



## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES, PROCEDURES & STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

*Red Wiggler Community Farm depends on the support of hundreds of volunteers each year. We appreciate the time, talent and expertise each volunteer offers. This document is meant to inform volunteers of relevant policies and procedures so that volunteers and staff have a mutual understanding of expectations. Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Red Wiggler!*

### **Volunteer Policy**

Red Wiggler Community Farm (RWCF) maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. RWCF recruits, accepts, trains, promotes, and dismisses volunteers on the basis of personal competence and job performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status or handicap. **Who is a volunteer?** A volunteer is an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment, contributes time and service to assist RWCF in the accomplishment of its mission.

### **Volunteer Procedures**

#### **Application Form**

Potential volunteers are required to complete an application for a position at RWCF.

#### **Background Check**

Adult volunteers are required to complete a background check. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted by RWCF. Under Maryland law, we must refuse applicants convicted of assault and battery or child abuse. All other convictions will be reviewed on an individual basis.

#### **Orientation/Interviewing**

All volunteers must attend a one-hour Volunteer Orientation. During this orientation, prospective volunteers will interact with a staff member of RWCF and will have the opportunity to learn about the organization, its mission, and the specifics for the job. The interaction will allow us to learn more about the applicant to determine if the applicant's interests and commitment are compatible with the mission of the organization. All volunteer Farm Interns will be interviewed by phone and have an on farm interview/orientation as stated above.

#### **Acceptance**

If a potential volunteer meets the needs of the organization, service of the volunteer will begin with the official acceptance of the volunteer by the staff by phone, email, or in person.

**Training**

All volunteers will receive training about the organization and its mission, policies and procedures, and needed information concerning their job or jobs. Our staff will have the primary responsibility for the organization of the training materials, time and location of the training, and content of the training. Given the seasonal nature of the work at RWCF, task specific training will be done as applicable in the fields.

**Probationary Period**

All volunteers must go through a 10-hour probationary period. During this probationary period, volunteers will work under close supervision.

**Supervision**

Every volunteer will have an identified supervisor who will be responsible for the day to day support and direction.

**Right of Refusal**

Volunteers have the right to refuse an assignment. Contact the appropriate supervisor so changes can be made as needed.

**Feedback and Evaluation**

Volunteers will be asked to evaluate their experience at the farm. This will be done through frequent informal dialogue, a written evaluation, and exit interviews for Volunteer Farm Interns. Feedback and evaluations will be used to inform changes to our programs.

**Recognition**

Volunteer service is very valuable to RWCF. Volunteers will be recognized informally and formally. Awards will be given for both the number of hours served and any special projects completed. These awards will be announced during the season and also acknowledged at the Annual Harvest Celebration and in the Annual Report when appropriate.

**Advancement**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to gain more responsibility within their role when appropriate. In addition, volunteers are welcome to apply for available employment opportunities when applicable.

**Confidentiality**

A confidential system of records will be maintained on RWCF volunteers, including the application, background check, emergency information, dates and hours of service. Volunteer records will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to the appropriate RWCF staff. All requests for information about volunteers must be through the appropriate RWCF staff member.

**Volunteer Hours**

Volunteers are responsible for signing in and out upon each visit on their personal log sheet in the Volunteer Log binder. This allows RWCF to provide recognition of service, and provides RWCF with tracking data. Volunteers may obtain a letter certifying their record of volunteer hours.

**Facilities and Office Equipment**

Volunteers will park in the designated area discussed at orientation. All equipment, facilities and grounds are expected to be treated with respect and well cared for by all volunteers. The appropriate RWCF staff

member must authorize use of the office equipment such as the fax, phone, and computer. Volunteers will have access to the equipment they need to perform their assigned duties.

### **Media Contact**

Volunteers may not speak to the media, as an official or unofficial spokesperson of RWCF, without prior clearance from the Executive Director.

### **Absenteeism and Tardiness**

Volunteers are expected to be reliable, punctual and dependable. If a volunteer plans to be late for their scheduled time, they must notify the appropriate RWCF supervisor. A volunteer may be terminated from their position due to continued absenteeism or tardiness.

### **Discontinuation of Volunteers**

A RWCF volunteer has the right to terminate their service for any reason, or no reason. RWCF reserves the same right, when a volunteer does not uphold standards of conduct or maintain an adequate record of attendance.

### **Exit Interview**

If a volunteer wishes to leave their service for any reason, they should contact the appropriate RWCF supervisor. This will allow RWCF to evaluate the volunteer's experience at RWCF when appropriate.

### **Dismissal**

Volunteers who fail to adhere to the policies of RWCF or satisfactorily perform their assignments may be subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for dismissal with the appropriate RWCF supervisor. There will be a written evaluation prior to the dismissal of a volunteer when appropriate.

### **Immediate Dismissal**

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to: gross misconduct or insubordination, breach of confidentiality, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing your assigned job, theft of property or misuse of agency equipment or materials, illegal, violent, or unsafe acts, or abuse (physical and /or emotional or mistreatment of clients, volunteers, of staff).

## **Volunteer Standards of Conduct**

*All volunteers must adhere to the standards of conduct established by RWCF to fulfill the mission of RWCF.*

### **Dignity**

It is important to be sensitive at all times to the dignity of the RWCF employees and treat everyone with respect. Not only does this mean speaking to everyone at an age-appropriate level, but also recognizing their presence whenever you are with them.

### **Privacy**

Never discuss the problems and/or confidences of RWCF employees and volunteers with anyone who does not have a professional right to know.

### **Confidentiality**

There may be times when it becomes your duty to report confidential matters to persons in authority. Please direct your concerns privately to the appropriate staff member and no one else.

## **Cell Phone/Electronics Policy**

*The purpose of the following guidelines is to ensure the safety of RWCF workers, as well as to keep the RW vision of creating fertile ground for an inclusive community alive and well.*

- RWCF strongly discourages volunteers from carrying cell phones with them during their volunteer time. Phones distract us from our work and are easily lost in the field. Volunteers are welcome to leave phones and other belongings in the Program Building. In the case of emergencies, parents, guardians and other important contacts should call Red Wiggler (301 916-2216) directly instead of relying on a volunteer's cell phone.
- RWCF is not responsible for lost or damaged cell phones.
- Any cell phones carried during work time must be on silent mode.
- No cell phone use is allowed during work time. If there is an urgent need to use a phone, unrelated to Red Wiggler operations, volunteers must find a space out of hearing of the rest of the group to make the necessary call.
- RWCF does not allow the charging of personal electronic devices on the premises.
- No earplugs or Bluetooth headsets are allowed.
- Please ask individual permission before taking photos of any RWCF employee or volunteer, and ask a supervising staff member before posting any photos to social media.
- The mission of RWCF includes the creation of an inclusive community. This is accomplished by our working together in the fields, as well as eating together at lunch and taking the time to get to know each other. We ask that our volunteers honor this by not using cell phones within hearing of the group during our lunch hour.

## **Harassment Policy**

Harassment includes sexual, racial and otherwise hostile, intimidating, or offensive behaviors. It is the policy of RWCF to treat every person with the respect and kindness they would want for themselves. Any volunteer who feels harassed should speak to their supervisor in an attempt to reach a resolution. It is the staff member's duty to listen to such complaints and to refer them the appropriate authority.

## **Grievance/Complaint Procedure**

Grievances and /or complaints concerning the work environment should be reported promptly to the appropriate staff member. Every effort will be made to achieve a speedy and effective resolution. All grievances/complaints are treated as confidential.

## **Personal Hygiene**

RWCF vegetables are food! All volunteers must wash their hands before handling food. Hands must be washed thoroughly after using the restroom.

## **Consumption of Food**

Volunteers should bring lunch in containers that do not require refrigeration. Food may not be eaten from the fields without permission of RWCF staff.

## **Honesty**

Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a high level of integrity and honesty in all aspects of their job performance. Honesty includes not falsifying information, not stealing from RWCF or any RWCF volunteer or employee.

## **Appropriate Language**

Use of profane, foul, or abusive language is not permitted on RWCF property.

## **Smoking**

RWCF is a smoke-free property.

## **Drug and Alcohol**

Purchasing, transferring, using or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal is prohibited while participating in RWCF activities and/or on RWCF property.

# **Workplace Safety**

*RWCF takes workplace safety seriously and works to provide safe conditions for its volunteers, consistent with operating in a farm environment that includes heavy outdoor work, large equipment, wildlife, and extreme weather.*

## **Personal Responsibility**

Volunteers should be alert and cognizant of their own safety while working at RWCF.

## **First Aid Kits**

First Aid kits are available to take care of minor injuries. This is not a substitute for professional medical attention.

