

THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE



# Arboretum Volunteer Handbook



**PennState**

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The Pennsylvania State University  
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[www.arboretum.psu.edu](http://www.arboretum.psu.edu)

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
About the Arboretum .....	4
Becoming a Volunteer .....	5
Finding Out About Volunteer Opportunities .....	6
Accessing Resources on the Arboretum Website .....	7
What Volunteers do in the Arboretum .....	8
Gardening .....	8
Docents .....	9
Childhood’s Gate Children’s Garden .....	9
Greeters .....	10
Natural Lands Management.....	10
Events.....	11
Avian Education Program.....	11
Unique Contributions .....	12
Using the Volunteer Logbook .....	13
Parking in the Arboretum Lot .....	13
Reporting Facilities Issues.....	14
Safety Information.....	14
Communicating with Arboretum Staff .....	15
Arboretum Staff Directory .....	16



Volunteers are an indispensable part of The Arboretum at Penn State. They welcome visitors to the garden, lead tours, provide guidance in the Childhood's Gate Children's Garden, maintain the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens and the natural lands areas, and help to create events like the Pumpkin Festival and Winter Celebration.

The primary function of this handbook is to provide a basic resource for all volunteers. It covers volunteer opportunities in the garden and how to access them, the process of becoming a volunteer, safety, logging hours, parking, and how to communicate with Arboretum staff.

Volunteers who wish to become docents should also read the Docent Manual, and those who plan to work in the children's garden should read the Children's Garden Handbook.

The Arboretum at Penn State covers 370 acres, including the intensively maintained H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens (30 acres) and the natural lands outside the garden (340 acres). The natural lands areas contain a fragment of old-growth forest (Hartley Wood), the Prairie Restoration Project area, the Hybrid Chestnut Seed Orchard, and an extensive trail network which includes the Bellefonte Central Rail Trail and Gerhold Wildflower Trail.



Map of The Arboretum at Penn State. The H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens are located on the lower right, along East Park Avenue. The natural lands areas extend from the botanic gardens to I-99/US 322.

Construction of the first phase of the botanic gardens was made possible by a \$10,000,000 gift from Charles H. (Skip) Smith in 2007. To date, nearly all the money used to build the Arboretum has come from private philanthropy.

The Arboretum has a small staff, just ten people, four of whom only work part-time. Therefore, the Arboretum relies on volunteers to perform many of the tasks which are essential to its mission, which is **to engage the academic strengths of the University in promoting scholarship and education about plants and their history and importance on earth.**

If you are reading this handbook, you have probably already completed the requirements for becoming an Arboretum volunteer. However, if you are still in the process of becoming a volunteer, need to update your Penn State clearances, or you are a new children's garden guide, please read the volunteer requirements below:

1. **Volunteers must be 18+ years of age.**
2. **Volunteers must fill out a volunteer application.** Applications are available online at <https://arboretum.psu.edu/involvement/volunteer/apply/> Applications may be returned via e-mail to [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu) or by US mail to:  
Kelly Oleynik  
The Arboretum at Penn State  
209 Forest Resources Building  
University Park, PA 16802
3. **Volunteers must complete Building a Safe Penn State: Reporting Child Abuse training.**
  - Free, repeat every 12 months.
  - If you are a member of Penn State faculty/staff, you can access the course at <http://lrn.psu.edu>
  - If you are an "affiliate" (have a Penn State e-mail) or need to create a brand-new account, you can access the course at <http://psu.csod.com/client/psu.default.aspx> You will need to enter the following to proceed to the training:  
Administrative area: **Agricultural Sciences**  
Campus: **UP**  
Appointment Type: **Volunteer**
4. **Volunteers who wish to work in the children's garden must complete a Penn State clearance.** Clearances take approximately an hour to complete, and are valid for 5 years. Clearances include the following mandatory components:
  - **PA Criminal Background Check**
    - Free, repeat every 5 years.
    - To obtain a background check form (SP4-164), go to <https://epatch.state.pa.us/> and follow the step-by-step directions for "New Record Check (Volunteers Only)"
  - **PA Child Abuse Background Check**
    - Free, repeat every 5 years.

