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Volunteer Steward Position Description

Title: Volunteer Steward

Supervisor: Ranger

Objectives: To deepen visitors' understanding of the Arboretum through increased dialogue, protect the Arboretum through increased presence of trained volunteers on the trails, and to more generally act as a liaison between visitors and staff.

Responsibilities: Volunteer Stewards are expected to be keen observers and effective communicators. Since Stewards are the first Arboretum representatives that many visitors encounter, it is vital that they greet and engage the public as goodwill ambassadors for the Arboretum, ready to discuss regulations, mission, and history when called upon to do so. As eyes and ears of the Arboretum, they also provide the Ranger unit with accurate records of their observations and interactions.

Qualifications:

- Interest in learning about the Arboretum and teaching others what you know
- Willingness to walk outside in all seasons
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team

Training and preparation: Completion of a 21 hour training program is required before beginning the position. Training includes information on Arboretum history and mission, regulations, ecology and management of various Arboretum communities, trails, interacting with visitors, and other topics. Continuing education is available through the year in the form of public classes and tours, an annual Naturalists' Enrichment Series, and hikes and outings offered for volunteers. Equipment specific to the job is provided: cap, nametag, first aid kit, and maps and other basic literature. Training takes place in spring of each year.

Commitment: Following completion of initial training, volunteers are expected to commit to six months' active involvement in the program. During that time they are expected to:

- Patrol at least four hours monthly, equipping themselves properly each time
- Record trail conditions and interactions after each shift

Shifts are available on a flexible basis from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., weekdays and weekends; shift locations are flexible as well, though an effort is made to keep even coverage throughout the Arboretum year-round, especially during the busiest seasons.

Benefits:

- Get to know various areas of the Arboretum throughout the year
- Learn about the history and ecology of the Arboretum
- Positively influence visitors' experience and help to protect the Arboretum
- Meet a variety of people with similar interests, both volunteers and visitors
- References provided on request, based on quality of experience
- An invitation to the Annual Volunteer Recognition Reception
- Recognition in the Arboretum newsletter's volunteer recognition issue
- An invitation to the Winter Enrichment Education Series for Arboretum volunteers and Madison-area naturalists
- A periodic volunteer newsletter
- Free parking

Evaluation: Evaluation is ongoing and informal, based on both Volunteer Steward and staff feedback. Volunteers' observations and criticism are welcome at any time.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is committed to providing equal opportunity and equal access in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and University of Wisconsin System and university non-discrimination policies and procedures.

Please contact the Volunteer Program Office at 608-262-5604 or judith.kingsbury@wisc.edu for more information.