

BALCONES CANYONLANDS  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

**VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION HANDBOOK**



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to introduce you to your role as a volunteer at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge and to give you guidance throughout your stay. It contains helpful information about the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Refuge. It also includes the policies and procedures that will apply to your volunteer time with us. These policies and procedures may change...ask your supervisor for clarification.

Since we want your volunteer experience to be rewarding, we encourage you to read this handbook carefully before you begin your duties and refer to it as needed. We hope it will prove to be a helpful and handy reference.

The Volunteer Coordinator and other staff and volunteers are ready to help you be successful and effective in your duties. We encourage you to seek assistance whenever necessary.

This handbook is yours to keep. If you find that other information would be useful and should be included in future editions, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know.

Important Contacts (these are in order of contact in case of a Refuge emergency):

Cindy Fronk – Volunteer Coordinator

***(Main Contact for job assignments & volunteering questions)***

Work Phone: 512-339-9432 **Ext. 70**

Cell Phone: (personal) 830-265-7443 (work) 830-220-9254

Email Address - cindy\_fronk@fws.gov

Chad Ediger – Maintenance Supervisor

Work Phone: 512-339-9432 **Ext. 61**

Cell Phone: 830-220-9470

Email Address: chad\_ediger@fws.gov

Dub Lyon – President, Friends of Balcones & Refuge Volunteer

Cell Phone: 817-291-2508

Email Address: dub@friendsofbalcones.org

David Maple – Deputy Refuge Manager

Work Phone: 512-339-9432 **Ext. 20**

Cell Phone: 512-413-1953

Kelly Purkey – Refuge Manager

Work Phone: 512-339-9432 **Ext. 10**

Cell Phone: 830-265-3024

## **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME AS A VOLUNTEER AT BALCONES CANYONLANDS**

An organization that relies heavily on volunteers has many unique qualities. Volunteers are here because they want to be and not for monetary rewards. Volunteers get their satisfaction through the jobs they perform and the difference they make. Frustrations may also occur in a volunteer organization. Things may not happen as fast as they might in the private sector. Because there are many jobs to do and a limited number of people to do them, not everyone will always have the job they prefer. When you join us at the Refuge, come with a professional attitude, sense of humor and an open mind. You will be in a beautiful setting, and doing useful work. You will be working and living with people from varied backgrounds and different parts of the country. We hope that the suggestions below will help you get the maximum pleasure from your time with us here at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge.

### **Understanding the Mission of the Fish and Wildlife Refuge System**

When Congress established the first National Wildlife Refuge, it was to provide protection for birds that were being slaughtered for their feathers. Widespread slaughter is obviously not taking place today, but the primary function of the Refuge is still to provide food, shelter and protection for the thousands of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects that inhabit the Refuge System. Refuges are very different from parks, national forests, and other public lands and understanding the mission will help you understand why some decisions are made. Parks are for people, refuges are for wildlife.

The primary mission of Balcones Canyonlands NWR is to conserve habitat for two endangered songbirds; the Black-capped Vireo and the Golden-cheeked Warbler.

A secondary mission of the Refuge is to provide a place where visitors can enjoy and appreciate the many forms of wildlife in this nation.

### **Leave Your Ego Behind**

It is sometimes hard for a volunteer, who may have been an executive or supervisor in a former life, to be comfortable with the wide range of jobs that need to be done on the Refuge. We expect volunteers to do the important jobs that support the mission of the Refuge. Picking up trash, cleaning bathrooms, or tearing down old fencing might be a long way from what you are used to do. It is, however, what needs to be done here. The jobs that we might ask you to perform could be under the supervision of another volunteer.

This is not a reflection on you personally. Relax, enjoy the experience and don't let your ego get in the way of your success as a volunteer.

### **Be Flexible**

On the Refuge, a variety of things come up. You might be scheduled to do one thing and then be asked to do something else. The task needing to be done may be something you've not done before. Many activities are needed to support the mission of the Refuge and our priorities may change daily. The Refuge is a huge living organism, teeming with life of all descriptions. Our responsibility is to respond to the needs of that organism and the lives within and to be constantly aware of the changes taking place. You will usually be able to do those things that you enjoy the most; however, when the need arises and we ask you to do something else, meet that need as a cheerfully and as enthusiastically as you can.

### **Be Patient**

Because of the size of the volunteer work force, change is always happening. Someone new is always arriving and someone else is going. When you get here, please take time to learn and observe how things are done. While you may see things that you believe should be done differently, the methods and procedures that are in place have evolved over a long period of time through the input of many staff and volunteers and may have more merit than you can see at first glance.

When you have been here for a while, you may want to provide suggestions to help the Refuge run more efficiently. It may take a while, though, for suggestions to be considered, so please give us time and your understanding. **Suggestions are always welcomed, but do understand that we receive many suggestions and are not always able to accommodate each one.**

### **Address Concerns Promptly**

If you have a question or concern about your responsibilities or duties on the job, bring it up immediately with your supervisor. If your concern involves other volunteers, staff or a conflict of any kind, meet as soon as possible with the volunteer coordinator or supervisor. The coordinator will try to clarify the issues, help you find a solution, or talk to you about the things prohibiting the solution you might prefer. If your problem involves another volunteer or a staff member, you may be encouraged to meet with the person to resolve the problem. If you prefer, the coordinator may offer to mediate a session to help reach a resolution. The important thing is that all parties are heard and that we resolve problems as quickly as possible. Please follow the "chain of command" when trying to resolve issues. **For any emergency that could involve someone getting hurt, please find the nearest staff member.**

It is important to all the volunteers and staff that experiences here are positive and rewarding. If we all strive to maintain an atmosphere that allows us to work with eagerness and enthusiasm, the Refuge and volunteers will be better for it.

