Water Work
NCA Water Rescue Work Information

http://www.ncanewfs.org/working/water/index.htm

Water Work is an intentional activity that focuses on the teamwork between handler and dog for aiding and rescuing in the water. Group training is a means to facilitate this activity by providing the resources, techniques, challenges, and opportunities not available for individual training. Testing for Water Work is a means to gauge the knowledge, performance, and achievements of the teamwork between both handler and dog. The ultimate goal of our group is that every team experiences progressive and successful skills. Therefore, everyone needs to be familiar with NCA test exercises, rules, regulations, and equipment in order to properly assist and support the main function and focus of Water Work. While the group trainings are based around specific exercises, it is not limited to only these or the execution of them, and a variety of ways and exercises are always available for individual needs and abilities. This is what group training is all about...respect, support, and assist.

The link above will take you to the main page of NCA Working Dog Water Work where you'll find detailed descriptions, information, and resources for Water Rescue Work.
We want group practice to be an enjoyable and productive experience, and use our time together efficiently. Although many are already familiar with the group training process, we also happily have new members joining us each season. Therefore, the following description of a typical training day is a guide for what to expect and how to plan accordingly:

- Upon arrival set up your crate, equipment, dog, and change clothes if needed. Please help unload boat. Get your dog wet before going into crate, if desired. Always use a collar and leash. Take potty breaks as needed, and do your best to keep dogs from going potty on beach practice area.

- Each team trains individually. Teams training for an upcoming test will have training time and order priority, especially as the test date gets closer, but individual needs are always considered. Training time per team will vary for each dog and exercise. When training your dog, please be thoughtful of your time to allow everyone to get adequate training time too.

- Have an idea about what you would like to work on, and any specific functions or commands you prefer to use. Please ask for suggestions if you aren’t sure or don’t know, we are all there to assist.

- Practice is generally 2-3 hours, or if park gets busy. If you need to leave at a certain time, let the group know, and we can plan accordingly. Otherwise, please stay for clean up and to load boat. Free swim is available after practice but the same rules always apply: collar, leash, controlled dog, poop pickup, respect park patrons.

- Wear appropriate clothes and shoes for water. A change of dry clothes and towel is suggested. You will get wet, some days and exercises more than others. The only weather we do not practice in is thunder and lightning!

- Lifejacket is required. Wearing a lifejacket is necessary when swimming with or being pulled by a dog, and needed for boat. If you don't already have your own, Horseshoe Lake Park does provide loaners, but no guarantee or many size choices.

- Bring water and a snack for yourself. Although this is an enjoyable and fun activity, it is water WORK, and can sometimes be more mentally, than physically, exhausting. Although our dogs get to rest, we are going and learning the whole time. So if you feel overwhelmed or start getting frustrated, please take a break!

- Bring your dogs water equipment, which may just be a bumper and/or toy. If you have more than one of each, even better. Try to designate this equipment for water work only.

- Having treats available is recommended, especially for dogs learning a new skill.

- Many exercises require "callers" (those calling the dog) and boat rowers. Learning by observation is the best way to know how to call and where to position the boat. Please pay particular attention during these activities. If you don’t know how or it’s been awhile since you’ve rowed a boat, let us know prior to someone's training time.

- HAVE A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR! This is supposed to be fun! So smile and enjoy the process, laugh and learn from mistakes!

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." Dr. Suess