



Edmonton & Area  
Land Trust

[www.ealt.ca](http://www.ealt.ca)

# Volunteer Manual

Updated: January, 2017



# Table of Contents

- Table of Contents ..... 2
- 1 Contact Details ..... 3
- 2 Who We Are ..... 3
- 3 Volunteer Roles ..... 3
  - 3.1 Volunteering from Home ..... 3
  - 3.2 Volunteering at Events ..... 4
  - 3.3 Volunteering in the Field ..... 5
- 4 Volunteer Responsibilities & Code of Conduct ..... 8
- 5 Edmonton and Area Land Trust’s Responsibilities ..... 9
- 6 Safety Measures and Emergency Procedures ..... 9
  - 6.1 Safety Measures ..... 9
  - 6.2 Emergency Procedures ..... 9
  - 6.3 Ticks ..... 10
- 7 Liability ..... 10
- 8 Confidentiality ..... 10
- 9 Consent to Photograph ..... 11
- 10 Grievance Policy ..... 11
- 11 Harassment Policy ..... 11
- 12 Thank You! ..... 11
- Volunteer Information & Waiver Form ..... 12

## 1 CONTACT DETAILS

---

Executive Director:  
Pam Wight  
Email: pamwight@ealt.ca  
Tel: 780-483-7578

Project Coordinator:  
Rebecca Ellis  
Email: rebecca@ealt.ca  
Tel: 780-850-3270

Outreach Coordinator:  
Stephanie Weizenbach  
Email: steph@ealt.ca  
Tel: 587-335-5382

## 2 WHO WE ARE

---

The Edmonton and Area Land Trust works to conserve our natural heritage for present and future generations. We're the only conservancy who focuses exclusively on the Edmonton region to preserve natural areas and rural landscapes. We do this to enhance residents' quality of life and sense of place, for wildlife and their habitat, and to maintain the economic, health, and community benefits of natural areas.

## 3 VOLUNTEER ROLES

---

As a volunteer, you can play a hands-on role in a wide range of projects – visiting properties as part of a team, building community support, educating others about conserving our lands, and many other types of activities. You are never limited to just one type of volunteer position, you can participate in as little or as many tasks as you prefer!

EALT sends out approximately one email per month with upcoming volunteer opportunities. Instructions on how to get involved are outlined for each opportunity. If you have specific interests such as website assistance, assisting at special events, citizen science or becoming a volunteer steward, please contact us to discuss opportunities further.

There are several ways for you to volunteer with EALT – at home, at events, or in the field.

### 3.1 VOLUNTEERING FROM HOME

Volunteer from the comfort of your own home and on your own schedule.

#### 3.1.1 Writing, Researching and Publications

Good research, writing skills, or experience with graphic design are necessary to help EALT produce various education materials such as brochures, handouts and booklets. Time commitment: one or more days, depending on depth of involvement.

#### 3.1.2 Website Assistance

This position requires computer skills and an interest in learning and using our content management system (CMS). This involves the occasional request to update materials and input other information on an as-needed basis. Time commitment: approximately <4 hours per month.



## 3.2 VOLUNTEERING AT EVENTS

Volunteer at events throughout Edmonton and the surrounding area.

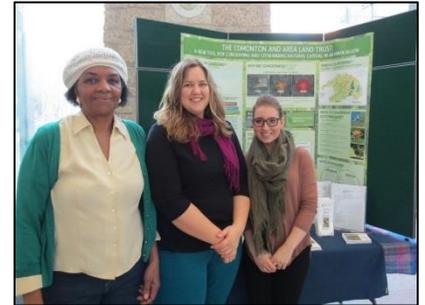
### 3.2.1 Assist at Special Events

This volunteer opportunity involves assisting with organizing special events with EALT by sitting on the event planning committee, or volunteering to set up at the event. Time commitment: one or more days, depending on depth of involvement.

### 3.2.2 Staffing an Information Booth/Table

EALT sometimes hosts information booths at various locations, including farmers' markets, businesses and special events. Volunteers can assist EALT by staffing the table, talking to interested people and explaining EALT's work.

