

# The Nature Conservancy

Ohio



## Volunteer Handbook



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## WELCOME

Welcome to The Nature Conservancy in Ohio volunteer program! The Nature Conservancy is a global organization with more than 120 million acres conserved worldwide and more than 60,000 acres protected across Ohio. Volunteers are essential to our fulfilling our mission of protecting the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our priority is a world where people and nature thrive. We work to meet this ambitious goal by focusing on these key areas of conservation:

- Tackle Climate Change
- Protect Land & Water
- Provide Food & Water Sustainably
- Build Healthy Cities

Conservation of biological diversity requires us to place a high value on preserving the greatest number of native species and components of a given biological region. We manage preserves for specific biological communities, for rare plants and animals, and for the structure and function of an intact ecological system. We also manage them simply as places for people to enjoy!

As a volunteer, your contributions, dedication, and commitment are vital to our work. Each volunteer opportunity, although different, contributes an important part to the organization. This Volunteer Handbook will introduce you to The Nature Conservancy in Ohio, its mission, history, guidelines, and policies. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the handbook. This is a valuable resource and will assist you in your volunteer duties.

Benefits of volunteering with The Nature Conservancy in Ohio include:

- New friends and fellowship with others who deeply value nature
- Exercise for the mind, body, and soul
- Special training and skills, including land management techniques and knowledge of flora, fauna, and habitat types
- Annual appreciation event and other volunteer activities
- Knowing that you are helping restore much-needed wildlife habitat
- Helping others to learn about and treasure the natural world and all its creatures

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to give you a basic understanding of what The Nature Conservancy in Ohio's volunteer program encompasses. Thank you for helping us to accomplish our mission!

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND POSITIONS**

A detailed listing of the volunteer position descriptions and opportunities for each region can be located in Appendix A. There is a diversity of volunteer opportunities available across the state that can suit a variety of volunteer interests and levels of expertise.

### **STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEERS**

Stewardship volunteers get off the beaten track at TNC preserves, often developing a strong attachment to these places. Stewardship projects are scheduled typically on weekends and occasionally weekdays throughout the year at the various preserves around the state. The following are work activities that volunteer stewards may engage in:

- Invasive species control
- Seed collection
- Trail maintenance
- Preserve monitoring
- Trash pickup
- Prescribed burn activities
- Boardwalk construction and repair
- Fence construction and maintenance
- Carpentry

### **OFFICE STEWARDS**

Office stewards help us do more with less through a donation of time and talents. Office stewards tackle numerous office tasks, allowing staff to focus on other important conservation and program development objectives. Our office needs are diverse and everchanging. The Volunteer Coordinator matches individual tasks and projects with the talents, skills, and available time of the individual office stewards. Following are possible work activities that office stewards may engage in:

- Large mailings
- Data entry
- Research and writing
- Proofreading and editing
- Organizing information and equipment

### **STAFF VOLUNTEERS**

Staff volunteers have a regular commitment in their region and are seen as representatives of The Nature Conservancy in Ohio. They may lead, manage, or direct others in various activities, work with or around youth, and/or attend community outreach events. Following are possible work activities that staff volunteers may engage in:

- Organize and lead volunteer stewardship workdays at a preserve or educational programming activities
- Represent TNC at a community event
- Coordinate and lead hikes or field trips at preserves



## WHEN YOU ARE READY TO VOLUNTEER

### Step 1 – Application

To register as a volunteer, go online at [www.tnc.org/ohio/volunteer](http://www.tnc.org/ohio/volunteer) and fill out the volunteer application form, which is also available in Appendix B. On the application form, let us know about your interests, skills, and other information about your abilities. Applicants under the age of 13 are prohibited from filling out this application but can attend appropriate volunteer events with a parent or guardian.

Applicants under the age of 18 will require parental consent, liability waivers, and other paperwork as necessary.

### Step 2 – Project Dates and Sign-up

**Preserve Projects:** Each quarter's outdoor volunteer projects are posted online ([www.nature.org/ohio](http://www.nature.org/ohio)). To sign up, send an email to the current volunteer coordinator or call 614-717-2770 ext. 144, indicating the date, preserve, and project for which you would like to sign up.

What to expect when you sign up for an outdoor workday project: Each project is run by TNC staff or by a volunteer crew chief. You will receive an email no later than the Thursday before the project giving details about the upcoming project, how to be prepared, and who to contact if you need information or assistance on the workday. Sometimes we have to change our plans with little advance notice due to weather or unforeseen circumstances. We will try to inform you of plan changes as soon as possible. In return, we ask that you notify us as soon as possible if you cannot make it to a project for which you are scheduled, so that we do not wait needlessly at the preserve site for you.

**Office Projects:** We do not publish a list of office volunteer projects. The volunteer coordinator will use the information on the volunteer application form and from an interview with you to match your interests and skills to projects. Our office space is limited during the working hours, so we may not be able to accommodate as many volunteers as we have projects. Some projects may be accomplished at home, and the volunteer coordinator can help to arrange this.

