

Integrating Volunteers into Regulatory Monitoring Programs

Natasha Dickrell, B.S., M.E.L.P.

Pinellas County Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

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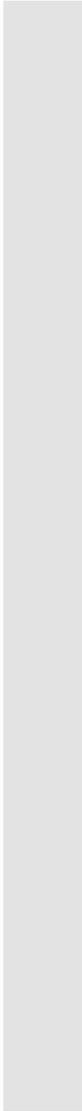


Volunteers and Interns

U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Regulatory Water Quality objectives

How Pinellas County Divisions incorporate both!



FLSA Volunteers

“...a volunteer will not be considered an employee if the individual volunteers for public service, religious, or humanitarian objectives...not displace employees or perform work that would otherwise be performed by employees.”



FLSA Interns

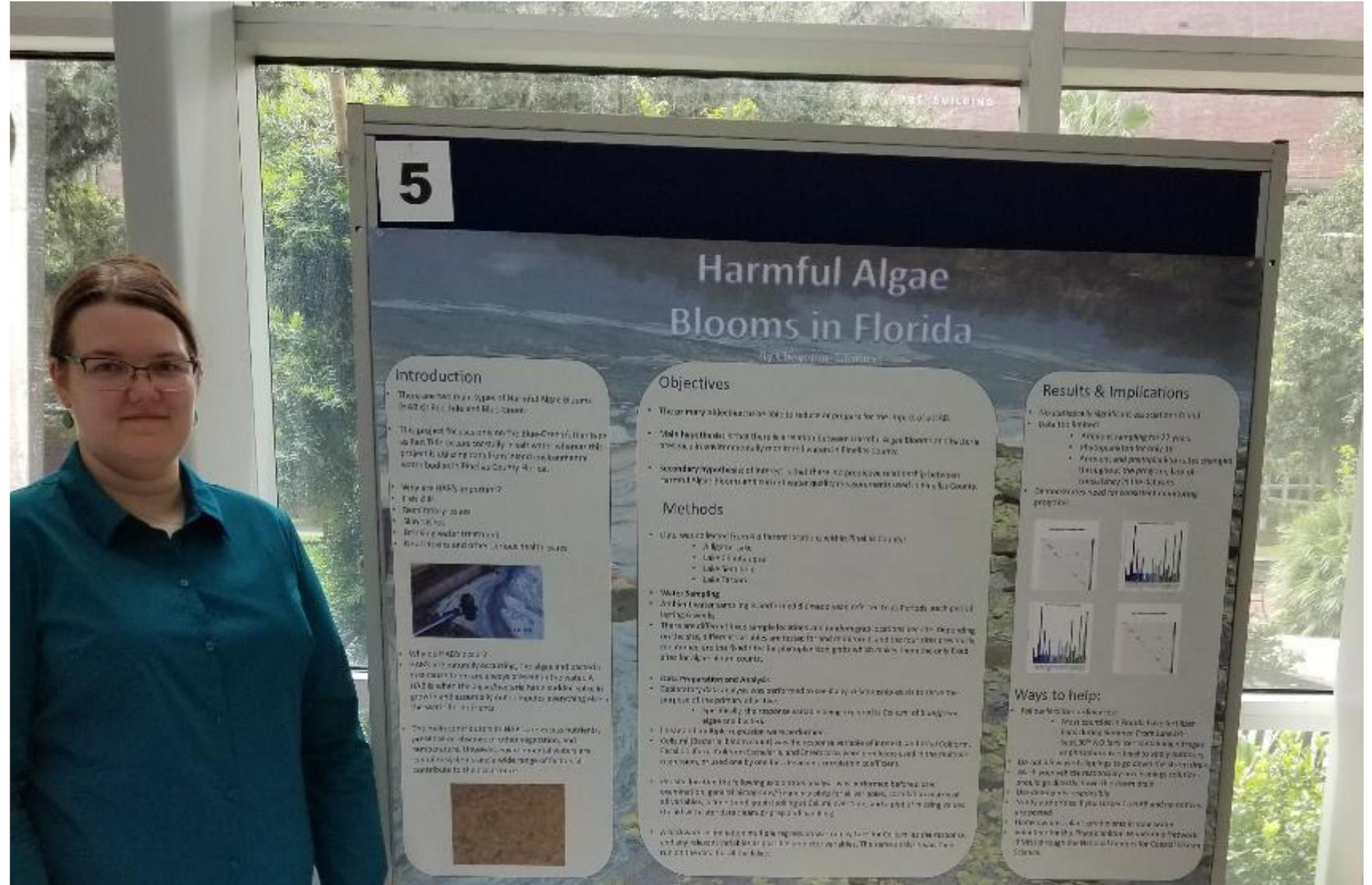
Vocational;

