



VOLUNTEER SERVICES HANDBOOK & POLICY MANUAL

Administrative Office
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[METROPARKS.COM](https://www.metroparks.com)



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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME!

Thousands of volunteers are needed each year to serve at the 13 beautiful Metroparks, located in five counties within southeastern Michigan. We welcome and thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Huron-Clinton Metroparks!

The Metroparks strive to create and maintain natural spaces that provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities that improve the quality of life for residents of Southeast Michigan. Our volunteers are a valuable resource for succeeding in those efforts and for being the best possible stewards to these public spaces. This handbook will provide you with the general policies and practices of the Metroparks volunteer service program. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook, and it will answer many common questions regarding volunteering. To retain necessary flexibility in the administration of the policies and procedures, the Metroparks reserve the right to change, add to, or eliminate any of the policies described in this handbook.

It is our hope that your volunteer experience here at the Metroparks is enjoyable, rewarding, and fulfilling. Thank you for joining our volunteer team!



HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS

MISSION STATEMENT

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, a regional park system created in 1940 by the citizens of southeast Michigan, provides excellent recreational and educational opportunities while serving as stewards of its natural resources. Our efforts are guided by the belief that the use of the parks and exposure to natural environments enhance society's health and quality of life.

ABOUT

The Metroparks are a greenbelt of parks surrounding the metro Detroit area along the Huron and Clinton rivers. Based in five counties in southeast Michigan, the 13 Metroparks cover nearly 25,000 acres and provide beautiful, natural environments for area residents to enjoy. Hiking, cycling, golfing, swimming, canoeing and kayaking, fishing, picnicking, winter sports and nature education are just some of the activities the Metroparks make available to area residents. Annually, nearly 7.5 million people visit the Metroparks. The 13 regional parks offer visitors nearly 140 miles of trails and more than 150 miles of lake and river shoreline.

The natural beauty and ecology of the area have been preserved within the Metroparks for the benefit of the population of southeast Michigan and have been enjoyed for generations.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Metroparks volunteers will provide support in the areas of Natural Resources and land management, Interpretive Services, golf, events, and administrative duties to help continue to provide exceptional experiences to the millions of annual visitors.

According to the Department of Labor, a volunteer is an 'individual who performs hours of service for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered.'

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

1. Be assigned appropriate tasks according to ability, skill, interests, availability, and training.
2. Receive training and supervisor for tasks completed.
3. Receive a position description for your assignment when appropriate.
4. Be treated as a fellow team member who contributes to the Metroparks goals through volunteer work.
5. Make suggestions about your assignment and our volunteer program, and be acknowledged by staff.
6. Expect that the Metroparks will be good stewards of your time.
7. Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
8. Be trusted with confidential information if needed to carry out assignments.
9. Expect that records are kept; showing areas of interest, positions held, applications, & time spent.
10. Be treated with a spirit of friendliness and cooperation.
11. A safe and inviting environment to volunteer in that is free of harassment and discrimination.

The Metroparks expect volunteers to:

1. Know their own duties and stay on task.
2. Cooperate with staff and fellow volunteers, and maintain a team attitude.
3. Voice their opinions and contribute suggestions to improve the Metroparks work.
4. Sign in and out each time they arrive for a work assignment.
5. Be on time for scheduled shifts, or communicate if running late or need to cancel
6. Honor their commitment and come when scheduled.
7. Treat all volunteers, staff, and visitors with respect.

The Metroparks will:

- Actively seek and encourage participation of volunteers to support all areas of the organization such as Natural Resources, Interpretive Services, golf, events, and administration.
- Share strategic plans and on-going schedules to inform volunteers and focus their energies.
- Respond to all inquiries from prospective volunteers in a timely manner to facilitate their orientation and scheduling.
- Match volunteers with tasks that meet their interests and skills, with clear instructions, deadlines, materials, tools and freedom to complete their tasks.
- Foster personal growth among volunteers by providing skilled supervision, training, and opportunities to learn new skills.
- Train all volunteers as needed for their assigned task
- Give volunteers meaningful work and sincere appreciation.
- Consider all volunteer requests, suggestions, and grievances in a respectful and timely manner.
- Work together to continually renew and reinforce our mutual commitment to the mission of the Metroparks.

