OUR MISSION
Through the experience of fly fishing in Montana, WQW is a catalyst for positive change in the lives of post-9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones. Warriors and Quiet Waters is an organization that helps veterans rekindle their love for the outdoors.

OUR VISION
WQW envisions an America in which a new generation of combat veterans successfully reintegrate* into society.

*WQW believes that successful reintegration means a veteran has filled their hierarchy of needs, self-actualized, has a strong identity, and pursues their full potential with a sense of purpose.
About WQW

WQW was founded in 2007 by Col. Eric Hastings.

Fishing Experience or FX is what we call our week-long programs.

Quiet Waters Ranch (QWR) is our official base of operations for FXs. WQW purchased the ranch in 2015.

The impact of WQW: Warriors and their loved ones report a renewed sense of purpose, solace, camaraderie, connection to others and with nature.
Our Participant Application Process

Here are some tips on how to interact with our participants, and a few things you should know about them:

Through outreach, word of mouth, and partnerships, WQW identifies individuals who can benefit from a WQW FX.

To be considered for our program, it all starts with an interested participant filling out our online application.

The application contains personal data including military service documents and transition information. It’s all thoroughly reviewed by our Chief Program Officer and Program Director. Participants apply from all branches of military service and from all over the country.

Not everyone that qualifies gets selected: Placements of our post 9/11 combat veterans and their loved ones is based on the need and who can benefit. When placing participants, dynamics between all participants (and volunteers) are at the forefront of our mind. This ensures the most successful and positive experience possible.
Our Programs

WQW aims to dive deeper with our participants with progressive programming that keeps them involved long-term. Depending on what a participant needs, there are a variety of programs we offer. Take a look at our website for more information on each program.

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Volunteer Opportunities

If fishing is the heart of our program, WQW Volunteers are the soul. Volunteers are a part of every facet of WQW and their support is what allows us to successfully pursue our mission. We have many opportunities for volunteers to help based on availability and expertise:

One day or less volunteer commitments:
- Special Events
- Community Outreach
- Quiet Waters Ranch Manual Labor
- Office Support
- Fundraising Support
- Marketing Support
- Fly-Fishing 101 Companion (direct program support)

Four-five day volunteer commitments
- Direct program support on our Fishing Experiences
- Minimum age of a program volunteer is 21 years old

Have a skill that you think could benefit us? Let us know!
FX Volunteer - The Basics

As a volunteer on a Fishing Experience, there are a few guidelines we ask everyone to follow to ensure that our participants have the best experience possible.

A volunteer must be a thoughtful and respectful communicator with program participants, fellow volunteers and staff. We have a preference to those who display a high-level of self-awareness, empathy, good listening skills, and a flexible, positive, service-orientation! To be clear, neither military nor fishing experience is required to be a part of the WQW Family.

Please ask questions if something remains unclear.

Be prepared! Wear your WQW issued gear and nametag during the week. Bring sunglasses, a rain jacket, and appropriate clothing for inclement weather. Waders are not required, but if you have them, please bring them along. In some cases, WQW can provide loaner gear.

All volunteers must be able to follow the provided Schedule of Events (SOE). Be on time for arrivals, meals and anything else required of you.

If the SOE has you driving somewhere – follow the route we provide. Must have a valid, state-issued drivers license and car insurance policy that meets Montana's minimum required standard of coverage.

Carry a working cellphone and communicate with your Team Leader if you have questions or concerns during the FX.
FX Volunteer - The Basics

Getting to know someone new can be awkward sometimes! It all starts with building trust. Here’s what we suggest:

• When interacting with participants, remember to be a good listener and let them guide the conversation. If they are quiet or don’t want to talk about their military experience, that’s okay.

• Please avoid discussing politics on a Fishing Experience. If it seems like the conversation is headed in that direction or toward a negative topic in general, do your best to steer it in another way.

• WQW’s programs are rooted in empowering participants, promoting independence, and building confidence. If someone seems to be struggling, ask if they would like assistance, and respect them if their answer is no. They are adults and can decide for themselves. Respect a participant’s wishes unless they are potentially going to harm themselves or others.

• Please do not probe or press service members or caregivers about the details of their wounds or experiences. If a participant remains aloof or does not want to talk, they may just need personal space and time to adjust to surroundings. Trust that each participant needs the WQW experience. Remember, all warriors have been thoroughly vetted by WQW’s Program Team.
Our **warriors** are ordinary people who have seen and done extraordinary things.

