

Volunteer Handbook



Introduction

The Board and staff of the Kerry Wood Nature Centre and Historic Fort Normandeau are proud of our many skilled volunteers who, over the years, have contributed enormously to our growth and ongoing success.

Volunteers are found in nearly every area of our operations and we couldn't do our work without them. Volunteering in our facilities means discovering the richness of Central Alberta's natural and cultural history. It also means gaining experience, learning new skills, meeting new friends, and having a lot of fun doing so!

This handbook acquaints volunteers with general information and the principles of our volunteer program. Keep this booklet, along with any other materials provided to you, for future reference. For further information, the Volunteer Policies and Procedures Manual may be obtained from your Volunteer Coordinator.

About the Waskasoo Environmental Education Society (WEES)

The Waskasoo Environmental Education Society operates the Kerry Wood Nature Centre, Allen Bungalow, Historic Fort Normandeau, the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary, and is responsible for natural and cultural history interpretation throughout the entire Waskasoo Park system. WEES is a non-profit charitable society governed by a volunteer board and managed by a professional staff of interpreters, educators and administrators. The Nature Centre and Fort offer an extensive program of natural and human history interpretation; environmental education; major special events; school, youth group and public programs; sleep-overs; day camps; Red Deer's first natural playspace/outdoor classroom; and outdoor music garden.

The facilities are owned by The City of Red Deer and are operated by WEES under a fee-for-service agreement with The City.

Governance

WEES is managed by an elected volunteer Board of Directors, with up to 10 citizens-at-large. One City Councillor appointed by the Mayor, and one representative of the Red Deer River Naturalists.

Philosophy: Understanding and appreciating our natural and cultural heritage benefits society.

Vision: A community that values and cares for its natural and cultural heritage

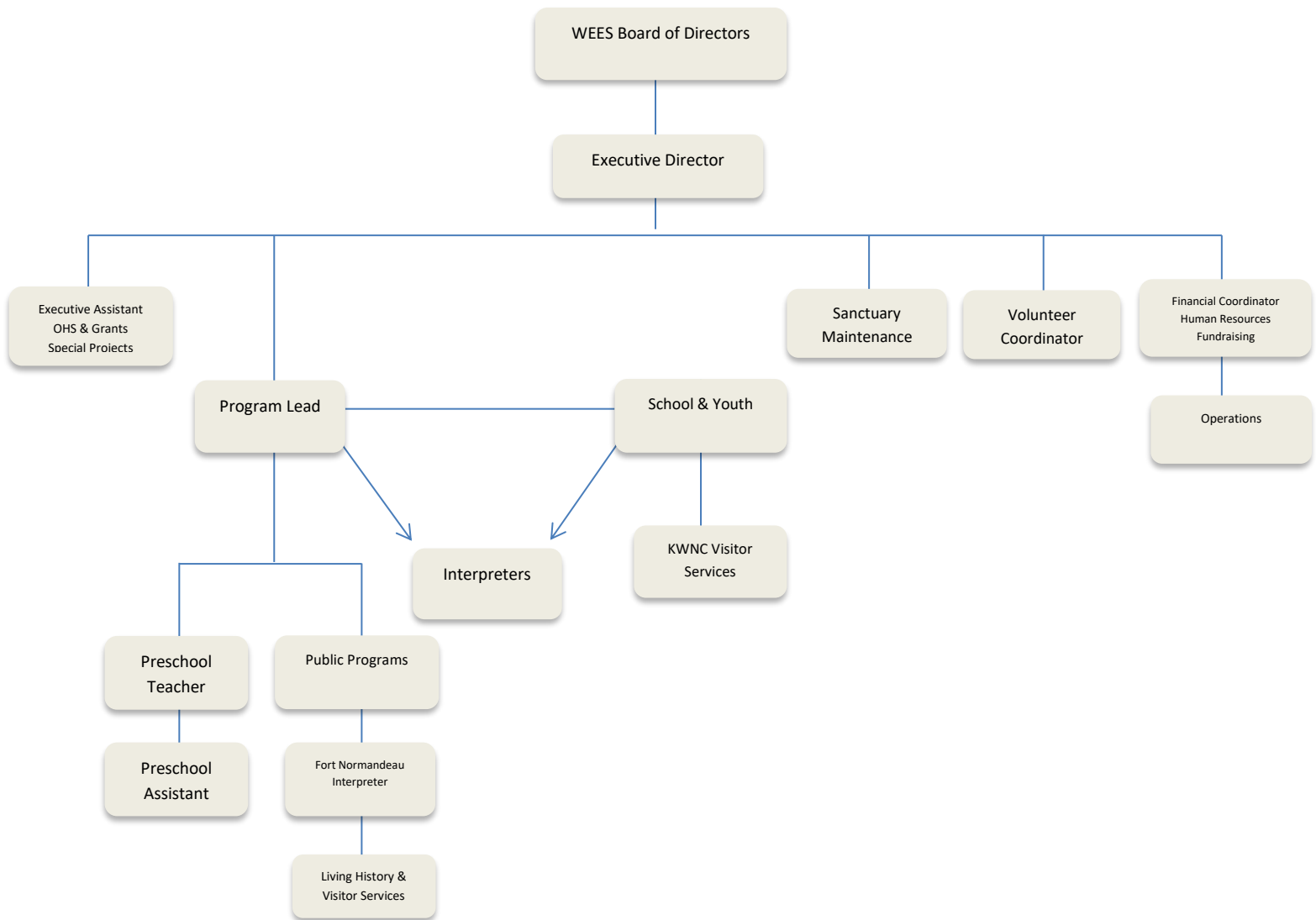
Mission: Our mission is to engage our community in our natural environment and cultural heritage through interpretation and education.