## ***Safety concerns on the farm include but are not limited to:***

### **Heat Stroke**

Hourly water breaks are strongly encouraged. Hourly water breaks are strictly enforced when the temperature is over 90 degrees. The breaks should be in a shady area and for at least 5 minutes. Everyone is expected to bring their own refillable water bottle. In addition to group water breaks, individuals should take water breaks as needed.

### **Insects**

Be aware of all insects in your surroundings. Ticks, mosquitos, and other insects may cause painful bites and carry infectious diseases. Conduct self-examination at the end of your workday.

### **Sun Safety**

RWCF encourages the use of sun protection including: hats, sunglasses, light colored clothing with long sleeves, and/or sunscreen. RWCF encourages you to bring your own sunscreen to reapply throughout the day.

### **Dress for Safety**

For work in the fields, greenhouse, and barn, RWCF encourages all volunteers to wear the following clothing:

- Hats appropriate for sun and insect protection

- Light colors in hot weather
- Sturdy pants – minimum below the knee (no shorts). Do not wear leggings or yoga pants.
- Closed-toe shoes with a rough sole

Safety glasses, hard hats, and work gloves will be available and should be worn when necessary.

### **Thunderstorm Policy**

Under the direction of staff, whenever thunder or lightning is present, all volunteers will move indoors until 30 minutes has passed with no thunder or lightning. The Executive Director and Managers have discretion to assess the situation during the 30 minute hold, and allow exceptions on a limited basis.

### **Equipment / Tools**

Tools and equipment should not be used without proper authorization and supervision from the appropriate staff member. Tools and equipment may only be used for the tasks for which they are intended.

### **Machinery**

Proper distance from all motorized machinery is no less than 50 feet. This 50-foot distance should be maintained at all times. Only authorized staff members may operate motorized machinery.

### **Abuse**

At no time should a RWCF volunteer be a victim of abuse by any RWCF volunteer or employee. It is our policy to assure that firm disciplinary action is taken against those who engage in abuse.

Abuse is defined as:

1. Physical, psychological, or verbal mistreatment which may hurt or wrongly use an individual.
2. Any injury that is afflicted willfully.
3. Inhumane treatment.
4. Lack of provision of basic sustenance.
5. Sexual Abuse:
  - A sexual act, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (e) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
  - Sexual contact, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (f) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.
  - Intercourse, as defined in Article 27, S 461 (g) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

For the purpose of this policy, abuse does not include the performance of:

1. An accepted medical procedure that a physician orders.
2. An accepted behavioral procedure that is either ordered by a licensed psychologist or formulated by the school or Maryland Vocational Training Center or job coach. The behavioral procedure must conform to other appropriate RW policies.
3. Acts on the part of a RWCF employee or volunteer which occur in self-defense shall not be considered abusive if the act is one which meets force with the least amount of force necessary to protect oneself. However, overreaction in the name of self-defense shall also be considered abuse.

### **Incidents Reports**

Incidents include: abuse (as defined in the above paragraph), unusual circumstances, injuries, accidents and

situations that could develop into accidents. If an incident occurs involving or witnessed by a volunteer, the appropriate staff member should be informed immediately. Incidents need to be documented on paper within 24 hours. There will be an incident form to fill out.

### **Legal Liability**

As a volunteer you agree to assume the risk of any injury or accident to person or property which you may sustain in connection with your participation with RWCF. In addition, you agree to release and discharge RWCF and any of its directors, officers, employees, volunteers, partners, and affiliates and successors from any and all liability or responsibility for any such accident or injury.

### **Certificate of Ability**

A volunteer may be asked to present a certificate from the physician if they have indicated they are under the care of a physician for any physical or psychological ailment which might impede their ability to perform their duties safely. If a volunteer enters a course of treatment, which might adversely impact the performance of their duties, they should consult with the appropriate RWCF staff member.

### **Safeguarding Possessions**

Volunteers are responsible for safeguarding their personal possessions while on RWCF property.

### **Medical Release**

In the event that an emergency should arise while volunteering at RWCF requiring medical treatment, authorization is needed by RWCF to select and designate nurses, physicians, and/or surgeons to furnish medical and/or surgical care. Authorization is needed for such surgical care as is determined to be necessary by the judgment of a physician and/or surgeon holding a physician's surgeon certificate issued by the Board of Medical Examiners of the State of Maryland. This authorization absolves RWCF, nurses, physicians, and/or surgeons selected and designated by them, from any and all liability for their acts rendered in good faith.