They are not broken, and they are not victims. They are proud warriors who incurred some challenges as a result of their voluntary service.

In most cases, they just need a hand up to grow beyond these challenges and become a better version of themselves.

Like you, they need connection, engagement, meaning, and purpose.
The caregivers, spouses, and children of our warriors are also ordinary people like you who often times are the source(s) of support needed to keep their warrior afloat.

Alongside their warrior, loved ones have also made sacrifices and involving all family members in reintegration ultimately benefits the warrior. Improving the family unit is where major growth or change happens.

They often feel isolated, among other things, due to the nature of their warrior spouse, parent, or sibling. Not many kids or adults can relate to having a combat veteran or disabled person in their lives.

Like you, they need connection, engagement, meaning, self-care, and purpose.
The Moms and Dads
FX Volunteer: Moms & Dads

What’s my purpose?

Our “Moms” and “Dads” make Quiet Waters Ranch (QWR) feel like home. They instill a warm, caring presence on the FX. They also provide delicious, nutritious meals for everyone involved on the FX. They ensure meals are prepared and ready in adherence to the SOE and in coordination with volunteer leadership. During most programs, the kitchen crew works in teams of four to prepare meals throughout the week. We generally have a “Head Mom” to keep the team in sync and meals on time.

Where and when?

- Almost all programs are based out of Quiet Waters Ranch.
- Requires availability Monday – Friday for all breakfasts, dinners, and an occasional lunch.
- This is a physically demanding job. Must be comfortable standing for long periods of time.

What should I know if I fill this role?

- Moms and Dads ensure everyone feels welcome and comfortable during their stay at QWR. You must be adaptable and flexible. The tone set in the kitchen permeates through the entire group. If the moms and dads are stressed, the group is stressed.
- Meal planning and food preparation is for a minimum of nine meals for between 15-30 people.
- You don’t have to be an expert cook to fill this role. As long as you can follow a recipe, chop a vegetable or wash some dishes you’ll be successful. Being in the kitchen is a team effort – a fun one too!
Meal planning 101

In collaboration with our Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, Karen Mitchell, Moms have the unique opportunity to give our participants a chance to “try on” new awareness and self-care concepts and understand how to care for their specific needs. So, grab your favorite recipes, and check out our tips below to ensure we are providing a well-rounded meal.

Building a strong foundation through food choices

- Balance every meal and snack with fiber, fat, and protein.
- Vegetables are a must at every meal.
- Plan for options that are gluten, dairy, and sugar free at each meal. These are popular restrictions that are requested on almost every FX.
- Be flexible! Everyone’s needs are different with food allergies and preferences.

Why is nutrition important to us?

These guidelines will provide you with some base level nutrition support for common veteran health concerns. Some of these concerns include sleep, traumatic brain injuries, declining gut health with food sensitivities, chronic pain, difficulties with blood sugar regulation, and overall interest in weight stability or loss. As a mom, you’re giving our warriors examples of what they can make in the kitchen when they go home.
The Companions
FX Volunteer Roles: Companions

What’s my purpose?

As a companion your number one goal is to be a friend to your participant. Each Companion is paired with a participant for the week to provide support and camaraderie. You’re there to lend a hand or ear and contribute to a positive, safe environment for all, while the professional guides teach the participant the basics of fly-fishing.

Where and when?

• Most operations will be based out of Quiet Waters Ranch. We go to various fishing locations including, and not limited to, the Gallatin, Madison, and Paradise Valleys, depending on conditions.
• Requires availability 8AM-8PM, Tuesday - Thursday, with a 1-hour volunteer training on Monday.

What should I know if I fill this role?

• Minimum of 21 years of age. Exceptions will be considered for the right candidates.
• This can be a physically demanding job. Must be confident walking long distances on uneven terrain, getting in and out of a drift boat on moving water, helping a warrior navigate terrain if necessary, or possibly physically assisting a warrior with severe disabilities.

“The Companion is the conduit to civilian life.” – SGT Michael MacLeod
The Team Leaders
FX Volunteer Roles: Team Leaders

What’s my purpose?
The Team Leader (TL) and Assistant Team Leader (ATL) help to make sure the FX runs smoothly. They also work closely with the Volunteer Lead and the Program Team to execute a successful Fishing Experience. They provide thoughtful oversight of participant, volunteer, guide, and schedule logistics.