Student benefit;

Close supervision;

Sponsor derives no immediate advantage and on occasion operations may be impeded.

Students are not entitled to a job or wages for their time.



Emergency Monitoring

Since the 1970s –
citizen science
activities respond to
environmental
crises!

Existing volunteer
procedures *mobilize*
volunteers during an
emergency:

RED TIDE (HABs)



Water Quality Programs

Meet NPDES, TMDL, ordinance credit and activity objectives.

Volunteers who witness impaired or degraded conditions expand support for monitoring efforts!



Regulatory Compliance

Local *advocates!*

Promoting *public education* and citizen scientists

Report compliance issues; expand monitoring activities.



Future Regulators

“Full-time” Experience

Fulfill graduation credit requirements – internship or directed study

Applying coursework and theory in regulatory environment.

Certification or license criteria



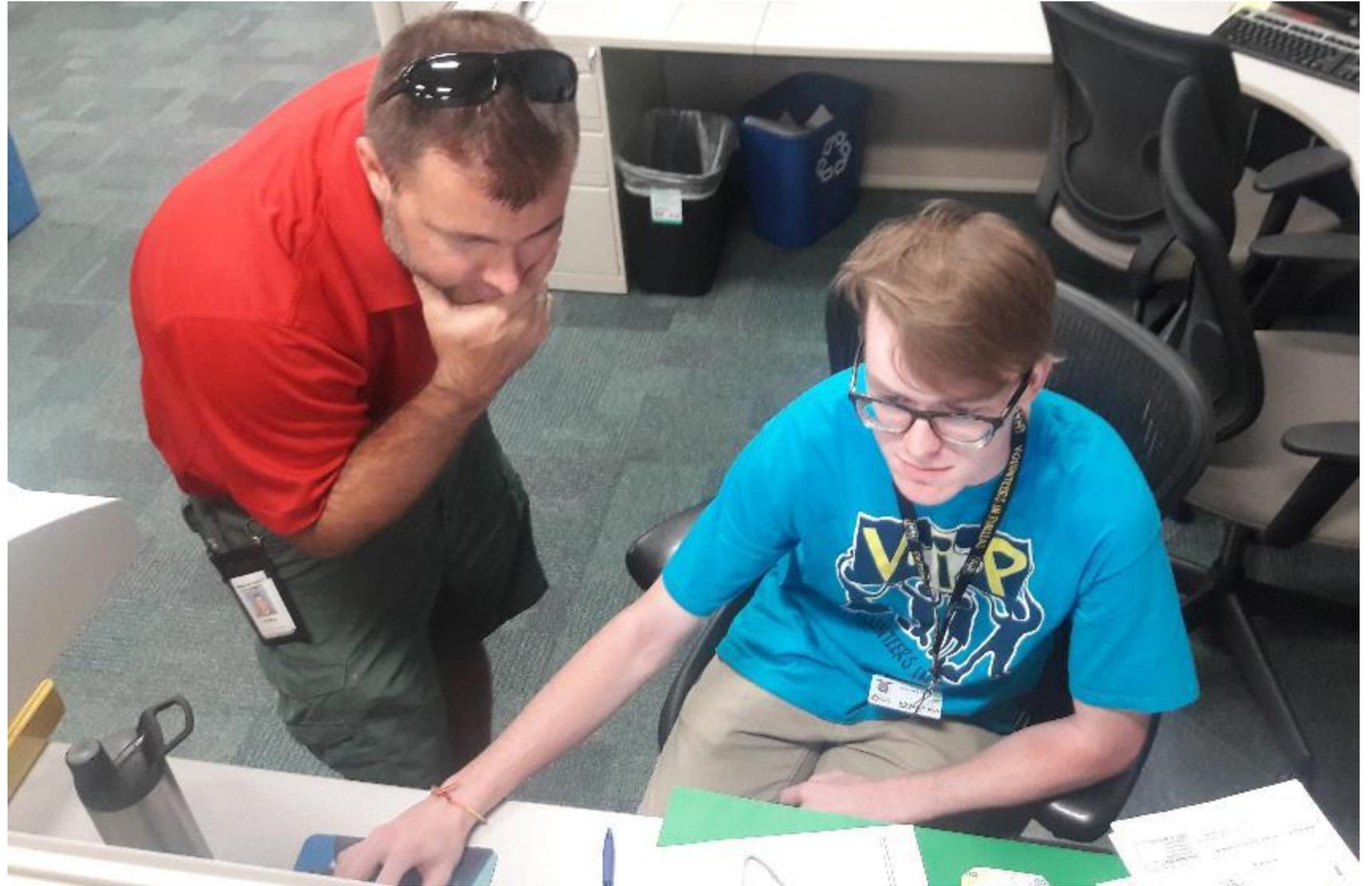
Dedicated Staff

To create a learning environment:

Mentor on professional "soft" skills (OFFICE)

Guide interpretation and perspective (COMMUNICATION)

Train on software, methods, mandates, analysis (FIELD)

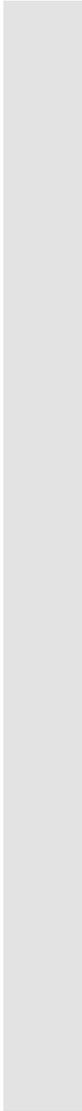


Help!

Volunteer efforts
justify additional
full-time monitoring
jobs!

Measured
effectiveness
justifies expanded
funding!





Monitoring and Tasking

A love note to our volunteers.

In the Field

Promotes *safety*;
benefits *reporting*
and *observations*!

Greater *ownership*
when understanding
the impact of their
activities in the field
– through training!



Getting
volunteers out
on a boat!

Extra set of
hands and
eyes!

Practical
training and
experiences.



Monitoring Preparation

“Doing Dishes”

Dedicated to *oversight*
and building volunteer
ownership in monitoring
processes.

*Efficiency is doing things
right; effectiveness is
doing the right things.*

Peter Drucker



Historical Records Management

Look what we found...

