

Small Budget, Diverse In-Kind Gifts, Big Outcomes

By George Constantz

Since 1989, Pine Cabin Run Ecological Laboratory (now Cacapon Institute), located in rural West Virginia, has taken a scientific approach to watershed protection. This brief article surveys the kinds of in-kind donations PCREL has received over the years, and gives a few tips on how we did it.

From the beginning, every aspect of the Lab's life benefited from in-kind donations:

- Start-up: attorneys, accountant
- Construction of a laboratory building: use of land, lumber, windows, electrical fixtures, cabinets, tile, carpenters, electrician, dry-wallers, painters
- Office Administration: office equipment, computers, printers, fax machines, envelope stuffing, accountant, bookkeeper
- Science Program: scientific equipment, expendable lab supplies, volunteer river samplers, lab technicians, bottle washers, data enterers, desk-top publishing, GIS analysts, field vehicle, riverside house that served as field headquarters
- Education Program: press releases, newsletter articles, in-stream teachers, photographer, natural history float trips, canoes and paddles, canoe trailer, life vests, wilderness first-aid, physician, certified white-water guides, master chef, meals from restaurants, loan of van, attorney for liability waiver forms
- Fundraising Concert: producer, musicians (partial donation), concert hall (partial donation), ticket salespersons, silent auction coordinator, auction items
- River Festival: coordinator, camp grounds, artist for promotional flyers, electrician, regional musicians, local radio station's remote coverage, giant tent, dozens of volunteers

How did the Lab garner these in-kind donations?

- appeals in the quarterly newsletter
- requests to board members
- appeals at the end of public education programs/speaking engagements
- free ads in newsletters of paddling and fishing clubs
- word of mouth from staff to relatives, neighbors, friends, agency staffers, ex-students, supporters.

Delivering a cabinet or donating half a day of work seemed to bond people to the Lab. Maybe this is why the Lab's in-kind donations have been more important to our successes than cash.

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