### **Continue to Learn**

Your value as a volunteer increases with your knowledge of the Refuge and the work required supporting it. Approach each job you do with an open and inquisitive mind and learn all you can about it. If you are offered a chance to learn a new job, take the opportunity seriously. Even if it is a job you might not feel prepared for, consider stepping outside your comfort zone.

### **Be Considerate of Other Workers**

While living and working on the Refuge, you will be interacting with a variety of people. Respect the feelings of the others and treat others with the consideration you expect. Disrespectful behavior and harassment will not be tolerated.

### **Obey the Rules**

Most of the rules that you will encounter on the Refuge were developed to protect the resources with which we are entrusted – especially wildlife and habitat. Other rules are to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors, volunteers, and staff. We do our best to apply the rules and regulations consistently and fairly with all user groups, including volunteers. For example, we enforce closed areas on the Refuge, except when on official business. If you are in doubt, ask your supervisor for clarification.

**Be careful in your use of Government property. You should have no question in your mind that you are conducting official business. If you have any doubt, then you should not be using Government property unless it is part of your work assignment.**

### **Monitor Your Own Satisfaction**

We sincerely hope you will be happy here as a volunteer. We realize that a full time volunteer job involves a commitment equivalent to a paying job. While we will make every effort to train and prepare you for your position, you may realize that you are not ready for this type of activity. If this happens, please see your supervisor. Balcones Canyonlands NWR is not a place for unhappy volunteers. If you are not happy here, it is in everyone's best interest to resolve the situation in a timely and mutually satisfactory manner. No one will think less of you for recognizing your desire to do something else.

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Volunteering can be a great experience. Opportunities and rewards abound. Most of all, though, it's just great fun! That's why many of our volunteers return year after year. With an open mind, a commitment to succeed, a sense of humor, enthusiasm and consideration

of others, you will be delighted with your time here at Balcones Canyonlands NWR. We look forward to sharing this great experience with you.

# U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS

## History and Function

The Service's national responsibilities for fish and wildlife go back more than 100 years to the establishment in 1871 of the Commission of Fisheries. In 1886 the Division of Biological Survey was established in the Department of Agriculture. In 1939 these functions were transferred to the Department of Interior. In 1940 they were consolidated and redesignated as the Fish and Wildlife Service. Further reorganization came in 1956 when the Fish and Wildlife Act created the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. An amendment in 1974 designated the Bureau as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Service performs the following functions:



Sandra Larry, a fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, is acting as a project design and fundraising advisor. PHOTO: USFWS

1. Acquires, protects, and manages unique ecosystems necessary to sustain fish and wildlife, such as migratory birds and endangered species.
2. Operates fish hatcheries to support research, develop new techniques, and fulfill the public demand for recreational fishing.
3. Conducts fundamental field assessments on fish, wildlife, and their habitats, to provide better management and produce healthier and more vigorous animals. Also protects fish and wildlife from dislocation or destruction of their habitats.
4. Renders financial and professional assistance to states through Federal aid programs for the enhancement and restoration of fish and wildlife resources.
5. Establishes and enforces regulations for the protection of migratory birds, marine mammals, fish and other non-endangered wildlife from illegal taking, transportation, or sale, within the United State or from foreign countries.
6. Communicates information essential for public awareness and understanding of the importance of fish and wildlife resources, and changes reflecting environment issues that ultimately will affect the welfare of human beings.
7. Operates wildlife refuges to provide, restore, and manage a national network of lands and waters sufficient in size, diversity, and location, to meet society's needs for the areas where the widest possible spectrum of benefits associated with wildlife and wildlands is enhanced and plants, animals and birds of this nation have benefitted from

the protection and care of generations of committed employees and volunteers. Many endangered species exist today, at least in part, due to our National Wildlife Refuge system.

Today the Service consists of a headquarters office in Washington, D.C., eight regional offices and more than 700 field units and installations, including more than 560 National Wildlife Refuges, comprising more than 150 million acres, 57 fish and wildlife research laboratories and field units, 43 cooperative research units at universities across the country, nearly 135 national hatcheries and fishery assistance stations, and a nationwide network of law enforcement agents and biologists.

## **BALCONES CANYONLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

### **Background**

Balcones Canyonlands is a National Wildlife Refuge located in the Texas Hill Country to the northwest of Austin. The Refuge was formed in 1992 to conserve habitat for two endangered songbirds: the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. The Refuge also preserves the Texas Hill Country habitat for numerous other wildlife species.

