



STROMLO FOREST PARK VOLUNTEER POLICY

August 2022



For review in 2023



ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Document History

Date	Name	Revision
July 2021	Maggie Welfare	Working draft created
3 December 2021	Scott Saddler, Executive Manager a/g, National Arboretum Canberra	Version 1 – Approved  6.12.2021
July 2022	Maggie Welfare	Version 1.2
1 August 2022	Scott Saddler, Executive Manager a/g, National Arboretum Canberra	Version 1.2 – Approved  02.08.2022

Definitions

Volunteer	A person willingly giving their time for the common good and without financial gain
Casual volunteer	A volunteer who participates up to 5 volunteering days each year
Registered volunteer	An individual who has signed the agreed paperwork and been accepted in the Stromlo Forest Park volunteer program
Community Group	A group of individual volunteers working together on an agreed project at Stromlo Forest Park
Incorporated Group Volunteers	Volunteers working under the direction and as part of an incorporated group
Volunteer Group Coordinator	A Volunteer who represents volunteers who are part of a volunteer activity group
Volunteer Supervisor	An employee who is engaged by Stromlo Forest Park who supervises Volunteers and Volunteer Activities
Community Engagement Officer	An employee who is engaged by Stromlo Forest Park for the purpose of managing the implementation of volunteer involvement in Stromlo Forest Park activities

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1 Introduction

Stromlo Forest Park (SFP) is a 1200 Ha recreation park surrounding Mount Stromlo in the rural district of Stromlo and adjacent the districts of Molonglo and Weston. The park is located between Uriarra road to the North, the Cotter road to the South, the properties of Huntly and Winslade to the West and the suburb of Wright to the east.

The park was opened in 2007 with the intention of providing a facility that could cater for non-motorised activities such as cross country running, road cycling, mountain biking and equestrian activities. Since opening, the park has hosted several major National and International cycling events on the mountain bike trails and the criterium circuit.

The management objectives of SFP are consistent with the ACT Government's intent on managing the park as a multi-use recreational facility.

The primary objectives are:

- Conserve and maintain the environment, including flora and fauna.
- Preserve the natural habitats of species existing at SFP.
- Preserve and protect all culturally sensitive heritage areas, features or artefacts.
- Protect and maintain all water catchment areas including dams and creeks.
- Protect the tourism and recreational character of SFP by preparing and abiding by organisational and administrative procedures to best manage the facilities and venue.
- Promote SFP as a community facility for all recreational and professional users ensuring equality and fairness across the venue.

Volunteers are important to SFP; they can support its programs with additional skills and resources. Additionally, through the engagement of volunteers, SFP is able to further its reach out to the community, facilitating a two-way passion of implementing the SFP Business Plan that is based on the SFP Masterplan.

1.1 Objectives

The objective of the SFP Volunteer Policy is to provide direction in the engagement and management of volunteers to ensure that:

- a safe working environment is provided for volunteers;
- volunteers are treated fairly, with respect and are valued and appropriately recognised for their contribution to the facilities and assets of the Park;
- the management of volunteers and volunteer activities is consistent with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, work health and safety, working with vulnerable people, finance, and privacy;

- opportunities are created for people to become active supporters and promoters of natural and cultural heritage conservation and land management initiatives that complement the work of paid staff; and
- opportunities are provided for volunteers to develop and enhance skills.

1.2 Principles

In providing opportunities for community volunteering, SFP adopts the following principles:

1. Volunteering is rewarding, interesting and enjoyable.
2. Volunteers are involved in activities that enhance and assist the programs, assets and facilities of the Park, activities that would not otherwise be available through the existing resources and general funding of SFP.
3. Volunteers will not be used for work that would normally require the employment of a paid employee.
4. Volunteer activities are managed and programmed to gain the best outcomes for SFP.
5. Volunteers have a minimum age of at least 8 years old at the time of engagement. If the volunteer is a minor (i.e. Under 18 years of age) a parent or guardian must sign and submit a written waiver for volunteers between the ages of 8 and 18 before undertaking volunteer work, and additionally be present to supervise volunteers who are between the ages of 8 and 16 years.
6. Volunteers will not disrupt other volunteer's experience on the program.
7. There is no maximum age to volunteer however SFP must consider factors such as overall health, potential risk of injury and the capability of an individual to undertake the volunteer activity.
8. Volunteers must be registered with SFP before they commence any volunteer activity.
9. All volunteers are to undertake a WHS Induction, a general induction and sign relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on commencement.
10. Volunteer attendance (hours of work) must be recorded on sign on sheets or logged through the online app Volunteer Management System *Better Impact*.
11. Volunteers engaged by third party volunteer organisations working onsite at SFP must adhere to this policy and the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