**Staff Volunteer Projects:** If you are interested in becoming a staff volunteer leading events or programming on behalf of The Nature Conservancy, please contact the current volunteer coordinator at 614-717-2770 ext. 144 to discuss your interests, regional opportunities, and required paperwork/trainings.

### Step 3 – Documenting Volunteer Hours

The gift of your time helps us to protect and transform our natural areas that inspire meaningful connections between people and nature. This record of your time spent volunteering with us is useful in many ways. We need to know what volunteers do so that we can fully recognize your contribution. In addition, many funding organizations require documentation of volunteer support when they consider grants to The Nature Conservancy. By keeping careful records, you can help garner financial support for our conservation mission. Besides, we want to let you know how much we appreciate you, and your documented hours make sure we don't forget!

How to: Volunteers may document their hours by reporting them via email to the volunteer coordinator, traditional mail using the appropriate documentation form provided in Appendix D, or by filling out the appropriate information on the hour documentation form on the day of a group volunteer stewardship event. Volunteer hours should be submitted in a timely manner, on a quarterly basis, and/or upon request by the volunteer coordinator.

## **Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct**

The Nature Conservancy is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards in all of its operations. As a volunteer, you reflect the ideals of our organization and we know that you will represent us well. Following is a quick guide to help you understand what we expect from our volunteers. Training is available for volunteers at [ConservationTraining.org](http://ConservationTraining.org). Full policy statements on Conflicts of Interest, Diversity, Sexual Harassment, Drug-Free Work Place, and Protection and Use of Confidential Information and Youth Safety are available upon request. You will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to adhere to these policies and procedures. Thank you for all you do to continue to build The Nature Conservancy's reputation and to ensure that we do our work legally and ethically with integrity at all times.

### **Work Ethics**

- Be respectful of The Nature Conservancy, our mission, property, employees, volunteers, and visitors.
- Be on time. Please call ahead if you are going to be late. If you must cancel a scheduled volunteer activity, please contact a Conservancy representative as soon as possible.
- Keep confidential any sensitive information you learn during your volunteer assignment.
- Be properly dressed for scheduled activities.
- Use the property and equipment of The Nature Conservancy properly. They should be used for business-related purposes only and maintained adequately.
- Be drug and alcohol-free when volunteering, do not engage in unlawful behavior, and encourage others to follow your example.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The Nature Conservancy will not condone or permit sexual harassment in the workplace. All members of the workforce, including volunteers, are required to abide by this policy.

### **Ohio Inclusivity Statement**

The Nature Conservancy has a strong and abiding commitment to diversity in its workforce and in the people and groups with which it works. We are committed to a workplace in which all are welcomed, respected, supported, and appreciated. The differences and experiences of all who work or visit here are valued. Respect is shown not just in our words, but in our actions.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Volunteers must refrain from engaging in any transaction in which personal interests conflict, potentially conflict, or appear to conflict with those of The Nature Conservancy. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when you are in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for yourself or for a relative as a result of The Nature Conservancy's business dealings.

### **Photography Release**

At times, The Nature Conservancy staff and/or representatives take photographs of outdoor work projects, hikes, outdoor education classes, or special events. These photos are occasionally used for Conservancy publications, presentations, or other media-related purposes. As volunteers may often be included in these photos, we would like your permission to use photographs in which you might appear, and the consent for and release of photography is included on the general volunteer application and within all volunteer agreements and liability waivers.

### **Safety Concerns**

The Nature Conservancy takes the safety of our volunteers very seriously. For this reason, volunteers receive various types of safety training, including the proper use of certain tools, identification of potential hazards, and what to do in case of an emergency. Working on open space preserves entails potential exposure to adverse weather, biting and stinging insects, animals or plants, weather-related illnesses, and other injuries associated with work in rugged areas. Some preserves have rugged terrain and are remote. These risks are a natural part of open space, and as a volunteer you must be aware of, and be willing to accept, these risks. Additional items related to safety at our preserves can be located in the Ohio-specific field safety manual (available upon request). Hazards related to volunteering in the office setting includes but is not limited to: papercuts, misspellings, increased time in front of electronic screens, and lifting or stacking of boxes/materials >10lbs.

You will be asked to sign appropriate releases of liability (Appendix E) as a part of The Nature Conservancy's prudent risk management practices. Some of your activities as a volunteer could also demand a higher level of physical fitness. While we do nothing to limit your opportunities, you must select your activities responsibly and only assume tasks for which you are physically fit. For example, if you choose to become a trail patrol member and have limited hiking experience, don't patrol the remote areas of any preserve. As a volunteer, your safety as well as the safety of others must be of the highest priority, as it is for all who work for the Nature Conservancy.

