



Volunteer Handbook

Thank you for contributing your time and talent to Northwest Trail Alliance (NWTa) as a volunteer. Our mission is rooted in being a volunteer trail stewardship organization. All of our goals, activities and accomplishments would simply not be possible without our volunteers.

All volunteers with NWTa will abide by the rules, policies and regulations contained in this Volunteer Handbook. All lead volunteer roles with NWTa, including but not limited to members of the Board of Directors, Local Stewardship Team members, Trail Sustainability Institute (TSI) instructors, and Crew Leaders, will acknowledge receipt and understanding of this Handbook (page 10).

GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Code of Conduct

We are committed to providing an environment that is pleasant, professional, and free from harassment, intimidation, hostility, and/or other offenses that may interfere with our mission and work.

We are committed to providing a friendly, safe, and welcoming environment for all, regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, and disability.

Our policy is that all volunteers, employees, customers, clients, contractors, and visitors are entitled to a respectful and productive work environment free from behavior, action, or language that constitutes workplace harassment or discrimination. The "workplace" includes when volunteers and employees are on organization premises/trail sites, at an organization-sponsored off-site event, traveling on behalf of the organization, or conducting organization business, regardless of location.

The policy prohibits any conduct that a reasonable person in the individual's circumstances would consider unwelcome, intimidating, hostile, threatening, violent,

abusive, or offensive. We invite you to help us create a safe and positive experience for everyone by:

- Participating in a positive, authentic, and active way.
- Exercising consideration and respect in your speech and actions.
- Attempting collaboration before conflict.
- Refraining from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech.
- Being mindful of your surroundings, fellow volunteers, Lead Stewardship Team volunteers, land manager representatives, and NWTa staff.
- Listening and responding to others with patience and respect at all times.
- Meeting commitments with positive interactions.
- Working effectively and respectfully to build up an individual while promoting teamwork.

Code of Ethics

We are committed to the highest ethical standards. The success and reputation of the organization depend upon the ethical conduct of everyone affiliated with this organization.

While no document can anticipate all of the challenges that may arise, the ethical principles listed below will assist in making good decisions that are ethical and following any applicable legal requirements.

- Integrity and Compliance with Law. We conduct all aspects of our activities ethically, reflecting our dedication to integrity, honesty, and fairness. We obey the laws of the jurisdictions where we operate at all times.
- Treat People Professionally. We respect the rights of others to fair treatment and equal opportunity, free from discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Volunteers must avoid any comments or behavior toward others that may reasonably be viewed as harassment or reflect unlawful bias.
- Honest, Efficient, and Courteous. Volunteers may not be discourteous or disrespectful to anyone while in the course and scope of their volunteer efforts with us. In addition, we expect each employee to cooperate with Lead Stewardship Team members and NWTa staff.
- Act Ethically in the Handling and Reporting of Data (applicable to certain volunteer roles). We require that complete, accurate, and reliable records and reports are maintained.
- Protect the Funds and Property. We approach all matters concerning funds and property held by the organization with care, diligence, and honesty. We will not tolerate

any scheme to wrongfully obtain or use funds or property through fraud or false pretenses.

- Fair Dealing. We endeavor to deal fairly and in good faith with others. We do not take advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, misrepresentation, or other practices.

Prohibited Conduct

Although by no means all-inclusive, the following examples represent prohibited behavior:

- Physical harassment, including but not limited to unwelcome physical contacts such as touching, impeding or blocking movement, or any physical interference with work;
- Verbal harassment, including but not limited to disparaging or disrespectful comments, jokes, slurs, innuendoes, teasing, and other sexual talk such as jokes, personal inquiries, persistent unwanted courting, and derogatory insults;
- Nonverbal harassment, including but not limited to suggestive or insulting sounds, obscene gestures, leering, or whistling;
- Visual harassment, including but not limited to displays of explicit or offensive content, circulation of derogatory content, posters, pictures, drawings, or cartoons that reflect disparagingly upon a class of persons or a particular person; or
- Sexual harassment, as described above, includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors in exchange for any conduct of a sexual nature, submission to unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in exchange for a term of employment, or other conduct of a sexual nature.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We are committed to a diverse and inclusive environment for applicants, employees, volunteers, vendors, and customers regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, disability, or any other protected class.

Statement of Equity

NWTA builds, maintains, and advocates for mountain bike trail access in the greater Portland area. Our core aim is to grow and support a thriving mountain bike ecosystem. We recognize that Oregon's deep history of inequity and racism formally extends to its founding which systematically granted free land to "whites only" and maintained black exclusion laws in the state constitution until being repealed in 1926. The structures continued in other ways and impacted communities disproportionately in events such as

the Vanport flood. To see mountain biking grow and thrive in our community, we aim to be just as systematic in our efforts to actively reverse inequity and racism.

