



Tejon Ranch Conservancy

Volunteer Handbook

June 2019

Contents

- Welcome 1
 - About Tejon Ranch 1
- Conservancy Volunteer Program 2
 - Goals of the Conservancy Volunteer Program 3
- Getting Started 3
 - Volunteer Descriptions 4
 - Volunteer Commitment..... 5
 - Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities 6
 - Keeping Track of Your Volunteer Hours 6
 - Dress and Personal Gear 7
- Health and Safety..... 7
 - General Safety Guidelines..... 7
 - Completing an Accident/Incident Report Form..... 8
 - Preliminaries At Meeting Place 9
- Appendix A – Conservancy Staff and Ranch Security Contact Info..... 11
- Appendix B – Accident/Incident Report Form 12

Welcome

Welcome to the Tejon Ranch Conservancy Volunteer Program!

We appreciate your participation. With your help, the Conservancy can undertake a broader diversity of science, conservation, and public access activities. Volunteers are also important ambassadors to the community at large. With your knowledge, skills, and passion, you will help educate, inspire, and engage the public both on and off the Tejon Ranch.

As fulfilling as being on Tejon Ranch and teaching people about it is, there can be a seemingly overwhelming amount of information to remember. Please use this volunteer guidebook to help answer questions you or others may have, to assure your safety and the safety of others, and most importantly, to enjoy and understand the natural and cultural resources of the Tejon Ranch. If you have any suggestions or questions that might make it easier for future docents, you are encouraged to share them.

Tejon Ranch Conservancy Volunteer Mission

The Tejon Ranch Conservancy encourages the teamwork of employees and volunteers so that it can offer guests the best services possible, advance the work of researchers and keep the Conservancy running smoothly. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills, and knowledge to provide personalized attention to visitors, enable the paid staff (see Appendix A) to concentrate on Conservancy projects, and educate the public about the Conservancy and its cause.

About Tejon Ranch

The Tejon Ranch Conservancy is one of the West's largest and most significant land trusts.

- > In one of the largest conservation agreements in California history, Tejon Ranch Company, the Ranch's owner, and five environmental organizations reached an unprecedented agreement in 2008 that protected 90% of the state's largest single piece of private property, the 270,000-acre Tejon Ranch.
- > The nonprofit Tejon Ranch Conservancy was created to manage the protected areas focusing on science, stewardship, public access, and education. Using modern conservation science in a working lands environment, the Conservancy is now one of the West's largest land trusts.
- > The Conservancy's creation opened Tejon Ranch to the public for the first time in generations, and it has launched several programs to make the Ranch more accessible and understandable.
- > The Conservancy offers guided hikes, wildflower viewing, birdwatching, tours, and many other member and public opportunities to experience and explore this historical and ecological gem.

The Conservancy is working with the Tejon Ranch Company to restore and enhance one of the last great places on Earth, the Tejon Ranch.

- > Tejon Ranch is a vast, undeveloped, unfragmented, and largely unknown landscape that is an ecological and historical treasure. It is home to more than 60 at-risk species, including the endangered California condor, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, and the San Joaquin kit fox.
- > Its rugged mountains, steep canyons, oak-covered hills, broad valleys, and expansive grasslands straddle the Tehachapi Mountains, encompassing the remarkable diversity of four different ecological regions and drawing species unique to each of these regions into one expansive piece of property.
- > Tejon Ranch is home to more than two dozen vegetation communities, over 200 species of birds, a third of the state's native oaks, extensive grasslands, and Joshua tree and conifer forests. Its terrain ranges from snow-capped mountain peaks to dry desert land, providing potential refuges from climate change for a wide variety of species.

The Conservancy conducts, sponsors, and supports state-of-the-art conservation science to protect and learn from this irreplaceable landscape.

- > With the Conservancy's support, Tejon Ranch serves as a valuable living laboratory for scholars and scientists seeking new species, answers to climate change, protection for vital habitats, sustainable practices for agriculture, and much more.
- > The Conservancy's establishment opened the Ranch to scientific exploration, and it has sponsored researchers who have discovered several new species. More discoveries could happen at any time.
- > Citizen scientists use Conservancy wildlife cameras to search for the elusive ringtail cat and other wildlife, as well as documenting the populations of pronghorn, birds, reptiles, butterflies, and many other species on the Ranch.
- > Through its partnerships with academic institutions and other scientific organizations, the Conservancy expands its conservation and sustainable land management research capacities.