Mandate: To operate the facilities, sites and programs in accordance with the agreement established between the Waskasoo Environmental Education Society and The City of Red Deer.

The Friends of the Kerry Wood Nature Centre

Incorporated in 1986, the Friends of the Kerry Wood Nature Centre support the promotion of Central Alberta's natural history. The Friends operate refreshment counters and bookstores at the Nature Centre and Fort Normandeau, provide financial and volunteer assistance, and undertake fund-raising activities. Their activities complement those of WEES.

Organizational Structure



Volunteer Opportunities

- Serving on boards and committees
- Assisting and promoting programs and special events
- Helping to operate the front counter (reception) and book shop
- Data entry/clerical work
- Assisting with setup & cleanup for events
- Dressing up as a soldier, rebel, or settler at Fort Normandeau Days
- Face painting
- Hauling seed in from the shed into the Centre
- Assisting with building maintenance
- Working in the wildflower or heritage gardens
- Building bird houses, bird feeders and bat houses for the bookstore
- Making costumes for the Fort and Nature Centre
- Inventory and cleaning in the bookstore
- Assisting with the setup of tipis and festival tents
- Barbequing
- Planting trees
- Collecting garbage
- Changing garbage bags on trails
- Photography
- Invasive species management and maintenance in the Sanctuary
- Caring for aquarium and terrarium

Volunteer Training

The Volunteer Coordinator will provide you with a general orientation to the facilities and the volunteer services program. Specific training for each placement is provided by your immediate task supervisor (staff). You are encouraged to inform the Volunteer Coordinator and/or your task supervisor should you require more training with your job.

Insurance Coverage

Volunteers under the age of eighty (80 years old) are covered under WEES Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance policy while working on behalf of our organization. Any volunteers over the age of eighty are required to sign a waiver stating they understand that they are not covered under WEES' insurance policy.

Using Personal Vehicle for Society Business

Proof of valid insurance, registration and drivers license are required in order to use your personal vehicle for society business (running for supplies etc.).

Volunteer Records

Recording volunteer hours is an important part of our records. They also provide necessary statistical information for grant applications and other documentation, and help us provide a reference and recognition for you when appropriate.

- All hours worked need to be recorded in the Volunteer Hours binder located in the staff hallway next to the mailboxes.

Dressing Appropriately for Tasks

Please dress appropriately for the task assigned. If you are working outdoors, wear clothing and proper footwear (no flip flops) for the weather.

Like all staff, volunteers represent WEES while they are on shift. It is important to maintain a professional appearance while working at our facilities. Please refrain from wearing revealing clothing and offensive logos when volunteering.

Telephone Usage

Just as an employee, please limit personal calls and cellphone usage while in view of the public.

Library/Reading Room

You are welcome to use the collections held within our library. Please check with your supervisor, Volunteer Coordinator or Librarian about library procedures. Reference material may be photocopied at your expense.



Health and Safety

We strive to ensure the health and safety of our volunteers, staff and visitors. The following information is designed to assist you in reacting appropriately to health or safety issues. Please keep safety in mind while you work.

- **MUSTER POINT:** During an evacuation drill or emergency, proceed to the muster point of the facility and remain there until notified by emergency services or the fire marshal of the facility that it is safe to re-enter the facility. Muster point signs can be found in the parking lot of each facility. Make sure you familiarize yourself with each facility's emergency evacuation procedures posted at emergency exit door.
- The Emergency Response Manual is located at the front (information) desk of each facility.
- Each staff member of WEES has Standard First Aid AED/CPR Level C training or better.
- **Personal Protective Equipment:** The role of personal protective equipment (PPE) is to protect workers/volunteers from health or safety hazards associated with conditions at the worksite (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, sunscreen, bug spray, reflective vests etc.). PPE does not physically control a hazard, but it helps to reduce the effect or exposure of the hazard. Please make sure you have the appropriate PPE to perform a task. PPE is stored in the Program Supply Room. Ask your task supervisor for assistance.
- **FIRE DOORS (Bookstore):** In the event of a fire or power failure, the fire doors between the bookstore and main lobby of the building will close without warning. Do not stand or place anything under the doors.
- You have the right and the obligation to refuse unsafe work!
- Report any unsafe work conditions being performed by staff, volunteers or contractors. Anything that could harm staff, visitors, volunteers or contractors must be reported immediately to the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator.
- If you are directly involved in an accident or incident (any undesired event that could or does result in a loss), an incident report must be completed. Incident Report forms can be found in the Incident Report binder at the front desk. Any WEES staff member can assist you in filling out an incident report.
- **Contractor Orientation/Contractor Building Access:** all contractors (volunteer contractors *and* paid) are expected to read the Contractor Safety Orientation and sign the Contractor Building Access Log prior to beginning work at any WEES facility. The Contractor Building Access Log and Orientation Book is located at the front (information) desk.
- You are not expected to volunteer if you are ill, and as a health precaution we ask that you call in sick.

Evaluation

In order for our volunteer program to be the best that it can be, it is necessary that we review and evaluate our programs and services on an ongoing basis. Periodically you may be asked to participate in anonymous evaluations by your Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Support

The Volunteer Coordinator's responsibility is to support and manage volunteer involvement in our facilities. Duties include recruiting, screening, developing training, opportunities, and planning recognition for volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator is also your liaison; someone you can count on to provide information, listen to your concerns, bring forward ideas, and share a cup of tea with.

Contact:

Volunteer Resources

Email: volunteers@waskasopark.ca

Phone: 403-346-2010 ext. 113

Website: www.waskasopark.ca



Forget the box. Just think outside!

