

Volunteer Guidelines

Regional Parks

Capital Regional District | July 2026



CRD

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1. Introduction

1.1 CRD Regional Parks Mission

The mission defines the fundamental purpose of the regional parks and regional trails system, describing why it exists, what it does, and the level of performance to be met or surpassed.

The mission for regional parks and regional trails is to:

- Operate and manage a connected system of regional parks for public enjoyment.
- Foster stewardship of biodiversity by learning from and working with science and long-term land stewards and by connecting people to nature.
- Operate and manage a regional trail network for active transportation and recreation.
- Foster reconciliation by collaborating with First Nations in the operation and management of regional parks and regional trails through the establishment of traditional use agreements.
- Be fiscally responsible and accountable in decision-making.

1.2 History of Volunteer Program

Volunteers have played a vital role in supporting our programs and services since the inception of the Capital Regional District (CRD) and CRD Regional Parks in 1966. Early community involvement in regional parks emerged through spontaneous acts of goodwill—visitors clearing branches from trails, picking up litter, and reporting trail and facility conditions to staff.

The first volunteers in regional parks were Volunteer Work Experience students in the late 1970s. These students contributed a specified number of hours under staff supervision in exchange for practical experience.

The formal volunteer program launched in 1982 with the introduction of the Volunteer Beekeeper and Volunteer Warden (now known as our Park Stewards) programs. In that year, we recruited four Volunteer Wardens and a single Volunteer Beekeeper.

Since then, the program has expanded significantly to include a diverse range of volunteer roles—long-term, short-term, and episodic. Each year, hundreds of individuals contribute their time, energy, and passion to help sustain and enhance our regional parks.

1.3 CRD Regional Parks Volunteer Program – Vision and Mission

1.3.1 Vision

The vision of Volunteer Services is that Regional Parks be the first choice for skilled and committed volunteers who value environmental protection and outdoor experience.

Volunteer Services will be a model for other community volunteer programs and recognised for the partnership between staff and volunteers and the positive changes that volunteers make toward the protection of regional parks and trails.

1.3.2 Mission

The mission of Volunteer Services is to provide meaningful, diverse and innovative volunteer opportunities. These opportunities protect the natural environment of regional parks and trails and help regional residents remain in close touch with nature. Volunteer Services strengthens connections with volunteers that foster citizen involvement in the stewardship of regional parks and trails.

Regional Parks values the volunteer ethic and believes that public involvement is an essential resource in our parkland and our community. Regional Parks recognises that one of the best ways to achieve department goals is to strengthen and encourage volunteer participation.

2. Applications and Signing Up

2.1 Volunteering Conditions

CRD Regional Parks is committed to fostering inclusive volunteer opportunities for individuals of all ages, while prioritizing safety and supervision, therefore:

- Volunteers under the age of 14 must volunteer with a parent or guardian;
- Volunteers between the ages of 14 and 18 may participate independently with written parental or guardian consent. These volunteers must be assigned to roles with staff supervision; and
- Volunteers who are working independently must be 19 or over.

2.2 Diversity

CRD Regional Parks values the diversity of staff, volunteers, and the people we serve. In our commitment to bring differing perspectives to our workplace, and to deliver the best possible service to our customers, we encourage and welcome volunteer applications from people with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and lived experiences. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where volunteers of all genders, ethnicities, religions, cultures, ages, body sizes, socioeconomic backgrounds, abilities and sexual orientations are treated with respect, equity, and consideration. Volunteers who require an accommodation to participate can submit a confidential request to parksvolunteer@crd.bc.ca.

2.3 Applying and Signing Up

Volunteers can begin their involvement with CRD Regional Parks through one of the following pathways:

- Filling out an application form: Regular volunteers are required to complete an application form. This process includes screening and onboarding and ensures coverage under CRD's volunteer insurance program.
- Signing a Liability Waiver: For single events, or for individuals who prefer not to be included in our volunteer database, signing a liability waiver is required prior to commencing volunteering.
- Partner Organizations: Regional Parks often partners with other organizations through License Agreement or Stewardship Agreement. In these cases, volunteers do not need to register with the CRD if they are registered with the partnering organization, and the partnering organization has insurance for volunteer activities.

2.4 Screening

Screening is the process used to assess whether a volunteer is suited for a specific role within CRD Regional Parks.

2.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are conducted for volunteer positions that involve independent work and direct interaction with the public. These interviews help ensure that volunteers are well-suited to the responsibilities of the role and can represent CRD Regional Parks effectively.

For roles that are directly supervised by staff or do not involve public interaction, interviews are considered optional, but may still be conducted to assess volunteer knowledge, experience, or suitability for specific roles.

2.4.2 Criminal Record Checks

The CRD requires Vulnerable Sector Checks for volunteers who may interact with the public and who are working without the direct supervision of staff.

