**Volunteer FAQs for Upper Schuylkill Valley Park**

We are excited you are considering joining our group of volunteers. Here are some things you may wish to know about becoming part of our team!

**How do I start the process of becoming a volunteer?**

Step one is filling out an application. Applications can be downloaded on our website or picked up in person at the site. Once completed, you can email it to UpperSchuylkillValley@montgomerycountypa.gov, mail it to the park at 1615 Black Rock Road, Royersford, PA 19468, or drop it off at the park office in person. Once you submit your application, you will be contacted by a staff member to set up a time to meet. We will conduct a short interview to gauge what you may like to do. Then, we will take you on a tour behind the scenes to learn more about us. All volunteers will need to successfully pass background checks in order to begin volunteering.

**How old do I need to be to volunteer?**

18 years or older; 16 if volunteer with parent/guardian.

**What do I wear?**

Comfortable clothing that you do not mind getting dirty. Long pants are recommended; especially for gardening as exposure to poison ivy is likely. Work gloves and sturdy shoes may be required. Dressing for the weather is a must! Most activities are outdoors.

After 3 times volunteering at the site, we will provide you with a lanyard and badge to identify you as a volunteer.

**What should I bring?**

Water, snacks, sunscreen, sunglasses—the usual! You are welcome to bring your lunch with you. We have refrigerators for people food in the office as well as a microwave, table and chairs. OR feel free to snack on picnic tables down by the River on a lovely day! We ask that you consult with staff first about bringing in food or treats for the animals, as many of them are on special diets.

If you need hand tools for things like gardening, we will provide them, however, if you have specialty items you enjoy, like padded kneelers, or your own gloves, please bring those with you.

**What kind of volunteer jobs are available?**

We have a variety of opportunities, and it does not have to be limited to just one job. Many of our volunteers will do multiple jobs and help where they are needed. Volunteer jobs include animal care, maintenance, gardening, and education. We have job descriptions available for
many tasks. However, you never know what talent you may have that we didn’t know we needed! Share with us your skills, and we just might find a unique match.

**Why do I have to complete a background check to volunteer?**

Upper Schuylkill Valley Park has many children that visit throughout the year. We have school groups on site, daycares on field trips and student helpers on most days. We cannot guarantee at any time that you will not be around children, and for the well-being of all, we strictly adhere to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s guidelines for working with children. Please use the following link to learn more about clearances:


**On my day of volunteering, what do I do?**

Upon arrival, we ask that volunteers check-in/sign in at the office. Discussing with staff where you will be and what you are doing would be next. We need to know who is on-site and where for everyone’s comfort and safety. At the end of your time, please sign out/log your hours.

**What Animals can I work with?**

Any of our animals that are not considered dangerous. Rabbits, foxes, reptiles, fish, amphibians, and domestic farm animals.

**Can I pet the Wolves? How about a bobcat?**

No, is the short answer. There are some animals and birds which have very limited human handling and are only cared for by staff. We will not allow anyone to volunteer in a potentially dangerous situation—they are still wild animals!

**Is there a minimum hour requirement?**

No. We are happy for any and all help you are willing to give.

**When can I volunteer? What day/times are available?**

You can schedule to come any day of the week, between the hours of 8:00am and 3:00 pm. We are only closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. Occasionally, the weather will cause a closure. We will show you how to sign up for ReadyMontco alerts so you will know when that happens. Volunteers may not be on site when the site is closed to the public.

If the staff is expecting you to volunteer on a certain day/time, please let us know if you are unable to come.

**Are there limits to what volunteers can do?**
Yes. We cannot allow volunteers to drive county vehicles/gators. We cannot allow the use of power tools, but manual hand tools are fine! Animal interaction is at the full discretion of the Animal Care/Education staff.

**What should I know about the work environment?**

The site has mostly outside opportunities for assistance. Our site has varied terrain and uneven surfaces often limiting easy mobility. We have varied noise and light levels inside buildings. We have general risks associated with outside work such as bee stings, poison ivy and pollen. Volunteers helping with animal food prep may be asked to cut food with sharp knives or a food processor. Depending on the work, lifting various items may occur. Volunteers would only be asked to assist with something that is appropriate to their skill/ability and comfort level.

**Who owns/operates Upper Schuylkill Valley Park?**

The Park is owned and operated by Montgomery County’s Department of Assets and Infrastructure, Division of Parks, Trails & Historic Sites. Site staff are paid Montgomery County employees. As a government agency, we are not a 501c3. Some companies that allow for volunteer hours during work days are only interested in 501c3 designated non-profits.

**Do you accept court-ordered community service hours?**

Yes, we do allow community service workers depending on project availability. Projects include painting, gardening, and small maintenance projects. This does not include animal care.

**Do you have group volunteer projects available?**

Yes! Depending on the season, we do have projects available for groups, contact us for more information. Volunteer groups are required to sign a waiver.

**If I still have questions, how do I find answers?**

Give us a call at 610-948-5170 or e-mail UpperSchuylkillValley@montgomerycountypa.gov, and we will answer your inquiry as soon as possible!