- Volunteer expertise:
  - Knowledge of EALT's missions, goals and conservation work is an asset.
  - Volunteers are not expected to be able to answer every question; it is okay to say "I don't know" and refer the curious person to EALT's website or give them a staff member's contact details.
- What to expect:
  - Volunteers will be briefed on procedures prior to the event.
  - Volunteers are asked not to be 'aggressive,' but rather be available to speak with interested people who approach the display.
  - Sharing your EALT volunteer experiences with interested individuals can offer a very unique perspective.
- Dress Code:
  - Clothes must not be torn, frayed or dirty. Offensive logos are not allowed.
  - The level of formality of your attire is dependent upon the event and is generally business casual or neat and tidy casual wear (e.g. jeans and a sweater or t-shirt). If a more substantive dress code is in effect, it will be communicated by your supervisor.
- Time commitment:
  - Two or more hours, usually on weekends.



### 3.3 VOLUNTEERING IN THE FIELD

Each EALT property is unique in its management needs, accessibility and its hazards.

- Bathroom Facilities:
  - None of EALT's properties have a bathroom facility; when nature calls while volunteering in the field, we find privacy behind a tree.
- Accessibility:
  - Many properties have limited parking so EALT staff arrange a carpool location in Edmonton. You will be asked to let us know if you will require a ride or if you have extra space in your vehicle for your fellow volunteers.
  - Depending on the field work, hiking into the property may be necessary before reaching the work area.
- How to dress:
  - Comfortable, durable clothing, including long pants to protect your legs from thorny or stinging plants. Layers for all weather conditions; rain gear or winter clothing if appropriate.
  - Sturdy shoes for hiking uneven terrain; insulated boots and snowshoes (optional but recommended) for winter events.
- What to bring:
  - Must bring a backpack with water, lunch, and snacks.
  - Sunglasses, hat, bug spray, sunscreen, extra shoes and/or extra socks, and tissues are also recommended, as well as field guides, camera, binoculars, etc. if desired.
  - EALT will supply necessary personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, etc.) and tools.



#### 3.3.1 Baseline Data Collection and Monitoring

When EALT acquires a new property, data is collected for a Baseline Data Report, which documents the ecological values of the land and determines management actions. In other cases, data is collected for monitoring purposes.

- Volunteer expertise:
  - Some experience in plants and animal identification or GPS use is valuable, but not necessary.
- What to expect:
  - Groups of volunteers will be led by EALT staff to collect data on our properties.
  - Types of data collected include presence of plant, animal, and insect species, photo reference points, and anthropogenic features such as fences, trails, and structures.
- Time commitment:
  - One or more 6-8 hour days, usually in June or July.

### 3.3.2 Weeding for Wildlife

Prohibited noxious and noxious weed species displace natural vegetation and degrade wildlife nesting and foraging habitat. These invasive species are manually removed to improve and restore the ecological values of the land.

- Volunteer expertise:
  - Some experience in plant identification and gardening is valuable but not required.
  - Experience operating a weed-whacker may be an asset.
  - Volunteers will be trained in the use of tools and weed identification.
- What to expect:
  - Weed removal includes manual labour to pull or cut weeds, and may also include the use of a weed whacker.
- Safety precautions:
  - Gloves are required for all weed removal activities.
  - Safety glasses are required when using the weed-whacker and steel-toed boots are recommended.
- Time commitment:
  - One or more 6-8 hour days, in the spring and summer.



### 3.3.3 Wind up the Wire

Barbed wire fences are a common site in the Canadian countryside. Many studies have shown that these fences can sometimes hinder the movement of wildlife through the area. Wind up the Wire days are held to improve the safety of wild animals that live on our properties.

