



qathet
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Handbook



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the qathet Regional District (qRD) Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program. Your involvement in the qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program will add great value to the region in ways that will benefit the ecosystems and the qRD's public parks, properties, and trails. We look forward to working with you to make your volunteer experience with qRD Parks, Properties & Trails a rewarding one! This handbook provides you with important information about the program.

REGISTERING FOR THE PROGRAM

In order to get involved and start volunteering you must sign up for the program by filling out and submitting a qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Application available at qathet.ca/services/parks-and-recreation/. Alternatively you can request a pdf or paper copy of the forms to fill out from Operational Services staff at operations@qathet.ca or by phoning 604-487-1380.



OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

As an important part of the fabric of qRD Parks, Properties & Trails all volunteers support and contribute to the vision, mission and values of the qRD through participating and contributing to program activities.

VISION: Working collaboratively for the common good to support a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable community.

MISSION: Provide our community with a voice and leadership in the delivery of sustainable local government services.

VALUES: Service Excellence; Consistent high quality service that is honest, ethical, respectful and professional.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT: Supporting a sustainable, inclusive community through respectful cooperation, communication, collaboration and engagement.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Decisions and actions which are open, transparent, responsive, and accessible.

ABOUT qRD PARKS, PROPERTIES & TRAILS

The qRD is well known for its environmental and cultural diversity. Our Parks, Properties & Trails are important for the community as they provide for local public recreation opportunities, and environmental protection. The region is characterized by a variety of landscapes including beaches, ocean coastline, lakes, rivers, lush riparian areas, mountains, forests and alpine meadows. The qRD manages its parks, properties and trails for the benefit of visitors, and current and future residents of the region.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Although no money changes hands in a volunteer relationship, there is great value to donating your time and energy. Volunteers with this program will gain knowledge, skills and experience associated with parks and trails. Volunteering also provides for social connection, and networking opportunities as well as community building. It is a great way to support individual and community mental and physical wellness. There is also a sense of satisfaction that comes from spending time on meaningful work that contributes to the value of parks and trails in the local community. For more information on the benefits of volunteering check out [Volunteer Canada's Value of Volunteering Wheel](#).



WHAT qRD PARKS, PROPERTIES & TRAILS VOLUNTEERS DO

qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteers will work with qRD Operations staff on initiatives related to improving the health of ecosystems through invasive plant removal and native planting, improving trail networks, clean ups and restoration of natural areas, and the overall betterment of our parks, properties, and trails.

What to Expect

The types of activities you can expect to have the opportunity to take part in as part of this program are:

- Invasive plant removal by manual methods like cutting, digging and pulling.
- Planting or transplanting of native species.
- Manually weeding and mulching restoration sites.
- Removing and properly disposing of garbage that is polluting the environment in parks and on trails.
- Using hand tools to undertake improvements to existing trails or preparing sites for the building of new trails and trail connections.

We will endeavour to give you as much information as possible about each event before it occurs so you can feel prepared, and comfortable while volunteering. Please feel free to contact volunteering organizations or the qRD should you have any questions about volunteering. Volunteer events will go ahead rain or shine, but they may be canceled if potentially unsafe conditions arise such as high wind, or icy ground.

Time Commitment

Most volunteer opportunities will take place as two to four hour work parties, although this may vary depending on the project. You can participate in as many or as few volunteer opportunities as you like depending on your interests and availability.

Working Environment and Conditions

Working conditions for the volunteer program will be varied. Events will take place almost exclusively outdoors in a qRD park, property or on a trail. From forests, to beaches, to community parks there will be a variety of places that volunteer activities will be organised to take place. Difficulty of access will vary as will weather conditions. Our first priority is keeping you safe while volunteering. Be aware that an event may be postponed or canceled if unsafe conditions arise.



qRD PARKS, PROPERTIES & TRAILS VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

A qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer program volunteer is anyone who offers time, energy and skills of their free will and without compensation for the benefit of parks and trails managed by the qRD.

Volunteers who are between the ages of 16 and 18 must have parental or legal guardian consent to participate in the program. Volunteers aged 15 and younger must be accompanied by their parent, or legal guardian while volunteering.

Those interested in volunteering should enjoy spending time outdoors in nature undertaking physical tasks and be positive, enthusiastic, and interested in protecting and rehabilitating natural spaces and or improving trails.

Goals

- Work cooperatively with your supervisor and fellow volunteers to complete assigned tasks at volunteer events in a safe and effective manner.
- Have fun, learn about and engage with qRD parks, properties and trails in new and rewarding ways, and contribute to a positive experience for all program participants.
- Improve qRD parks, and trails through actions that promote healthy ecosystems and high quality outdoor recreation opportunities for the community.

Responsibilities

- Actively participate in assigned activities.
- Comply with all applicable qRD policies and procedures.
- Carry out all work as a volunteer under the direction and supervision of the volunteering organisation or qRD staff.

Limitations

As a volunteer of the qRD it is important to recognize that you are not considered an employee, and therefore are not entitled to compensation or benefits traditionally associated with an employment position or role. As a volunteer of the qRD you have no authority to officially represent the qRD.

Skills and Abilities

You will learn many skills and develop abilities while volunteering with this program. The following list encompasses some of the skills and abilities that will be used in this program. We will inform you of specific considerations for opportunities as they are scheduled and advertised.