While serving as a volunteer, you are responsible for your actions with respect to the property, safety, and well-being of all members of the public involved in your activities. Please observe and follow all safety precautions; wear and use proper equipment; and follow procedures. Be especially careful around equipment. All accidents and injuries must be reported to a Conservancy representative immediately. No injury is too small to be reported. Be familiar with the safety precautions appropriate to the job you'll be



doing and the instructions given to you during training. It is your responsibility to ask questions when unsure of anything. No question about safety is too insignificant to ask.

### **Youth Safety**

Helping children explore nature and all it has to offer is an important and rewarding part of our conservation efforts. Inspiring the next generation starts with ensuring their safety and well-being when they are with us. Given this important obligation, we want every young person with whom we come into contact to have a positive and rewarding experience. With this in mind, we want our staff and volunteers to have clear and consistent practices for working with children. We have created an extensive Youth Safety Program to make your relationship with The Nature Conservancy safe and enjoyable. As such, we have a commitment to youth safety that can be found in Appendix F.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Volunteer Position Descriptions

Appendix B: Volunteer Application

Appendix C: Staff Volunteer Application

Appendix D: Volunteer Time Documentation

Appendix E: Volunteer registration and release of liability

Appendix F: Commitment to Youth Safety

Appendix G: Agreement to follow guidelines for appropriate conduct

## Appendix A: Volunteer Position Descriptions

### **Preserve Stewardship Positions:**

#### **1. Preserve Carpentry, Construction, and Maintenance**

##### **Locations:**

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Herrick Fen Preserve (Streetsboro)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Lucia Nash Preserve (Burton)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Big Darby Headwaters Preserve (East Liberty)**
- **Central Ohio- Browns Lake Bog (Shreve)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** We need you to help make our preserves the best that they can be. It is often difficult for us to raise funds for general maintenance and repairs of TNC equipment, vehicles, and buildings. We know our volunteers are fountains of untapped knowledge, skills, and abilities. Some handyman might find they can help us by fixing things and helping us to keep facilities operational. We are looking for someone who feels comfortable getting an explanation of a problem from the Preserves Manager and then working independently to fix it.

- **Time Commitment:** As needed
- **Number of Volunteers Needed:** As many as possible!
- **Hazards:** varied
- **Training required?:** Skills in trades such as carpentry, construction, vehicle and equipment repair, welding, plumbing, electrical, etc. are desired.

#### **2. Tend Native Plant Welcome Garden**

##### **Locations:**

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** Our native plant welcome garden will be the first thing that people see when visiting the Grand River Conservation Campus, Kitty Todd, and Edge of Appalachia Preserves. It is therefore important that we find dedicated volunteers who will ensure that it appears neat and well-kept at all times, so that visitors have a favorable first impression. This garden will serve as an educational tool to help preserve visitors learn to identify and appreciate the diversity of plants that exists in the region. This position requires volunteers to stoop, kneel, and get dirty while removing weeds from the gardens and transplanting native plants between beds.

- **Time Commitment:** 2 hours/week, April - October
- **Number of Volunteers Needed:** 2 - 3 at each location
- **Hazards:** Extreme weather conditions, potential exposure to biting insects
- **Training required?:** Native Plant identification and gardening skills preferred

### 3. **Preserve(s) Monitors**

**Locations:**

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Herrick Fen Preserve (Streetsboro)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Lucia Nash Preserve (Burton)**
- **Coastal Ohio- Great Egret Marsh (Lakeside Marblehead)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Big Darby Headwaters Preserve (East Liberty)**
- **Central Ohio- Browns Lake Bog (Shreve)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** The Nature Conservancy's preserves protect some of the most rare and wonderful flora and fauna in Ohio, and we need you to help monitor and take care of them. Without people helping to keep a watchful eye, the preserves are especially vulnerable to issues such as signs of trespass. It is helpful if Preserve Monitors have the ability to take photos of potential problems and to access email, use text messaging, and access other forms of communication to discuss issues with the Preserves Manager. Phone calls also work!

- **Time Commitment:** Though Preserve Monitors are needed as often as once a week at some preserves, any commitment of time is appreciated.
- **Number of volunteers needed:** As many as possible!
- **Hazards:** Poison ivy/sumac, possible exposure to stinging insects, uneven terrain
- **Training required?:** Yes, discussion with TNC staff to review situation response procedures.