- Volunteer expertise:
  - Some experience with tools or building fences is an asset but not required.
  - Volunteers will be trained in the use of tools and wire removal methods.
- What to expect:
  - Removing strands of barbed wire includes pulling staples out of posts with fencing pliers, collecting the staples in a bucket, cutting the wire at intervals and winding the wire into manageable bundles.
  - Fence Maintenance – this may include tacking wire back to posts with staples and may require the use of the wire stretcher to tighten the strand of wire.
- Safety precautions:
  - Thick gloves and safety glasses are required and will be provided.
  - Tetanus vaccination should be up-to-date when working with barbed wire to avoid infection. If you are cut by barbed wire, visit a health clinic to ensure you are properly protected.
- Time commitment:
  - One or more 6-8 hour days, in the spring, summer, or fall.



### 3.3.4 Winter Wildlife Tracking

Winter tracking is conducted to monitor the natural area and record species that may not have been observed in the summer.

- Volunteer expertise:
  - Experience with wildlife tracking is an asset but not required.
- What to expect:
  - Snowshoes are highly recommended for this activity and may be a requirement depending on trail condition.
  - Snowshoe trek for up to 3 hours looking for and documenting wildlife tracks.
- Safety precautions:
  - Must dress appropriately for the weather with multiple layers, insulated boots, toque and mitts/gloves.
  - This event is weather dependent and will be cancelled if the forecast calls for weather below -20°C.
- Time commitment:
  - One or more 4-5 hour days, in the winter.



### 3.3.5 Other Work Party Days

May include signing the site, tree planting, snow fence installation, nest box installation, litter clean up, building bird or bat boxes, etc.

- What to expect:
  - Volunteers will be sent details about the work party activities prior to the event.
  - Volunteers are welcome to inquire for further information.
- Safety precautions:
  - Volunteers will be notified of any particular safety dress code prior to the event and will be notified of safety precautions and hazards at the safety meeting of the event.
- Time commitment:
  - Varies, but generally one or more 3-6 hour days in spring, summer or fall.



### 3.3.6 Volunteer Stewards

Those interested in taking on a larger commitment may wish to be a volunteer steward. Stewards usually live or recreate near one of EALT's conserved lands, and assist in a variety of aspects, such as keeping out a watchful eye for things such as off-highway vehicle trespassing, downed sections of fence, or even unique species, and also assisting with field work either as a solo project outlined in the [Citizen Science Manual](#) or joining volunteer work party days.

- What to expect:
  - Volunteer Stewards are asked to check in with EALT staff with any updates of observations or stewardship needs identified on the natural area.
  - Volunteer Stewards are generally updated on stewardship needs, upcoming projects or volunteer days, and given the opportunity to be involved.
- Safety precautions:

- Volunteer Stewards should only take on this role if they are comfortable working in the field alone. You should take safety precautions when heading out to EALT's lands alone: always tell someone where you are going, when you expect to be back, and check in with them when you return.
- Do not confront anyone on EALT lands when you observe them doing something unlawful, such as riding their quad on the land. Make note of what they look like, a licence plate if applicable, time of day, and location, and report the incident to EALT staff as soon as possible. At EALT lands where hunting is not allowed, report any hunting activity (e.g. animal remains) to EALT staff as soon as possible.
- Time commitment:
  - Depending on interest, this could be one or more days a month.

### 3.3.7 Citizen Scientists

Those interested in taking on projects on their own schedule may wish to become a citizen scientist. Citizen scientists visit EALT's natural areas to collect data on species present, clean out nest boxes, or carry out specific stewardship needs.

- What to expect:
  - Citizen scientists should read the full [Citizen Science and Stewardship Manual](#) for additional training and considerations.
- Safety precautions:
  - Citizen scientists should only take on this role if they are comfortable working in the field alone. You should take safety precautions when heading out to EALT's lands alone: always tell someone where you are going, when you expect to be back, and check in with them when you return.
- Time commitment:
  - Depending on interest and stewardship needs, this could be one or more days a month.

## 4 VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES & CODE OF CONDUCT

---

We recognize that as a volunteer, you are donating your valuable time to EALT. We depend on you to accomplish many of our tasks and projects. We ask that you make every effort to be on time and prepared. If you are ill or unable to meet a scheduled commitment, please inform us as soon as possible.