- To obtain a PA Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY-113), go to <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home> Scroll down to “VOLUNTEERS”, select “Create Individual Account”, and follow step-by-step instructions.
- **Federal Fingerprinting**
  - \$22.60, applies only if you have lived outside PA in the past 10 years.
  - Available at IdentiGO, Advantage Resource Group, located at 111 Sowers St., Suite 300, State College. <https://www.identogo.com/>
- **Building a Safe Penn State: Reporting Child Abuse** (see above)

If you have questions or concerns about completing the process of becoming an Arboretum volunteer, please contact Kelly Oleynik at [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu)

Once you have completed the application process, you will start to get e-mails from the Arboretum regarding volunteer opportunities in the garden, and social and educational events open to volunteers.

## FINDING OUT ABOUT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer opportunities at the Arboretum are announced in three ways.

- **The Events Calendar.** The Events Calendar is where regularly scheduled events, such as Tuesday/Thursday gardening sessions and Gerhold Wildflower Trail work days, are listed. Clicking on an event will yield a detailed description, including time and date, and information about how to sign up for opportunities for which space is limited. The Events Calendar is available at <https://arboretum.psu.edu/events/>

EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2018						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	31	1 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	2	3 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: GERHOLD WILDFLOWER TRAIL
4	5	6 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	7	8 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	9	10 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: GERHOLD WILDFLOWER TRAIL
11	12	13 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	14	15 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	16	17
18	19	20 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	21	22 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	23	24 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: GERHOLD WILDFLOWER TRAIL
25	26	27 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	28	1 10:00 AM - VOLUNTEER SESSION: BOHANNAN GARDENS	2	3

**The online events calendar**

- **E-mail announcements.** E-mail announcements are sent out regarding

volunteer opportunities which occur irregularly, like those associated with the Pumpkin Festival, Winter Celebration, and other events. Volunteer program opportunities like lectures, field trips, and social events are also announced via e-mail.

- **Flyers posted in the garden and on Facebook.** Flyers for volunteer events like lectures, field trips, and social events are often posted at the Overlook Pavilion and on the Arboretum's [Facebook page](#).

#### ACCESSING RESOURCES ON THE ARBORETUM WEBSITE

A section of the Arboretum website contains information which is specific to volunteers. If you go to <https://arboretum.psu.edu/involvement/volunteer/> you will be able to download documents like the Arboretum's Volunteer Handbook, Docent Manual, and Children's Garden Handbook.

## WHAT VOLUNTEERS DO IN THE ARBORETUM

You may volunteer your time at the Arboretum as often or as infrequently as you wish. There is no minimum or maximum amount of volunteering that is required.

Essential tasks performed by Arboretum volunteers include:

### GARDENING

- Gardening volunteers handle tasks like planting spring bulbs, rotating seasonal displays, mulching, and pruning.
- Gardening sessions are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens. Sessions are open to all Arboretum volunteers. If you are new to the gardening sessions, please let us know that you plan to attend so that we can look out for you.
- All skill levels are welcome; on-the-job training is part of the experience. Tools will be provided, but gardeners should



**Gardeners at work planting spring bulbs in the Display Garden**

come prepared with weather-appropriate clothing which can withstand dirt.

- For more information on regular gardening sessions, contact Volunteer Program Coordinator Kelly Oleynik via e-mail at [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu)



## DOCENTS

- Docents lead 45- to 60-minute public tours of the botanic gardens for scheduled groups. Docents do not need to master all details of Arboretum knowledge; every docent will bring a unique perspective to his or her work.
- Volunteers who wish to serve as docents should read the Docent Manual (available on our website).



**A docent-led tour underway in the botanic gardens**

Please communicate your desire to work as a docent to Volunteer Program Coordinator Kelly Oleynik ([keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu)).

## CHILDHOOD'S GATE CHILDREN' S GARDEN

- The children's garden is home to some of the most intensive volunteer efforts in the Arboretum. Children's garden guides provide educational experiences and gentle direction to children of all ages. They also perform tasks like delivering produce from the Harvest Gardens to the food bank and providing harvest tastings for visitors.
- Volunteers who wish to work in the children's garden should read the Children's Garden Handbook (available on our website at <https://arboretum.psu.edu/involvement/volunteer/>) and contact Kelly Oleynik via email at [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu).