POLICY MANUAL

Age of Volunteers

The Metroparks supervisors evaluate the abilities and competency of all volunteers and assign appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. Volunteers under the age of 18 must present a waiver of liability form signed by a parent or legal guardian. Volunteers under the age of 14 may not work on off-trail sites without adult supervision. There are very limited opportunities for volunteers under the age of 14, however, Volunteer Services will work with youth and youth group leaders to provide opportunities for safe, meaningful participation in appropriate activities and settings that support our mission. There is no maximum age for Metroparks volunteers.

Safety

The volunteer and Metroparks staff share a responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. The Metroparks will attempt to ensure a safe work environment and to comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, you are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all your volunteer activities. Volunteers are asked to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident, which results in injury, regardless of how insignificant, must be reported promptly to your supervisor.

A first aid kit is located on all park offices. A supervisor will advise you of exact locations on site.

Sign-in sheets

Volunteer sign-in sheets are very important to our organization. All volunteers must sign in and out on the forms provided each volunteer day on site, or keep a log of their personal hours if spent off site.

Volunteer Liability & Protection

Volunteers are provided a safe environment to work in and are expected to behave in a manner that is consistent with a safety-conscious work place.

If a volunteer is injured while performing their assignment, an accident/injury report must be filed with the Volunteer Services Supervisor immediately and forwarded to Human Resources. Claims are reviewed by and are subject to proof of negligence. Medical coverage, workman's compensation, and liability coverage are not provided to volunteers. Release of liability statements are signed by all group and individual volunteers on the first day of service.

If volunteers cause property damage or bodily injury to others through negligent behavior while acting in the scope and duties of volunteerism, HCMA has an obligation to resolve the claim. HCMA provides general liability insurance coverage of volunteers who are performing duties associated with their assignment.

Volunteer Dress & Appearance

Volunteers are asked to dress conservatively with clothes that are appropriate for working conditions. Typical wear includes close-toed shoes such as sneakers, long pants, and a t-shirt/jacket. Clothing depicting graphics that are offensive in nature will not be allowed and volunteers will be asked to change.

POLICY MANUAL (CONTINUED)

Parking Permits

Volunteers will receive a one-day permit for their volunteer day. Volunteers will receive the permit upon sign-in for the volunteer day to place in their window. Volunteers should be aware they will be ticketed if a vehicle parking permit is not displayed. After 24 hours of volunteer service in the calendar year, volunteers will receive one (1) complimentary annual Metroparks vehicle pass.

Use of Huron-Clinton Metroparks Vehicle

Volunteers may not drive Metroparks motor vehicles. Volunteers can drive golf carts and gators but must complete training beforehand provided by Metroparks staff, and have a valid current Michigan driver's license.

Use of Power Tools

Volunteers are not allowed to use power tools at the Metroparks, except for select power tools while under Metroparks staff supervision. Approved power tools include: sawz-all with pruning blade, weed whip, and drill. Under no circumstance shall a volunteer use a chainsaw.

Handling Money

With the appropriate training from Metroparks staff, volunteers can support staff in positions that handle money; supervised counting of money at the beginning and end of the volunteer shift while the volunteer is present must occur.

Animal Care

It is acceptable for volunteers to do the following tasks for animal care with training: holding, showing, taking care of animals, grooming, cleaning, feeding, and water. Volunteers under 18 are not able to help with the cleaning of stalls, but are able to animal clean pens/sheds.

Community Service

The Metroparks welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools, community assistance programs, and the judicial system. Community service volunteers are responsible for maintaining an accurate timesheet and to ensure it is signed at the beginning and end of each day by a Metroparks supervisor or duly appointed person. Hours worked, but not recorded or signed off at the end of each day of service, will not be counted. Community service volunteers must also sign in and out of the Metroparks volunteer sign-in sheets. This is the only information that will be entered into the Metroparks database.

The Metroparks does not recognize breaks or lunches to be community service time. Only actual time worked will be credited for community service. For appropriate placement within the organization, the Metroparks reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service. In all other respects, court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.