The Refuge is located deep within dissected portion of the Edwards Plateau which has underground labyrinth of caves, sinkholes and springs. Various spiders, beetles, and other creatures inhabit this below-ground world and are unique to this area of Texas. Even deeper below the surface lies the Edwards Aquifer, which stores billions of gallons of water and supplies drinking water for almost one million people. The aquifer is also the source of many springs that feed Hill Country Rivers, which eventually flow into marshes, estuaries, and bays along the Texas coast.

The vegetation found in the Hill Country includes various oaks, elms and Ashe juniper trees (often referred to as “cedar” in Texas). The endangered Golden-cheek Warbler and Black-capped Vireo depend on different successional stages of this vegetation. Both of these birds nest in the Edwards Plateau, the Warbler exclusively.

The Refuge harbors approximately 245 bird species for part or all of the year. Almost half are neo-tropical migratory birds that breed in the U.S. and winter south of the border. Because of its importance to birds, this refuge has been identified as being significant for world bird conservation and officially designated a Globally Important Bird Area. The American Bird Conservancy recognized Balcones Canyonlands NWR as an IBA for its significant role in conserving the Golden-cheeked Warbler, the Black-capped Vireo, and their habitats.

Like much of the area, the Refuge's roadsides and prairies transform to brilliant wildflower gardens each spring, accenting the emerald, olive and forest green of the Hill Country. The flowers in turn attract a myriad of butterflies. In summer, at least 37 kinds of dragonflies zip across refuge ponds, streams and meadows in hot pursuit of their insect prey.

The Refuge currently encompasses roughly 24,500 acres with an acquisition total goal of 46,000 acres.

### **Refuge Vision Statement**

As the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge grows it will become a focus of conservation efforts in the Austin area. The Refuge will continue to play a key role in conservation of the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo and

protection of karst habitat. Ongoing efforts to manage habitat for the two endangered songbirds on the Refuge will result in innovations useful to surrounding private and institutional landowners, as well as to Refuge management. Protection of caves and other karst features on the Refuge will assure that populations of the cave fauna remain viable. Conservation of these poorly understood and largely un-catalogued species and their habitats is consistent with overall conservation of regional ecological integrity. Future scientific study should yield greater understanding of these obscure organisms. Management actions aimed at the Golden-cheeked Warbler and Black-capped Vireo will benefit other neo-tropical song birds as well, restoring vigor and diversity to the avifauna of central Texas. The Refuge will be a demonstration area for adaptive management techniques focusing on habitat and wildlife.

The Refuge will develop education and interpretation programs for local school children, as well as visitors from other states and nations. These programs will foster increased public knowledge and appreciation of the unique natural resources of the Edwards Plateau, particularly its rare and endangered species. As the population of the hill country continues to grow and develop, the importance of the Refuge to regional rare species conservation and natural ecological integrity will only increase. The Refuge will also be valued by area residents and visitors alike as a window on the area's natural heritage.

### **Refuge Goals**

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge lies within the Edwards Plateau Ecosystem Unit. The plan for that Ecosystem Unit established four goals:

1. Conserve the full range of natural biological diversity within the Edwards Plateau ecosystem including landscapes, communities, populations and species.
2. Promote conservation of water quality and quantity for human and natural resource benefit.
3. Provide high quality recreational experiences to the extent these activities support the resource and priorities identified by the ecosystem team.
4. Promote an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of natural resources and the human role in the environment.

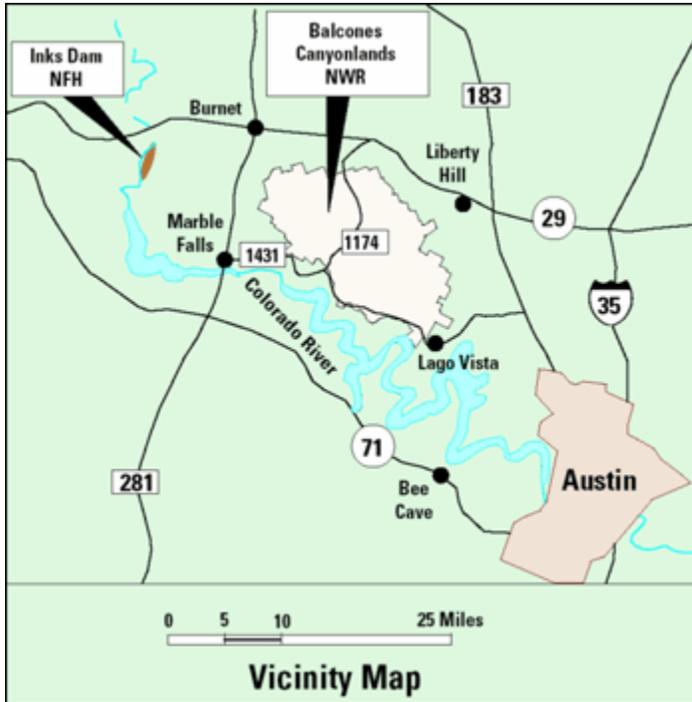
## **Refuge Resource Management Goals**

The following goals were established for management and staff in September of 2001 in a Comprehensive Conservation Plan. You, as a volunteer, can greatly help us continue to maintain and achieve these goals.

