criminal law or regulation, where there is intention to hold the person accountable for the action.
- B. Avoid ordering a person to disperse, leave an area, or not enter an area. When based upon reasonable suspicion or probable cause, a person must be asked to show their personal identification or other identifying information. "Reasonable suspicion" is the legal threshold necessary to conduct an investigative stop and demand identifying information. Only BLM or other public law enforcements are trained to determine such threshold.
- C. Avoid physically touching or removing a hostile or combative person from area. Physical touching and certain contact controls are considered a level II use of force on the Federal use of Force Model. Only BLM or other public law enforcement officers are trained in the use of force under prescribed legal and policy restraints. BLM or other public law enforcement officers are trained in the use of defensive weapons and in making determinations of when certain levels of force are permitted or not permitted.
- D. Avoid making a physical arrest or issuing accusatory or charging instruments, such as written warnings or citations.

## **As a volunteer, what should I do to enhance my personal safety on public lands?**

- A. Be prudent in all of your contacts, especially when telling people who are in violation. Wear the official accessories (to be provided, hat and

tee-shirt) when conducting public contact duties.

- B. Call BLM or other public law enforcement officers to make contact with individuals, if you anticipate persons to be contacted could be hostile or uncooperative. Also, notify BLM of other local law enforcement officers if you observe actions or evidence that indicate a serious crime is occurring. **DO NOT CONFRONT SUCH INDIVIDUALS!**
- C. Notify BLM or other public law enforcement officers if persons are ignoring the regulatory information that has been supplied through public contact.
- D. Immediately notify BLM or other public law enforcement officers if threats have been made against, or assaults or batteries have been committed upon any volunteer or public land user.
- E. Know where the nearest phone is located, and always carry a cell phone, if you have one.

**As a volunteer, what actions should I avoid to enhance my personal safety?**

- A. Do not make threats or inferences about issuing citations, making arrests, or statements about calling the authorities. This may elevate the hostility of the contact. In most cases, a quiet withdrawal and notification to the appropriate authorities without direct contact with the subject is the safest alternative.
- B. Do not let your anger or emotions dictate your actions. Attempt to communicate in a calm and precise manner. Do not raise your voice or shout at any person. If your emotions get the best of you, withdraw from the contact immediately and, make the proper notifications.
- C. Do not issue written warnings or any other written from which may be interpreted to be a criminal accusatory instrument.
- D. Do not ask for or demand a person's identification in connection with a potential violation. Volunteers lack the proper authority and the necessary level of proof; this action would also constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy.
- E. Do not confuse any authority you may have to conduct law enforcement activities given to you by State, Federal, or local agency with your duties as a volunteer, and/or authorizing such as volunteers to take any law enforcement action.
- F. Do not physically touch, lay hands upon, or strike a person.
- G. Do not carry, wear, or display firearms or other weapons (including spray, clubs, sticks, batons, nun chucks, bazooka, etc.) on your person when serving as a site steward.
- H. Do not work alone, if possible always work as a team.

**Being a good witness**

Witness: One who can accurately relate what he or she saw, heard, smelled, felt, experienced. Try to observe and learn. Your careful observations of fact will prove invaluable. "I saw" is a powerful testimony and will do much to overcome the false claims and denials of a violator. Remember to ask yourself: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Could you tell a person not there what occurred without adding or deleting from what you saw?



**Describing a person (top to bottom)**

A person is more easily described and remembered if you view them from *top to bottom*.

**Example 1:** *Hair?* Length, color, thickness, curly, receding, bald, grey streaks, etc.

*Face?* Round or thin, smooth or wrinkled, scarred, tattooed, pierced, facial hair, eyebrows or nose distinctive, eyes narrow or wide, teeth missing or gold, silver capped, etc.

*Build?* Short or tall, fat or thin, muscular or flabby, bust, etc.

*Clothes?* Shirt-color, sleeves, logos, clean or dirty. Belt - fancy buckle, leather or weave. Pants - long or short, color, clean, dirty, faded, torn knees, straight or flared. Shoes - boots, sandals, sneakers, colors, etc.

*Unique features?* Always look for something special that makes it easy to remember and see. Scars and tattoos, unusual moles or marks, fancy cowboy boots, fancy jewelry, we all have something that makes us and others unique.

*Race/Sex?* Important features that greatly reduce the field of suspects. Make your best guess, it is not always obvious.

Practice with your friends! You will be amazed how little most people remember about the people they see throughout the day. Perhaps because we are taught to not stare or draw attention to injuries, etc., we *look but do not see*. Use the *top to bottom* system and you will improve. It is necessary to focus on a violator and give a good description.

**Example 2: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?**

*Who?* Describe *top to bottom*. "Unique features and behaviors i.e. An older white male, 60-70, about 6' 5" and thin, wears glasses, clean shaven with long white hair pulled back into a ponytail, wearing a fly fishing vest, khaki pants, no belt, and hiking boots. Has a weathered face and an Airborne/parachute tattoo on left forearm. Nose is sunburned."

*What?* What makes the event a concern? "The man was digging with a shovel on a known grave site."

*When?* Date and time, exact if you can, otherwise estimate and write it down.

*Where?* Try to use permanent features. "A hole dug in black soil on the North corner of the bedrock mortar at the Enterprise access ramp."

*Why?* Not easy to determine, but give it some thought. Is the violator a casual, curious collector or a skilled and focused commercial motivated exploiter? An experienced looter or vandal, digger of burials or just surface materials? Obvious or secretive?

*How?* Vehicles used. Drop off? Digging, screening, surface scatter? Where did the artifacts go - pockets, packs, trunks, hidden or handed off to others? Boats or motorcycles, etc.

