

# Volunteering with Slow The Flow

## Guidance

### Introduction

The object of Slow The Flow is to advance the education of the public in Natural Flood Management, Sustainable Drainage Systems and other renewable methods of managing the environment, including the exploration of alternative practices which safeguard the natural environment and its resources in a manner which best fits the specifics of a local geography.

### **For the safety of yourself and all volunteers, please read and comply with the following:**

- Slow The Flow work in unpredictable environments and in all sorts of terrains and weather. While Slow The Flow will take all reasonable care for your welfare, you are also responsible for your own wellbeing and safety and you must not take unnecessary risks whilst working as a volunteer.
- Before beginning work we will ask you for your name, contact telephone number, email address, emergency contact details, any relevant health issues, specific skills you may have and permission to use your image for publicity.
- Volunteers must work in small groups of two or 3 people and not in isolation at any time.
- If you notice a dangerous situation or environment, it is your responsibility to report it immediately to a Task Officer who will identify themselves at the beginning of each volunteer day.
- All tools must be used in accordance with their instructions. You will be advised at the beginning of each volunteer session how to use these tools. You must use them responsibly and make every effort to return them to us at the end of each volunteer session. If you are unsure how to use a tool, please ask the Task Officer.
- Please do not wear shorts. There are bugs and ticks and plenty of plants which will sting whilst you are in the undergrowth. Good boots or wellington boots, preferably with steel toe caps, are also recommended.
- Children under the age of 18 must always be supervised by their parents or guardians and appropriate measures must always be taken to ensure their safety.
- Trustees may advise that sharp tools are not to be used by children under 18.
- You must inform us of any illness or impairment prior to any volunteer session so we can ensure your wellbeing.
- Heavy lifting is a large part of the work we undertake. If you are unable to lift heavy objects, you must inform us at the start of a volunteer session. There will be plenty of light work to do so everyone will be actively engaged.
- All injuries must be reported to a member of the Management Group.

### **Health Hazards in Natural Flood Management Work**

Conservation/flood alleviation work carried out by Slow The Flow is not usually a particularly hazardous activity. However, it does increase the risk of exposure to a few nasty illnesses, in particular, Tetanus, Weil's Disease and Lyme Disease. Some of the plants we work with also present unusual hazards. Working in the outdoors can expose volunteers to environmental challenges rain, sleet, sun etc.

The Task Officer will point out the hazardous species / substances on the site but there are some generally sensible precautions which can be taken to minimise the small chances of suffering from any problems as follows:

- Make sure your tetanus immunisation is up to date.
- Cover cuts and grazes with a waterproof dressing before you start work.
- Wear appropriate protection from the weather.
- Wash your hands before eating.
- If you suffer from flu-like symptoms shortly after working in water or suffering a tick bite, you have almost certainly got flu! You should nevertheless go to your GP, so they can check that you have not got something worse. In the very unlikely event that you have, they can treat it very effectively.

It is also advisable that you can recognise and are familiar with some of the more common health hazards of conservation work. More detailed advice about these can be found by following these links.

- [Tetanus](#)
- [Giant hogweed](#)
- [Weil's Disease](#)
- [Lyme Disease](#)

### **Code of Behaviour**

As an adult volunteering with Slow The Flow you have a responsibility to ensure that everyone attending Slow The Flow activities, particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults, are protected from harm. It is the responsibility of each adult volunteering with Slow The Flow to ensure that:

- their behaviour is always appropriate
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- they follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed
- in every respect, the relationships they form with the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care are appropriate

All persons who wish to volunteer with Slow The Flow, must accept and understand this policy. They must also agree to put Slow The Flow policies on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults into practice. The policies are available on our web site.

### **Meeting your responsibilities**

To give positive guidance the Code of Behaviour (below) provides a list of 'do's and don'ts' to help you ensure that:

- ✓ the welfare of the children and/or young people and/or vulnerable adults for whom you have a duty of care is safeguarded
- ✓ you avoid compromising situations or opportunities for misunderstandings or allegations

### **Code of behaviour**

- ✓ **DO** always put this code into practice

- ✓ **DO** treat everyone with dignity and respect
- ✓ **DO** set an example you would wish others to follow
- ✓ **DO** treat all young people equally - show no favouritism
- ✓ **DO** plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others
- ✓ **DO** follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities
- ✓ **DO** respect the right to personal privacy of a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- ✓ **DO** avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust, *e.g.*: a sexual relationship with a young person or vulnerable adult over the age of consent
- ✓ **DO** allow children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk about any concerns they may have
- ✓ **DO** encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like
- ✓ **DO** avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, *e.g.*: tantrums and crushes
- ✓ **DO** make everyone aware of Slow The Flow's procedures for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- ✓ **DO** remember this code even at sensitive moments, *e.g.*: when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse
- ✓ **DO** keep other Trustees/volunteers informed of where you are and what you are doing
- ✓ **DO** remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- ✓ **DO** take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately
  
- ✗ **DO NOT** trivialise abuse
- ✗ **DO NOT** form a relationship with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is an abuse of trust
- ✗ **DO NOT** permit abusive peer activities, *e.g.*: initiation ceremonies, bullying
- ✗ **DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual
- ✗ **DO NOT** play physical contact games with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- ✗ **DO NOT** make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun
- ✗ **DO NOT** use inappropriate language - writing, phoning, email or internet
- ✗ **DO NOT** let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported
- ✗ **DO NOT** just rely on your good name to protect you

### **Health and Safety Responsibilities**

All volunteers will ensure that:

- They are aware of the contents of the Slow The Flow Health and Safety Policy, available of our web site.
- They comply with this policy
- They take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions or omissions
- They will report all accidents, or unsafe situations, and any near misses (things which could have led to an accident), the Task Officer once who will identify themselves at the beginning of the event
- They are aware of all fire procedures for the area in which they are working
- If they identify anything which they think could be in any way unsafe, they will report it to the Task Officer
- They have responsibility for all minors they bring to an event or activity
- Any volunteer with a health and safety concern must first tell the Task Officer
  - If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or the Task

Officer decides that no action is required but the volunteer is not satisfied with this, the volunteer may then refer the matter to the Trustees via the Secretary. This must be in writing to [secretary@slowtheflow.net](mailto:secretary@slowtheflow.net)

- If the volunteer is still dissatisfied, the matter will be entered on the agenda for the next meeting of the Trustees.

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#### Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
27/5/2020	WG	Approved by Trustees
8/6/2020	BM/WG	Reconciled inconsistencies with Trustees and Task Officer
1/8/2020	WG	Added reference to registering at the start of the session and STF GDPR Policy