1. Restoration and enhancement of threatened and endangered species habitat on Refuge lands.
2. Protection and enhancement of habitat for a diversity of wildlife including other migratory birds.
3. Restoration of watershed health to minimize sheet runoff and siltation, enhance seasonal stream flow, and maximize ground and surface water recharge.
4. Development of interpretive programs that enable the public to, (1) enjoy the fish and wildlife resources found on the Refuge, (2) understand these resources and issues related to them, and (3) act to promote fish and wildlife conservation.
5. Protection of habitat within approved Refuge boundaries by fee acquisition or conservation easement.
6. Compile and maintain accurate, up-to-date data on roads, other physical infrastructure, habitats and wildlife and plant species.
7. Comply with historic and archeological resource protection laws and regulations.
8. Provide efficient administration that supports Refuge objective accomplishments.

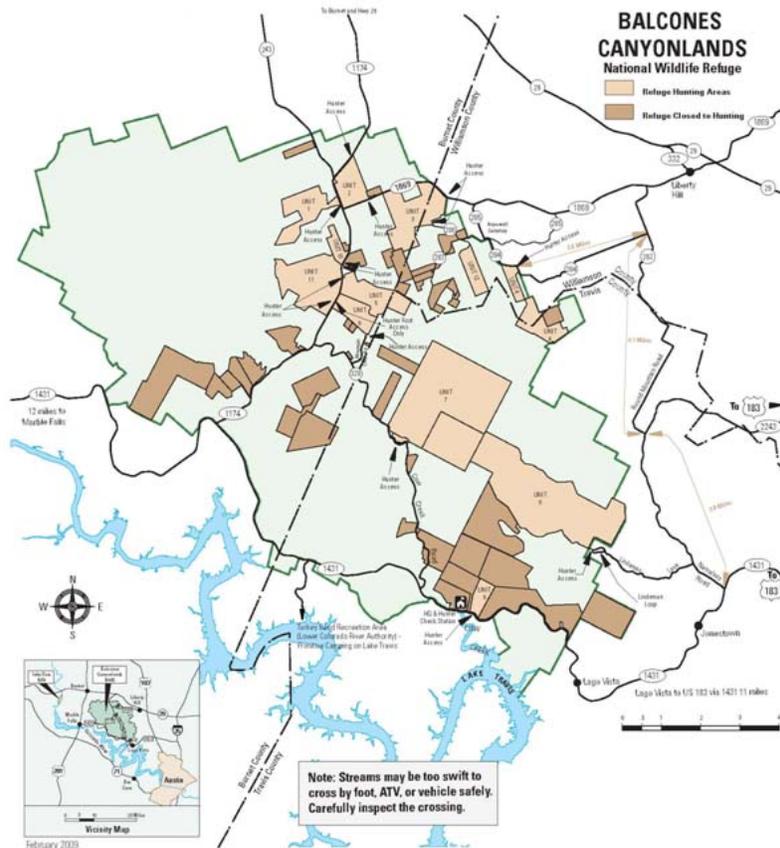
## Refuge Area Map & Location

The Refuge Headquarters is approximately 30 minutes from Austin, Texas. Take U.S. Highway 183 North from Austin, then continue West on FM 1431 past Lago Vista to reach the southern portion of the Refuge.



Refuge Address:

24518 FM 1431  
Marble Falls, TX 78654  
Phone: 512-339-9432



## GENERAL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

### Your Arrival at the Refuge

Welcome! We hope you enjoy your stay at Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge and that you will leave here with a feeling of satisfaction for having made a significant contribution to the Refuge and its wildlife.

### Resident Volunteer Work Hours

**Balcones Canyonlands NWR requires a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of six (6) months commitment.** As a resident volunteer, you will provide your own RV. Each couple is expected to work 48 hours while a single individual is expected to work 32 hours each week to qualify for a pad site. Your hours will start at 8:00 AM and end at 4:30 PM. You will have a 30-minute lunch break. During the first two weeks of your stay, you will be assigned to work in the visitor center on your assigned days.

Working in the visitor center will give you the opportunity to meet the staff, educate yourself on the public use areas by greeting volunteers, and time to complete any assigned training and forms. After completing two weeks in the visitor center, you will then receive your specific lists of duties. More information on refuge volunteer jobs and duties are listed below.

If you are assigned maintenance or outdoor work, the starting and ending hours may vary. The days we work sometimes depend on weather. You may be asked to work on the weekends. If you need additional time off which conflicts with your work schedule, please coordinate this with your supervisor. The Refuge Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. The Refuge Office is closed on the weekends.

We will do our best to accommodate your work schedule per your request, but please be flexible based on weather conditions and other emergencies that arise. You may be requested to work on one of your scheduled days off.

### Type of Work

Typically the six types of work on the Refuge are Visitor Center Receptionist, Environmental Education Program Assistant, Recreation Program Assistant, Public Use, Facility and Vehicle Maintenance Assistants.

Visitor Center Receptionist: will assist refuge with general office, reception and small visitor center services.

Examples of Duties:

1. Answer Phones - answering questions courteously and directing calls
2. Greet and answer guest's questions regarding the refuge
3. Collect and distribute mail
4. Make copies as needed (Refuge maps, trail maps, etc.)
5. Create or update Excel spreadsheets
6. Create or update Word documents
7. Assist with filing
8. Enter volunteer hours into Access database
9. Assist with Environmental Education Program
10. Assist with the maintenance of the headquarters' interpretive gardens

Environmental Education Program Assistant: will prepare and conduct environmental education programs for students in grades K-12. May assist program with scheduling.

