



## Volunteer FAQs

### **Do I have to volunteer for a whole day?**

We have a variety of different roles, some require a full day's commitment and others where you can come for a few hours or on an ad hoc basis. The Volunteer Role Profile gives you an idea of the typical hours which are required. If you're still not sure, feel free to ask the Volunteer Manager for more details.

### **How do you make Earth Trust volunteering inclusive?**

Our Public Programming roles offer weekend and holiday time opportunities, we have a young person's volunteering programme, and a weekend Land Management work party at Wallingford Castle Meadows. We are now looking after more community reserves than we ever have done before, and these green spaces are close to local towns/villages where a wider variety of local people can access them via public transport. We are looking at ways to offer more volunteering opportunities outside of normal working hours and to provide accessible options wherever possible.

### **What training is there for each volunteer role?**

We have 13 core volunteer roles, and they all work slightly differently. Once you are registered with us, we will put you in touch with the Staff Lead for the department/role you have chosen where they will give you role specific training.

### **Can skilled volunteers train others?**

We want to make full use of all the skills and abilities that our volunteers have and there are many areas where experienced volunteers share their knowledge with others, from gardening insight to species identification to hedgelaying and systems techniques.

If you have a skill that others might be interested in learning, please speak to your Staff Lead in the first instance so that we can take it forward, and make sure a risk assessment is produced if necessary, so that we are covered from an insurance perspective.

### **How do you train your staff to manage volunteers?**

All of the Staff Leads are part of our Volunteer Experience Team which meets on a monthly basis to discuss best practice and share experiences, enabling our staff to deliver a consistent volunteer programme. Staff attend workshops throughout the year and receive training on the management of volunteers.

### **What should I do if I am upset about something that has happened whilst volunteering?**

In the first instance please do approach your Staff Lead. If you don't think you can, the Volunteer Manager is always available to speak to, in person or over the phone, or you can email [volunteering@earthtrust.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@earthtrust.org.uk)

### **What do I do if there is an accident when I'm volunteering?**

A risk assessment and tool safety talk will take place at the start of every work party, public event or new operational task. If an accident - or near miss - does occur, please alert the session leader immediately. There will always be a first aid plan in place as well as an emergency procedure, you may be asked to fill in an accident report form.

### **I don't get the chance to meet other volunteers, how can I do this?**

We offer monthly Welcome Walks for new volunteers and members. Please get in touch with the Volunteer Manager if you would like to come to one of these. If you are in a lone volunteering role and would like to be part of a group, please speak to the Volunteer Manager. We run regular learning and development events through the year, and social events, for all our volunteers and these are an ideal chance to meet other volunteers.

### **How are you making yourself more visible at a local level?**

We have a Communications Team that is dedicated to raising the profile of the charity in the surrounding areas, regionally and nationally, using a whole range of marketing tools from social media, emails, advertising, podcasts, banners and more. Our senior staff members give regular talks at local events and are often invited to be guest speakers at conferences and seminars, all helping to raise awareness of Earth Trust. We are members of many key

regional environmental networking groups, such as Local Nature Recovery Partnership, through which we contribute our knowledge and experiences with managing local green spaces for access and nature.

### **How can volunteers have a greater say in shaping Earth Trust's direction?**

Our annual volunteer survey is a chance to feedback on Earth Trust's volunteer programme and our summer Supporters' Day event, for volunteers and members, provides an opportunity to hear from Earth Trust's leadership on the strategy and direction of the charity. When we develop new programmes or strategic projects, we make sure to consult with our volunteer community to ensure their knowledge, experience and insights are utilised. Outside of these formal routes to have a say in the charity's work, we are very pleased to receive feedback at any time on any subject, so please do speak to your session leader, or the Volunteer Manager with any thoughts or ideas.

### **How do we know we are having a positive effect on biodiversity?**

We utilise a number of established management techniques to promote a diverse habitat across our green spaces, this includes coppicing, hedgelaying and hay cutting. Our rangers also carry out annual surveying and monitoring, with the help of our volunteers, encompassing butterflies, invertebrates, wetland birds, bats, newts and more, and this data is fed into national schemes – including with partners such as UK Centre for Hydrology & Ecology - to inform UK-wide ecological actions. We are in the process of developing this area of our work to maximise our capacity for biodiversity monitoring to inform our future land management decisions.

### **Can children volunteer?**

Children aged 13 and over can volunteer via our Young Persons Programme:  
[earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/young-volunteers/](http://earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/young-volunteers/)

### **Do the Education Team do outreach?**

Yes, the team take our environment workshops out to schools – for instance with our Inspiring Future Green Leaders programme which sees our team visit schools in Reading to bring the benefits of our learning approach into the schools themselves. You can read more about this outreach work on our website: [earthtrust.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/inspiring-future-green-leaders/](http://earthtrust.org.uk/what_we_do/inspiring-future-green-leaders/)

At holiday times, we run our Earth Explorers sessions at the community reserves we look after, on a rotating basis. These are funded by SODC and so are free for children to attend.

**Do you have electronic sign in sheets?**

We are in the process of moving to a new CRM system which will allow us to update the way volunteers sign in and log their hours.

If you have any additional questions, please do speak to your session leader, Staff Lead or the volunteer team.

**More Information**

You can find out lots of interesting and informative information about volunteering with us on our website at [earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved](http://earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved) and we have a dedicated digital resources space for our active volunteers at [earthtrust.org.uk/volunteer-portal](http://earthtrust.org.uk/volunteer-portal)

**Contact Details**

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