



*Richfield*  
HERITAGE PRESERVE

# Volunteer Guidebook

## **Volunteer Welcome**

Greetings and welcome to the family of volunteers at Richfield Heritage Preserve (RHP). The park is well-loved, and you are joining an army of individuals such as yourself that already love the park or are just discovering it for the first time. Whatever category you fall into, we appreciate and are so grateful for every one of you! The park wouldn't and couldn't exist as it is today without your help.

The factors that bring volunteers to the park are varied. Some individuals love the quiet and serenity of the park. Others come because they enjoy the socialization. Some are here as part of a company "give back" day, a school project fulfillment, or a scout work project. Whatever the reason, we find that many newcomers return again and again and again. It's just that kind of place! People fall in love with the trails, the streams, the lakes, and the interesting remnants of days gone by. Some lucky ones make new and lasting friendships.

We have assembled this guide to help orient you to the park and answer questions you might have regarding your responsibilities. Please don't hesitate to ask if something is not clear. We have included contact information in this document.

Know that every one of you is valued and appreciated. It matters not if you spend an hour or a lifetime at the park. We appreciate everyone who enters the RHP with the intent of making it a better place. Thank you!

**Organizational Information:**

RJRD Board of Trustees is the governing body for the Richfield Heritage Preserve, a 336-acre preserve offering visitors access to lakes, streams, and wooded trails any day of the year from dawn to dusk. The RJRD Board of Trustees is made up of seven members. The Richfield Village Council and the Richfield Township Trustees each appoint three Board Members to represent the two entities. These six board Members then elect a seventh Board Member. Each Board member serves a three-year term.

**Vision:**

History: On November 4, 2014, the voters of Richfield Village and Richfield Township approved a bond issue to purchase the Crowell Hilaka property along with a levy for operations. The Richfield Joint Recreation District (RJRD) administers and operates the property. In 2016, the property was renamed Richfield Heritage Preserve.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/history>

**Mission:**

The mission of the RJRD is to safeguard, support, and maintain the natural properties of Richfield while encouraging recreational and educational opportunities in our community.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the District shall be to provide community programming in recreational, educational, social, cultural and athletic areas; acquire property for constructing, operating and maintaining parks, playgrounds, playfields and to preserve and protect real property with valuable natural features as parks and spaces for governmental, civic educational or recreational activities for the benefit of all citizens.

**Contact Information:**

John Piepsny RHP Park Director  
[park-director@rjrd.org](mailto:park-director@rjrd.org)  
330-388-3095

Anita Gantner RJRD Board Chair  
[agantner@rjrd.org](mailto:agantner@rjrd.org)  
330-807-3060

Mike Selig RJRD Board Vice-Chair  
[mselig@rjrd.org](mailto:mselig@rjrd.org)

Dave Wehner RJRD Treasurer  
[dwehner@rjrd.org](mailto:dwehner@rjrd.org)

Holly Price RJRD Secretary  
[hprice@rjrd.org](mailto:hprice@rjrd.org)

Mark Robeson  
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Steve McPeake  
[smcpeake@rjrd.org](mailto:smcpeake@rjrd.org)

Susan Czaplicki RHP Volunteer Coordinator/Recreation Programmer  
[volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org)  
330-317-2597

Polly Wheeler RJRD Admin Coordinator  
[office@rjrd.org](mailto:office@rjrd.org)  
330-888-0511

### **Our Volunteer Program Philosophy**

The strength and stability of the Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteer program are sustained through the coordinated and collaborative efforts of the RJRD Board, the RHP Volunteer Coordinator, and our volunteers. Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteers are an integral part of making the park enjoyable for all. Your work as part of a team collectively contributes to the overall success of Richfield Heritage Preserve.