If a Vulnerable Sector Check returns unclear, the CRD's People, Safety & Culture (PS&C) Division will be consulted, to provide advice on the hiring decision.

2.4.3 Reference Checks

Reference checks are conducted following the interview process.

Staff will contact two references provided by the applicant and confirm that the CRD can contact the references given, which may include volunteer, professional, or personal references. Reference checks may be conducted via phone or email.

2.5 Volunteer Placement

Volunteer placement is determined at the discretion of the Coordinator of Volunteers or other authorized staff, based on a combination of factors including needs of the organization, experience, and screening. Placement is not guaranteed for all applicants.

Changes to volunteer placement are also subject to the discretion and approval of the Coordinator of Volunteers or other authorized staff. A change may be requested by the volunteer or initiated by staff if the current placement is deemed unsuitable.

Suitability is assessed based on the volunteer's ability to perform assigned duties effectively and to represent the CRD and CRD Regional Parks in a positive and professional manner.

3. Insurance

All volunteers must be covered by appropriate insurance before participating in activities with CRD Regional Parks. Coverage may be provided through one of the following:

- CRD's Volunteer Insurance program
- A signed liability waiver for specific events or roles
- Insurance coverage through a partnering organization

3.1 CRD Volunteer Insurance

The Capital Regional District insures registered volunteers for the following:

Commercial General Liability: this is coverage against claims arising from negligence causing death, personal injury or property damage to a third party.

Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance: this is coverage against personal injury suffered by volunteers while participating in CRD approved activities.

EXCLUSIONS AND LIMITS OF INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEERS:

CRD arranged insurance coverage will not extend to volunteers who have not registered with the CRD Volunteer Registry.

CRD arranged insurance coverage will not extend to volunteers who have been hired or engaged by another municipality or any other third party organizations.

CRD arranged insurance coverage will not extend to unapproved activities, nor to slander or gross negligence.

CRD arranged Accident Insurance coverage will not extend to any volunteer aged 87 years or over, weekly indemnity coverage ends at 70.

LIMITS OF COVERAGE:

The following are the levels of insurance provided by the CRD to registered volunteers:

Commercial General Liability:

CRD Self Insured to \$2,000,000

Purchased Excess Liability \$20,000,000

Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance:

<i>Accidental Death & Dismemberment</i>	<i>\$100,000 maximum</i>
<i>Weekly indemnity (up to age 70)</i>	<i>\$250 per week for up to 52 weeks</i>
<i>Accidental reimbursement benefit</i>	<i>\$1,000 maximum</i>
 <i>Accidental dental benefit</i>	 <i>\$2,500 maximum per accident</i>

Standard policy conditions and exclusions apply. Refer to policy wordings.

4. Orientations and Training

Depending on the role, orientation and training may include a combination of the following:

- In-person orientation sessions;
- E-mailed or online instructions;
- Handbooks and printed resources, including access to the Nature House libraries;
- Recorded training modules;
- Job shadowing and mentoring;
- On-the-job training prior to beginning work (e.g. identifying and removing specific invasive plant species);
- Continuing education sessions; and
- Safety instructions by staff or qualified instructors.

4.1 Ongoing Training and Education

CRD Regional Parks offers free ongoing training and educational opportunities through the volunteer program. These sessions may include education about local ecosystems, Indigenous perspectives and/or safety and procedural training.

Volunteers are required to stay current with all safety and procedural training necessary for their roles.

5. Safety

CRD Regional Parks is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all volunteers. Every volunteer is entitled to work under conditions that prioritize their physical and psychological safety.

5.1 Physical Safety

Volunteers have a right to physical safety and to instruction and training that will prioritize their safety while performing their duties. Physical safety refers to the absence of harm to one's body.

Volunteers will be given an appropriate safety orientation prior to commencing any volunteer activities and will receive any specific safety training at intervals set by the CRD. Volunteers will be provided with an understanding of the risks that are inherent in any activity they undertake and will be instructed in the measures that the CRD takes to reduce risk to the lowest practical level. Volunteers are not expected to take any action which would cause harm to themselves or to any other person and can refuse to conduct any action which they believe could cause harm to themselves or others. All volunteers are expected to diligently follow all instruction provided by the CRD regarding health and safety including administrative controls and the wearing of assigned Personal Protective Equipment.

5.2 Psychological Safety

Volunteers have a right to psychological safety. Psychological safety means volunteers are free to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas without fear of harassment, bullying, discrimination, or retaliation. It also includes access to information and training that promotes respectful interactions, cultural awareness, and inclusive practices. If a volunteer feels unsafe with a staff member, or other volunteer, they are encouraged to speak with the Coordinator of Volunteers. If the concern involves the Coordinator of Volunteers, the volunteer may speak with the Manager of Visitor Experience and Stewardship.