Examples of Duties:

1. Contact area schools regarding educational opportunities with the refuge
2. Maintain calendar of events and ensure there are no event scheduling conflicts
3. Train volunteers to lead event educational Refuge programs
4. Ensure students have a positive outdoor and educational experience on the refuge
5. Assist in updating and developing educational programs

Recreation Program Assistant: will assist in programs and tours that center around the outdoors, nature, and recreation for all ages.

Examples of Duties:

1. Conduct interpretive nature, birding, and wildlife hikes on the refuge
2. Rove refuge hiking trails to evaluate trail maintenance needs
3. Monitor visitor and guest safety
4. Lead hikes and assist refuge staff during special refuge events
5. Instruct and educate during special recreation events

Public Use Maintenance Assistant: will assist refuge staff with day-to-day maintenance of Refuge bathrooms, trails, collection of trash and recyclables.

Examples of Duties:

1. Cleaning the restroom facilities at Doeskin Ranch and Warbler Vista Public Use Areas.
2. Cleaning the interior and exterior of refuge headquarters and other refuge facilities open to the public including bathrooms
3. Restocking of brochures and maps at headquarters entrance, Warbler Vista, Doeskin Ranch, and Shinoak Observation deck.
4. Record monthly visitation numbers from traffic counters at all 3 public use areas.

Facility Maintenance Assistant: will assist refuge with general improvements and general maintenance of structures.

Examples of Duties:

1. Minor plumbing repairs
2. Interior and exterior painting
3. Mowing grass, tree trimming, clearing brush
4. Roofing repairs
5. Minor electrical repairs
6. Minor carpentry repairs
7. Facility construction

Vehicle Maintenance Assistant: will assist refuge staff with day-to-day maintenance of vehicles, equipment, tools, motor pool buildings, and bays.

Examples of Duties:

1. Cleaning the interior of vehicles.
2. Minor vehicle and equipment maintenance.
3. Organizing and inventorying tools.
4. Sweeping and tidying bays.
5. Collecting and emptying trash and recyclables.
6. Washing vehicles.
7. Picking up vehicle parts.
8. Maintaining and inventorying disaster response recreational vehicles and generators.
9. Recording mileage in log book and submitting it to the Maintenance Office monthly.

There are times the Refuge holds special events and educational programs. If you are here during those times, you could be assigned to help in the coordination and teaching of these events. ***Please be flexible.*** There are times when an urgent project may arise which will cause you to be reassigned.

### **Volunteer Communication**

We realize your resources for communication can be limited based on cell phone and internet. Please advise us of the best way to communicate with you: Cell Call, Text and/or Email. We will try to keep this usage to a minimum, but may need to contact you in case of an emergency or an unscheduled change in your work day. If you do not have access to one or more of these communication resources above, please let your supervisor know at the start of your time here.

### **Timekeeping**

You will be given copies of timesheets to record your hours. Please record your work hours accurately. This helps the Refuge keep track of how long it takes to complete a task and how many volunteers are needed to help the Refuge. We also keep track of the type of task. Please record your task under the proper code. If you need help in identifying the proper code for a task you are assigned, please consult your supervisor. Upon the end of

your work month, your timesheet needs to be turned into the Volunteer Coordinator at the 1<sup>st</sup> of the new month.

## **Uniforms**

You will receive two to three t-shirts upon your arrival. Visitor Center workers please wear these shirts with jeans or pants. Maintenance workers will be supplied with a ball cap in addition to t-shirts. Please wear clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. Working in the field you will encounter heavy brush, cactus, old fencing and other landscape that will require gloves to be worn. **If you don't have gloves, safety glasses or ear protection, please ask your supervisor.**

## **Vehicles**

You may be assigned a vehicle if a project and/or task requires it. Government vehicles will be returned to the bay at the end of your work day and keys returned to the key box in the volunteer coordinator's office. Volunteers are required to complete defensive driving through DOI Learn before being permitted to operate a Government vehicle. Please see forms section for a link to the vehicle training.

It is your responsibility to keep the vehicle clean and maintained. You can wash the vehicle on the west side of the Maintenance Bay. You need to ensure the vehicle has been properly serviced which includes: oil change, tire pressure, windshield wipers and all important fluids that help operate the vehicle. Fill up the vehicle when the tank is ¼ full. Please check with your supervisor on the approved vendors for service. Do not use electronic devices while driving such as cell phones. Pull to the side of the road if you can or return calls / text upon arrival at your destination. There is a log book in each vehicle. You are to enter your mileage and fuel consumption into the vehicle specific log book. This is turned in by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to the Maintenance Staff. Even if you are sharing a vehicle with other volunteers, do not assume they have completed these tasks. You are responsible for ensuring the proper usage of all Refuge vehicles. Do not park in the fire crew area. ***Vehicles are not to be used for personal use at any time this includes driving to and from your RV pad site.***

## **Safety**

Staff and volunteers work with a variety of equipment, from paper cutters to bulldozers, and under many different circumstances, including cold, wind, rain, heat and sunshine. We want everyone to work carefully and safely at all times, this includes wearing personal protective equipment, receiving proper training on tool/equipment use, ensuring that safety equipment is operating, and being aware of the world around you as you work.