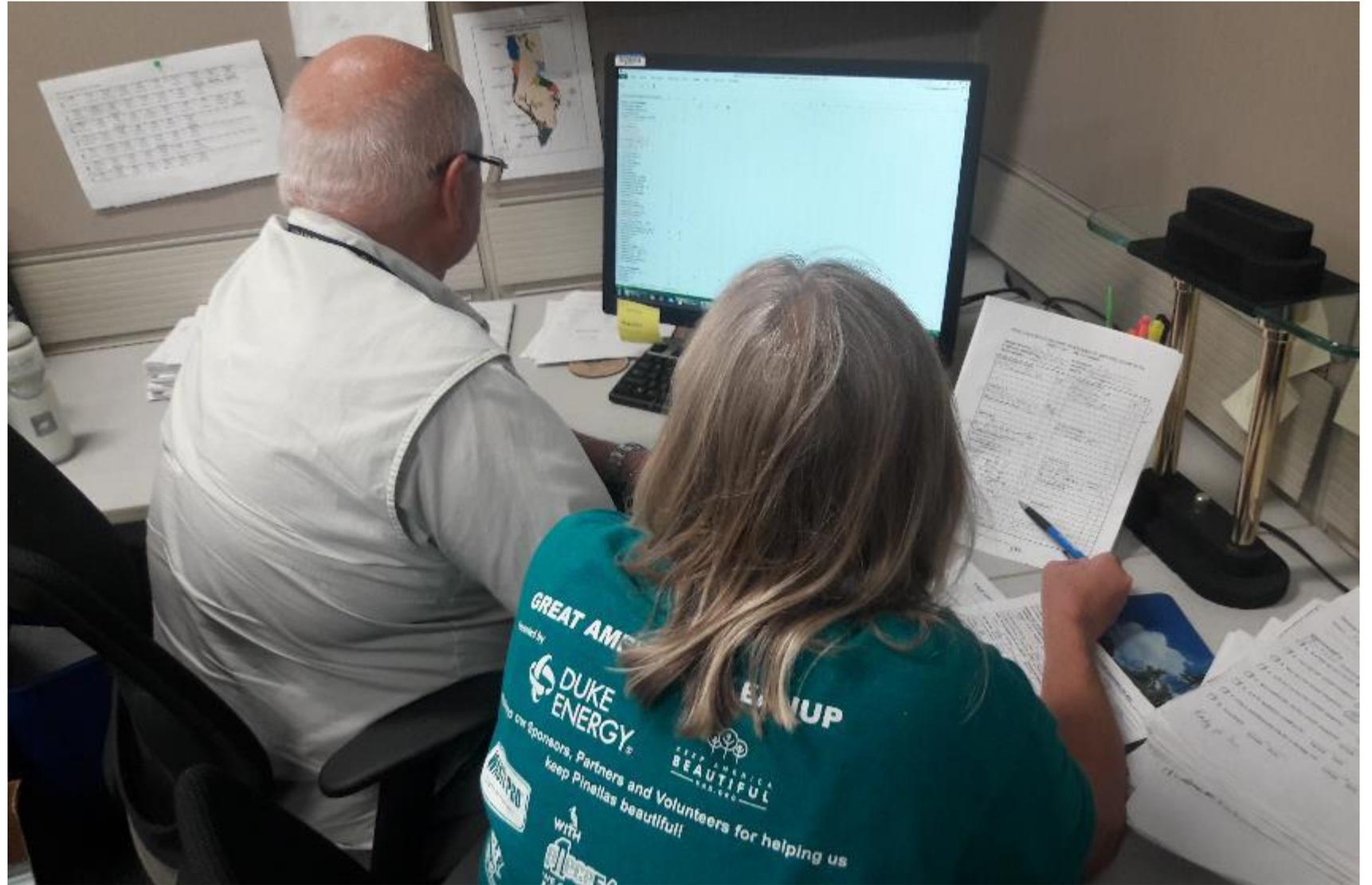
Data entry

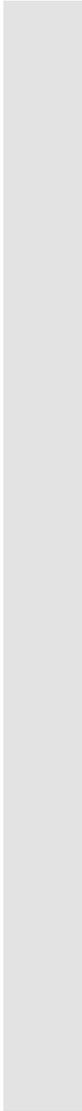
Electronic Filing

Technical training in reporting.

Tracking a robust QA/QC process

Make monitoring data available again!





Community Impacts

“The purpose of life...is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Mentoring

Guide *future colleagues*, partners, and advocates (e.g. ESRI GIS)

Partnerships with academic institutions to influence *professional development* (e.g. degree tracks)

Successful *trades* and *entrepreneurs*.



Intermediary Advising

Academic research and
instruction for
monitoring activities

Pinellas County is host to
undergraduate, graduate,
and vocational schools

Monitoring agreements
supported by volunteer
resources reduce costs
and expand partnerships.



Non-Profit & Corporate Initiatives

Non-profit volunteers produce measureable monitoring outcomes (i.e. integrated success)

Opportunities for partners to meet corporate volunteer, monitoring-based objectives (e.g. Blue Carbon, Watergoat).

Success prompts public demand for non-profit activities and/or corporate investment!