Conservancy Volunteer Program

Connecting people to the Tejon Ranch is what we love to do! There are many ways that you can volunteer your time to connect the Tejon Ranch Conservancy to people near and far. Whether you are an expert citizen scientist, or you want to support the Conservancy as a webmaster, volunteer coordinator, or fundraiser, the Tejon Ranch Conservancy wants you!

We have many volunteer opportunities and it's easy to get started.

The volunteer program is an important piece of the Conservancy's operations, and there are many ways to become involved in this work. Volunteers help the Conservancy in a variety of ways from leading interpretive member and community hikes, to collecting important data for the Conservancy and its research partners, working with school

groups, assisting with stewardship activities, and helping with office and logistical support.

The Conservancy volunteer program consists of three areas of focus:

- > Stewardship and General Volunteer: Assists with periodic tasks in field, office, or at events
- > Docent/Naturalist: Trained to conduct tours, hikes and outings
- > Citizen Scientist: Trained to supplement field work assisting researchers and staff

Goals of the Conservancy Volunteer Program

The primary goals of the Tejon Ranch Conservancy Volunteer Program are to ensure that participants have a fun, educational, and safe experience on the Ranch. Volunteers also help:

- > Educate the public about what we do, how we do it, and why it is important.
- > Provide positive opportunities for volunteers to utilize their talents in a constructive way, while meeting some of their own needs.
- > Give the volunteer a chance to provide interesting and skilled service to the community.
- > Enable the volunteer to gain knowledge, experience, and recognition for future employment.
- > Give all participants a sense of pride and purpose.
- > Support paid staff so they can be more fulfilled and effective in their work.
- > Improve the organization's image via public relations in the community.
- > Extend services by initiating new and innovative programs that might not otherwise be possible.

Getting Started

Getting started as a Conservancy Volunteer is simple. The first step is to register by completing the Volunteer Application Form. This information is essential, as it informs the staff about your preferred geographic area, interests, skills, and ensures your safety. If you have a medical condition, please indicate this on the form. Severe allergies, conditions like diabetes, or other health issues can be promptly and safely handled if you advise the Conservancy about what you may need in an emergency.

The second step is to review this handbook. Whether you are new to volunteering or have volunteered elsewhere for many years, please pay particular attention to the section on Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities.

When you have sent in the application, we will provide orientation, plus training as needed. After training, you will be added to the Conservancy's Volunteer database. You will be able to check for volunteer opportunities, log your hours, and check in with the staff.

In addition, you will be asked to complete a liability release and a Ranch permit. All volunteers must sign a liability release and provide other information when they first become volunteers. All volunteers under the age of 18 must have a form signed by their parent or guardian permitting them to volunteer.

Volunteer Descriptions

Stewardship and General Volunteer

As a Stewardship and General Volunteer for the Conservancy, you can help with a variety of tasks. Some people don't have the time or inclination to lead trips through the Ranch or to engage in field studies as a Citizen Scientist, and that's OK! There are many ways to help advance the work of the Conservancy as a Volunteer, including:

- > Stewardship field projects, such as pipe capping, removal of debris, litter, and unused fencing, as well as invasive plant control (weeds).
- > Office assistance, social media
- > Supporting membership events and activities
- > Communications/newsletters
- > Video production
- > Vehicle maintenance

These Volunteers can participate as individuals or even as groups. A group volunteer activity can be a great team-building exercise for a corporation or business, civic entity (police, fire, or other government office), or social organization (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club, Boy or Girl Scouts, school group, college club, etc.). Being a Volunteer on the Ranch requires minimal training, varied commitment, and yet provides rare access to the Ranch accompanied by knowledgeable Conservancy staff.

Docent/Naturalist

Docent/Naturalists provide one of the most valuable and valued roles for the Conservancy and the public visiting Tejon Ranch. Docent/Naturalists plan and lead hikes, tours, special programs, and other activities on the Ranch either independently or with Conservancy staff, as well as serving as both a natural history interpreter/instructor and safety monitor. Docents introduce the Tejon Ranch to new visitors, share the area with participants and educate those who wish to learn more about all the land has to offer and how to protect it.