- At least moderate physical fitness (required for most volunteer activities).
- Ability to use hand tools.
- Ability to work outdoors in varied weather.



Useful Experience

It is not a requirement to have prior experience to volunteer with this program but some types of experience that would be useful are:

- Ecological restoration, gardening or landscaping (native and invasive plant identification, weed control techniques, proper planting technique, use of a variety of hand tools).
- Trail maintenance, experience with trail maintenance using hand tools.
- Hiking, working outdoors in a variety of conditions.

Orientation and Training

Once you are signed on to the program you will receive an orientation email which will include important information about the qRD including relevant policies that apply to your involvement as a volunteer.

There will be an introduction of all volunteers and supervisors at the start of each volunteer activity or event, and the organisation's leadership will present a site and activity orientation so everyone feels safe, comfortable and knowledgeable while completing the task at hand.

Groups are responsible for task-specific training for each volunteer activity. This will include explanations of how and why tasks will be completed as well as demonstrations for things like proper tool use and proper planting technique.

What to Bring

Please come dressed for the weather as volunteer events will take place in various conditions. Depending on the day you may want to consider bringing rain gear (waterproof pants and jacket with a hood), a hat, and warm layers. Sturdy closed-toe footwear is a must and long pants and sleeves are always a good idea too. Also consider sun glasses and sun screen if we are expecting sunshine. We will be doing physical work outdoors so please wear work clothes that you don't mind getting dirty or ripped. Also if you require or may require medication please bring it with you.

Bring all the drinking water you will need and a snack or lunch for the break depending on your needs and preferences.

Pets

As much as we love our furry friends, please leave them at home for volunteer events. Registered service animals are welcome.



Safety

We ask all program participants to keep in mind their own safety and that of other participants while volunteering. Volunteering organisations are required to have a safety plan, some things individuals should keep in mind are to take extra caution when walking through uneven, unmaintained terrain to avoid any slips, trips or falls. Special care should also be taken when using or storing hand tools to keep everyone injury free while volunteering. Always be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye out for potential hazards.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

We strive to provide an accessible and inclusive environment for our volunteers that reflects the diversity of our community. Please let us know if there are ways we can accommodate your inclusion in this program.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer you can expect to be treated with respect and appreciation. The qRD will provide support and appropriate resources to facilitate meaningful volunteer involvement in the program. We aim to involve volunteers in a way that reflects skills, needs, interests and backgrounds within the scope of our program. You have the right and the responsibility to decline to take on any work

As part of this program, the qRD commits to:

- Ensure that you are provided with a safe working environment.
- Treat you fairly, with respect and value and recognize you for your contribution to the work of the qRD.
- Provide management of volunteers and volunteer activities in a manner that is consistent with qRD policies, standards and bylaws.
- Provide valuable opportunities for you to become an active supporter of qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program.

As a volunteer you are expected to support and abide by the vision, mission and values of the qRD and the Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program. Volunteers must read and agree to follow the qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program Agreement to become a participant in the program.

We ask that you actively participate and contribute to the work assigned and supervised by your organisation or qRD staff to the best of your abilities while volunteering. In return for your time and energy, you will receive some of the many benefits that come with volunteering.



All policies and practices of the program are implemented to ensure a safe working environment for both volunteers and the qRD.

Supervision and Evaluation

Volunteers will be supervised by their organisation's leadership or qRD staff during volunteer events. Feedback will be provided to volunteers on an ongoing basis as needed. Volunteers are also encouraged to provide feedback regarding the program to qRD staff.

Dismissal and Resignation

The qRD may end an individual's participation in the program if they do not remain in compliance with applicable qRD policies standards and bylaws as per the qRD Parks, Properties & Trails Volunteer Program Agreement. Efforts will be made to address issues with a volunteer should any arise. Dismissal of a volunteer will only be considered as a last resort if issues cannot be resolved.

As a volunteer you can cease participation in the program at any time you wish. We appreciate you letting us know if you will no longer be participating in this program so that we can thank you for your contributions, keep our records up to date, and receive any constructive feedback you may have about your experience in the program.

VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Volunteer events may be advertised on the qRD website or other media. Once you are signed up for volunteer events, you can also receive emails about your upcoming scheduled volunteer activities.

COMMUNICATIONS, PROMOTION AND ENGAGEMENT

We may also send out opportunities and program information to program organisations and volunteers by email. Volunteers may be photographed. Images are subject to public disclosure for the use and promotion of this initiative and other qathet Regional District activities. If you would prefer not to be photographed, please inform the photographer.

FEEDBACK

We welcome feedback from our volunteers. Please tell us about your experience with the program using the contact information below.



THANK YOU!

This program would not be possible without the generous contributions of time and energy by volunteers like you!

The qRD thanks you for wishing to make this community a better place to live, work and play through your intention to become involved with the Parks, Properties, & Trails Volunteer program.

CONTACT

Please get in touch if you have any questions about the program and how to get involved.

Contact Operational Services in one of the following ways:

Email: operations@qathet.ca

Main Office Phone: 604-485-2260

Community Services Office Phone: 604-487-1380

In Person or by Mail: 2815 McCausland Road, Powell River, BC V8A 0S2