Confidential Information

The Metroparks has an obligation to visitors, volunteers, and donors to maintain their confidentiality and to respect their privacy. Every person served by the Metroparks has the right to confidentiality. If you are aware of an issue that requires immediate attention, especially if it involves volunteers, please direct your concern immediately to an on-site supervisor or the Metroparks Volunteer Services Supervisor.

Contacting Other Volunteers

If volunteers need to contact other volunteers regarding their activities at the Metroparks, we expect all such communications among volunteers to follow general etiquette and/or online etiquette guidelines. The Metroparks will not share contact information about a volunteer with another volunteer without the express consent of all parties involved.

Harassment and Discrimination

The Metroparks is firmly committed to providing a positive work environment free of discrimination and bias. The Metroparks prohibits any actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's race, sex, sexual preferences, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition, or other legally protected characteristic. Any conduct or action, whether overt or subtle, which creates an offensive or hostile work environment is prohibited and will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action.

The Metroparks prohibits any harassment between volunteers, employees, or other non-employee on the basis of sex. No volunteer should be subjected to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtones and conduct, either verbal or physical.

Any volunteer who believes they are a victim of sexual or discriminatory harassment is encouraged to let the harasser know that his or her behavior is unwelcome. In addition, volunteers who believe they have been harassed must immediately report the matter to an on-site supervisor or Volunteer Services Supervisor.

Conflict resolution

If a volunteer believes they are being treated unfairly, has any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job, regardless of whether the problem is large or small, then they should report this immediately to the site supervisor and/or Volunteer Services Supervisor. If the issue is not resolved, the Human Resources Department will then become involved. All conflicts are handled confidentially.



POLICY MANUAL (CONTINUED)

Volunteer Conduct

The Metroparks is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer with or without cause. Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior or conduct that are considered unacceptable in the work place, the following, although not an all-inclusive list, are examples or infractions or conduct that may result in the limitation and termination of the volunteer relationship.

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of the Metroparks property
- Misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials
- Falsification of timekeeping records
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcoholic or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty or while operating the Metroparks equipment
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to the damage of property
- Repeats failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable job assignment
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Violation of safety or health rules
- Abuse or mistreatment of visitors, volunteers, or employees
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination
- Violation of Huron-Clinton Metroparks anti-discrimination policies and procedures
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the work place
- Excessive absenteeism without notice
- Releasing confidential information

Media Relations

Volunteers must receive approval from the Chief of Marketing and Communications before speaking with any member of the media about their activities with the Metroparks. Volunteers should notify their site supervisor that they have been contacted by the media and share the contact information and details with that supervisor. Volunteers may not speak on behalf of the organization.

Be a Brand Ambassador

Volunteers support the mission of the Metroparks, are stewards of the environment and help complete projects that further the efforts of the organization. That makes you a valuable ambassador of the Metroparks. We encourage you to share your experiences with your friends, family and network. You can be a part of our efforts to grow Metroparks brand awareness by talking about the Metroparks and encouraging other people to check out our website for opportunities. If you are going to post on social media about your activities with the Metroparks, please remember not to share false, confidential or defaming information and use professional social media etiquette if/when representing yourself as a volunteer of the organization.

Background Checks

The Metroparks have implemented the following volunteer background check policy for the safety and wellbeing of our park visitors, staff, and volunteers:

- All volunteers working with the vulnerable population must have a background check, done at the time of application. The vulnerable population is defined as children, elderly, and disabled. Minors are exempt from the background check. Background checks are done through an online function
- All volunteers will acknowledge and confirm the Metroparks Commitment Statement stated on the volunteer application
- Volunteers with the following backgrounds will not be able to volunteer at the Metroparks:
 - o The volunteer cannot have been convicted of an offense of a violent nature
 - o The volunteer cannot have been convicted of an offense of a sexual nature
 - o The volunteer cannot have been convicted of theft or burglary
- Volunteering with the Metroparks is a privilege and this privilege may be revoked at any time if the staff feels the volunteer is not meeting expectations, if they are not productive, or if they are disruptive to the visitors, volunteers, or staff in any way that prohibits us from accomplishing our daily activities

