



Conservation Volunteer Pack



September 2014

WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you for expressing an interest in Volunteering with the 'Footprints' group. We hope that you will enjoy your volunteering and look forward to working with you in conserving some of Suffolk's habitat and wildlife.

1. Who are we?

The role of the Suffolk Coastal Norse Countryside Team is to manage 30 countryside and urban green spaces sites on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council. Some of which hold international, national or regional designations on account of their wildlife interest.

The variety of habitats on our sites include heathland, woodland, marshland, grassland and reedbed and as well as urban green spaces.

2. Our Mission

"To maintain and enhance the habitat and wildlife value of countryside sites while ensuring access and raising awareness for the people who live, work and visit the area, leaving a rich and diverse legacy for future generations."

3. What would you do?

Outlined below is the sphere of activity in which volunteers would be likely to be involved with.

- ◆ Heathland management and reclamation, felling, coppicing and control of invasive species – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Woodland management – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Hedge maintenance – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Ditch and pond maintenance – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Litter picking and site clean ups – any time of year.
- ◆ Plant and animal surveys – spring /summer
- ◆ Footpath improvements - any time of year.
- ◆ Hay raking - summer

4. Sites where we require volunteers?

Sutton Heath and Upper Hollesley Common

The Grove, Felixstowe

Melton Riverside

Bawdsey Picnic Site

Leeks Hill, Melton

Farthing Wood, Kesgrave

Mill Stream and Sandlings, Rushmere St Andrews

Brook Farm Wood, Saxmundham

Sizewell beach and car park
Nacton Shore

5. Our Volunteer Code

- ◆ Treat others with respect and thoughtfulness
- ◆ Take care of Health & Safety of yourself & others
- ◆ Work at your own pace, to your own abilities, training and experience.
- ◆ Pay attention to and follow instructions from the Countryside Ranger
- ◆ Feel free to make suggestions to or raise any concerns with the Countryside Ranger
- ◆ Enjoy yourself!

6. Out on site

- a) A **Countryside Ranger** is in charge of every work party and gives the group full instruction. They are responsible for the group and its activity as a whole.
- b) A **SAFETY TALK** is given at the start of each work party. The specific hazards of the day and other important information are highlighted. Please listen carefully; it is for the benefit of you and those working alongside you.
- c) A general **RISK ASSESSMENT** and a **MANUAL HANDLING** is given to each volunteer when they join and you are asked to read them and sign your registration form to say that you have understood them.
- d) A person trained in **FIRST AID** attends every work party. They will be pointed out to the group at the beginning of the event, together with the location of the First Aid Kit.
- e) A **MOBILE PHONE** is taken out on every work party for emergency use and to contact volunteers.
- f) **REFRESHMENTS** – Hot drinks are available on every work party. You will need to bring your own lunch and cold drinks.
- g) We operate a **NO SMOKING** policy in vehicles and buildings. You can smoke on site but we ask you to smoke away from non-smokers.
- h) You will need to wear **OUTDOOR CLOTHING** suitable for the task and weather conditions, boots or wellies (steel toe-caps recommended) and waterproofs. We will supply you with a pair of gloves.
- i) Volunteer **work parties** are arranged for once or twice a week in the autumn and winter. We meet on the chosen site at 10.00 and finish about 15.00. Volunteers are emailed dates in advance and asked to let the rangers know if they can attend.

7. Basic precautions

While out on work party we recommend that you:

- ◆ Wear gloves
- ◆ Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking
- ◆ Cover any cuts
- ◆ Wear clothing that covers arms and legs
- ◆ Wear goggles to protect eyes from splinters and debris.
- ◆ Make sure that your Tetanus immunity is up to date.
- ◆ Bring any medication you may need in an emergency with you (such as anti-histamine if you are allergic to wasp or bee stings) and make sure that the Countryside Ranger is aware.

8. Health Hazards

1. Many jobs include cutting and handling **sharp and thorny** plants and volunteers should take care that to protect themselves from scratches and cuts and flying debris.
2. **Tetanus** can be caught from wounds contaminated with soil. Please make sure that your tetanus immunity is up to date (a booster is needed every 10 years).
3. **Dog faeces** whether visible or not volunteers should be aware of dangers from soil contamination.
4. **Wasp's nests** are common and volunteers should be aware that they might come across one on site. Please report any found to the Countryside Ranger. If you have an allergy to any stings from insects let Countryside Ranger and colleagues working nearby know.
5. Do not overexert yourself in **hot weather** and make sure that you drink plenty of fluid. Please wear sun block when necessary. In **cold and wet weather** wear warm clothing and waterproof trousers and coats.
6. **Weils' disease** is a bacterial infection carried in rats' urine, which contaminates water, and can be present on lake, river and canal banks. The bacteria are absorbed by the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes and also through the skin via minor cuts. Treat all water as if it is contaminated. Cover any cuts with waterproof plasters, wear barrier cream and gloves.
7. **Lyme disease** can sometimes be transmitted to humans when bitten by a tick from a deer or a sheep. Ticks can be picked up from tall vegetation such as bracken. When working in such areas, make sure you have tucked your trousers into your socks and that your cuffs are fastened.
8. The **sap** from certain plants can cause itching, rashes and in severe cases blistering burns, especially when combined with exposure to sunlight, including Hemlock Water-dropwort, Hogweed and Ragwort. Some plants are also poisonous to eat.
9. **Adders** are can be found on many of our Sandlings heaths, so volunteers should inform the Countryside Ranger if any are seen.

10. Tools and Other Equipment

1. Techniques in conservation activities are demonstrated before you start.
2. All tools are provided and ongoing training is given for their correct use and handling.

3. All tools are regularly checked and maintained; if you find a tool that is damaged in any way report it to the Countryside Ranger who will remove it from use.
4. Vehicles and power tools may be used on task, however, volunteers must not operate these unless authorised by the Countryside Ranger.

11. Training

The Countryside Ranger will provide training on the use of tools and how to tackle particular jobs during the work party.

12. Insurance

While you are volunteering on behalf of Suffolk Coastal Norse Countryside Team you are covered for personal accident and public liability insurance, until you are 75 years old.

13. Health & Safety

A general volunteer and manual handling risk assessment have been carried out and each volunteer is provided with a copy of these. For your own safety and the safety of others, please comply with any safety instructions that are given by the Countryside Ranger. While at a work party you must take reasonable care for the **Health & Safety** of yourself and other people working around you who may be affected by your actions:-

- ◆ Report any accidents or near misses to the Countryside Ranger.
- ◆ Any damage or loss of equipment or material liable to affect **Health & Safety** must also be reported.
- ◆ No person will carry out work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ◆ Should volunteers' actions or behaviour threaten the safety of themselves or others in the group the Countryside Ranger will request the individual to stop working.

14. Young persons

Children (8-16years old) and young persons (16-18years old) with additional needs can attend work parties but they must be accompanied and supervised by an adult and there with their parents/carers permission.

The countryside team are CRB checked.

Want to know more?

If you want to attend an event or for further information about any aspect of volunteering with us not covered here, please do not hesitate to contact the Countryside Team.

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