SFP management is committed to ensuring there is adequate support to volunteers and volunteer groups through:

- Appropriate insurance cover;
- provision of permanent staff and with an authorised SFP Contractor as relevant, to coordinate and support volunteers;
- provision of a healthy, safe and satisfying environment free from discrimination;
- assistance in planning and coordination of activities;
- enhancing relevant skills; and
- recognising volunteer achievements.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to any Volunteer undertaking voluntary work for SFP.

This policy does not apply to work experience, industry or vocational placement students. The following are not considered to be Volunteers, as such are not governed by this policy:

- Those seeking formal work experience (e.g. school students on work experience placements);
- School groups engaged in SFP supervised programs (e.g. such as school community service programs);
- Those required to perform community work as a result of having committed an offence;
- Co-programs with other government agencies (e.g. ACT Corrective Services);
- Participants in employment programs such as 'Work for the Dole'; and
- Volunteers who are involved as members of advisory committees.

2 Volunteer Management

2.1 Stromlo Forest Park Volunteers Program

The SFP Volunteer Program is run by the ACT Government in conjunction with the SFP trail maintenance contractor Iconic Trails P/L. The program has been introduced in 2021 and plans to grow the volunteer base while ensuring all activities meet ACT Government requirements including relevant legislation and work health and safety.

All volunteer opportunities must be directed to SFP Management. The team will consider the opportunity and ensure it meets requirements before it is offered as an official SFP volunteer activity. SFP Management has the right to refuse the promotion of a volunteer activity or volunteer.

2.2 Volunteer Recruitment

To volunteer at SFP, interested community members are asked to visit <https://stromloforestpark.act.gov.au> to download a registration form and send to the SFP Bookings and Marketing Officer at stromloforestpark@act.gov.au.

Volunteers are to acknowledge there are multiple park users, including but not limited to: cycling road/off-road riders, equestrian riders, walkers, joggers, triathlon users with different requirements and priorities.

Volunteers are accepted:

1. Only after all correct documentation has been returned promptly.
2. On the basis of their suitability and knowledge to perform a task at SFP and to also undertake this task without any conflict of interest, perceived or real.
3. Through an interest in a specific activity or a general interest in volunteering to be matched with the SFP business priorities and available resources.
4. SFP is not obliged to accept a request for voluntary work and a Volunteer Agreement can be terminated by the management or the volunteer at any time subject to clause 3.0.

Acceptance into the Volunteer Program is subject to the successful completion of the following:

5. *Volunteer Registration*
6. *Agreeing to the Volunteer Code of Conduct*
7. *Work Health and Safety* induction (the volunteer agrees to undertake this induction on site prior to commencement)

2.3 Volunteer Conditions

2.3.1 Capacity to Incur Expenditure

Although it is not expected that volunteers will incur expenses related to SFP, prior written approval must be sought from SFP Management for reimbursement. Appropriate records and/or receipts should be kept and given as supporting evidence for any claims for reimbursement.

2.3.2 Accepting Gifts & Benefits

On occasion a gift may be offered to a volunteer by a member of the public. Volunteers must not accept gifts of cash or items of value. Token gifts (e.g. beverages, chocolates) might be accepted, but first must be declared to the SFP Volunteer Manager to place in the gift register, especially the intent of the token gift. Volunteers must never solicit, demand or request any gifts or benefits, nor accept gifts or benefits either for themselves or for another person.

2.3.3 Insurance

For the purposes of safety, rehabilitation and compensation, volunteers are considered employees.

While volunteers are providing assistance to SFP, they are covered by Australian Capital Territory Insurance Authority (ACTIA). This does not include travel to and from home to the location of the SFP program for which they are volunteering time and skills. All accidents and injuries must be reported to SFP Management within 24 hours.

2.3.4 Work Health and Safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* applies to all staff and volunteers at SFP. Volunteers will be considered as 'workers' for the purposes of this Act. Non-compliance by a volunteer with this Act may lead to the volunteer's agreement being terminated. All volunteers must complete a WHS Induction for volunteers. All volunteers must supply their own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (at a minimum, long sleeved shirt, long pants, enclosed shoes, and broad-brim hat).