METROPARKS FACILITIES

Location	Address	Hours of Operation
Huron-Clinton Metroparks Administrative Offices	13000 High Ridge Drive, Brighton, MI 48114 Phone: (800) 477-2757	Monday- Friday, 8am-4pm
Delhi Metropark	3902 E. Delhi, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 Phone: (734) 426-8211	Park: 8am-8pm daily
Dexter-Huron Metropark	6535 Huron River Drive, Dexter, MI 48130 Phone: (734) 426-8211	Park: 8am-8pm daily
Hudson Mills Metropark	8801 N. Territorial Road, Dexter, MI 48130 Phone: (734) 426-8211	Park: 7am-8pm daily Park Office: 8am-4pm daily
Huron Meadows Metropark	8765 Hammel Road, Brighton, MI 48116 Phone: (734) 426-8211	Park: 7am-8pm daily
Indian Springs Metropark	5200 Indian Trail, White Lake, MI 48386 Phone: (248) 625-6640	Park: 7am-8pm daily Park Office: 8am-4pm daily Environmental Discovery Center: 9am-5pm daily
Kensington Metropark	4570 Huron River Parkway, Milford, MI 48380 Mailing Address: 2240 W Buno Rd., Milford, MI 48380 Phone: (810) 227-8910	Park: 6am-10pm daily Park Office: 8am-6pm daily Farm Center: 9am-4pm daily Nature Center: 1pm-5pm Monday, 10am-5pm Tuesday-Sunday
Lake Erie Metropark	32481 W. Jefferson, Brownstown, MI 48173 Phone: (734) 379-5020	Park: 7am-10pm daily Park Office: 8am-5pm daily Marshlands Museum: 1pm-5pm weekday, 10am-5pm weekend
Lake St. Clair Metropark	31300 Metro Parkway, Harrison Township, MI 48045 Phone: (586) 463-4581	Park: 7am-8pm daily Park Office: 8am-4pm weekday, 8am-5pm weekend Nature Center: 1pm-5pm weekday, 10am-5pm weekend
Lower Huron Metropark	40151 East Huron River Drive, Belleville, MI 48111 Phone: (734) 697-9181	Park Hours: 7am-10pm Office Hours: 8am -4pm weekday, 8am-5pm weekend
Oakwoods Metropark	32911 Willow Rd., New Boston, MI 48164 Phone: (734) 782-3956	Park Hours: 8am-Dusk, daily Nature Center: 1pm-5pm weekday, 10a-5pm weekend Summer 10a-5pm daily
Stony Creek Metropark	4300 Main Park Road, Shelby Township, MI 48316 Phone: (586) 781-4242	Park: 7am-8pm daily Park Office: 8am-4pm daily Nature Center: 10a-5pm daily
Willow Metropark	23200 S. Huron Rd., New Boston, MI 48164 Phone: (734) 697-9181	Park: 7am-10pm daily
Wolcott Mill Metropark	Farm Center: 65775 Wolcott Road, Ray, MI 48096-1823 Phone: (586) 752-5932 Historic Center: 64142 Kuntsman Road, Ray, MI 48096-2434 Phone: (586)749-5997 Camp Rotary: 20505 29 Mile Road, Ray, MI 48096 Phone: (586) 752-5932	Park: 9am-5pm daily

VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read and understand the Metroparks Volunteer Handbook and Policy Manual, and understand I should consult with the Metroparks Volunteer Services Supervisor if I have any questions about the policies or procedures contained herein.

I understand that from time to time there may be revisions to the Volunteer Handbook and Policy Manual. Such revisions will require the prior approval of the Director and will be communicated to volunteers.

I have entered into my volunteer relationship with the Metroparks voluntarily and acknowledge there is no specified length of volunteering. Accordingly, either the Metroparks or I can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this manual is neither a contract of employment or volunteering, nor a legal document. Although some or all of the policies and procedures may have been explained to me verbally, I understand that it is my responsibility to fully read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Volunteer's Signature

Date Signed

Volunteer's Name (print)

Parent/Guardian signature if volunteer is under 18