Our Docent/Naturalist volunteer positions require a significant commitment. They can be one of the more rewarding and engaging volunteer activities on the Ranch and may have a variety of both time and physical requirements. We are committed to providing the training required of a Docent/Naturalist volunteer if you are committed to providing the time and love required to be successful!

Docent/Naturalists work does require a certain level of basic and advanced training, but also can provide unaccompanied access to the Ranch, as well as the potential for wilderness experiences and potential overnight stays.

Docent/Naturalists need the following knowledge, skills, and abilities, for which they can be trained:

- > A strong understanding of the natural and cultural history that make Tejon Ranch and the Tehachapi Mountains unique and continentally significant resources.
- > Understanding of basic interpretation skills and lesson planning, including but not limited to: group management, plant/animal identification, 4-wheel drive safety.
- > Sound judgment, and organizational and safety skills to ensure the safety of all.

- > Current 16-hour Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and CPR training or strong interest in pursuing it.

Citizen Scientist

Citizen Science plays an important role in conservation and provides an opportunity for focused and disciplined efforts worldwide. The Conservancy has a multitude of volunteer opportunities in the field, including collecting data, photo-documentation, or even assisting researchers on the Ranch. While working as a Citizen Scientist requires a serious commitment, it can be rewarding and engaging, and may have a variety of time commitments and physical requirements.

In-Kind Services

The Tejon Ranch Conservancy has been fortunate to receive a number of in-kind services from individuals and businesses. Some examples include:

- > Architectural services
- > Legal Services
- > Photography
- > Teaching and instructing
- > Research

Make an offer and let's discuss!

Volunteer Commitment

Volunteers are often seen as the face of the Conservancy and we ask that all volunteers protect the good will of the organization through courtesy, respect, and consideration.

By signing up for the Volunteer Program, volunteers agree to become a contributing part of the Conservancy Team, working toward long-term, sustainable stewardship of the Tejon Ranch Conservancy.

As a representative of the Tejon Ranch Conservancy, volunteers are expected to:

- > Follow Ranch and Conservancy policies and procedures
- > Maintain the highest standards of conduct and safety
- > Educate participants through interpretation
- > Encourage others to volunteer
- > Not speak on behalf of the Conservancy or its staff or board of directors, regarding policies, relationships, or programs while acting in a volunteer capacity
- > Not discriminate based on race or ethnicity, politics, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, or marital status
- > Not smoke or use drugs on the Ranch or in Conservancy facilities.
- > Behave as good role models when working with minors
- > Provide a SAFE Screening when working directly with children.

The Conservancy reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer under any circumstances at any time. We appreciate your understanding of this policy.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

- > Understand what is expected of you and be provided the materials to do the work
- > Know to whom you report and receive feedback on your work
- > Have access to information about the Conservancy and your volunteer position
- > Have access to training and skills development, where available and when appropriate
- > Work in a safe environment
- > Work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment
- > Be assured that your personal information will remain confidential
- > Be valued as a member of the Conservancy Team
- > Be treated with respect by staff and other volunteers
- > Be an adjunct to, not a replacement for, paid staff
- > Have access to policies which affect your role as a volunteer
- > Have problems or difficulties addressed in a timely fashion
- > Be given appropriate recognition for your volunteer work

As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to:

- > Be clear about how much commitment you can offer the Conservancy
- > Attend orientation and training sessions
- > Accept the vision and objectives of the Conservancy
- > Be reliable and arrive on time
- > Follow the policies outlined in this handbook
- > Respect the confidentiality of the staff, organization, and other volunteers
- > Declare any conflict of interest
- > Offer good quality service to the organization
- > Promptly report any problems or difficulties
- > Treat staff, other volunteers, and the public with fairness and respect
- > Honor your commitment to the Conservancy
- > Ensure a safe environment, and observe health and safety rules
- > Complete and submit an online or physical timesheet detailing your hours worked and duties completed at least monthly

Keeping Track of Your Volunteer Hours

Why do we need to keep track of your hours? Funders need and like to see the value that volunteers are adding to the Tejon Ranch Conservancy. What constitutes a volunteer hour? Anytime a volunteer does something on behalf of the Conservancy, he or she is volunteering and should record that time. All hours contributed count!

How do you report your hours? The Conservancy captures volunteer hours in a variety of ways. Each volunteer is given an online account in Volgistics. If you have limited access to the internet or to a computer, staff will arrange for you to record your hours on a physical timesheet.

