



Parks and Recreation  
Department

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Volunteer Expectations.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Ethics and Standards of Trust.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Site Orientation and Training.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>A. Orientation.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>B. Training.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>C. Equipment.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>D. The Short-Term Volunteer.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Insurance and Liability.....</b>	<b>4</b>

## I. I. Welcome

Welcome to the Williamson County Parks Department (“Department”) volunteer experience. The Department manages, operates, and maintains a system of public lands in Williamson County, Texas. This public lands system includes opens space lands, green spaces, parks, trails and natural preserve lands. As with the County’s population growth, more public lands are being added to our stewardship responsibilities. An abundance of opportunities exist for you to assist us with this very important work.

What is part of being a volunteer?

We need you! Volunteers help us in almost everything we do. Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the Department’s mission of management and conservation our County’s natural resources, and in providing safe outdoor recreational opportunities. We invite you to join us as a volunteer in an assignment that suits your talents, time, and physical capabilities. Volunteering with the Department provides the opportunity to leave a legacy for future generations.

What is not part of being a volunteer?

Volunteering for the Department in no way creates an employment relationship. Williamson County Parks Department volunteers **are not** entitled to a salary, retirement or any other benefits provided to County employees. Volunteers **are not** covered by worker’s compensation. Volunteers **are not** to engage in any law enforcement activities, and cannot drive County vehicles.

The Department reserves the right to place, decline to place, reassign, or terminate the services of any volunteer. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or designated guardian at all times.

### **Williamson County Parks Department’s Mission**

To manage and operate a system of parks that will add quality to life, build community pride and spirit, promote physical fitness and self improvement, evoke an emotional and intellectual response to connections with nature, consider long term open space needs, preserve endangered species, and improve air quality.

## II. II. Volunteer Expectations

While performing assignments for the Department, all volunteers are expected to and must:

- ❖ Follow County and Department policies, procedures and guidelines; consult the Park Manager or designee for applicable information;
- ❖ Seek and accept guidance and support needed to complete assignments;
- ❖ Work as a team with direction from park staff and respect staff roles;

- ❖ Accurately record volunteer hours;
- ❖ Be dependable in completing assignments;
- ❖ Be courteous to the public, fellow volunteers, and park staff;
- ❖ Wear clothing appropriate for the location and task, including proper volunteer identification;
- ❖ Do not access or use information, facilities, equipment or County property without specific authorization from the Park Manager or designee;
- ❖ Attend applicable training sessions and required meetings;
- ❖ Provide adequate notice if you are not available to volunteer as scheduled;
- ❖ Care for County resources and be a steward for those resources;
- ❖ Follow all safety regulations and procedures;
- ❖ Immediately report any accidents, emergencies or problems with a volunteer assignment to the Park Manager or designee.

The Park Manager or designee may issue additional work rules if the situation requires.

### **III. Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Policy**

The County and Department will not tolerate sexual harassment of any employee or volunteer by another volunteer, employee, supervisor, or other person with whom the individual may have contact as part of his or her duties.

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature if:

- ❖ Submission to such conduct is an implicit or explicit term or condition of an individual's service to the County and Department;
- ❖ Submission to or rejection of such conduct as used as a basis for decisions affecting such individual; or
- ❖ The conduct has the purpose or the effect of unreasonably interfering with work performance, or the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive workplace.

Additionally, the County and Department will not tolerate harassment or discrimination due to an employee or volunteer's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability, or involvement in retaliation for complaining about or opposing such harassment or discrimination.

#### **Complaint Procedure**

For complaints regarding harassment or discrimination of any kind, please contact the Parks Director at 512.943.1920.

### **IV. Ethics and Standards of Trust**

All volunteers are expected to and must:

- ❖ Accurately and honestly complete all records maintained in the course of volunteer service; falsification of records or other County documents is prohibited.
- ❖ Accurately report or record volunteer activities as required;

- ❖ Act in a trustworthy manner. Theft from other volunteers, employees, private individuals, or the County will be grounds for immediate dismissal from volunteer service.
- ❖ Maintain ethical standards. Acceptance or solicitation of any compensation, gifts, favors, or promises from any person or organization subject to County regulatory authority or which could influence or be reasonably perceived as having an influence on the performance of duties or otherwise impact Department operations is strictly prohibited.
- ❖ Use of authority of a volunteer position as a matter of public service. Using the authority of a volunteer position for personal gain is strictly prohibited.

## **V. V. Site Orientation and Training**

Orientation is an overview of the Department and volunteer program. Training for a task or assignment is specific. Pre-assignment training will address immediate needs.

Training should prepare the volunteer for the responsibilities and expectations of the position. Ask questions. The Park Manager or designee is there to ensure your time is used effectively and efficiently in order to achieve the greatest benefit for the program or site.

### **A. Orientation**

All volunteers will be given specific instruction of what will be expected of them before their first volunteer assignment. Orientation sessions are a great way to formally welcome you as a new member to the park team and get you acquainted with the Department, program and park.

### **B. Training**

The Park Manager or designee may provide the following types of information:

- ❖ Overall view of Department, program and park for which you are volunteering;
- ❖ List of events and activities planned for the season;
- ❖ List of staff and other frequent volunteers;
- ❖ Recordkeeping forms;
- ❖ Park information;
- ❖ Whom to notify in case of illness or emergencies;
- ❖ Where volunteers report when reporting to work;
- ❖ Schedules;
- ❖ Locations of park amenities and special features.

### **C. Equipment**

Only volunteers who have training and have demonstrated competency in operations of individual pieces of non-registered, motorized equipment may operate such equipment. Volunteers under the age of 17 are not allowed to operate motorized equipment or machinery. Volunteers **will not** be allowed to operate County vehicles that are registered with the Texas Department of Vehicles for purposes of driving on public streets, roadways and highways.

#### **D. The Short-Term Volunteer**

Not all volunteer positions require formal orientation and training. For those volunteers providing specific and limited service, only a brief “introduction” to the task objectives and simple safety precautions may be necessary. Less formal training could apply to one-time projects, such as one-day events.

### **VI. VI. Insurance and Liability**

The County and the Department **does not provide** any insurance coverage (e.g. auto, accident, liability, worker’s compensation, etc.) for volunteers. Volunteers performing services for the County and Department **are not permitted** to operate County vehicles.

Volunteers may operate non-vehicle, non-registered (e.g. non-license plated), motorized equipment (e.g. utility vehicles, tractors, mowers, etc.) **if** volunteers have received training and have demonstrated competency in operations of individual pieces of non-registered, motorized equipment.