Mountain biking requires riders to confront their fears, biases, and preconceived notions: whether it's your first rock roll, your first gap jump, or a steep root-strewn section of trail, we know what that feels like to be fearful, uncomfortable, and out of our element. We believe that everyone's barriers should be respected and that only mutual support will get us past our challenges as we cheer each other on and push ourselves to improve. NWTa wants a world where everyone feels welcome, safe, and free in the outdoors. As an organization, the NWTa is committed to creating a pathway to nature for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, faith, and country of origin.

Our Board, organization, and members are under no illusion that this work is easy or has an endpoint. We embrace the challenging work with full awareness of its broad scope, nevertheless, we're setting our goals aloft. In any cases where we fall short of our expectations, we will continue to strive towards our goal of maximum positive impact. We can only do such by continuously expanding our collective and individual knowledge and confronting our biases. We are committed to making sure the outdoors are for everyone.

Penalties

We will not tolerate discriminatory conduct, harassment, or sexual assault of any kind. Volunteers who do not follow NWTa's Code of Conduct and/or Code of Ethics will be immediately relieved of their volunteer responsibilities and no longer be invited to participate in future activities of any sort with NWTa.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance Abuse Policy

NWTa has a vital interest in maintaining safe, healthy, and efficient working conditions for its employees and volunteers. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol when actively engaging in volunteer activities may pose serious safety and health risks to NWTa volunteers, leadership, land managers and the public.

Prohibited Conduct

Our primary goal is maintaining a safe, productive, and drug-free working environment. For this reason, we have established the following policy:

- A. Volunteers will not use, possess, sell, trade, offer for sale, or offer to buy illegal

Updated October 2025

- drugs or otherwise engage in the illegal use of drugs on premises;
- B. Volunteers will NOT engage in trail work or tool usage under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or marijuana.
- C. Volunteers will NOT engage in heavy machinery use while under the influence of any drugs, alcohol, or marijuana.

Exception: There may be some NWTa functions (including but not limited to fundraising events, membership meetings and volunteer appreciation activities) where alcohol will be served. Alcohol will only be served with prior approval, and consumption will be strictly monitored and controlled. No volunteers or staff members may operate machinery while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is everyone's responsibility to remain professional, sober, and under control at all times during these functions.

Marijuana is considered a "controlled substance" under applicable federal regulations. Marijuana is considered a drug for this substance abuse policy, regardless of whether a physician prescribes it or Oregon has authorized recreational and/or medical marijuana. Marijuana inhibits the ability to use machinery and tools in a safe manner. Volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of any marijuana or its components during work parties.

Tobacco

All cigarette butts and other trash must be disposed of in appropriate waste receptacles. Any and all restrictions on smoking and tobacco use put in place by landowners/land managers, including but not limited to fire danger at trail systems, must be adhered to.

Penalties

Volunteers who do not follow NWTa's Substance Abuse Policy will be immediately relieved of their volunteer responsibilities and no longer be invited to participate in future activities of any sort with NWTa.

EXPECTATIONS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & DATA SECURITY

All organization computers, communications equipment, and the information and data stored on such computers and equipment ("Electronic Systems") are the property of the Organization. As used in this Handbook, Electronic Systems includes the equipment (desktop and laptop computers, iPads, landline telephones and mobile phones, scanners, copy machines, etc.), software loaded onto such equipment, and internet access. For organization-owned equipment, all the information stored on the equipment is the

property of the Organization. All work-related information stored on the equipment is organization property for personal equipment used for work purposes. Information stored on equipment includes but is not limited to email, voicemail, text messages, photos and videos stored on the equipment, internet history and downloaded information, and electronic documents and information.

We maintain our Electronic Systems to assist in conducting business, and except as otherwise provided in this policy, these Electronic Systems are to be used for organization business purposes only. We have the right to and may monitor all aspects of the Organization-owned Electronic Systems, including email, voicemail, and text messages, to ensure compliance with our policies within the limits of the law. Employees should not expect privacy in anything they create, send, or receive on the Organization's Electronic Systems or when accessing the Organization's Electronic Systems through personal computers, cell phones, etc.