We ask all of our volunteers to follow our **Volunteer Code of Conduct**:

- Perform your duties to the best of your ability.
- Honour confidentiality and respect the mission and goals, and properties of EALT.
- Deal with conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner as outlined in this manual.
- Be courteous, friendly and cooperative.
- Offer constructive feedback about our organization in an appropriate manner.
- Follow through on commitments and advise us if you are unable to work as scheduled.
- Demonstrate respect for the direction and decisions of your supervisor(s).
- Treat staff, volunteers, landowners, and the public fairly and without discrimination.
- Do not take unnecessary risks while working in the field.

## 5 EDMONTON AND AREA LAND TRUST'S RESPONSIBILITIES

---

It is the responsibility of the Edmonton and Area Land Trust to ensure that we provide the best volunteer experience possible. This includes giving adequate instructions for a project or task, and to take every measure possible to ensure your safety, especially when volunteering in the field.

## 6 SAFETY MEASURES AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

---

Volunteer safety is very important to EALT. We practice due diligence to manage and reduce any risk associated with our volunteers, especially when working in the field. Before every field activity, a safety meeting is held that addresses possible risks that may be encountered, as well as emergency procedures. EALT's conservation lands are left in their natural state. This means that trips to these lands involve hiking through areas that do not always have trails. We ask that if you are interested in being part of our field work team you are in moderately good physical condition in order to navigate the difficult terrain.

To ensure safety in the field, we require that you adhere to the EALT staff member's instructions at all times (or the instructions of the person in charge). This includes instructions on how to use equipment, where to walk, and to stay in a designated group.

### 6.1 SAFETY MEASURES

- EALT's natural areas all have natural and human-made hazards. These will be outlined in the safety meeting prior to starting the day's activities.
- Safety equipment (e.g. gloves, glasses, ear plugs, etc.) will be provided when necessary. Volunteers not comfortable with potentially hazardous tasks (e.g. operating a weed whacker) are not required to do so.
- EALT staff have current First Aid Training and always carry a First Aid kit. We encourage you to carry a First Aid kit as well.
- It is important to inform us of any medical conditions that could impact your activities for EALT. Examples of these medical conditions could include, but are not limited to: diabetes, severe allergies to insect bites, epilepsy, etc.
- Ensure that you bring enough water and food for yourself for a whole day of physical activity. Wear a hat and sunscreen on warm, sunny days to protect yourself from the sun and heat.

### 6.2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EALT takes extra precautions to be prepared in the event of an emergency. This includes:

- We ask that field volunteers provide an emergency contact person in the event of an injury or other emergency (see **Page 12**). EALT staff have this information with them in the field.
- EALT staff have maps to the nearest hospital or health centres from each conservation land, in their vehicles.

## 6.3 TICKS

Ticks are spreading north and can carry diseases such as Lyme disease. EALT is happy to report that we have not had a staff or volunteer incident with ticks to date. But working in the field off trail does put us at risk. Ticks are “nature’s dirty needle,” so it is important to be aware of prevention techniques, and what to do if you get bitten. Prevention and quick removal are key to reducing any risk from tick bites.

- Prevention
  - In the field:
    - Pull tight weave socks over your pant legs.
    - Wearing light coloured clothing without patterns on it will allow you to easily spot a tick on your clothes.
  - When you return from the field:
    - Do a tick check of your whole body.
    - Remove your clothing and hang them outside or throw them directly in the wash. Make sure to put your clothes in the dryer after washing – a tick could survive going through the washer, but will not survive the dryer.
    - Have a shower – ticks take a while to anchor themselves in to your skin. Taking a shower and washing everywhere will generally dislodge a tick.
- What to do if you get bitten
  - The sooner a tick is removed the less likely they are to spread disease so it is important to get the tick to let go of you as soon as possible.
  - Using tweezers, grab the tick at its mouthparts (as close to your skin as possible) and gently pull the tick away from your skin. You may need to hold the tick in the tweezers for 30-60 seconds before it will let go with its mouth. It is important to be patient and allow the tick to let go.
  - If the tick’s mouth parts separated from its body and were left in your skin, go to the doctor to have it removed.
  - See your doctor if the site of the tick bite develops a rash.