2.3.5 Media

Volunteers must not make statements to media on behalf of SFP without prior written approval by SFP management. Volunteers approached by the media should refer all enquiries to ACT Government employed SFP Management in the first instance.

SFP stakeholders are not considered ACT Government staff (eg YMCA Stromlo Leisure Centre staff, Handle Bar Café, Dynamic Motivation, Iconic Trails, Clubs etc).

2.3.6 Privacy

Volunteers must not disclose any personal, sensitive or commercial information regarding SFP, its contractors, or its staff, obtained in the course of their duties. SFP will adhere to the *Privacy Act 1988*.

The personal information about volunteers collected and held by SFP will only be used for the purpose of managing the Volunteer Program and providing volunteers with information about SFP's programs, activities and services. SFP will not disclose personal information to a third party unless the consent of a volunteer is obtained, or SFP is required or authorised by law to do so.

2.3.7 Parking

SFP will keep all volunteers informed of parking procedures.

2.3.8 Communication/learning

Volunteers will be kept up to date with SFP activities through a digital email.

Face to face (or virtual online) volunteer meetings will be held three (3) times per year, or more often as required.

Volunteers without appropriate skill-sets will provided basic on-site training, through third party contractors/suppliers or SFP staff. SFP with approved contractors will determine the skill-set of each volunteer.

3 Termination of Agreement

Both the Volunteer and SFP have the right to terminate the *Volunteer Agreement* at any time by giving the other written notice to that effect.

Potential reasons for the termination of an agreement may include but are not limited to:

8. Change of personal situation or ill health.
9. Change of SFP priorities.
10. Inappropriate behaviour or comments towards visitors, staff or other volunteers, verbally or written, including in the digital environment.
11. Volunteers making media comment without prior written approval from SFP Management.
12. Volunteer's efforts consistently prevent tasks from completion.
13. Volunteer uses unsafe work practices in completing assigned tasks.
14. Volunteer undertakes their own project/task without SFP approval.

If an incident or issue is highlighted by a Volunteer, a Volunteer Group Coordinator or SFP Management regarding a volunteer's behaviour, a SFP representative will meet with the volunteer/s concerned to discuss the issue. If after this meeting SFP Management decides that the agreement is no longer mutually beneficial, the *Volunteer Agreement* may be terminated and confirmed in writing.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Volunteer Responsibilities

- Make an informed decision to work as a volunteer within SFP
- Recognise and respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions of others and be respected by others
- Treat staff, other volunteers and members of the community with courtesy, sensitivity and consideration
- Operate within an environment that is supportive and encouraging to all members
- Undertake duties orientation and training as required
- Behave in an ethical manner
- Keep agency and client matters confidential
- Be committed to SFP aims and objectives
- Inform SFP Management when unable to undertake or complete a task
- Be aware of the limits of their role within SFP
- Be aware of their duty of care to themselves and others
- Be aware of Work Health and Safety policies and practices
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when undertaking a volunteer task that requires PPE (at a minimum, long sleeved shirt, long pants, enclosed shoes and broad-brim hat, to be supplied by the volunteer)
- Report all injuries, illnesses, accidents and near misses immediately to SFP staff
- Act as a member of a team
- Commit to achieving results and make an effective contribution to SFP.

4.2 Stromlo Forest Park Responsibilities

- To provide suitable opportunities for members of the community to volunteer at SFP where possible
- Recognise and respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions of others
- Treat volunteers with courtesy, sensitivity and consideration
- Create an environment that is supportive and encouraging to all members
- Provide volunteers with orientation and training as required
- Behave in an ethical manner
- Keep agency and client matters confidential where required
- Be committed to SFP aims and objectives
- Inform volunteers if a planned volunteer task cannot take place
- Follow our duty of care to ourselves and others
- Apply Work Health and Safety policies and practices related to all volunteer tasks
- Issue Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Volunteers where reasonable and practical when the volunteer requires PPE to be worn
- Facilitate productive and healthy volunteer teams
- To make decisions regarding volunteer activities and opportunities that best meet organisational priorities, requirements and resources.

5 References

ACTPS Code of Conduct October 2012

Volunteering Australia, *National Standards for Involving Volunteers*, Melbourne, Volunteering Australia Inc, April 2015

Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework, ACT Public Service, 2010

Public Sector Management Act 1994

The *Work Health and Safety Act* 2011

Essential Guide to Work Health and Safety for Volunteers developed by Safe Work Australia

Privacy Act 1988