### **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities and RJRD/Richfield Heritage Preserve Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **Volunteer Rights:**

A volunteer has the right to:

- Do meaningful and satisfying work
- Be oriented to the Richfield Heritage Preserve's mission, goals, and policies
- Be trained appropriately for your work
- Work in a safe and healthy environment
- Be given access to a copy of the Richfield Heritage Preserve's Volunteer Guidebook

#### **Volunteer Responsibilities:**

A volunteer has the responsibility to:

- Participate in Richfield Heritage Preserve volunteer opportunities, programs, and events with enthusiasm and commitment
- Complete an RHP Waiver and Release Form every two years
- Ask for assistance as needed
- Agree to do only what you are qualified to competently handle and realistically accomplish
- Undertake training as needed or required
- Be reliable and on time
- Be comfortable saying "no" if necessary
- Clean up after the volunteer opportunity, project, program, or event
- Value and support other volunteers
- Remember that you represent Richfield Heritage Preserve
- Learn from your volunteer experience
- Read this Guidebook in its entirety and remain aware of all revisions to the guidebook

#### **RJRD/Richfield Heritage Preserve Rights:**

Richfield Heritage Preserve has the right to:

- Establish and enforce rules and regulations for the use of the RHP and activities on the property.
- Set parameters and guidelines regarding volunteer opportunities, programs, and events
- Update the RHP Volunteer Guidebook at any time or without notice. The RHP Volunteer Coordinator will communicate any policy changes to all volunteers.

#### **RJRD/Richfield Heritage Preserve Responsibilities**

In connection with the volunteer program, Richfield Heritage Preserve will strive to:

- Assign suitable tasks to volunteers with respect to their training, experience, and personal interests
- Provide necessary training as needed
- Provide a safe and healthy volunteer opportunity
- Offer regular feedback to volunteers
- Treat volunteers as valuable members of Richfield Heritage Preserve
- Show appropriate recognition of volunteer efforts

## **Zero Tolerance Policy for Discrimination and Harassment**

RJRD and RHP are committed to creating an environment for guests, employees, and volunteers that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Prohibited actions include:

Tripping, shoving or physically harming, or accosting another person;

- Verbal threats, name-calling, slurs, and insults, including on the basis of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, disability, religion, or sexual orientation
- Demanding money, property, or some service to be performed.
- Abusive, harassing, threatening, or bullying speech or conduct

Any volunteer who experiences or witnesses harassment, intimidation, or bullying or who becomes aware of such actions involving RJRD/RHP employees, volunteers, or guests, are asked to report this to the Park Director or Volunteer Coordinator immediately, either verbally or in writing. Volunteers are expected to cooperate in any investigation of such a report.

Volunteers must not make comments or jokes based on race, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. RJRD/RHP has a "zero tolerance" policy on discrimination and harassment, including bullying. This means that such conduct will not be tolerated and may be cause for termination from the volunteer program. Similarly, a failure to report such conduct may be cause for termination from the volunteer program.

In the event that a dispute arises and comes to the attention of the park director, the parties will be asked to provide an accounting of the event. A determination will be made regarding the ability of the parties involved to continue serving as volunteers.

## **The Importance of the Richfield Heritage Preserve Volunteer**

The RJRD Board of Trustees and staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers at the park.

### **Volunteer Job Descriptions**

1. Regular volunteers: Volunteers whose work is to be considered continuous, provided their work performance is satisfactory.
2. Special event volunteers: Volunteers who assist with a particular event or program.

### **Volunteer Supervision**

Volunteers report directly to the Volunteer Coordinator for RHP, except on those occasions when working on a Partner Group's project approved by RJRD. Under those circumstances, the volunteer would report to their Partner Group's project manager, and the project manager will, in turn, report to the Park Director as defined in the project agreement.

Regardless of who supervises the volunteer, every volunteer and every park employee is expected to follow the conduct guidelines identified in this document.

### **Park Rules:**

Please visit <https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/park-rules>

### **Recording Volunteer Time:**

All volunteer hours, including partner group hours, should be reported to the RHP Volunteer Coordinator monthly.