### 4. **Preserve Stewards**

**Locations:**

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Herrick Fen Preserve (Streetsboro)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Lucia Nash Preserve (Burton)**
- **Coastal Ohio- Great Egret Marsh (Lakeside Marblehead)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Big Darby Headwaters Preserve (East Liberty)**
- **Central Ohio- Browns Lake Bog (Shreve)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** Preserve Stewards provide support to the Preserves Manager by protecting and maintaining some of the most rare and wonderful flora and fauna in Ohio. It is necessary to ensure that our preserves are well-maintained and free from problems such as litter, vandalism, and invasive species, both so that they can be a source of pride for the community and to protect rare plants and animals. Preserve Stewards may choose to focus on maintenance activities such as picking up trash and/or helping with the ecological management of the preserve by removing invasive or planting native species. You can even “Adopt” an area at your local preserve and help us maintain it through time! This position requires volunteers to work alongside TNC staff, other volunteers, or alone (once trained) to control invasive plant species. It may require lifting of some heavy objects, safe/proper use of herbicide, and hiking over unimproved ground. Preserve Stewards need to have the ability to communicate via email, text message, and other forms of communication.

- **Time commitment:** Preserve stewards will attend weekend and weekday events as they are scheduled and available but often visit preserves at least once a month, however any commitment of time is appreciated.
- **Number of volunteers needed:** As many as possible!
- **Hazards:** sharp objects, falling limbs, uneven terrain, possible exposure to insects and poison ivy/sumac
- **Training required?:** Yes. Valid driver’s license a plus.

## 5. Mowing Steward

### Locations:

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Herrick Fen Preserve (Streetsboro)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Lucia Nash Preserve (Burton)**
- **Coastal Ohio- Great Egret Marsh (Lakeside Marblehead)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Big Darby Headwaters Preserve (East Liberty)**
- **Central Ohio- Browns Lake Bog (Shreve)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** Visiting TNC Ohio preserves is often the first experience people have with our organization. It is therefore important that we have dedicated volunteers who take pride in knowing that they help make them appear neat and well-kept so that visitors and potential donors will experience a favorable first impression. Parts of the open preserves are mowed to provide a park-like setting for visitors and to maintain trail access. TNC will provide a tractor with a mower attachment or a riding mower. This position should not be very physically demanding, but it requires being outdoors in the direct sunlight.

- **Time Commitment:** Approx. 3 - 4 hours every other week from April - September
- **Number of Volunteers Needed:** 2 to 4
- **Hazards:** Sunlight, potential exposure to bees, equipment noise, uneven terrain
- **Training required?:** Yes, safe tractor/riding mower operation



## Office Steward Positions

### Locations:

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Chapter Main Office (Dublin)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** Office stewards help us do more with less through a donation of time and talents. Office stewards tackle numerous office tasks, thereby allowing the staff to focus on other important conservation and program development objectives. Our office needs are diverse and ever-changing and often include helping write newsletters, marketing materials, assisting with social media posts, scholarly and internet-based research, data entry, assisting with mailings, outreach to local organizations, creating maps, database management, and much more!! The Volunteer Coordinator matches individual tasks and projects with the talents, skills, and available time of the individual office stewards.

- **Time Commitment:** Variable and depending on project
- **Number of Volunteers Needed:** 2 to 4
- **Hazards:** papercuts, misspellings, increased time in front of electronic screens
- **Training required:** Project-dependent

## Staff Volunteer Positions

### 1. Team Nature Center Volunteers

**Location:** Northeast Ohio- Dr. James K. Bissell Nature Center

**Description:** Team Nature Center is a group of staff volunteers who have taken on the responsibility of running the Dr. James K. Bissell Nature Center located at the Grand River Conservation Campus at the Conservancy's Morgan Swamp Preserve in Ashtabula County. The Dr. James K. Bissell Nature Center offers educational opportunities to the public including workshops, guided hikes, natural history presentations, and more. The Nature Center also offers K-12 curricula designed to support state educational standards.

Team Nature Center volunteers will aid in the planning, development, and implementation of:

- Exhibits, displays, and interactive educational materials
- Educational programs
- Interpretive hikes
- Outreach and promotional materials
- Staffing the Nature Center
- Native Garden
- Administrative/office duties such as scheduling, filing, and data management

**Time commitment:** Nature Center Volunteers will attend monthly group meetings in addition to individual committee meetings, and lead or assist with events and programming as they are scheduled and available, however any commitment of time is appreciated.

**Number of volunteers needed:** As many as possible!

**Hazards:** use of power tools

**Training required?:** Yes, training will be provided for Team Nature Center Volunteers.

## 2. Preserve Volunteer Crew Chief

### Locations:

- **Northeast Ohio- Grand River Conservation Campus (Rock Creek)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Herrick Fen Preserve (Streetsboro)**
- **Northeast Ohio- Lucia Nash Preserve (Burton)**
- **Coastal Ohio- Great Egret Marsh (Lakeside Marblehead)**
- **Northwest Ohio- Kitty Todd Preserve (Swanton)**
- **Central Ohio- Big Darby Headwaters Preserve (East Liberty)**
- **Central Ohio- Browns Lake Bog (Shreve)**
- **Southern Ohio- Edge of Appalachia Preserve (West Union)**

**Description:** Crew Chiefs provide support to the Preserves Manager by leading volunteers on projects focused on protecting and maintaining our preserves. Crew Chiefs may choose to focus on maintenance activities such as picking up trash, leading hikes, conducting surveys, attending outreach events, and/or helping with the ecological management of the preserve by removing invasive species, or conduct projects that include many of these tasks at once. This position requires the ability to identify common native and invasive species, lead and supervise volunteers of all ages on the project in a safe and effective manner, and work alongside TNC staff, other volunteers, or alone (once trained) on projects identified by staff. It may require lifting of some heavy objects, safe/proper use of herbicide, and hiking over unimproved ground. Crew Chiefs need to have the ability to communicate via email, text message, and other forms of communication.

