

WORKING GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER TEAMS

- These are just a few observations and suggestions for people coming to help out on the River Walk. We want your time to be as satisfying and productive as possible. Most of the comments might seem very obvious, but we present them here in an overview of how this kind of work comes together.
- In doing any kind of physical work, **SAFETY** is most important. It is even more important than getting the job done.



The first part of safety you can do already at home.

Eat well to fuel yourself for physical work.

Dress for the weather.

Wear sturdy shoes.

Bring a rain suit or a change of clothes if the weather will get you damp.

Wear a hat and bring your favorite gloves, water, sunscreen or insect repellent (which we provide as well).

- When you come, listen carefully to instructions and explanations. Choose a task that is suited to your abilities or that will teach you something new. Use the right tools for the job. Make sure you understand the best way to use the tools; get extra advice and demonstrations from River Walk crews. Pace yourself, and take a break when you need one. If you need a break but want to stay busy, look around and make sure the workplace is tidy and organized. That is a very important part of safety.
- **SPECIAL NOTE: Accessing the riverbank:** Do not go onto the riverbank until you have been checked out by a River Walk staff member. Until then, stay on the trail or the top of the bank. Never go on to the riverbank alone.
- Take special care for the possible presence of **HAZARDOUS WASTE MATERIALS**. If you are working in soils of unknown content, rubberized gloves are strongly recommended. If you are working in the river or in the river bottom, heavy duty rubberized gloves, flotation devices, and sturdy shoes are required. You should be vaccinated for tetanus. Beware of sharp and rusty objects.

Hazardous materials: Stop working immediately if you discover a sealed drum, tank or other container, or a substance with a suspicious odor, as hazardous waste materials may be involved. Report the location to a supervisor for inspection.

- Understand, in general, the tempo of all projects, so that you can take an active role in the completion of the work at hand. All projects have at least three parts:

1. The first part is preparation, or planning: deciding what needs to be done, who is going to do what, and what is the most efficient way to get the project completed. We have usually done most of this, but you can always contribute by asking questions about how the work will progress or how to use the tools. It also means taking tools to the area and keeping them organized. Find out where the trash or compost should be disposed. Notice how tools are stored so that you know how to return them. The most important question to ask is what the end result should look like.

2. The second part is actually doing the work. After you have worked for a bit, assess, and think about your efficiency, your safety, and your part in the overall picture. You might need a different pair of gloves or another kind of tool. You might have to do something else first before you can really get to the job you have in mind. You might need a partner or a helper. You might need to switch jobs with someone else halfway through, so you don't overstrain yourself or go crazy with boredom.

You probably have been assigned an actual area to work in; you might want to break it up into sections and do one at a time. There is often the opportunity to work "from left to right" across an area, as when erasing a chalkboard. Start by making sure a small area is accomplished, then continue by enlarging it bit by bit, until the entire area is complete. Jobs like weeding, picking up trash, raking the path, and spreading mulch fall into this category.

When you are done, check over your work to see if you missed something. Look around to see who else might need some extra help. If the job is planting, be aware that watering and mulching are part of the process. As the work comes to completion, start getting ready for the next phase, clean up.

3. Clean up. The job site should look like no one was ever here and the place just naturally



always looks this good. Keeping tools and waste organized during the work phase is helpful when it is time to collect and put them away or move on to the next project.

Knowing these rhythms of working should help you to be an active and satisfied participant in a project. It is easiest to be a team member and see a project through to completion when you can focus on a specific task, while keeping in mind the project as a whole.