Volunteer hours are tracked in 15-minute increments and rounded up to the nearest quarter hour (15, 30, 45). Volunteer hours include time spent on projects at the park, meetings, research, composing meeting minutes, reports, emails, phone calls, events, programs, etc. At this time, we will not be recording travel time. Please contact the RHP Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org) for further information

Important reasons for reporting your volunteer hours in a timely manner:

- Volunteer hours provide data for annual reports and reports to the community
- Volunteer hours can be used in grant proposals
- Volunteer hours provide data for annual volunteer recognition
- Volunteer hours can be used to verify unpaid work experience
- Volunteer hours provide data to document park maintenance
- Show the impact your hard work has made
- Verify the volunteer has completed an RHP Waiver and Release form
- Regardless of the number of volunteer hours, volunteering is unpaid

### **Training**

Training shall be given either individually or in a group setting as needed

### **Volunteer Recognition**

RJRD will recognize volunteers periodically

### **Volunteering with the Richfield Heritage Preserve**

The Richfield Heritage Preserve offers volunteer opportunities for everyone's schedule. The park has something for you!

For more information regarding volunteer opportunities at the Richfield Heritage Preserve, please email the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org)

### **Volunteer Dress Code:**

Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately when volunteering at the park. Many of the park's volunteer opportunities take place outdoors in all seasons. Volunteers are encouraged to dress appropriately for the current weather conditions. Closed-toe footwear is required. Sunscreen, insect repellent, and long pants may be necessary.

### **Children and Pets:**

Volunteer opportunities require full attention by a volunteer; therefore, it is prohibited to bring young children or pets to a volunteer opportunity.

## **Park Guest Focus:**

### **You are the Eyes, Ears, and FACE of Richfield Heritage Preserve**

As volunteers, we all would like to be an advocate for Richfield Heritage Preserve. Some people understand the importance of a smile and a positive attitude, and some just may not realize how much of an impact they may have. You should always identify yourself as a volunteer if asked or if a visitor asks you a question to which you do not know the answer.

### **What you say and do DOES matter**

You are the face of Richfield Heritage Preserve. You may be the first person someone meets at Richfield Heritage Preserve, and you now have the responsibility of making a good first impression. You never know who is paying attention at any given time, so choose your words and actions wisely. Foul and condescending language and actions are not acceptable in any situation. Volunteers should 'educate' park guests, not 'reprimand' them.

### **When NOT to answer a question**

We all want to make park guests happy. If approached by someone with a question that you do not know the answer to, please do not fake it! Be honest and say you don't know the answer but will get the information to the right contact for follow-up. Please ask them to call the Park Office (330-888-0511) or direct them to the Richfield Heritage Preserve website: <https://www.richfieldheritagepreserve.com/> for more information.

When engaging with park visitors and other volunteers, please be thoughtful about speaking in one voice. There has historically been a culture that used the terms "us" and "them", where RJRD is one party and a partner group the other. RJRD is striving to foster a culture where volunteers are a united group, united in making RHP the best it can be.



## **Volunteer FAQ**

**To report serious crimes in progress:  
Call Richfield Village Police at 330-659-9500**

**In case of emergency: Call 911  
Your location is 4374 Broadview Road Richfield**

Approaching a park guest is optional.

If you see a park guest not in compliance with RJRD Park Rules, approach the guest and introduce yourself, 'Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ I'm a Richfield Heritage Preserve Volunteer, how are you today?'

Please keep in mind that many park guests may not be aware of the park rules. If you feel unsafe due to a guest's conduct or believe it poses a danger to you, call the Park Director before approaching the guest.

After your introduction, please follow these guidelines:

**If a dog is not on a leash:**

'I just wanted to make you aware that there is a leash law at RHP, dogs are required to be on a leash at all times.'

**If a boater is not wearing a personal floatation device:**

'I just wanted to make you aware that PFD is required for all boaters on the Upper Lake.' We follow ODNR Boating rules and regulations.

**If you see a park guest riding a bicycle through the park:**

Bicycles are permitted on paved roads.

**If you see a vehicle driving to the boat launch:**

Vehicles are permitted to drive to the Boat House to drop off their watercraft from April 1st through November 1st, weather permitting. If a vehicle is parked at the Boat House, please ask the boater to move his or her vehicle to the parking lot.

When you are finished speaking with the park guest, say, 'thank you, and have a nice day at the park.'

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

RHP volunteers are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of professional integrity, honesty, and responsibility. Volunteers represent the Richfield Heritage Preserve to park guests and should treat everyone with respect and courtesy. Volunteers should conduct themselves in a manner that avoids favoritism, bias, and the appearance of impropriety.