- **Time commitment:** Ideally, Crew Chiefs will lead volunteer events at preserves at least once a month, however any commitment of time is appreciated.
- **Number of volunteers needed:** 2-5 per preserve
- **Hazards:** sharp objects, falling limbs, uneven terrain, possible exposure to insects and poison ivy/sumac
- **Training required?:** YES. Valid driver's license a plus.

## 2. Regional Outreach Volunteer

### Locations:

- **Northeast Ohio- Cleveland**
- **Northwest Ohio- Toledo**

- **Central Ohio- Columbus**
- **Southern Ohio- Cincinnati**

**Description:** Outreach volunteers provide support to our chapter by staffing tables and booths at professional conferences and community outreach events and are seen as representatives of The Nature Conservancy. This involves informing the public about TNC, sharing details about the work we do in Ohio, signing individuals up for email updates about TNC and volunteer opportunities, and working with staff to answer any follow up questions that arise from the event. Outreach volunteers need to be passionate about our mission and conservation, able to engage the public in a variety of settings, and demonstrate effective communications skills. Outreach volunteers need to have the ability to communicate via email and text message, and have availability on evenings and weekends for events.

- **Time commitment:** Variable (event specific)
- **Number of volunteers needed:** 2-5 per region
- **Hazards:** Event specific but could include adverse weather conditions.
- **Training required?:** YES. Valid driver's license needed.

**Appendix B: Volunteer Application**

**Volunteer Application**

(Please fill out completely, sign and return to the physical address above or email to [angela.burke@tnc.org](mailto:angela.burke@tnc.org))

**Personal Information**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ OH \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any health concerns or special needs we should be aware of?  Yes  No

**Preferences**

Please Indicate the type of volunteer position(s) you are interested in.

- Preserve Stewardship  Office  Staff Volunteer/Crew Chief  Outreach Volunteer

Please indicate the geographic area(s) where you are interested in volunteering.

- NW (Toledo area)  NE (Cleveland area)  Central (Columbus area)  
 SE (Athens area)  SW (Cincinnati area)  Entire State

I wish to receive emails about volunteer opportunities in Ohio  Yes  No

**Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

Please take the time to jot down a bit about yourself so that we can begin to explore the best fit for you. If you are unsure at this point simply leave blank and watch for volunteer opportunities via the email address you provided above.

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**Volunteer Release Form**

I understand that my volunteer work with The Nature Conservancy may involve difficult conditions, uneven terrain, unanticipated natural hazards, use of equipment, and/or strenuous manual labor. I undertake all activities at my own risk and agree, for myself and my heirs, to release The Nature Conservancy from any liability for injury to myself or damage to my possessions which may occur in connection with these Conservancy-related service activities.

By checking this box, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the paragraph above **(required)**.

**Confidentiality Statement**

As a volunteer for The Nature Conservancy, I acknowledge that I may have access to confidential and privileged information and materials obtained through my affiliation with The Nature Conservancy. I shall not share any such information or materials with anyone within or outside the organization not intended to receive them. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Specific locations of “closed” preserves, which might lead to unauthorized visits;
- Specific locations of rare plants or animals, which might lead to unauthorized collecting;
- Nature Conservancy financial, membership, or donor information in files, databases or mailings;
- Information about conservation planning priorities or Site Information Packets.

By checking this box, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the paragraph above **(required)**.

**Consent and Release for Publication of Photographs**

I hereby grant The Nature Conservancy permission to take photographs of me, and irrevocably consent to and authorize the use and reproduction by The Nature Conservancy, or anyone duly authorized by The Nature Conservancy, of any and all such photographs, for any legitimate purposes, including for advertising, trade, and editorial purposes, at any time in the future in all media now known or hereafter developed throughout the world. I also consent to the use of my name in connection with such photos.

I hereby release, indemnify, and hold harmless The Nature Conservancy and its officers, directors, agents, and employees from any and all claims which may result at any time by reason of the use of my image and name, including, without limitation, claims of privacy. My heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns shall be bound by this consent and release. I am over the age of 18.

By checking this box I acknowledge that I have read and understand the paragraph above (required).