For stewardship events, sign in at the event. If doing research or other work at home, you will be asked to email the Conservancy office to indicate the hours worked.

What happens to those hours? The Conservancy tracks volunteer hours monthly. These records are used to seek additional funding and to provide information for reference or recommendation letters for volunteers.

Dress and Personal Gear

Volunteers are expected to dress for the position with the following general expectations:

- > When representing the Conservancy to the public, volunteers will wear an item identifying them as volunteers
- > Clothing shall not be suggestive, revealing, or supportive of illegal activities, and must be free of offensive wording or graphics; Conservancy-provided clothing may not be altered in any permanent way
- > Volunteers working outdoors must wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes – preferably hiking boots when in the field
- > Perfumes, hairsprays, or other products with scents are strongly discouraged

Health and Safety

The safety of volunteers is of utmost concern to the Conservancy. Please follow these guidelines closely to ensure your health and safety during any and all volunteer activities with the Conservancy.

Remember to consider your health and physical condition limitations in terms of activities for which you desire to volunteer. If you volunteer for an activity and then realize it is too strenuous, please do not feel uncomfortable or hesitate to inform Conservancy staff. We appreciate all the efforts of volunteers and want you to be comfortable and safe.

If you have a medical condition which could affect you during your volunteer work, please inform Conservancy staff. Allergies to bee stings, diabetes, and other conditions can be promptly and safely handled if you advise the Conservancy about what you need in an emergency.

If an injury should occur while volunteering for the Tejon Ranch Conservancy, please let a staff member know immediately.

General Safety Guidelines

Certain health and safety guidelines are applicable to all program areas. For volunteers working outside, the following overall guidelines apply:

- > Carry a cell phone with emergency numbers, including the Conservation Science Director's and Operations Director's numbers
- > Carry a map of Tejon Ranch and a SPOT unit with you
- > Be aware of other Tejon Ranch users like hunters, guests, and wranglers
- > Be aware of cattle and wildlife
- > Get inside the nearest shelter when bad weather strikes

- > Every Conservancy vehicle is equipped with a first-aid kit in the Action Packer in the back of most vehicles (behind the back seat in the Tacoma trucks)
- > Every Conservancy vehicle has an emergency pamphlet in the glove compartment showing nearby medical facilities, listing Conservancy staff phone numbers, and Tejon Ranch security staff phone numbers
- > Send an ok message at least every hour from the SPOT unit

If emergency assistance (9-1-1) is called, please let a Conservancy staff member know immediately after the call.

Completing an Accident/Incident Report Form

For any health or safety incident, an incident report must be completed; blank forms are located in the Conservancy office, as well as in first-aid kits and glove compartments in every Conservancy vehicle. These documents are for internal use only. (See copy of form in Appendix B.)

These forms should be completed for any incidents or “near misses” to help the Conservancy determine improvements to safety procedures and to document any injuries. Give completed form to your supervisor or turn in at the Conservancy office.

Office Work

Office work can have safety implications. For example, staff or volunteers could be asked to move furniture, carry items, or perform other tasks with a risk of injury. The basic rule is that if you feel unable to perform the requested task due to physical inability or lack of training, let your supervisor know.

Special Events

The Conservancy hosts special events. Volunteers are asked to perform only those tasks which they are able to accomplish. A few other safety considerations include being aware of first-aid kit locations and emergency exits at the site and carrying a cell phone in case of emergency. If an emergency does occur, please contact a Conservancy staff member office as soon as is reasonably possible.

Stewardship Events

Volunteer stewardship events occur as part of the Conservancy’s stewardship program. These events provide a method for group or individual volunteers to give back in a meaningful and tangible way.

Safety precautions include:

- > Orienting participants properly, including information about wildlife (e.g., poisonous snakes)
- > Ensuring that participants are wearing appropriate clothing and shoes
- > Providing orientation and training regarding working with tools and lifting
- > Being aware of any potential site hazards, including poison ivy
- > Providing proper safety equipment, including safety glasses and gloves
- > Ensuring that participants get to safety in the event of thunder or high winds

- > Being aware of work locations on the trails, as well as who has the walkie-talkie and first-aid kits

Preliminaries at Meeting Place (whether office or Ranch gate)

