

# CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

## POLICY

***The Department encourages, welcomes, and supports conservation volunteerism. Recruitment, training, identification, supervision, assignment, and service recognition will be done through local staff observing Conservation Volunteer procedures.***

11/1998 (est. 11/1993)

## PROCEDURES

The Missouri Department of Conservation offers a number of opportunities for the public to participate in volunteer service. Volunteer opportunities fall within two service categories:

### **CONSERVATION STAFF VOLUNTEER**

- Volunteers in this category will receive training and are expected to comply with the Department's applicable rules and policies. Conservation Staff Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to: Interpretive Site Volunteers, Range Volunteers, Hunter Education Instructors, Bowhunter Education Instructors, Protection Volunteers, and Discover Nature-Fishing Volunteers.
- Participants assist and are under the ongoing supervision and/or direction of paid employees in delivering services that are strategically important to the Department and that supplement the programs administered by the Department.
- Conservation Staff Volunteers must submit appropriate Conservation Staff Volunteer applications and agreement forms.
- With approved specialized training or certification, these volunteers may assist with prescribed burns, use motorized equipment (including, but not limited to, chainsaws, ATVs, and motorized boats) and handle hazardous substances (including regulated chemicals). Training requirements are the same as for staff. Supervisors must fill out a "Safety and Equipment Operator's Certification" form for each volunteer using vehicles, equipment or hazardous substances. Volunteers may not use personal motorized equipment.
- With appropriate supervisor approval, these volunteers may use Department computer and network resources to meet the requirements of their volunteer service. The supervisor must submit the appropriate online network account request form to Information Technology and include a date when the account

should be disabled. It is also this supervisor's responsibility to notify Information Technology when the volunteer's computer access is no longer required, so the account may be disabled promptly, and to reclaim any equipment that may have been utilized by the volunteer. Volunteers must abide by the Computer Network and Internet Access policy and Using Communication Systems policy.

- The Department reserves the right to request a drug and/or alcohol test of any conservation staff volunteer when reasonable suspicion exists (see HR "Drug and Alcohol Testing" Policy).
- The Department will seek permission to run a criminal background check on staff program volunteers before they begin service for those Department-sponsored volunteer programs where a background check has been determined to be necessary. For other conservation staff volunteers, background checks should be conducted when volunteer tasks involve frequent interaction with the public.
- Conservation Staff Volunteers may operate state-owned or –leased vehicles, subject to the rules and policies governing the use of state vehicles in the Human Resources Policy Manual.
- Volunteers who fail to perform job expectations or violate Department policy or basic rules of conduct are subject to verbal warnings, written warnings or termination, depending on the nature and severity of the situation. Supervisors have the authority to implement any of these actions except terminations – as referenced in § 252.245 RSMo. Termination of a Conservation Staff Volunteer requires written approval by the Director.
- Conservation Staff Volunteers may not be under age 14. Child labor laws apply to youth volunteers (under age 18).
- In appreciation of their importance, conservation staff volunteers will be formally recognized and presented with service awards, as determined by each program.
- These volunteers are considered unpaid employees for purposes of § 252.245 RSMo.

## **CONSERVATION SERVICE VOLUNTEER**

- This category refers to all volunteer activity on Department-managed property and Department-sponsored events on non-Department property (other than activities of Conservation Staff Volunteers). This includes one-time projects and occasional volunteer service by service organizations or the general public.
- Conservation Service Volunteers should contact the appropriate Area Manager or office where they would like to volunteer (via email, telephone, or in-person conversation). If approved, Conservation Service Volunteers and the Area Manager must sign appropriate volunteer agreement forms.

- Walk-in volunteer requests (picking up trash, etc.) on Department lands may or may not be accommodated and still require Volunteer Service Agreements and Parental Approval forms.
- These volunteers may not assist with prescribed burns, use motorized equipment that generally requires specialized training (including, but not limited to, tractors, chainsaws, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs), and motorized boats), handle herbicides or pesticides, or operate state-owned or -leased motorized vehicles unless volunteers are Master Naturalists, Forestkeepers or Stream Teams with specialized training and certification and the use has received area manager approval. With approval, Master Naturalists, Forestkeepers and Stream Teams may use personally-owned motorized equipment. When volunteering on Department-managed property, training requirements for Master Naturalists, Forestkeepers and Stream Teams are the same as for staff. Area managers must fill out a “Safety and Equipment Operator’s Certification” form for each volunteer using equipment or hazardous substances. With appropriate safety considerations, all volunteers may use personally-owned normal household items such as vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, power drills, leaf blowers, string trimmers, etc.
- Conservation Service Volunteers may be under age 14, however, they must be accompanied by a parent or adult chaperone. Child labor laws apply to youth volunteers (under age 18).
- These volunteers are not considered unpaid Department employees for purposes of § 252.245 RSMo.

## **AFFILIATED PROGRAMS**

- This category refers to citizen organizations that are jointly sponsored by the Department and another entity (i.e., Stream Teams, Forestkeepers, Master Naturalists).
- When working on Department-managed property, these program participants are considered Conservation Service Volunteers and must follow related procedures.

## **ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING – COMMUNITY SERVICE**

- Court-ordered compensatory community service on Department property is not considered volunteering. The Alternative Sentencing – Community Service form should be used for liability purposes in these cases.
- These participants may not assist with prescribed burns, use motorized equipment that generally requires specialized training (including, but not limited to, tractors, chainsaws, All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Utility Terrain Vehicles

(UTVs), and motorized boats), handle herbicides or pesticides, or operate state-owned or -leased motorized vehicles. With appropriate safety considerations, these participants may use normal household items such as vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, power drills, leaf blowers, string trimmers, etc. Participants may not use personal motorized equipment.

11/2014 (est. 11/1993, rev. 11/1998)

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Volunteer Policy Frequently Asked Questions

### **Conservation Staff Volunteer Forms**

Form 1a – Conservation Staff Volunteer Application

*Use this form to apply to participate as a Conservation Staff Volunteer (Interpretive Site Volunteer, Range Volunteer, Hunter Education Instructor, Bowhunter Education Instructor, Protection Volunteer, or Discover Nature Fishing Volunteer).*

Form 1b – Conservation Staff Volunteer Background Check Form

*This form should be used for applicants who have completed an application and interview process, and are near to acceptance into a program.*

Form 1c – Conservation Staff Volunteer Work Agreement and Registration

*Once Conservation Staff Volunteers are accepted into the program, they must sign this agreement form. Depending on program, agreement forms may need to be updated annually.*

### **Conservation Service Volunteer Forms**

Form 2a – Conservation Service Volunteer Agreement (Individuals)

*If proposed individual service volunteer work is approved by area manager, individual volunteers (not part of a group) must sign this agreement.*

Form 2b – Conservation Service Volunteer Agreement (Group)

*If proposed group service volunteer work is approved by area manager, group volunteer leaders must sign this agreement.*

Form 2c – Group Volunteer Log Sheet

*All group volunteer participants must sign this log sheet upon arriving for volunteer work.*

Form 2d – Parental Approval Form (under 18)

*This form is required for all persons under the age of 18 that wish to participate in service volunteer activities on Department managed lands. The Parental Approval Form is not required for Conservation Staff Volunteers, individual Conservation Service Volunteers, or group volunteers whose parents sign the Group Volunteer Log Sheet.*

**Alternative Sentencing – Community Service Form**

Form 3 – Alternative Sentencing Community Service Agreement

*Use this form when working with individuals who are serving community service due to alternative sentencing.*