**If Applicant is Under the Age of 18**

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of the above-named person. I hereby grant permission of this minor to engage in these volunteer activities. I hereby consent to the foregoing in my behalf, and on his/her behalf, relinquish and assign all rights, title and interest, if any in said photographs, and release, indemnify and hold harmless The Nature Conservancy and its officers, directors, agents, and employees from any and all claims which may result at any time by reason of their use. **Volunteers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to every project or event.** Regardless of age, all volunteers (or their parent/guardian) are required to read and sign a waiver of liability form on site before participating in field preserve management activities. **Persons under the age of 13 are prohibited from filing out this form.**

By checking this box I acknowledge that I have read and understand the paragraph above (required).

**PRINTED NAME, SIGNATURE AND DATE REQUIRED BELOW FOR ALL ABOVE PARAGRAPHS AND BOXES**

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Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date



**Appendix C: Staff Volunteer Application**

Staff Volunteer Application Form (Contact with Youth)

Leave at the front desk or mail to Angela Burke at 6375 Riverside Drive, Suite 100 Dublin, Ohio 43017

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived at this address? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday (Day and Month) \_\_\_\_\_ (must be over 18 years of age)

**The Conservancy is committed to Youth Safety and has a comprehensive Youth Safety Program. Some of these questions are pursuant to the needs of that Program. Volunteers who may have contact with Youth and are acting on the Conservancy's behalf will need to undergo a background check, an interview, reference checks, and training. Thank you for your interest and commitment to helping us ensure the safety of the Youth entrusted to us.**

**Where are you employed (or volunteering) currently?**

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**What volunteer positions interest you?**

Please indicate the type of volunteer positions you prefer: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to be a Volunteer for the Conservancy?

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Describe briefly your volunteer experience, work you have done with youth or community groups, and training you've received as part of that work or volunteering experience(s).

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List your interests and skills (for example, drama, photography, safety/wellness, animal science, horticulture, leadership, citizenship, natural resources, marine and water resources, community service, career



Because this volunteer role may involve contact with Youth, the attached form I also sign to acknowledge receipt of the **Disclosure Regarding Background Investigation for Staff Volunteers** and to authorize the Conservancy through its vendor to obtain background reports on me. I also understand that certain trainings will be required in order for me to qualify to work with youth for the Conservancy.

I understand that The Nature Conservancy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, military or veteran status, or other status protected by law in all locations where the Conservancy works and that this application will be handled in a confidential manner.

I certify that the above information is correct. I agree to inform the Conservancy of any changes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to: Angela Burke at [angela.burke@tnc.org](mailto:angela.burke@tnc.org) if able to do so electronically, or at the above listed mailing address.

**Thank you for your willingness to share your talents!**

## The Nature Conservancy in Ohio Volunteer Time Documentation Form

Volunteer Crew Chief (Print Name/Sign Name) : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Staff Certification (Print name/Sign Name) \*: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preserve : \_\_\_\_\_ Tract : \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Project # : \_\_\_\_\_ Award I.D. : \_\_\_\_\_

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Volunteer Name (print)	Activity Performed	Round-Trip Travel Time (HH:MM)	Time In (HH:MM)	Time Out (HH:MM)	Total Hours (HH:MM)	Volunteer Signature

By signing here you are certifying that the information on this form is complete and accurate.



**Appendix E: Volunteer registration and release of liability**

**VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY -  
STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**

**Preserve, County, State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Volunteer Activities:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Crew Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Volunteer Stewardship Activities:**

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In consideration of my participation as a volunteer member of a work crew of The Nature Conservancy ("Conservancy") performing stewardship activities, I agree as follows:

1. I will follow the instructions of the crew leader, and if I have a Youth with me, I will ensure they will follow the instructions as well.
2. I understand the proper operation of the equipment I am to use. I understand that my participation in this work may involve sustained strenuous physical activity.
3. I am in good health and I am aware of no physical problem or condition which will limit or interfere with my ability to participate as a member of the crew under either predicted or emergency conditions (and if I have a Youth with me, I make the same representation regarding their good health with no physical problem or condition to limit their ability to participate). I also understand that medical attention may not be readily available.
4. I understand that the stewardship activities may involve dangerous activities or situations. I agree that I (and any Youth with me) am participating on the crew at my (our) own risk, and acknowledge that the Conservancy has made no warranty or representation, express or implied, regarding the safety of conducting this work for the Conservancy.
5. I understand that I am not an employee of the Conservancy and that I will receive no compensation or other employment-related benefits from the Conservancy (nor will any Youth with me).
6. On behalf of myself, my heirs, successors and assigns, I hereby forever release, indemnify and hold the Conservancy, its officers, directors, employees and agents, harmless from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses arising from or in any way related to, my service as a volunteer. I intend this release to be effective, regardless of whether the claim of liability is asserted in negligence, strict liability in tort, or other theory of recovery.