**Scene Management**

Most often you will find the results of looting after the fact. Still, a story remains to a trained investigator and clues remain. Help protect the scene until an investigator can view it. Enter the

area of the looting, with caution; try not to rub out tracks and clues. Do not enter the area at all if you can see from afar it has been looted. DO not rebury artifacts, or move objects until advised to do so. Sometimes nobody will be available to respond to a "cold" case. Try to walk out the on the same tracks you entered. Leave some sign of where you entered, something discreet that only you can identify, i.e. three pine cones, or stones in a row, obvious to you but not to others. The looter may return, and maybe we will be waiting for them. Remember what you saw, report it and hope for appropriate action, and know that we do not catch all violators, but will try our best.

### **Witness, Testimony**

You may be a witness in court. Officers are also witnesses in court. Officers will seek to witness violations themselves if at all possible, and will not involve you unnecessarily. Most cases do not go to trial, only a few.

Should you be required to testify in court, consider the following; Testifying is easy if you remember to just tell the truth. If you do not remember something, just say so. Do not feel you have to "fill in the blanks," as it is normal and natural to not recall everything you have witnessed.

As a witness, you may be questioned by officers and later by attorneys. Your answers should therefore be consistent, as the facts do not change. When questioned by an attorney, answer the specific question asked, neither volunteering nor deleting information. Many of these answers will be "Yes" or "No". If you are confused, ask the questioner to slow down and rephrase the question asked.

An attorney will usually tell the story of what occurred (or did not occur), using witnesses and evidence obtained to verify or emphasize important points. To be a good witness, answer truthfully without embellishment or emotional reaction. It is normal to be a bit nervous, try to relax and go along with the process. YOU are not on trial.

### **Role-playing exercises for dealing with the public**

The following situations allow monitors to examine possible actions that you may encounter when confronted with issues regarding artifact and site vandalism, destruction, and protection. As site monitors, you may have to make decisions in difficult situations. It is best to examine how you may react and prepare yourself for handling these types of situations before they occur. As you review these situations, point out the pros and cons of each and write out your reasons for your decision.

#### **Situation 1**

You are monitoring a rock art site consisting of Native American pictographs and petroglyphs. As you walk towards the site, you pass several young adults carrying a large bag. When you arrive at the site, you can see names painted across the opening. When you look closer, you see that the paint is still wet. What do you do?

- Approach the young adults. Tell them it is against the law to damage rock art and you are calling the authorities.
- Quietly follow the young adults; get their license plate number, a physical description of them and their car. Report them to a law enforcement officer as soon as possible.
- Wait until you get back home before calling the appropriate personnel listed in your Site Kit.
- Try to wipe off the paint before it dries.
- Other solution:

**Situation 2**

Your neighbor shows you some prehistoric artifacts that he obtained while on a weekend camping trip because he wants your opinion about how much they might be worth. When you talk to him about the artifacts he says that since he found them on private property, then it is legal to sell them. What do you do?

- Try to get more information about where he found the artifacts, and contact your coordinating archaeologist for advice.
- Tell your neighbor that he has broken the law.
- Ask law enforcement agents from the public land managing agency in the area to investigate your neighbor.
- Don't do anything because you have no concrete proof.
- Try to get your neighbor involved in archaeological classes or to volunteer on a legal excavation so that he will understand the importance of preserving sites on private and public lands.
- Other solution:

**Situation 3**

While on your monitoring route you discover a large projectile point. What do you do?

- Pick up the point and take it back to the BLM office.
- Leave the point where you found it. Take a photograph and carefully record the location on a map using a Global Positioning System (GPS) if you have one. Turn over the information to the coordinating archaeologist.
- Leave the point where you found it. Cover it with brush and dirt so that no one else will find it.
- If this is an uncommon type of projectile point, then take it home to show and educate other people about archaeology.
- Other solution:

**Situation 4**

Your monitoring assignment includes an historic ranch site. Several of the buildings no longer have roofs. Only the rock formation of one building remains. A sign by the building says: "This site is very fragile! Do not walk on the foundations or enter the buildings. Take only photographs."

You are eating lunch nearby when a family arrives in a car. After getting out of their car the children run into the buildings. They ignore the sign. The children walk on top of the foundation and jump inside the building. They start picking up glass fragments and old nails and putting them in their pockets. What do you do?

- Politely ask the parents if they have read the sign.
- Ignore the family. Law enforcement is not part of your job as a volunteer site monitor.
- Tell the children they are breaking the law.
- Say nothing, but record the license plate number before leaving. Hurry to call a law enforcement office to report the family.
- Other solution:

**Situation 5**

On your monitoring route, you encounter several people who are sitting in a small rock shelter that is part of a known archaeological site. They are sitting around a small fire and chanting. What do you do?

- Approach the group. Ask them if they have a burn permit.
- Tell the group that they may be damaging a prehistoric site. Ask them to leave.
- Contact your coordinating archaeologist for advice.
- Say nothing; record the license plate number, and leave. Hurry to call a law enforcement officer.
- Other solution:

**Situation 6**

While on your monitoring route, a young man approaches you. He says that he is a Native American and that you are on a sacred site. He further comments that he does not believe that you, or any other non-native, should have access to sacred sites. What do you do?

- View this encounter as a teaching opportunity. Say, "I am a site monitor" and proceed to explain the program.
- Tell the young man that you are an official site monitor. You have not finished your monitoring route and you don't have to leave because this is public land.
- Tell the young man that you respect his view and are leaving.
- Finish your monitoring assignment. Fill out the monitoring form, detailing the encounter.
- Other solution: