

Kitsap County Parks Department

# Volunteer Handbook

*~Last updated August 2023~*



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# Section 1. Introduction

## Purpose

*Kitsap County and the Kitsap County Parks Department are dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring natural and cultural resources and park and recreation facilities for present and future generations.*

Thousands of volunteers donate their time, skills, and expertise to Kitsap County, including to the Kitsap County Parks Department. Volunteering provides opportunities to develop and sharpen skills, explore new interests, meet a diverse range of people, network professionally and within the community, and improve mental and physical health.

The Parks Department operates a volunteer program designed to promote partnerships between the Parks Department and the community. Volunteers collaborate with the Parks Department to provide quality parks and programs that serve visitors and residents of Kitsap County.

## Welcome Volunteers!

Volunteers are an integral part of the Parks Department's management and preservation of Kitsap County parks. Kitsap County supports and appreciates volunteer dedication to enrich natural resource programs, promote positive visitor experiences, and enhance community relations.

This handbook is intended to inform prospective volunteers and serve as a reference when volunteering with the Kitsap County Parks Department. It provides general guidelines for volunteer and public safety, presents administrative procedures, and outlines volunteer standards and ethics. The guidelines in this handbook will not be interpreted as promises of specific treatment or deemed to create a vested contractual right with any volunteer. Kitsap County may amend, modify, delete, alter, supplement, suspend, or terminate any statements or policies in this handbook at any time, with or without notice. The County reserves the right to deviate from statements or policies in this handbook in individual situations to avoid disruptions in the County's public function, or to achieve the County's primary mission.

## **Thank You!**

We appreciate the contributions made by volunteers and strive to make volunteering a positive experience. Kitsap County relies on the commitment and contributions of volunteers to effectively serve the needs of the community. For any questions about matters covered in this handbook, please contact the Parks Department as indicated below.

Sincerely,  
Kitsap County Parks Department

## **Contact Information**

**Phone:** (360) 337-5350

**Email:** [parks@kitsap.gov](mailto:parks@kitsap.gov)

**Website:** [www.kitsapgov.com/parks](http://www.kitsapgov.com/parks)

### **Mailing Address:**

614 Division St, MS-1,  
Port Orchard, WA 98366

### **Office Location:**

1195 NW Fairgrounds Road  
Bremerton, WA 98311

Open Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

(closed on Weekends & Holidays)

# Section 2. County Organization

## Kitsap County Mission

Kitsap County government exists to protect and promote the safety, health, and welfare of our citizens in an efficient, accessible, and effective manner.

## County Commissioners

Kitsap County is represented by a board of three Commissioners, who divide the county into three commissioner districts of nearly equal population in the North, Central, and South geographical areas of the County. The Parks Director reports directly to the Board of County Commissioners.

## Parks Advisory Board

The Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board is comprised of nine appointed members, three from each County Commissioner District. The Board functions as an interface between the community and the County. The Board provides advice to the Parks Department and makes recommendations to the Commissioners concerning acquisition, development, and administration of park facilities throughout the County. The Board also works on special projects and policy development as needed. Board meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. and are open to the public. Meeting locations and agendas can be found on the [Kitsap County Parks website](#).

## Parks Department, Natural Resources, and Volunteers

The Parks Department is multifaceted, with divisions in Administration, Marketing & Events, Maintenance & Operations, Capital Projects, Natural Resources, and Planning (see the “Parks Department Organization Chart” in the [Appendix](#)). The Parks Department volunteer program is managed within Natural Resources and is primarily established to assist with land management activities such as non-native and invasive weed control, trail construction and maintenance, forestry and environmental science education, park enhancement projects, and forest health monitoring. For this work, volunteers work directly with the Natural Resources Division to enhance County parks for visitors and protect natural resources within them. Volunteers may assist with other parks-related tasks when need, skill, and desire align. Depending on the type of work performed, volunteers might serve under the direction of other Parks Department staff, rather than Natural Resources Coordinators.

## Section 3. Volunteer Standards and Ethics

Kitsap County has enacted an ethics code applicable to all county employees (see chapter 3.25 Kitsap County Code). While provisions within that code might not be directly applicable to volunteers, the Parks Department has established the following standards for the health, safety, and well-being of volunteers, members of the public impacted by volunteer services, Kitsap County employees who oversee volunteer services, and flora, fauna, timber, and ecosystems within the parks. All Kitsap County volunteers must:

**Lead by example.** Volunteers are representatives of Kitsap County and must adhere to all County rules and regulations. This includes park code, rules, policies, practices, and direction from staff. The [Kitsap County Park Code is available online](#) or in the [Appendix](#). A hard copy of this handbook is available, upon request.

**Be courteous and respectful to the public.** Volunteers are expected to treat park users with respect and courtesy. If a member of the public is causing a disturbance and a volunteer needs assistance, please contact County staff. If a volunteer encounters a homeless encampment, do not approach. Call Kitsap1 at (360) 337-5777. If a volunteer or park visitor is threatened or believed to be in danger, please call 9-1-1. Volunteers may also report issues through [SeeClickFix, available online](#) or through a phone application.

**Be courteous and respectful to County staff and fellow volunteers.** Volunteers are expected to always treat fellow volunteers and staff with respect and courtesy. If a conflict arises that cannot be resolved between volunteers or staff, the Parks Director will be informed to help achieve a solution.

**Be respectful of County property.** Volunteers are not permitted to use any County office, facility, or employee for the procurement of anything for personal use or convert for personal use any County-owned material, equipment, or services. All borrowed tools and equipment must be returned in a timely manner, in original condition. Fauna and wildlife within parks may not be disturbed except as directed by Parks Department staff.

**Understand role of limited authority.** Volunteers are not authorized to contract on behalf of the Parks Department or Kitsap County or financially obligate the Parks Department or Kitsap County in any way. A volunteer must not use the County's name to request and receive special discount privileges or special services from County suppliers of materials, equipment, or services, except as authorized by County policy. A volunteer must not represent the Parks Department or Kitsap County in any official capacity as a volunteer without prior written approval of the Parks Director.

**Contribute to a safe and healthy community through action.** Using or possessing tobacco or marijuana products is not permitted in County offices, buildings, County

vehicles, or while performing volunteer services. Volunteers must not perform volunteer tasks or attend official County meetings while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Volunteers should not work while under the influence of any medication that impairs judgment or physical ability.

**Serving as a volunteer, donating time without pay.** Volunteers receive no wages from Kitsap County for their County volunteer service. While performing volunteer services for the County, volunteers may not solicit contributions on behalf of themselves or organizations they are members of or represent. No volunteer may sell or trade goods or services on County property unless expressly authorized by the Parks Director.

**Accountability to uphold standards.** Failure to meet standards and ethics described in this handbook, or as may be regulated by law or regulation, may result in a meeting with Parks staff or Natural Resources Coordinators to discuss the matter. The County reserves the right to suspend a volunteer pending further review of the behavior, provide an opportunity for the volunteer to improve, or dismiss the volunteer from the Parks Volunteer Program. All volunteers serve on an “at will” basis, meaning that volunteers are free to stop volunteering at any time, and Kitsap County may require a volunteer to stop volunteering at any time without advance notice and without cause.



# Section 4. Park Volunteer Opportunities

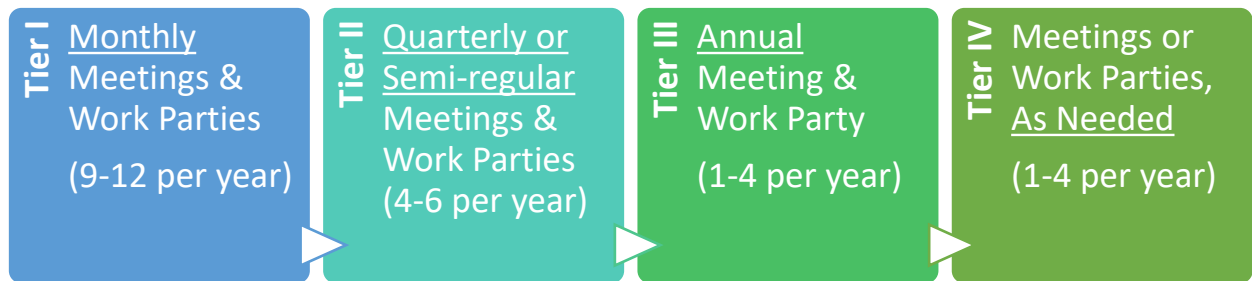
The Kitsap County Parks Department values and relies on volunteerism to increase staff capacity by creating community partnerships to manage and maintain parks, natural resources, and other recreation facilities. The Parks Department offers a variety of opportunities for community members, groups, and organizations to get involved. Below, volunteer opportunities are outlined in order of estimated time commitment.