7. As a volunteer for the Conservancy, I acknowledge that I may have access to confidential and privileged information and materials obtained through my affiliation with the Conservancy. I shall not share any such information or materials with anyone within or outside the organization not intended to receive them. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Specific location of “closed” preserves, which might lead to unauthorized visits;
  - Specific location of rare plants or animals, which might lead to unauthorized collecting;
  - Information about conservation planning priorities.
8. I grant the Conservancy permission to take photographs and video recordings of me (and my child) and to display, publish, or otherwise use any photographs, video recording, or any other media associated with the activity, including any media which contains my (and my child’s) image or likeness, for the Conservancy’s purposes. I also consent to the use of my (and my child’s) name in connection with such images. I release, indemnify, and hold harmless the Conservancy and its officers, directors, agents and employees from any and all claims which may result at any time by reason of the use of my (and my child’s) image and name, including, without limitation, claims of privacy. My (child,) heirs, executors, administrators and assigns shall be bound by this consent and release.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and understand this form and that the statements I have made in it are all true, and that I am at least 18 years of age or, if I am not 18 years of age, the signature and consent of my parent or legal guardian is included below.

Please note: your own health insurance will be primary in the event of an injury. The Conservancy has an insurance policy that can provide secondary coverage if applicable.

Volunteer’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer’s Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgment by Crew Leader**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly reviewed this form with the volunteer named above.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Crew Leader

Date

**PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION BY MINORS (under the age of 18 years of age)**

I am the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ who has my permission to participate in the volunteer stewardship activities described above. I make all of the representations and agree to all of the terms specified above with respect to this Youth’s participation in these activities.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY -  
STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
WITH HERBIBICIDE APPLICATION**

**Preserve, County, State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Volunteer Activities:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Crew Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Volunteer Stewardship Activities:**

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In consideration of my participation as a volunteer member of a work crew of The Nature Conservancy ("Conservancy") performing stewardship activities, I agree as follows:

1. I will follow the instructions of the crew leader.
2. I understand the proper operation of the equipment I am to use. I understand that my participation in this work may involve sustained strenuous physical activity.
3. I am familiar with and understand the proper techniques for use of the chemicals described above in a safe and effective way. I understand that I will be applying those chemical and I am aware of any health risks associated with the use of these chemicals. I agree to take proper precautions in using these chemicals to minimize the health risks to myself and others. Following application, I agree to store or dispose of any remaining chemicals in accordance with the directions of the Conservancy and any applicable laws and regulations.
4. I am in good health and I am aware of no physical problem or condition which will limit or interfere with my ability to participate as a member of the crew under either predicted or emergency conditions. I also understand that medical attention may not be readily available.
5. I understand that the stewardship activities may involve dangerous activities or situations. I agree that I am participating on the crew at my own risk, and acknowledge that the Conservancy has made no warranty or representation, express or implied, regarding the safety of conducting this work for the Conservancy.
6. I understand that I am not an employee of the Conservancy and that I will receive no compensation or other employment-related benefits from the Conservancy.
7. On behalf of myself, my heirs, successors and assigns, I hereby forever release, indemnify and hold the Conservancy, its officers, directors, employees and agents, harmless from and against any and all claims,

liabilities, losses, damages, costs and expenses arising from or in any way related to, my service as a volunteer. I intend this release to be effective, regardless of whether the claim of liability is asserted in negligence, strict liability in tort, or other theory of recovery.

8. As a volunteer for the Conservancy, I acknowledge that I may have access to confidential and privileged information and materials obtained through my affiliation with the Conservancy. I shall not share any such information or materials with anyone within or outside the organization not intended to receive them. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Specific location of “closed” preserves, which might lead to unauthorized visits;
  - Specific location of rare plants or animals, which might lead to unauthorized collecting;
  - Information about conservation planning priorities.
9. I grant the Conservancy permission to take photographs and video recordings of me and to display, publish or otherwise use any photographs, video recording, or any other media associated with the stewardship activities, including any media which contains my image or likeness, for the Conservancy’s purposes. I also consent to the use of my name in connection with such images. I release, indemnify and hold harmless the Conservancy and its officers, directors, agents and employees from any and all claims which may result at any time by reason of the use of my image and name, including, without limitation, claims of privacy. My heirs, executors, administrators and assigns shall be bound by this consent and release.
10. By signing below, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and understand this form and that the statements I have made in it are all true, and that I am at least 18 years of age or, if I am not 18 years of age, the signature and consent of my parent or legal guardian is included below.

Please note: The Conservancy provides secondary insurance coverage to **supplement** your own health insurance in the event of injury. If you would like more information about our policy, please ask for a pamphlet.

Volunteer’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer’s Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgment by Crew Leader**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly reviewed this form with the volunteer named above.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Crew Leader

Date

Appendix F: Commitment to Youth Safety

# Youth Safety at The Nature Conservancy

Helping children explore nature and all it has to offer is an important and rewarding part of TNC's conservation efforts.