- A. Wear your Conservancy T-shirt, hat (if you're a member), or a name badge so people can identify you at the meeting place or while on the tour/hike.
- B. Arrive 15 minutes early to greet participants and reassure them they are in the right place.
- C. Introduce yourself and others (usually form a circle and go around it with names) in a friendly, informal way.
- D. Wait a few minutes for all cars/hikers to arrive. If they don't, try contacting drivers via cell phone to see if group should wait. If they can't be reached, do not cancel the event.
- E. Ask everyone to sign the Conservancy Waiver and Ranch Permit, including volunteer(s) (unless volunteer has individual permit). No one may enter the Ranch property without a signed Ranch Permit.
- F. Count the number of people present and compare it to Permit and Waiver signature counts. Keep the Permit and Waiver with you during the event
- G. If a minor child attends your event, the parent or legal/temporary guardian must sign the Ranch Permit and a Minor Consent Form.
- H. For hikes, provide an overview of the hike including the level of difficulty, distance, elevation gain, terrain, and points of interest. Let the group know when you expect to return to the meeting spot or trailhead.
- I. For hikes, ask hikers to inform you immediately if they encounter any problems on the hike (e.g., hot spots (blisters), accelerated heart rate, cramping, etc.). Ask if anyone has any special medical expertise to determine who may assist in a medical emergency.
- J. Use Conservancy vehicles for most trips. On occasion, guests may be required to drive their own vehicles. Make sure it is appropriately fitted for tires and clearance to suit the road conditions.
- K. If carpooling or meeting at a gate, give directions (verbal or printed), mileage, and discuss options. For liability reasons, we usually do not organize carpools.
- L. Screening: Check everyone for: WATER, ABILITY, AND EQUIPMENT.

For tours involving a hiking component: Visually inspect for out-of-shape people.

If you fear someone is not in good enough shape to keep up with the group, talk to that person privately, and ask about their previous hiking experience. Be sensitive and tactful. Don't make automatic judgments about a person's hiking experience and ability based simply on that person's appearance, but if the hike is strenuous and the pace is brisk, you need to make sure all participants can keep up. If you believe someone won't be able to keep up, say you are sorry, but for their safety and out of concern for the rest, it would be better for that person to skip today's hike and attend another time. (It helps to have an upcoming event to recommend.)

Screening Criteria

1. Fitness: Participants should be physically (conditioning and stamina) and medically fit enough to enjoy the tour/hike and not compromise their or the group's safety.
2. Experience: Participants should have the technical expertise appropriate for the type of hike, such as off-trail travel.
3. Equipment: Participants should also have the necessary equipment to participate in the hike safely, such as food and water, sturdy footwear, and clothing. Did they bring the GO 10 Essential items?
4. Screening Questions (do this privately):
 - a. What is your hiking experience?
 - b. How often do you hike (if never, what sort of exercise do you do to stay fit?)
 - c. Have you done a hike of this length and duration before?
 - d. How is your general physical condition?

Appendix A

Conservancy Staff

Title	Name	Phone #	@tejonconservancy.org
Conservation Science Director	Ellery Mayence	(661) 699-5102	emayence@
Operations Director	Tim Bulone	(661) 248-2400 x 101	tbulone@
Biologist	Mitchell Coleman	(661) 248-2400 x 106	mcoleman@
Education Coordinator	Paula Harvey	(661) 248-2400 x 102	pharvey@
Public Access Assistant	Reema Hammad	(661) 248-2400 x 109	rhammad@
Administrative Coordinator	Susan Chaney	(661) 248-2400 x 103	schaney@

Ranch Security Staff

Name	Phone #
Eric Fennell	(661) 617-9482
Matt Etcheverry	(661) 333-7699
Tony Mattias	(661) 428-9650

Appendix B



Accident/Incident Report

Internal Document Only

Date	Location of Accident/Incident		
Name of Injured Person			
Address		City	
Telephone Number		Circle one: Student Adult Child	
Date of Birth (if under 18)		Minor's Parent/Guardian Name: Address: Telephone:	
Description of Accident/Incident (please include whether occurrence was during a Conservancy program)			
Description of Injury			
First Aid Given? Yes No If yes, by whom?		Sent to Hospital? Yes No Mode of Transport: Ambulance Private car	
Reported to Police? Yes No		If yes, Officer's Name Badge Number Occurrence Number	
Follow-up Action			
Witness Name(s)		Telephone Number(s)	