5.3 Reporting Unsafe Conditions

It is of vital importance that volunteers report any condition or act that could cause themselves or others to be harmed. This can be done by making contact directly with the Coordinator of Volunteers, or, if required, to the Manager of Visitor Experience and Stewardship. Until further direction is provided and safety is assured, the activity of concern will be suspended, and priority will always be given to the safety of volunteers, staff and the public.

6. Volunteer Code of Ethics

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to support a culture of openness, trust, and integrity in all Regional Parks volunteer practices. Below is the Volunteer Code of Ethics:

As volunteers at Regional Parks we are dedicated to interacting with park/trail visitors to facilitate emotional and intellectual connections between visitors and their environment, which are reflected in their positive behavior within the parks/trails.

We are committed to conducting all volunteer affairs and activities with the highest standards of ethical conduct:

- We realise that when we wear our CRD volunteer name tags we are the face of Regional Parks and as such, we will conduct ourselves in such a manner that is a credit to us, Volunteer Services, and Regional Parks, and will maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, service, and performance.*
- Parks volunteer status is not used as a source of or basis for developing business contacts for personal or family gain.*
- The special knowledge that we may have due to our status as a volunteer will not be used to promote personal, association/club or professional agendas with regard to parks planning.*
- We will comply with applicable government laws, rules and regulations and proactively promote ethical conduct within regional parks and on trails.*
- We are courteous and respectful of others and their views. We will speak in support of Regional Parks to park/trail visitors. In the course of our volunteer duties, we will not agree or disagree with park/trail visitors that make negative or critical statements about regional parks. We will instead refer parks visitors with concerns, interests, or complaints to Regional Parks Headquarters.*
- We are committed to treating each other and those with whom we interact, of all ethnicities, religions, cultures, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, abilities and sexual orientations with respect and consideration.*

- *We are committed to knowing and following established program guidelines and policies and will be responsible for staying current with Regional Parks volunteer information and participating in continuing education and ongoing training.*
- *We will diligently, honestly, and to the best of our ability carry out the agreed-upon duties as outlined in the appropriate Volunteer Position Description.*
- *We will promote a spirit of cooperation in all activities.*
- *We will seek advance advice from the Coordinator of Volunteers about the propriety of any action or inaction that we have reason to believe may be or may lead to a violation of the Volunteer Code of Ethics & Conduct before we or others engage in the activity.*

7. Exiting

Exiting is a natural part of the volunteer cycle. Volunteers may choose to end their involvement with CRD Regional Parks at any time, either temporarily or permanently, depending on their personal circumstances.

7.1 Resignations

Volunteers may choose to resign from their role at any time. Upon resignation, their file will be archived, and they are welcome to reapply and participate in the program again in the future.

7.2 Inactivity

Volunteer inactivity is a natural part of any volunteer program. Some volunteers may not begin their roles after applying, while others may become inactive due to changing personal circumstances.

CRD Regional Parks will make reasonable efforts to reach out to inactive volunteers, offering support and encouragement to help them re-engage with the program. If a volunteer has been inactive for over one year and has not responded to two or more communication attempts, their file will be archived. Archived volunteers are welcome to reapply and participate in the program again in the future, should their circumstances change.

7.3 Dismissal

Dismissals are handled with care and consideration and typically occur when a volunteer is unable to meet the expectations of their role or when safety, conduct, or suitability concerns arise.

Dismissals are made at the discretion of the Coordinator of Volunteers or other authorized staff. Before considering dismissal, staff will make every reasonable effort to address concerns—such as offering additional training, mentoring, or adjusting a volunteer’s placement—to support volunteer success in their role.

Volunteers are expected to work with staff, volunteers and members of the public respectfully, cooperatively, professionally and safely. Volunteers will comply with instructions from staff and adhere to all applicable CRD guidelines and policies. Failure to abide by these expectations could lead to dismissal.

The following behaviors constitute serious misconduct and will result in immediate dismissal:

- Physical violence towards a staff member, volunteer or member of the public;
- Physical violence towards a staff member, volunteer or member of the public’s property;
- Purposeful destruction or vandalism of CRD equipment or infrastructure;

- Verbal abuse or psychological violence towards a staff member, volunteer or member of the public including discrimination, bullying, intimidation or harassment; and
- Sexual harassment or other inappropriate conduct with a staff member, volunteer or member of the public.

Volunteers who are dismissed for serious misconduct are not eligible to reapply for roles within the CRD Regional Parks volunteer program.

8. Acknowledgement

Volunteers are at the heart of the Regional Parks community. Through your dedication, stewardship, and passion for the natural environment, you play a vital role in protecting, preserving, and enhancing our parks for current and future generations. Your contributions make a lasting difference, and we are deeply grateful for the time, energy, and expertise you share. We sincerely thank you for your commitment and look forward to continuing this meaningful work together.