## Park Stewardship Groups

***Time commitment: 5+ hours per month***

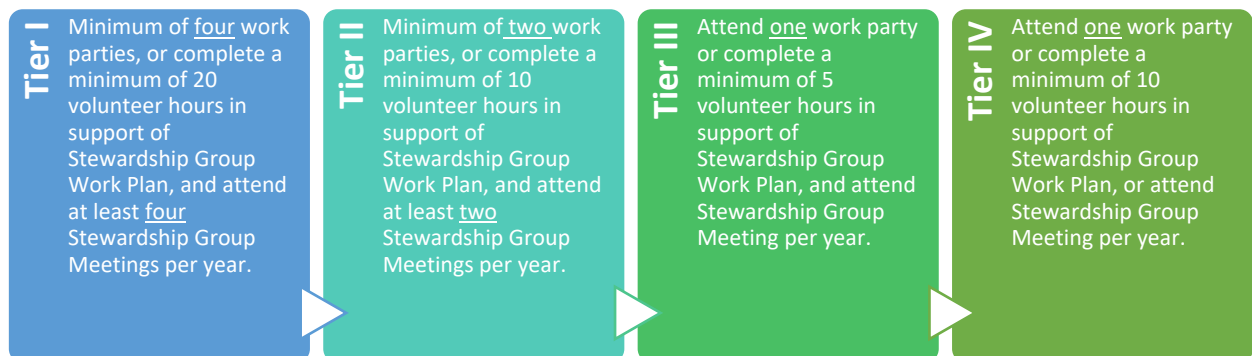
Stewardship groups are established at selected parks. These groups are highly organized, have regular or semi-regular meetings, work parties, and overall provide support to the Parks Department. Each Park Stewardship Group may adapt a structure pertaining to one of four “tiers.”

### Stewardship Group Tiers (According to Frequency of Meetings and Work Parties)



***By attending stewardship group meetings and work parties, volunteers are eligible to become Park Stewards.*** Park Stewards support a variety of non-motorized recreation appropriate to the ecological characteristics of the land, working within the capacity of the Parks Department. Group meetings and work parties are open to all, although stewardship group leadership, or *Park Steward* status, is defined by reaching a threshold of participation according to each tier the Stewardship Group identifies with:

### Requirements for Park Stewards (According to Tier)



Other means of achieving Park Steward status will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Park Stewards work closely with Kitsap Parks staff, interact with visiting public and partners, and function as part of a cohesive team to accomplish Park Stewardship Group goals, thus Park Stewards must adhere to additional standards, as outlined in the **Stewardship Group Standards** section in the [Appendix](#).

***Benefits of becoming a Park Steward*** include leadership and training opportunities, involvement with park development and planning, invitations to attend classes and events offered by Parks Department staff, independent or team-focused park project support, the opportunity grow and shape the park stewardship program for future generations, and many other benefits.

### ***Kitsap County Staff & Park Stewards***

- Natural Resources Coordinators provide general supervision and guidance to Park Stewards through facilitating meetings and training, supplying tools and materials for projects, and offering technical guidance in accomplishing trail maintenance and ecological restoration.
- Natural Resources Coordinators and Parks staff attend associated stewardship group events, such as meetings and work parties, to provide guidance on County standards and support Stewardship Group Standards.
- Park Stewardship Groups must create an annual work plan to be reviewed, organized, and approved by Parks Department staff. The work plan tasks and projects must adhere to available funding allocated in the Parks Department's annual budget, effective at the beginning of each County year (January 1). To plan for the following year's budget, stewardship group work plans are submitted by July 1. Natural Resources Coordinators may approve, deny, or edit any submitted work plan to reflect park priorities, developed expertise, or limited resource availability. All work must be approved by Natural Resources Coordinators prior to any activity. Changes to a yearly work plan may be accommodated on a case-by-case basis.
- Natural Resources Coordinators have the responsibility of maintaining communication between stewardship groups and the Parks Department.
- The Parks Department must approve and will assist with the processing of grant applications for parks projects to support and ensure shared goals between the stewardship groups and Parks Department.
- Kitsap County provides staff and resources to respond to emergencies, public safety concerns, or other stewardship needs that are beyond the capabilities of stewardship groups.
- Kitsap County provides appropriate staff assistance, equipment, training, and other resources to assist Park Stewards. If a Natural Resources Coordinator is not present at a work party or meeting, a trained Safety Officer or Lead Volunteer must be present.

## **Adopt a Spot**

***Time commitment: Varies according to two-year contract (i.e. events could be monthly, semi-monthly, biannual, or annual)***

Individuals, groups, or organizations that would like to service one park or trail regularly can opt to “Adopt a Spot.” This program, in partnership with Kitsap County Public Works Department, aims to ensure clean and healthy community spaces through regular litter clean up. The Adopt a Spot program coordinates with the Parks Department Natural Resources Division to maintain trails and parks. Adopting parties perform general litter pick-up in a chosen spot of a Kitsap parkland or trail, with the option of performing additional trail work or maintenance during the designated term. Desired trail work maintenance is decided in collaboration with the Natural Resources Division. Activities may include trimming back vegetation along trails, removing leaves and/or debris from recreation pathway, cleaning equipment/signs, removing weeds and invasive plants from the park, removing debris from trail culverts, keeping water off trails through maintaining existing water drainage features, among others, as appropriate.

Adopting a “spot” is best for individuals or groups that would like to serve a specific park area regularly to enhance sense of community and connection to place. Applications for adoption are submitted through the Public Works Department’s Adopt a Spot website. Request for adoption and project scope will be reviewed by Public Works and Parks Department staff. If a spot within a County park is adopted, the individual, group, or organization’s name will be posted for public knowledge.