## **Accidents / Incidents**

While we take as many precautions as possible, we understand that accidents sometimes occur. As a volunteer, you are covered by workers compensation insurance during your duty hours. You must immediately report all accidents and incidents to your supervisor regardless of how minor they may seem. Any accident needs to be reported (cut fingers, strained back, bug bites that could cause allergic reaction, etc.) will need to have an incident report filled out and sent to the regional office. You will not be punished for reporting accidents. All vehicle accidents, including dents and broken taillights, must also be reported so we can get the damage fixed as quickly as possible. See your supervisor so an incident form can be filled out.

## **Training**

No volunteer will drive, operate or use any tool equipment or vehicle without proper authorization and training from the designated training officer. All volunteers will read the operation manuals and be introduced to the usage, safety and maintenance of all equipment on the Refuge. Some equipment requires training and a written exam before operating. Your supervisor will instruct you and help you with the exam if necessary. Keep a copy of your certificate if you volunteer for other refuges.

## **Tools and Materials**

Volunteers should get proper instruction on the correct use of all tools before using them. All tools will be accounted for daily and stored in a locked building. Materials will also be stored properly. Garbage and trash should be disposed of each day. The work area should be policed and kept clean and tidy. Plan work time at the end of the day to service and clean equipment, tools and buildings.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in government housing, buildings, vehicles, or near any flammable objects or areas. ***Please do not throw cigarette butts on the ground.*** Dispose of cigarette butts properly so someone does not have to pick up after you.

## **Ethics & Conduct**

The following prohibited conduct will cause for immediate termination of a volunteer:

1. Use of intoxicating beverages or narcotics drugs in Refuge vehicles at any time.
2. Gambling
3. Discrimination
4. Harassment or creating a hostile work environment based on race, gender, religion, ability, orientation, or other protective status.
5. Discourtesy to a member of the public or staff.

- Careless use of vehicles or equipment that could result in damage to the equipment or an injury to yourself or others.

### **Dealing with the Public**

Greet visitors warmly. Be courteous even if they are not. Be sure they understand that we are a Federal facility-not state, county or private. Our Refuge was established to protect the habitat for Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped vireo. Activities supported by the Refuge are hunting, hiking, wildlife observation, photography and special events. Nature brochures are available for Doeskin Ranch and Warbler Vista. It is a good idea to keep some of these brochures in your vehicle to hand out to visitors.

Do not engage in conflicts with visitors. Do not argue with them. You may inform them of rules and regulations and offer an explanation for why these rules are in effect. If necessary, offer them an opportunity to speak with a staff member but if the situation gets out of hand, just walk away. If you can safely do so, get a license plate number. Do not detain visitors but be aware of what they may be doing on the Refuge.

Inform visitors of upcoming events. The Refuge Headquarters is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Hiking trails and observation decks are open seven (7) days a week from Sunrise to Sunset. ***Note: The Shin Oak area may be closed during certain times of the birding season.***

Consumption of alcohol by the public is prohibited on the Refuge.

Pets are not permitted in the public areas of the Refuge since they are predators to some of our wildlife species. We do allow pets to be taken out of the car in the parking areas to prevent overheating but they must be on a leash.

We do not provide garbage containers on the refuge. We follow a “pack it in/pack it out” policy.

### **RV Housing**

There are five RV sites located behind the **Refuge Headquarters**. All five sites include concrete pads, and full hookup (Sewer & Electric-30/50 amps) but only three sites have covers.

***Please note – the sites below are 15 miles from the Refuge Headquarters.***

There are two RV sites located at the **Flying X Ranch** located on FM 1174. These sites include gravel pads, full hookup (Sewer & Electric-30/50 amps).

*\*This area is located on a bluff and can get extreme wind.*

There is one RV site located at the **Beard Ranch** on FM 1174. This site includes gravel pads, and full hookup (Sewer & Electric-30/50 amps).

*\*There is no phone or TV reception at the Beard location. Laundry must be done at the Flying-X Ranch.*

The Flying X located on FM 1174 is used as an event center. Volunteers are permitted to use the facility provided it is left clean and no other groups are scheduled.

Refuge Headquarter and Flying-X offer free laundry and freezer. Exercise equipment is available at the Block House located behind Refuge Headquarters.

### **Power Outages**

If the power goes out at the RV Headquarters, RV Pads, or Flying-X, contact the electric company (PEC) and provide the information below:

Pedernales Electric Company Phone Number – 1-888-554-4732

#### **Pad 1: (3 Covered Concrete Pads)**

Account Number – 200000294211

Meter Number – 180936

Address – 24518 E FM 1431, MARBLE FALLS, TX 78654

#### **Pad 2: (Gravel Pad)**

Account Number – 200003562416

Meter Number – 178998

Address – 24518 E FM 1431, MARBLE FALLS, TX 78654

#### **Flying-X**

Account Number – 200002339717

Meter Number – 215527

Address – 8936 FM 1174, BERTRAM, TX 78605

### **Wi-Fi**

Wi-Fi is not available at the RV sites. You can use the Wi-Fi at the rock house with your own computer; however data is limited and streaming of videos is NOT allowed.