The Electronic Systems may be used for personal use during non-working time, but neither business nor personal use of our Electronic Systems is private, and our Electronic Systems and all use of it may be monitored, accessed, reviewed, and disclosed by us at any time. All Organization Electronic Systems are subject to the following:

- Volunteers must comply with all software licenses, copyrights, and other state and federal intellectual property laws.
- Volunteers may not install software onto their individual computers or the network without first receiving express authorization from management.
- Volunteers may not access, store, display, send or receive information or communications that violate our policies regarding harassment or discrimination.
- Volunteers may not access, store, display, send or receive information or communications that are fraudulent, intimidating, threatening, or contain obscenity/pornography. Volunteers encountering or receiving such material should immediately report the incident to a Board member or the Executive Director.
- Volunteers should use the same care in drafting email as they would for any other written communication. That is especially true when writing to clients/customers or other third parties outside the Organization.
 - All NWTA-related communications must be courteous and respectful and may not contain profanity.
 - NWTA emails to customers and third parties must be professional and reviewed to ensure proper grammar, spelling, word choice, etc.

- Volunteers may not relay (verbally or in writing) communications to customers/clients or other third parties that are derogatory or defamatory toward our customers/clients.
- Volunteers should not alter or copy a file belonging to another user without first obtaining permission from the file owner. The ability to read, modify, or copy a file belonging to another user does not imply consent to read, alter, or copy that file.
- Volunteers are responsible for safeguarding their passwords for the system. Individual passwords should not be printed, stored online, or given to others. Volunteers are responsible for all transactions made using their passwords.
- The storage of confidential information should be limited to the organization network and equipment, with proper security provisions. Laptops, cell phones, jump drives, and other removable storage should not contain confidential organization documents or information unless approved by us.
- NWTa's email policy reflects the standards here, and all Board, Staff and volunteers agree to adhere to this policy.

Confidential Information

Our confidential and proprietary information is vital to our current operations and future success. Each volunteer's responsibility is to use all reasonable care to protect against and prevent the unauthorized disclosure of such information, comply with these policies, and handle data such as passwords, legal contracts, identification codes, donor information and other confidential information securely.

NWTA Social Media Accounts

If posting on social media is a function of your volunteer responsibilities, we expect you to use the NWTA's social media-sponsored sites. You are not to reflect personal views and opinions on any NWTA social media posts. All postings are to follow all media and branding guidelines at the time of each post.

Personal Social Media

Generally, we regard personal social media as your matter. However, certain types of activities can cause concern because of the potential negative impact on our reputation, ability to do business, or involving other NWTA volunteers, staff or Board members.

Engaging in or being associated with social media conduct believed to adversely impact the organization, our public image, your ability to carry out your volunteer responsibilities, NWTA staff or Board, or otherwise adversely affects clients, customers, suppliers, or

people who work on behalf of the NWTa, may lead to termination of volunteer responsibilities.

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, or people who work on our behalf. Remember that we are more likely to resolve complaints by speaking directly to the party we have an issue with than posting complaints on a social media outlet.

Expectations on personal social media use for volunteers:

- Never post false information or rumors about NWTa related information.
- Maintain confidentiality of NWTa's private/confidential information
- Do not create a link from your social media or profiles to the NWTa's website.
 - An exception is granted if choosing to promote a specific NWTa event from personal social media channels
- Express only personal opinions and do not act as a representative of or post on behalf of NWTa.
- Do not use NWTa's email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools for personal use.

Personal and work-related postings must be consistent with Organization policies, including our anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and anti-retaliation policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated.

Penalties

Volunteers who do not follow NWTa's Expectations for Use of Information Technology and Data Security will be immediately relieved of their volunteer responsibilities and no longer be invited to participate in future activities of any sort with NWTa.

OTHER

Personal Property

Volunteers are urged not to bring valuables to work or worksites. Found property is to be given to a Lead Stewardship Team member, or a message sent to NWTa staff regarding the found property. We assume no responsibility for personal property loss, theft, or damage.

Anti-Violence & Weapons Policy

We strongly believe that all employees be treated with dignity and respect, which means we do not tolerate any acts or threats of violence or bullying. Volunteers must report any instances or threats of violence to their manager immediately. All complaints will be fully investigated.

We do not permit weapons to be used or implied to be used threateningly or incorrectly on Organization property, at NWTa worksites, or in organization vehicles.

Chainsaw and Heavy Machinery Operation

NWTa volunteers, including but not limited to Staff, Board members, crew leaders, Lead Stewardship Team members, and work day volunteers, may only operate heavy machinery and chainsaws with the following stipulations.

- Chainsaw operation is only permitted by individuals who hold current United States Forest Service (USFS) A, B, or C sawyer certifications. A chainsaw operator is beholden to the requirements and abilities of the level of certification they hold, including current First Aid certification.
- Required Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for chainsaw operators and swamper: cut resistant work gloves, non-skid (lug soles or caulks) boots with a minimum of 8" top, hardhat, eye protections, hearing protection, long-sleeved shirt. Chainsaw operators must also wear chainsaw chaps.
- Any use of NWTa machines (including but not limited to the Canycom BFP602 walk-behind tracked carrier, or Walk-behind Ditch Witch Skid Steerer, Takeuchi TB216R Mini Excavator, and Single Track ST240) for the building/rebuilding of specific features, must be conducted by operators who meet the following requirements:
 - NWTa equipment operators must have a minimum of 100 hours of experience on any machine they are using or be supervised by an operator with a minimum of 200 hours, except for walk-behind carrier.