### ***Adopt A Spot Process & Procedures***

- Parks Department staff receive and process applications for spot adoption. Staff may approve or deny an application based on factors outlined in the application process.
- If work extends beyond litter pick-up, a trail/park work plan must be submitted. Natural Resources Coordinators may approve, deny, or amend any submitted work plan due to emphasized park priorities, safety concerns, project scope, or resource availability.
- Prior to beginning projects and maintenance in parks, Parks staff must be notified to schedule onsite training, tool or material dispersal, communication to public, and any needed trail closures.
- Parks Department staff support adopting parties by providing tools, materials, and technical guidance in accomplishing work.
- If Parks Department staff is/are not present at a work party, a trained Safety Officer or Lead Volunteer must be present.
- Kitsap County provides staff and resources to respond to emergencies, public safety concerns, or other needs that are beyond the capabilities of the adopting party while working on County park property.

## Work Party

***Time commitment: Varies by Kitsap County Park (normally 2-3 hours per event)***

Individuals may participate in a work party at qualifying Kitsap County Parks. A “work party” is a volunteer event, open to any park visitor, which typically involves habitat restoration and trail maintenance. One-time, monthly, or annual work parties are posted on the volunteer calendar, accessed here: <https://kcowa.us/parkvol>. Work parties are led by Parks Department staff or trained Lead Volunteers. *More information on how to become a Lead Volunteer may be provided, upon request.*

By clicking on the calendar event per calendar day, work party contact information, location, and duties are described. Volunteers show up at the scheduled time and location, wearing proper attire and bringing any recommended tools or supplies described on the volunteer calendar event. Upon arrival, each new volunteer signs a **Volunteer Service Agreement Form**. Returning volunteers are expected to enter their hours on the County Parks Department Volunteer webpage. A typical Work Party is 2-3 hours long and may include activity on uneven terrain or during inclement weather conditions.

### ***Kitsap County Staff & Work Party Participants***

- All work must be approved by Natural Resources Coordinators prior to any proposed activity.
- Natural Resources Coordinators support work by providing tools, materials, safety briefings, and technical guidance in accomplishing projects or maintenance.
- If a Natural Resources Coordinator is not present at a work party, a trained Safety Officer or Lead Volunteer must be present.
- Kitsap County provides staff and resources to respond to emergencies, public safety concerns, or other needs that are beyond the capabilities of the organization while working on County Park property.

## How to Start Volunteering with Kitsap County Parks

**Still unsure which volunteer opportunity is the best fit?** Please do not hesitate to contact the Natural Resources Division at [ParksNRD@kitsap.gov](mailto:ParksNRD@kitsap.gov) or through this online questionnaire ([Volunteer Interest Form](#)) to coordinate, or generate, the best volunteer opportunity for an individual, group, or organization in Kitsap County Parks.

**Ready to volunteer?** The next section, Volunteer Policies, contains instructions on how to become an official Kitsap County Parks Volunteer.

# Section 5. Volunteer Policies

Before volunteering in any capacity, volunteers must agree to adhere to Kitsap parks volunteer policies as stated elsewhere in this handbook and as described in this section.

## Volunteer Agreement & Registration

Volunteers must agree to volunteer policies and liability waivers by registering online or signing an official Kitsap Parks Volunteer Service Agreement Form, in-person. **If under 18 years old, a parent, chaperone, or guardian must sign the Volunteer Service Agreement and be present throughout the minor's time of service.** Volunteer agreements, registration forms, and liability waivers will vary based on type, level, and duration of volunteer service.

- **In-person:** An official Kitsap Parks Volunteer, or parent/guardian, must have signed the Volunteer Service Agreement form (in-person or online) before participating as a volunteer in any Kitsap County Parks Department activity. This form is transferred to Parks Department staff for official record, aiding in verification of hours.
- **Online:** Registering online as a Parks Department Volunteer through the [Volgistics Volunteer Portal](#) helps volunteers track their service and stay informed regarding volunteer opportunities. This is highly recommended for those wishing to volunteer more than once. Online registration can also help direct volunteers to work in specific parks, events, and perform certain needed work. Approval for registration is determined by Natural Resources Coordinators after completed application forms are received. Once registered, volunteers will be updated on opportunities based on their interests. After volunteering, it is expected that the volunteer regularly logs their service hours

## Service Hours

- **Why log service hours online?** Quantifying the service of volunteers showcases work and dedication to specific parks, per volunteer. This helps qualify volunteers for awards, determine needed funding for parks, and track work done in each park. This reporting system also helps volunteers to personally track their time, skills, and training developed during their service. Documentation of service can provide verification for required community service, job applications, grant reporting, Kitsap County insurance requirements, and more.
- **How do volunteers log service hours?** After registering online, volunteers can start [tracking their service regularly by logging into their account on 'Volgistics' with their username and password.](#) If a username or password is forgotten, click on "forget your password?" or "need a password?" After service is completed in parks, volunteers must

report their hours promptly. If further help is needed, select the “help” button on the login page or contact the Parks Department.