Computers and Wi-Fi are also available at both the Lago Vista and Marble Falls libraries and most people can get a good signal at both locations. Note: Marble Falls and Liberty Hill Public Libraries will allow you to obtain a Library card. You do not have to be a local resident. They also have a 14-day DVD / Blue-ray movie rental program.

## **Surrounding Area**

Depending on where you will be staying, there are grocery stores, hardware stores, restaurants, post offices, libraries and other attractions conveniently located near you.

**Lago Vista** is 5-miles from the Refuge Headquarter. There is a post office, CVS Pharmacy, ACE Hardware Store, Lowes Supermarket, Sonic Drive-In, J&J BBQ & Burgers, Wok 'N' Grill, Domino's Pizza and Lago Vista Public Library.

**Cedar Park** is 18-miles from the Refuge Headquarters (approximately 18 minutes). Cedar Park is a larger city and has a Walmart, Target, H-E-B Plus and there are a lot of restaurants in this area.

**Marble Falls** is 22-miles from the Refuge Headquarters and 18-miles from the Flying-X Ranch (approximately 20 minutes). There is a post office, H-E-B Supermarket, Home Depot & Lowes, Dollar General, Office Depot, Blue Bonnet Café, Brothers Bakery and Café, Chicken Express and the Marble Falls Library. *Marble Falls Library is free to sign-up. They have 14-day movie rentals and free Wi-Fi. Marble Falls also has the Walkway of Lights during the Winter Holiday Season.*

**Bertram** is 23-miles from the Refuge Headquarters and 14 miles from the Flying-X Ranch. There is a Dollar General, Shell Gas Station, El Rancho Mexican Food, Highway 29 BBQ and Tony's Hill Country Smoke BBQ, post office and Bertram Library.

**Burnet** is 34-miles from the Refuge Headquarters and 20 miles from the Flying-X Ranch. There is an H-E-B Grocery Store, Dollar General, Dairy Queen, Whataburger, Chicken Express, post office and Herman Brown Free Library.

**Leander, TX** is 20-miles from the Refuge Headquarters and the Flying-X Ranch and has an H-E-B Plus, Walmart Supercenter, Chili's, Home Depot & Lowes, post office and Leander Public Library.

## **PERSONAL MAIL / PACKAGES**

Mail - You may use the Refuge address to receive your personal mail and/or packages.

The address is:

**{Your Name}**

Balcones Canyonlands National Refuge

24518 FM 1431

Marble Falls, TX 78654-4096

Phone: 512-339-9432

## **Policy for Housing Visitors**

Each Refuge has their own policy for housing visitors. Please see the Volunteer Coordinator for details and permission.

## **Pets**

It is the Refuge policy to keep your pet(s) on a leash and away from Refuge visitors and other volunteers. You are expected to clean up after your pets. Pets should not be left unattended outside your RV since they could become victims of rattlesnakes, coyotes and other wild animals. Barking dogs that disturb other volunteers are not permitted.

## **Recycling & Scrap Metal**

The Refuge does recycle. Please help us by disposing of your plastic, aluminum cans and cardboard in the proper bins located at the Maintenance Bay. Rinse all plastic and aluminum before disposing. Try to crush plastic and aluminum if possible. All scrap metal is disposed of west of the Fire | Maintenance Shop on the open concrete pad. There is a scheduled run and you may be asked to take recyclables and/or scrap metal for disposal. Your supervisor will provide detail on how to properly transport and the location of these vendors.

## **CODE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR VOLUNTEERS**

**BE SURE.** Look into your heart and know that you really want to help other people.

**BE CONVINCED.** Do not offer your services unless you believe in the value of what you are doing.

**ACCEPT THE RULES.** Don't criticize what you don't understand. They may be a good reason. Find out why.

**SPEAK UP.** Ask about things that you don't understand. Don't coddle your doubts and frustrations until they drive you away or turn you into a problem worker.

**BE WILLING TO LEARN.** Training is essential to any job well done.

**WELCOME SUPERVISION.** You will do a better job and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you.

**BE DEPENDABLE.** Your word is your bond. Do what you have agreed to do. Don't make promised you can't keep.

**BE A TEAM PLAYER.** Find a place for yourself on the team. It is important to help the staff and other volunteers. It is rare to work alone here on the Refuge. Partnerships are very important to the success of the refuge.

## **BILL OF RIGHTS FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The right to be treated as a coworker not just free help and not as a prima donna.

The right to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background.

The right to know as much about the agency as possible: its policies, its people, its programs.

The right to be trained for the job with thoughtfully planned and effectively presented training.

The right to continuing education on the job with follow-up training, information about new developments, and training for greater responsibility.

The right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, patient, well-informed and who has the time to invest in giving guidance.

**VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST**



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Sign and Return the Volunteer Services Agreement

Complete and Return the Volunteer Application

Read and return the Volunteer Orientation Handbook

Sign and return the Volunteer Acknowledgement Form

Complete Defensive Driving Course: instructions on p.24

Read the Refuge Safety Plan & Hazardous Communication Plan, sign the Memorandum on Front Cover (found at HQ)

Complete the Safety Orientation Checklist and have it Signed by Cixto Saucedo or Chad Ediger in Maintenance, Return to Cindy Fronk

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## GSA Sponsored – Defensive Driver Training

### [Online Defensive Driving Course](#)

National Safety Council's Online Defensive Driving Course is a four-hour course designed to provide convenient training on a personal computer. Using state-of-the-art animation and graphics, the online defensive driving course offers an engaging, interactive learning environment for Fleet customers to analyze real driving situations, spot driving hazards, and identify the correct defenses. GSA's Office of Motor Vehicle Management offers this training free of charge to GSA Fleet customers. Upon completion, students receive a Water Marked certificate from the National Safety Council that, in many states, may be used to lower automobile insurance rates. More than 65 million drivers have learned to protect themselves on the road by taking part in National Safety Council programs. Certification expires within three years, so those who took this course in 2013 will need to take it again to maintain certification.

### It's Fast, Easy, and Free!

1. Go to <https://drivethru.gsa.gov/> in Internet Explorer.
2. Click on the link for Defensive Driving Course located on the top left side of the screen on the blue bar.
3. You will be presented with a registration page. (Ensure your pop-up blocker is disabled - select the Tools button, then Internet Options. Go to the Privacy tab, under Pop-up Blocker, select or clear the Turn on Pop-up Blocker check box, and then select OK).
4. Enter a vehicle tag number in this format: GXX-XXXXX. Then enter your agency email address or private email address. Use one of these tag numbers if you don't have a GSA leased vehicle:

G10-6320P  
G10-6315P  
G10-6314P  
G10-6318P  
G10-5638P  
G10-6317P  
G10-6319P  
G13-8275P

5. Check the box that you are certified to drive a GSA Fleet leased vehicle.
6. A new window will appear with options of New Student, Returning Student, Site Orientation and Administrators.
7. Select either New Student or Returning Student
8. Enter FWS Customer number 071200147967100.

**New Student** - Fill in all your information, including a login ID and a password of your choice, then click on Submit. Enter Login ID and Password you just created. Note: A

confirmation e-mail will be sent reminding you of the user name and password you created for access to the site at a later date. **See Example of requested information below.**

- 1) Click on Safety located on the My Place page.
- 2) Then on My Courses page, click on NSC Defensive Driving Course 9th Edition to begin the course.

**Returning Student** - click on this link [www.safetyserve.com/gsafleet](http://www.safetyserve.com/gsafleet) to log back in. Enter Login ID and Password

- 1) Click on Safety located on the My Place page.
- 2) Then on My Courses page, click on NSC Defensive Driving Course 9th Edition to begin the course.

NEW STUDENT –

*Please fill in all "Required Fields" and click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the screen.*

Required Fields	
✓ Login ID:	<input type="text"/> <i>require more than 4 characters</i>
✓ Login Password:	<input type="text"/> <i>require more than 4 characters)</i>
✓ Re-enter Login Password:	<input type="text"/>
✓ First Name:	<input type="text"/>
✓ Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
✓ Agency Name:	<input type="text" value="USFWS"/>
✓ Bureau:	<input type="text" value="Department of the Interior"/> ▼
✓ Region:	<input type="text" value="02"/>
Unique Employee Identifier:	<input type="text"/>
✓ Work Phone:	<input type="text"/>
✓ Email:	<input type="text"/> Will automatically fill with E-mail provided.
✓ Address 1:	<input type="text"/>
Address 2:	<input type="text"/>
✓ City:	<input type="text"/>
✓ State:	<input type="text" value="None"/> ▼
✓ Zip-Postal Code:	<input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>
Cert (office use only):	<input type="text"/>

Hit Submit

New students will see this when they hit submit at bottom on new employee page.

## Welcome to your Online Training Center

Please enter the following information to login.

Member Login	
Login ID:	<input type="text"/>
Password:	<input type="password"/>
	Enter Password
<b>LOG IN</b>	
Click on Log In	

**Access Help**

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Forgot your ID or password?](#)

## NEXT PAGE

My Place	
<p><b>Categories:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Safety</a></li></ul>	<p><b>Welcome to your online training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>To access a course, click on a category on the left.</b></li><li>• If you have not started a course before, you may be asked to download a secured multimedia player when launching a course. This player has passed all security checks and is required for the online training.</li><li>• Course progress information is available by clicking on the 'Progress' link on the left navigation bar or by going to the 'details' link under 'Syllabus' before you select a course.</li><li>• To improve our service and course content, please provide us with feedback using the 'Feedback' link on the left navigation bar.</li><li>• Thanks!</li></ul>

**NEXT PAGE**

*My Courses*

**Click on a Course title below to begin your training -**

**[Note: All dates/times are in Eastern Time]**

Date Created Date Expired Date Accessed Syllabus/Progress

**Courses Available**

<a href="#">NSC Defensive Driving Course 9th Edition</a>	9/8/2011	9/7/2012	--	<a href="#">details</a>
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**NOTE: YOU MAY USE THE DETAILS LINK, UNDER SYLLABUS/PROGRESS, TO VIEW YOUR COMPLETION STATUS**

If you cannot finish the training in one session you can close and when you log in to the NSC Defensive Driving Course it will automatically bring you back to where you stopped.