Where and when?
• Most operations will be based out of Quiet Waters Ranch. We go to various fishing locations including and not limited to the Gallatin, Madison, and Paradise Valleys, depending on conditions!
• Requires availability Monday–Friday, with staying at the ranch overnight preferred.
• There are responsibilities for the TL/ATL prior to and after the FX to ensure all needs of the FX have been met.

The Team Leaders are vital to the seamless flow of our Fishing Experiences.

What should I know if I fill this role?
• You should have prior experience as a WQW volunteer to be a TL/ATL.
• Excellent communication and leadership skills are required.
• Must have a calm and steady demeanor. The TL/ATL poise sets the tone for everyone else on the FX.
• Must be able to predict and respond to the logistical needs of program participants and volunteers as it relates to physical comfort, transportation, and Montana’s unpredictable elements, keeping safety at the forefront of every decision.
The FF101 Companions
FX Volunteer Roles: FF101 Companions

What’s my purpose?

The Fly-Fishing 101 Companion role is a one-day commitment for our Couples FX, or other FXs, where Companions are not apart of the whole week. They are there to support a participant’s experience while gaining a refresher on fly-fishing. This is the one position where it is helpful to be knowledgeable about fly-fishing in order to help with any questions the participant may have. In a way, they serve as an extra hand to the professional guide.

Where and when?

- Fly Fishing 101 is located at a private pond located in Gallatin or Paradise Valley. Location varies by FX.
- Requires availability 8AM-5PM for one day (generally Tuesdays).

What should I know if I fill this role?

- Assist warrior with knots, basic fishing techniques, fly selection, casting, and landing fish. Ensure proper catch and release technique.
- Bring tippet, strike indicators, hemostats/nippers, weights and a long-handled landing net.
- Must keep safety at the forefront of your mind and the warrior experience.

“The Companion is the conduit to civilian life.” – SGT Michael MacLeod
FX Volunteer – Performance & Safety

• Just as we hope you will provide us with feedback in an effort to continually improve the volunteer and participant experience, we ask that all volunteers remain open to coaching.

Coaching will be provided leading up to, during, and after your volunteer experience to ensure continued growth and the best experience possible for all. Team Leaders and Assistant Team Leaders complete a formal written performance evaluation of each volunteer at the end of an FX.

• Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation’s Volunteer Lead evaluates the interests, skills, and abilities of all volunteers and assign appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. There are limited opportunities for volunteers under age 21 on a Fishing Experience. Volunteers under 18 must present a waiver of liability form signed by a parent or legal guardian and must be accompanied by an adult when volunteering for WQW. There is no maximum age for WQW volunteers.

Staff and volunteers share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. WQW will make every effort to ensure a safe work environment to comply with federal, state and local safety regulations. In turn, we ask volunteers to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all activities. You are asked to report any unsafe conditions to your Team Leader or WQW staff immediately. Any accident which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to the Team Leader or Fishing Operations Manager (whoever is available first).

Fly fishing has inherent risks, from unpredictable Montana elements, to moving water, drift boats, and remote fishing locations.

Use of hand-held communication devices is prohibited while driving. This includes texting.
How to Become a Volunteer

Step 1: Read this handbook (you’re almost done).

Step 2: Visit warriorsandquietwaters.org/volunteer to submit a Volunteer Application.

Step 3: Schedule and attend a volunteer interview.

Step 4: Agree to the information and policies outlined in the WQW handbook.

Step 5: Complete the provided online PsychArmor training prior to your volunteer experience. The Volunteer Lead will share a link and list of required courses. PsychArmor is a free on-line resource that provides education and support for all Americans who work with, live with, or care for military service members, veterans, and their families.

Step 6: Volunteer! Volunteer service will be scheduled with the Volunteer Lead.
Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to reapply if I’ve volunteered in the past?
No, just send an email to volunteers@wqwf.org letting us know you are interested.

I’ve been placed as volunteer; when do I get more information?
You will get more information about your time volunteering about a month from the start date of your FX.

Do I get to choose what volunteer role I fill on an FX?
We will do our best to place you in the role you feel you're best suited for, but please understand that in some cases we may ask you to fill a different role.
WARRIORS and QUIET WATERS FOUNDATION

Thanks, You!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation to serve our nations warriors and their loved ones.

For more history, events and details about WQW, you can visit our website.

To take a look at what an FX is like, check out Sgt. Mac’s photos. If you want to hear some testimonials from others who have volunteered, check out what Peter or Liz had to say about their time on an FX!