RHP Volunteers are expected to read the park rules and conduct themselves accordingly.

### **Youth Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers under the age of sixteen are required to always have a parent or guardian with them.

### **Park Vehicle Usage**

Park Volunteers are required to complete Richfield Heritage Preserve Park Vehicle Training before operating a Park Vehicle.

Volunteers under the age of 18 years are not permitted to operate a Richfield Heritage Preserve park vehicle.

### **Emergency Situations**

To report serious crimes in progress:

Call Richfield Village Police at 330-659-9500

Volunteers are encouraged to stay at a safe distance until safety forces arrive

Examples of what you should report:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Weapons being used or brandished
- Indecent exposure
- Suspicious persons breaking into a vehicle or building

**In case of emergency: Call 911** (Your location is 4374 Broadview Road in Richfield)

In case of severe weather, the Park Director or the RHP Volunteer Coordinator will inform volunteers of current severe weather alerts. In case of lighting, please go to the nearest shelter if possible.

### **Volunteer Injuries:**

Any volunteer who sustains an injury or illness that requires urgent medical attention while performing the volunteer duties should immediately seek emergency medical treatment. All volunteer-related injuries or illnesses should be reported in the following manner:

- The volunteer should immediately inform the RHP Park Director or RHP Volunteer Coordinator
- The volunteer should contact the RJRD Admin Coordinator at 330-888-0511 or [office@rjrd.org](mailto:office@rjrd.org) to complete an incident report.

### **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is prohibited inside any Richfield Heritage Preserve building, shelter, structure, vehicle, or while on duty.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Richfield Heritage Preserve is a drug-free place for volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or substances on park property.

Violations of this policy may result in removal from the Richfield Heritage Preserve Volunteer Program.

**Beer and Intoxicating Alcohol:** No person shall possess, use, or offer for sale beer or any other alcoholic beverage within the park. This section does not apply to alcoholic beverages used, consumed, or possessed on designated premises for which a permit has been issued by the RJRD Board.

**Violence-Free Work Environment** Richfield Heritage Preserve promotes a safe work environment for all volunteers and does not tolerate any type of violent behavior committed by or against volunteers.

Threatening or violent behavior committed by anyone against volunteers, staff, or program participants will not be tolerated. Such behavior may include but is not limited to:

- Physical injury to another person
- Threats
- Behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury
- Intentionally causing damage to RJRD property or property of another person
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence
- Statements or gestures that in any way suggest that an individual may engage in violent conduct will be taken seriously by RJRD and responded to appropriately.

Volunteers are strictly prohibited from possessing firearms or other weapons while volunteering on RJRD premises or engaging in RJRD-related activities in connection with their volunteer status unless specifically permitted by the Park Director due to the responsibilities of the volunteer.



## Volunteer Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received a copy of the Richfield Heritage Preserve Volunteer Guidebook and have reviewed its policies and procedures. I understand my responsibilities and will discuss any questions or concerns I may have regarding these policies and procedures with the RHP Volunteer Coordinator. By signing this agreement, I understand that I am agreeing to abide by the contents of the RHP Volunteer Guidebook, I understand the items listed here, and that this document will become a part of my volunteer file.

- General information about RJRD and Richfield Heritage Preserve
- RJRD Organizational Chart and Staff Structure
- RJRD Mission and Values
- What Volunteers Can Expect from Richfield Heritage Preserve
- What Richfield Heritage Preserve Expects from Volunteers
- Eligibility
- Volunteer Onboarding
- RHP Waiver and Release form
- Orientation and Training
- Volunteer Conduct
- Dress Code

## Risk Management

- Safety
- Emergency Procedures
- Severe Weather
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy
- Violence-Free Work Environment

## Record and Time Keeping

If the volunteer is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign below granting their authorization for the minor prior to volunteering.

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*Volunteer Signature and date*

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*Parent/Guardian Signature Date*

Prior to volunteering with Richfield Heritage Preserve you must read the Volunteer Guidebook, sign this Agreement, and return this agreement to: [volunteer-info@rjrd.org](mailto:volunteer-info@rjrd.org)