## Restrictions on Work

For safety reasons, the Parks Department requires volunteers to observe the following restrictions and requirements while working as a Kitsap County volunteer:

- Volunteers may not drive County vehicles unless given special authorization from County officials.
- Motorized vehicles may not be operated within County parks without authorization from Parks staff. A vehicle pass will be issued, which must be displayed on the vehicle dashboard or side of the car, whenever the vehicle is being driven within the park. Driving is limited to established park and forest service roads. Vehicles shall not exceed 5 mph. Drivers are required to stop to allow pedestrians/bicycles to pass and are required to turn off the engine to allow equestrians to pass. Do not overtake an equestrian unless the equestrian motions to do so.
- Volunteers must have a **Personal Equipment Use Permit** on file with the Parks Department to use personal heavy equipment such as mowers, chainsaws, tractors, and excavators. *Please see the Power Tools section on the following pages for further clarification.*
- Volunteers must be current on **Chainsaw Safety Training** to use a chainsaw. Volunteers are not authorized to fell any tree over 6 inches in diameter. *Please see Chainsaw Safety Expectations to follow post-training.*
- Volunteers must not exceed their training, experience, or ability level. Training may be completed outside of training offered by Kitsap County. All certifications should be submitted to Parks staff.
- If a volunteer is observed as behaving unsafely, or not within the safety guidelines described in Section 6, an **Incident Report** may be filed. This will serve as a warning to the volunteer and prompt Natural Resources Coordinators to guide the volunteer to receive further safety training. If safety guidelines are not followed, corrective action, including possible termination of the volunteer, will follow.
- If volunteers would like to propose a new trail at a County Park, they must submit a proposal to Parks Staff. This will be reviewed by Natural Resources Coordinators and County Staff to ensure trail building will *not* occur in a critical area, wetland, or beyond the scope of park planning protocol.
- Volunteers are not allowed to bring pets to work parties, even if leashed. The only exception is for service animals that have the appropriate certification.

## **Access to Kitsap County Parks Property & Materials**

As appropriate, Parks staff will provide materials and equipment necessary to fulfill tasks. **All tool requests should be made prior to a volunteer event.** Any equipment provided to the volunteer must be used only for Kitsap County Parks Department purposes. This includes use of tools, office equipment, gloves, safety equipment, and literature. A volunteer's personal power equipment may be used, after submitting a **Personal Equipment Use Permit**. If specialized County equipment or machinery is requested, please contact Parks staff.

All equipment should be checked out and returned to the Parks Department in good operating condition within 48 hours after the final event. This allows for tool cleaning, maintenance, or other groups to access equipment. If equipment is lost, broken, or damaged, please let a Natural Resource Coordinator know as soon as possible. If certain County equipment is repeatedly lost, returned late, or unreported as broken or damaged, Natural Resources Coordinators may restrict volunteer usage of equipment.

## **Communication Policy**

Only those designated by the Kitsap County Parks Director are authorized to represent the County or Parks Department in any form of internal or external communication, including websites, print, or broadcast media, social media, public hearings or other public meetings. All questions, concerns, or comments should be directed to the Natural Resources Division, to ensure that communications concerning the Parks Department and its volunteer program are accurate and effective.

## **Media and Public Relations**

**Media Requests:** If a member of the media makes inquiries concerning County staff, County parks, or the County volunteer program, volunteers must direct media personnel to a Kitsap County Parks Department staff person.

**Right of Publicity:** Participation in Kitsap County Parks Department volunteer programs shall constitute permission to use the name, likeness, or any other identification of the participant, and photographs or videos taken of volunteers, to promote County programs and events in digital, print, TV, or other media, without compensation or right of prior review or approval by the participant or a participant's parent or guardian (except where prohibited by law).

## **Volunteer Insurance**

Volunteer Service does not constitute County employment, and a Kitsap County Volunteer has no entitlement to any County benefits including, but not limited to, overtime,

retirement benefits, workers' compensation, sick leave, or injury leave. I understand that Kitsap County undertakes no liability or financial obligation on my behalf because of the Volunteer Service. My health, homeowners, umbrella, and auto insurance (if any) shall provide primary coverage in the event of any injuries or losses to myself or others arising out of the Volunteer Service.