Inspiring the next generation starts with ensuring their safety and wellbeing when they are with us. We want every young person we come into contact with to have a positive and rewarding experience.

Given this important obligation, we want our staff and volunteers to have clear and consistent practices for working with children. We have created an extensive Youth Safety Program and we need you (and your children) to help us make your relationship with The Nature Conservancy safe and enjoyable.

All staff and volunteers who work with Youth must sign and commit to our Commitment to Youth Safety (see reverse). In addition, there are rules for interacting and communicating with Youth that they must follow.

**Off-Site Contact:**

Sometimes our staff and volunteers will be interacting with your children away from Conservancy property. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Appropriate Off-Site Contact	INAPPROPRIATE Off-Site Contact
<p><i>Always with parents' permission:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking groups of Youth on an outing</li> </ul> <p>Attending activities with a group of Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending functions at a Youth's home, with parents present</li> <li>• Home visits, with parents present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking one Youth on an outing without the parents' written permission</li> <li>• Visiting one Youth in the Youth's home, without a parent present</li> <li>• Entertaining one Youth in the home of a Conservancy Employee or Staff Volunteer</li> <li>• A lone Youth spending the night with a Conservancy Employee or Staff Volunteer</li> </ul>

**Communications to and about Youth:**

Social media and other electronic forms of communication are wonderful ways of spreading our message and interacting with others. However, there are associated risks with using these forms of communication.

Communication with Youth should be <u>Open and Professional</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications should only be about Conservancy activities and mission and always comply with the Commitment to Youth Safety.</li> <li>• No private messaging between adults and Youth. Adults may never friend Youth with their private account-only TNC accounts.</li> <li>• Open social media (Twitter, Instagram and public Facebook pages) are a great way for TNC staff to communicate with Youth.</li> <li>• Any emails or texts to Youth must also have parents or another TNC staff member copied.</li> </ul>

If you ever have a concern about a TNC staff member or volunteer, or another Youth at a TNC event, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [compliance@tnc.org](mailto:compliance@tnc.org).

## COMMITMENT TO YOUTH SAFETY

I agree that, in the course of activities conducted by or on behalf of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), I will abide by the following TNC Youth Safety Commitment, and that I will:

1. Treat Youth with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and birth or other personally defining characteristics or status,
2. Plan activities with Youth to protect and enhance the highest level of safety of the Youth involved, whether or not the Youth is accompanied by parents/family,
3. Adhere to uniform standards of physical contact and other conduct as outlined in the Manual, and avoid physical contact with Youth when out of close proximity to or outside the view of other adults,
4. Avoid being alone with one Youth, and in the rare circumstances that being alone with one Youth is unavoidable, follow the guideline for One-on-One Activities in the Manual,
5. When working with a group of Youth, wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present or nearby,
6. Be sensitive to and observe boundaries with respect to language, conversation, and physical contact provided in this SOP and the Manual, following local and regional norms if these norms are more restrictive than the standards,
7. For overnight Activities With Youth, provide high levels of supervision and follow the guideline for Monitoring High Risk Activities, Overnight Activities in the Manual, and
8. Follow any program specific Youth safety guidelines and safety plans for managing boundaries and high risk Activities With Youth.

I understand that the following conduct is prohibited:

1. Hitting, physically assaulting, punishing, or abusing Youth, through the use of any actual or threatened physical contact,
2. Verbally or psychologically abusing Youth (including shaming, bullying, humiliating, belittling or degrading Youth),
3. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of Youth,
4. Giving money or a personal gift to an individual Youth (a standardized gift given to all Youth in a group or a unique award publicly given in special recognition may be permitted),
5. Commenting on or staring at Youths' bodies or being nude or inappropriately dressed in the presence of Youth, and
6. Dating or sexual activity with Youth, regardless of local age of majority or age of consent. Sexual activity is defined as any actual or threatened touching of sexual areas of the body, non-contact sexual activity (verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or electronic communications, exposure or voyeurism), or exposing Youths to sexual material. Sexual activity includes actions that result in intentional or unintentional, actual or potential, harm to Youth.

If you ever have a concern about a TNC staff member or volunteer, or another Youth at a TNC event, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [compliance@tnc.org](mailto:compliance@tnc.org).

**Appendix G: Agreement to follow guidelines for appropriate conduct**

Volunteer Agreement to Follow  
Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct

I have read the information in the Volunteer Handbook, including the Appendices, and have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the materials in the Handbook. If I have any more questions or concerns, I will let a Nature Conservancy representative know.

As a volunteer for The Nature Conservancy, I agree to follow the guidelines included in the above Work Ethics, Safety, Sexual Harassment, Diversity and Conflict of Interest and Youth Safety policies, and encourage others to do the same.

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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For office use only:

Received and verified by:

TNC Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_