- For a walk-behind carrier, operators must have a minimum of 20 hours experience or be supervised by an operator with a minimum of 40 hours.
- Volunteer machine operators MUST perform work consistent with the terms of any trail project approvals by NWTa and/or the underlying landowner/land manager, including any additional terms related to equipment or tools.
- Volunteer machine operators will use the machine with the smallest footprint feasible to accomplish needed maintenance tasks.
- If underlying landowner/land manager requirements for machine operation are stricter than as listed in the NWTa Volunteer Handbook, the landowner/land manager requirements supersede this Handbook.

Inclement Weather Guidelines

NWTa Staff, crew leaders or other volunteer leads, land management partners and Board members reserve the right to cancel, delay, or postpone any events due to inclement weather or other safety concerns, in accordance with inclement weather guidelines at any time.

Events will be canceled for any of the reasons below or for any other safety concern:

- Wind – If wind speeds, either maintained or gusts, are 25 mph or more, events will be canceled due to safety issues. Events may be canceled for winds below 25 mph when the event location deems safety is of concern, particularly if there is a wind advisory in effect for the area.
- Winter Weather – If conditions are icy and unsafe for volunteers or participants to travel to the event, events are to be canceled. If the ground is frozen, events are to be canceled.
- Air Quality – If the Air Quality Index is in the unhealthy for sensitive groups range (>100), events are to be canceled. NWTa references Oregon Department of Environmental Quality data for air quality information at <https://oraqi.deq.state.or.us/home/map>.
- Wildfire risk – NWTa may use Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) or other tools to assess the risk of wildfire and decide whether to cancel, delay, or postpone an event. Scope of work will be adjusted to IFPL fire levels.
- Heat – if the heat index exceeds 100 degrees Fahrenheit, events are to be canceled. If the heat index is in the 90s, conditions such as tree cover will be evaluated, and work projects may be modified, or sites may be changed to better accommodate volunteers.
- Unforeseen circumstances – NWTa representatives and land management

partners reserve the right to cancel any event for any safety concerns not outlined above.

- Land management partners reserve the right to cancel NWTa work parties and events at their sole discretion, and NWTa representatives will adhere to any such requests.

In the event an event needs to be canceled, delayed, or postponed, NWTa will communicate to Leadership and registered participants as early as possible.

Critical Incident Policy

We hope our volunteers will never be in a position to experience a significant crisis during their work with NWTa. In the event of a situation such as a robbery, active shooter, etc., We ask that you take no action that would place yourself or others in danger. If you are confronted directly, comply with the requests, or demands.

Follow the protocol below when possible:

- Run - Always be aware of the two nearest exits and have possible escape routes in mind. If an active shooter incident arises on-site, leave your belongings behind, and try to evacuate as quickly as possible, regardless of whether others agree to follow you. If there is time, help others evacuate with you and prevent anyone from entering the premises. Once you are a safe distance from the area, call 911.
- Hide - If you are unable to evacuate the premises, remain calm and try to hide in a secure location, as far away from the assailant(s) as possible. Lock all doors and windows and close the blinds if you are in an office area. Blockade entry points with heavy furniture, turn off any lights or equipment, and silence your cell phone. Make as little noise as possible, stay low to the ground and conceal yourself behind large objects. Dial 911 only if it is safe to do so. Stay in this location unless a safe evacuation opportunity arises or an all-clear is issued by law enforcement on-site.
- Fight - If you cannot evacuate or hide from the assailant(s), attempt to disrupt or incapacitate them as a last resort. You can do so by acting as aggressively as possible, yelling, throwing items, and improvising weapons.

In all situations, as soon as it's safe - call the police.

NORTHWEST TRAIL ALLIANCE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. I understand that I must abide by the rules, policies and benefits contained in the Handbook as a volunteer with Northwest Trail Alliance. I further acknowledge that I have read it thoroughly, including the Code of Conduct.

I understand and agree to abide by all the rules and policies in the Handbook. I understand that any violations of these rules and/or policies may result in my being removed from my responsibilities as a volunteer with NWTa and/or asked to not participate in NWTa events as a volunteer.

In addition, I understand that the rules, policies, and benefits contained in the Handbook may be changed, modified, or terminated at any time at the Organization's sole discretion. I understand that the Handbook supersedes all prior handbooks and policies. I agree that nothing contained in the Handbook is intended to or may be construed as creating a contract of employment (express or implied).

Please sign and date this receipt.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____