## **Resignation / Termination**

Any volunteer may resign by notifying the Natural Resources Coordinators. The County has the right to terminate its association with a volunteer at any time and for any reason, with notice. Reasons for dismissal may include but are not limited to: violations of law, regulations, or County policies or procedures; intentional or willful misconduct; gross negligence; communicating misleading, inaccurate, or overly subjective information to County residents, customers, visitors, or other volunteers; misrepresentation of the Kitsap County Parks Department or its objectives; or placing persons or property at risk.

## **Section 6. Safety**

**In ANY emergency, please call 9-1-1.**

For non-emergency issues, notify the Natural Resources Coordinators or Work Party Lead on duty.

### **Preventative Measures**

The safety and health of staff and volunteers is our top priority. Volunteers who encounter an unsafe situation or observe others working in an unsafe manner should:

- Safely resolve the situation, if possible, without compromising safety; and
- Report safety problems to the Natural Resources Coordinators. If a volunteer is observed behaving unsafely, or not within the safety guidelines described in this section, an **Incident Report** may be filed. This will serve as a warning to the volunteer and prompt Natural Resources Coordinators to guide him/her to receive further safety training.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

For the health and safety of volunteers, all volunteers must dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their activities. This includes, but is not limited to, wearing gloves, long pants, and flat close-toed shoes while performing stewardship activities within County parks. Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) is required when operating power equipment.



## **Power Tools**

### General Power Tool Usage

Volunteers who are 18 years of age and older may be eligible to operate handheld electric or gas-powered tools, providing they demonstrate competency, safety, and wear all required PPE before using power tools.

Volunteers must go through proper training provided by Parks Department staff or Lead Volunteers.

### Chainsaw

Only volunteers who have passed a chainsaw safety training course are allowed to use their personal chainsaw on County park property, with adherence to **Kitsap Parks Chainsaw Safety Expectations**. Volunteers must use all PPE required by Kitsap County and show verification of chainsaw safety training course to Natural Resources Coordinators prior to use. If a volunteer would like to use their personal chainsaw, they must have a **Personal Equipment Use Permit** on file. Kitsap Parks Chainsaw Training is currently offered two days per year each Fall. Registration is limited and opens in August each year.

### Heavy Equipment (mowers, tractors, backhoes)

Volunteers must have a **Personal Equipment Use Permit** on file with the Parks Department to use personal heavy equipment on County Park property. Volunteers must also abide by all safety protocols set forth by Kitsap County. If a volunteer is unsure whether their equipment falls under “heavy equipment,” refer to Natural Resources Coordinators. Operators must show verification of heavy equipment experience to Natural Resources Coordinators prior to usage.

## **Personal Vehicle Use**

Volunteers operating personal vehicles in Kitsap County parks need prior authorization, **Personal Equipment Use Permit** on file, and supporting documentation. Parks Department staff will provide official vehicle permits to individuals who need access on a case-by-case basis.

## **Injury to Volunteers**

Volunteers who are injured while participating in a County parks related activity must report the incident to Parks Department staff as soon as possible after sustaining an injury. Injured volunteers must fill out an **Incident Report**. Natural Resources Coordinators or the Parks Director must sign this form and investigate the accident. This form should be in possession of the Lead Volunteer or Parks staff. If not accessible, contact Natural Resources Coordinators.

## **Injury to the Public**

In any emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately and notify Parks Department staff as soon as possible. Emergency operators will immediately dispatch the appropriate emergency personnel. Only volunteers who are trained in first aid may help the victim to the extent of their training. Volunteers who are not trained in first aid should remain with the victim until trained rescue personnel or first responders arrive. Volunteers may choose to leave the injured person if they have secured coverage from another volunteer or member of the public. In general, volunteers should not leave the victim unless it is necessary to do so to call for help. Such a situation may arise if the volunteer is unable to get cell coverage where the victim is located. Volunteers who temporarily leave a victim to get help should return to the victim as soon as possible and wait with the victim until help arrives.

***Please note:*** Due to the risk of contracting blood-borne pathogens during first-aid treatment, the County does not require volunteers to administer first aid. Contact with blood and other body fluids can transmit diseases. The decision to administer first aid is a personal choice and solely that of the volunteer. General first-aid and CPR training is recommended to all volunteers prior to volunteering with the Parks Department. Lead Volunteers are required to have general first-aid and CPR training to lead a work party and should act in accordance with their certification.

## **Inappropriate Park Usage and Encampments**

Parks are being visited more each year as Kitsap County population continues to rise. At times, individuals may build or create unlawful living quarters in park areas. If a member of the public is seen setting up a campsite or living in a Kitsap County park, please report their presence to Parks Department staff. If you encounter a homeless encampment, do not approach and call Kitsap1 at (360) 337-5777. If a volunteer or park visitor is threatened or believed to be in danger, please call 9-1-1.

## **Sharps**

“Sharps” are defined as needles, syringes, scalpels, lancets, intravenous tubing with needles attached, razor blades, box cutters, knives, broken glass, and other sharp objects.