The Data:

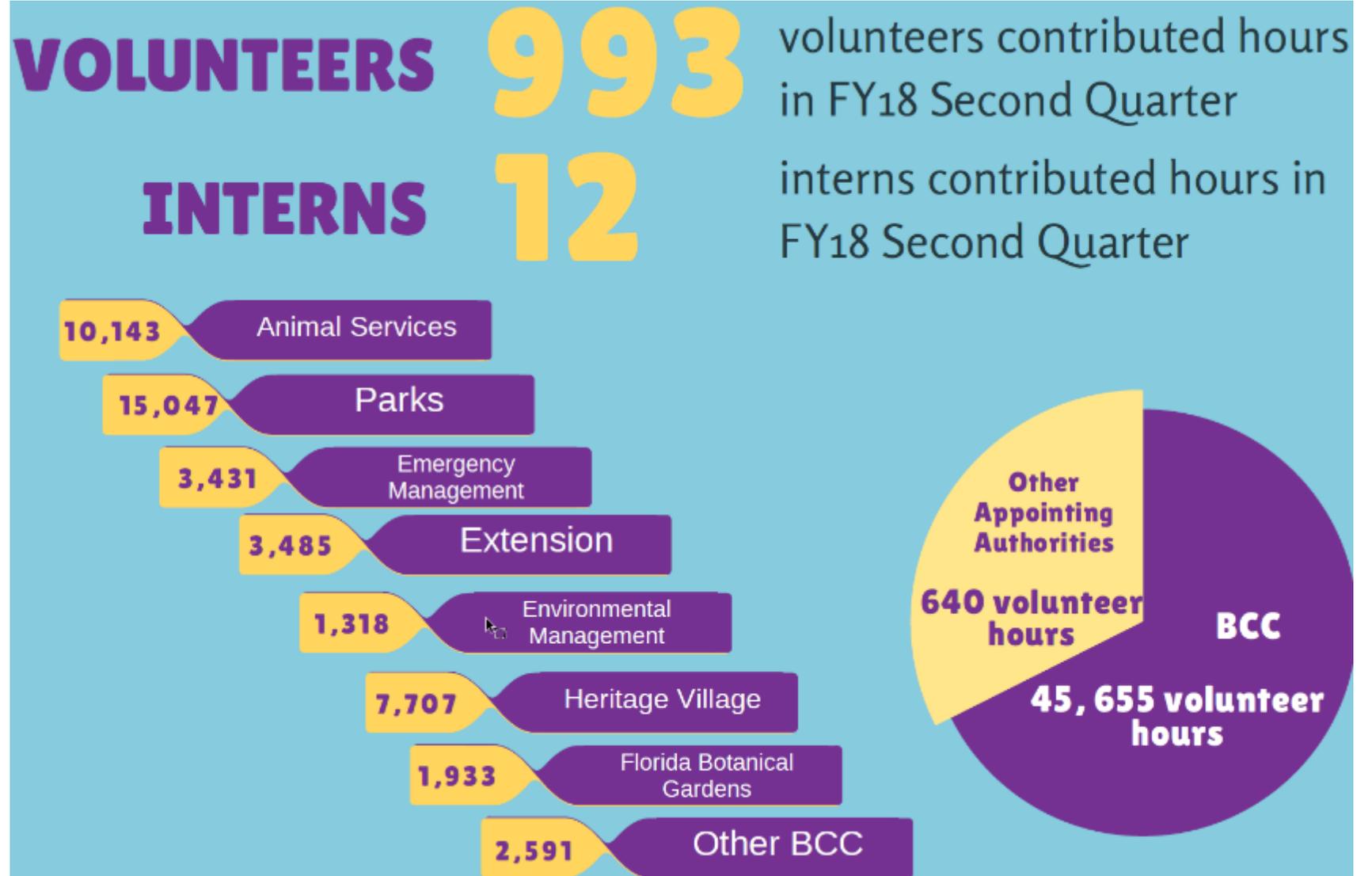
For Environmental Management –

2.75 FTEs per week

4 Interns

6 Volunteers

1 Cleanup Event



References

Stepenuck, K.F. and Genskow, K.D. "Traits of Volunteer Monitoring Programs that Influence Natural Resource Management and Policy Impacts." *Society & Natural Resources*, July 2018.

Tuschman, Richard. "Using Volunteers and Interns: Is it Legal?" *Forbes Online*, August 2012.

Karolak, Irena. 2018. *Pinellas County Volunteer Services Quarterly Report*.