## 7 LIABILITY

---

A standard Waiver of Liability agreement is included in this package on **Page 12**, which volunteers are required to sign. EALT always practices due diligence to reduce risks to volunteers and also has appropriate insurance coverage for volunteers.

## 8 CONFIDENTIALITY

---

EALT is committed to protecting individual privacy. We take every step to ensure that any and all personal information in our possession is fully protected and strictly confidential. We do not share your information with anyone. Our Privacy Policy may be viewed upon request.

Due to the nature of our organization, we are involved in confidential land deals. We require our volunteers to sign a confidentiality statement included in the consent form on **Page 12**. This states that as a volunteer you will not divulge sensitive information to external sources.

## 9 CONSENT TO PHOTOGRAPH

---

EALT staff take photos of volunteer activities to share with our social media followers and to use in informative brochures and other materials. This helps the public and our supporters learn about EALT's stewardship and education initiatives. The photos also encourage others to get involved and volunteer their time to conserve our natural heritage.

A consent to photograph statement is included in the consent form on **Page 12**. Signing the form gives EALT permission to use photos or videos of you in many of our communications with the public. If you are not comfortable with EALT using photos of you, please inform your supervisor on each volunteer day, and do not participate in group photos.

## 10 GRIEVANCE POLICY

---

- In situations where differences arise between volunteers or between volunteers and staff it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.
- If a third party is needed the immediate supervisor is to be informed and involved.
- Differences must not be made public or involve other members of the organization.
- If the grievance is in regard to the immediate supervisor, an appeal may be made to the Executive Director.

## 11 HARASSMENT POLICY

---

Edmonton and Area Land Trust (EALT) is committed to a healthy, harassment free work environment for all our employees, contractors, and volunteers.

Harassment occurs when an employee, contractor, or volunteer is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, colour, place of origin, gender, mental or physical disability, ancestry, marital status, family status, source of income, or sexual orientation. Alberta human rights laws prohibit harassment in the workplace on these grounds.

Our policy for preventing and addressing incidents can be viewed [here](#).

## 12 THANK YOU!

---

Thanks to you and your generous donation of your time and abilities, we have been able to protect a growing inventory of ecologically significant lands in the Edmonton area. With your help, we will be able to protect many more in the future. If you have any feedback to help us improve, please do not hesitate to contact us.





---

## Volunteer Information & Waiver Form

[Click here to fill this form in online.](#)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Are you 18 years of age or older (Circle answer)? Yes No (\*A parent or guardian must sign this form for minors.)

I have read and understand EALT's Volunteer Manual. (Circle answer) Yes No

### In Case of Emergency

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

### Waiver, Indemnity, and Consent Form

In connection with my volunteering with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, I acknowledge being aware that there exist certain associated risks, including, without limitation, the risk of any manner of property loss or damage, and the risk of mental and physical injury up to and including permanent disability and death, such risks being associated with travel to and from the locations where I perform duties, with me being physically present at such locations, and with the use or misuse of equipment by me or others. In consideration of one dollar and other good and valuable consideration, I acknowledge and agree as follows:

I, for myself and for my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, fully accept and assume all such risks, and release the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, its officers, board members, employees, servants, agents and volunteers (individually or collectively, "EALT"), from all present and future accounts, claims, demands, actions, cause of action and suits of any kind whatsoever, howsoever arising, for loss, injury or damage (collectively "Loss"), including, without limitation, Loss arising directly or indirectly from the negligence of EALT.

I indemnify and save harmless EALT from and against all Loss of any kind whatsoever, howsoever arising from my volunteering with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust.

Further, I agree to being photographed or recorded while volunteering with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, and for the Edmonton and Area Land Trust to use the resulting photographs and recordings ("Materials") for promotional or educational purposes. I understand that all Materials will remain the property of the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, and that I am not entitled to compensation of any kind for their use.

Finally, I agree to keep confidential all personal, financial and other information that may be considered confidential that I acquire as a result of volunteering with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, and to not divulge such information to any person, organisation or agency unless required to do so by law.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer (or parent/guardian)