Volunteers must avoid contact with or handling sharps of any description, as doing so may lead to a cut or puncture wound. Sharps may pose significant health risks including infection by blood borne pathogens (bacteria and viruses) and possibly death.

### Sharps Standard Operating Procedures

- Volunteers are *not* permitted to handle or dispose of sharps.
- In the event of an accidental encounter with a sharp, volunteers should do their best to document or identify the location and notify Natural Resources Coordinators immediately.
- Only Parks Department staff are authorized to remove and dispose of sharps.
- Notify Parks Department staff immediately if a volunteer is wounded by a sharp.

## **Fire Danger**

Fire danger signs will be distributed to stewardship groups by Natural Resources Coordinators as directed by Parks Department leadership. Signs are posted in County parks depending on the current fire danger levels as determined by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

# Forms & Extra Resources

Forms and information relating to the Parks Department volunteer program can be found by clicking on links below or visiting volunteer website at <https://kcowa.us/parkvol> . All forms can be submitted online or via email. If paper copies of forms are needed, please reach out to Natural Resources Coordinators, or contact [parksNRD@kitsap.gov](mailto:parksNRD@kitsap.gov).

Available forms:

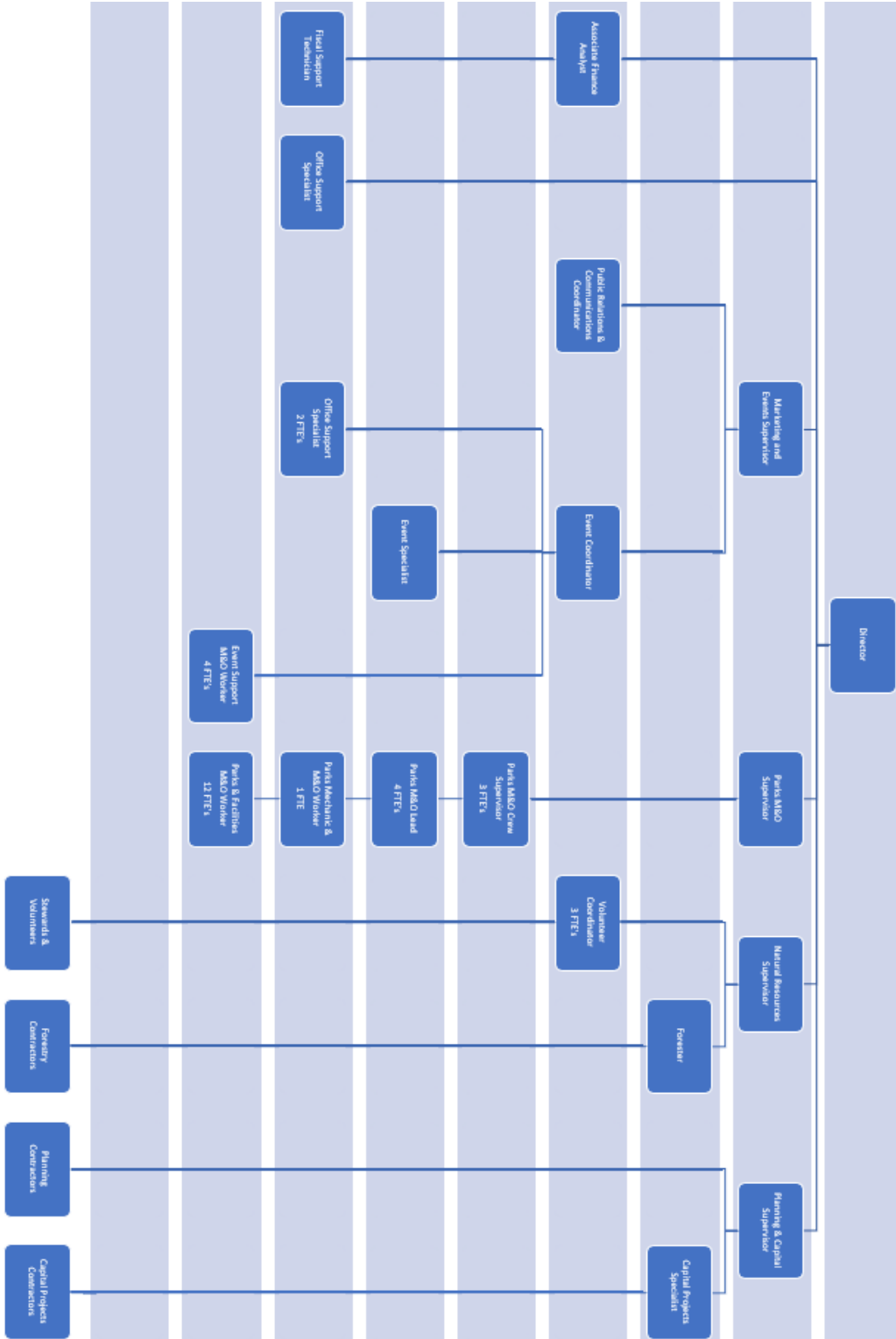
- Kitsap Parks Volunteer Service Agreement
- Personal Equipment Use Permit
- Tailgate Safety and Tool Checklist
- Incident Report
- Cooperating Association Volunteer Services Agreement
- [Volunteer Work Proposal](#)
- Criminal History Background Check for Lead Volunteers

