

[From Fall 1993]

## **SCA Volunteers**

Since 1957 the Student Conservation Association (SCA) has been successfully matchmaking for the environment. The Association pairs students and other volunteers who are interested in working for such agencies as the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U. S. Forest Service and other public and private agencies. These volunteers receive the kind of exposure and experience which has encouraged alumni of the SCA program to seek careers in conservation.



Headquartered in New Hampshire, this nonprofit organization is the nation's oldest and largest provider of conservation volunteers, recruiting and fielding approximately 1,500 individuals per year at more than 250 locations. Volunteers working with conservation projects in wildlife refuges, national parks and other sites throughout the country have given budget-strapped conservation agencies valuable assistance. Wildlife research, trail construction, wilderness trail patrol, ecological restoration, archaeological surveys and visitor education services are among the activities through which SCA volunteers help to conserve our natural resources.

In 1982, Chincoteague became the first refuge to participate in the SCA program. That summer, two volunteers were selected to assist with the public use program for twelve weeks. They helped staff the visitor center, conducted interpretive programs and assisted with many other projects.

Today, SCA volunteers contribute 56 weeks of assistance at Chincoteague. During the summer, two SCAs work the public use staff and one with the biology department. Also, the public use staff selects an SCA for the fall season.

Funding for the SCA program is provided by an effective public/private partnership. Conservation agencies utilizing SCA volunteers provide approximately 65% of the overall cost of the Association's ongoing programs. Foundations, corporations and more than 12,000 SCA members contribute the rest. At Chincoteague NWR, the Chincoteague Natural History Association and the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island have assisted with the funding of the SCA program.

Thirty-six years of public service have strengthened SCA's conviction that, ultimately, the protection of the natural environment will depend upon the vision, inspiration and education of an enlightened youth.

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