Extra resources (available upon request or during ***scheduled training***):

- How to Register as a Kitsap Parks Volunteer (.pdf or print)
- Lead Volunteer Training (*must be age 18 or older*) (***Quarterly, in-person***)
- Kitsap Parks Chainsaw Training (***Bi-annually, in-person***)
- Kitsap Parks Chainsaw Expectations (.pdf or print)
- Trail Construction and Maintenance (US Forest Service)- Kitsap County Parks Standard (.pdf)
- Trail Tools and Equipment (SCA Trail Manual) (.pdf)

# Appendix

## Parks Department Organization Chart



## Stewardship Group Standards

### 1. Regular Public Meetings

- a. *Agendas should be submitted prior to public meeting or in collaboration with Natural Resources Coordinators to ensure topics are appropriate, receive adequate attention, and allow time for public comment.*
- b. If elected, Chairperson and Secretary will help facilitate and keep a record of meetings, which must be available to the public after meetings are held.
- c. Due to affiliation with Kitsap County, all meetings are open to the public and, must be held in a public location, or as an online virtual meeting open to the public. Members of the group may have private meetings for discussion; however, all decisions must be made in a public meeting, in adherence to the Open Public Meetings Act.
- d. Before each meeting, members of the visiting public shall be granted the opportunity to speak openly for up to three minutes regarding any park or county issue during the public comment period. This may help guide meeting topics and resolve concerns in each associated park.
- e. Only active Park Stewards may vote on an issue to serve as an advisory decision, representing the greater Stewardship Group.

Note: Only those who have achieved or maintained Park Steward status will be able to vote: please refer to [Park Stewardship Groups](#) section of the Parks Volunteer Handbook.

### 2. Work Parties

- a. At least one public work party will be held at a Stewardship Group's associated park. Work party frequency will vary according to [Stewardship Group Tier](#). Trained Park Stewards, Lead Volunteers, and/or Natural Resources Coordinators are responsible for providing the opportunity for community members to steward Kitsap County parks. Planning and coordination for each work party will be accomplished at least one week in advance to recruit for and support impending volunteers.

### 3. Work Plans

- a. Park Stewards may create an annual work plan to be reviewed, organized, and approved by Parks staff. The work plan tasks and projects must adhere to available funding allocated in the Parks Department's annual budget, established at the beginning of each County fiscal year (January 1). Natural Resources Coordinators may approve, deny, or edit any submitted work plan to reflect park priorities, developed expertise, or limited resource

availability. All work must be approved by Natural Resources Coordinators prior to any activity.

- b. **Final work plans are submitted by Stewardship Group Leadership mid-year (July 1) for the upcoming Kitsap County work plan year (January 1-December 31).** Annual Work Plans must be *approved* prior to commencing work on any project. Changes to yearly work plan may be accommodated on a case-by-case basis. If additions to the work plan are needed after work plan approval, Park Stewards may submit an additional [Volunteer Work Proposal](#) or communicate proposal to Natural Resources Coordinators.
4. Electing Stewardship Group Leadership
    - a. Each Stewardship Group has different roles and responsibilities associated with overall group function and must describe them to Park Stewards prior to holding elections.
    - b. In coordination with submittal of a work plan, an election will be held during a regular public meeting for at least one chairperson, secretary, and any necessitated committee heads (trail, restoration, education, etc.).
    - c. Nominations should be voiced for each role, with nominees receiving the opportunity to explain interest or disinterest of the nomination.
    - d. Then, a vote is held. **Only those who have achieved or maintained Park Steward status will be able to vote. [This is dependent on Stewardship Group Tier.](#)** Other means of achieving Park Steward status will be considered on case-by-case basis.
    - e. If conflict or indecision arises, then the attending Natural Resource Coordinator will intervene to provide support.
  5. Conduct
    - a. All Park Stewards must abide by [Volunteer Standards and Ethics](#), or otherwise be subject to dismissal. Any Parks Steward may be removed as a Parks Volunteer when the Director determines it is in the best interest of the Stewardship Group and Parks Department.
    - b. Park Stewards must not characterize themselves as representing a Stewardship Group, or representing the opinion of a Stewardship Group, or hold themselves out as representatives of Kitsap County Parks Department without written authorization from the Kitsap County Parks Director.