- Training for children’s garden docents is held every spring before regularly scheduled shifts in the garden begin. If you have missed the yearly training, you can still work in the children’s garden; on-the-job training is available throughout the season.
- Regularly scheduled shifts occur from late spring to mid/late fall. Sign up for shifts is on line at SignUpGenius.com, <https://goo.gl/EYMb8P>

## GREETERS

- Greeters provide a welcoming presence, answer questions about the gardens and University, and help guests find facilities like bathrooms and drinking fountains. Their work is particularly important on days when visitor volume is high, especially on weekends and throughout the football season.
- Volunteers who wish to work as greeters should contact Kelly Oleynik, Volunteer Program Coordinator, at [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu).



**Greeters ready to welcome people to the Botanic Gardens**

## NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT

- Volunteers remove non-native species from the natural lands areas, plant native ones, and help maintain trails.
- Volunteers who wish to participate in natural lands management can find the semester schedule in the EVENTS CALENDAR tab on the Arboretum website. Space is limited and volunteers must confirm their participation by contacting Shari Edelson, the Arboretum’s director of horticulture and curator, at [ske13@psu.edu](mailto:ske13@psu.edu).



**Volunteers at work in Hartley Wood**

- Volunteers should wear closed-toe shoes, dress for the weather, and expect to get dirty. All tools and safety equipment will be provided.

## EVENTS

- The Arboretum hosts two major events (the Pumpkin Festival and Winter Celebration), as well as small-scale public gatherings every year. Volunteers are critical to the success of these events. They provide behind-the-scenes support and also serve the public during the event. Some events-related tasks are labor-intensive, for example, harvesting pumpkins or arranging garden displays. Volunteers are also ambassadors for the Arboretum and engage directly with the public.



**Pumpkin Festival volunteers running the registration for entries to the pumpkin-carving contest**

- Event support needs will be announced in advance via e-mail solicitation from Volunteer Program Coordinator Kelly Oleynik.

## AVIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Volunteers assist in bird-banding operations, help with bird walks, and maintain feeding stations in the garden.
- Avian Education Program events are announced via the Arboretum website's Events Calendar, <https://arboretum.psu.edu/events/>
- Volunteers who wish to participate in an avian education event should contact Kelly Oleynik at [keo5114@psu.edu](mailto:keo5114@psu.edu).



**An Arboretum bird -banding volunteer**

## UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS

- Not all volunteers fall into the categories listed above. Volunteers are always welcome to come up with their own unique contributions. Some volunteers have a passion for photography and share their pictures for Arboretum use. Others keep an eye on maintenance needs in Hartley Wood and on the Bellefonte Central Rail Trail and provide feedback to the Arboretum.



**A photograph contributed by Arboretum volunteer Jason D. Traverse**

## USING THE VOLUNTEER LOGBOOK

Your time is important to us! Logging your volunteer hours will enable the Arboretum to better understand how volunteers like to spend their time in the garden, and help determine who needs a parking permit (see the section titled “Parking in the Arboretum Lot”). The logbook also provides an opportunity for volunteers to give feedback on their experience.

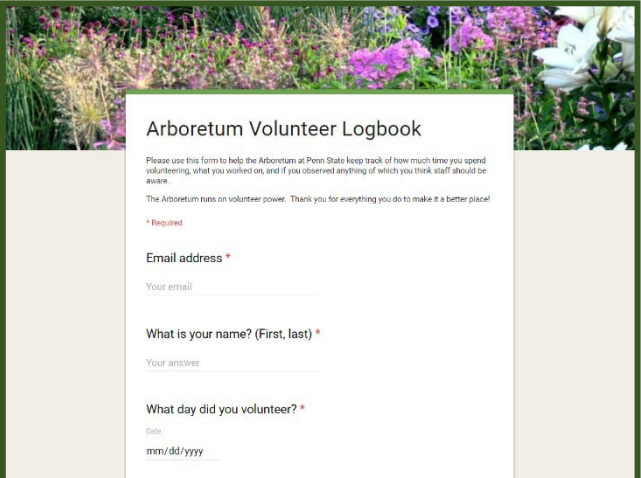
All information gathered from the logbook will be kept strictly private.

Volunteers can log their time online in the [Arboretum Volunteer Logbook](#).

You will fill in the following information:

- Your e-mail address
- Your name
- The day you volunteered
- Number of hours you spent volunteering
- How you spent your time
- Whether you noticed anything in the garden about which staff should be aware

Don't forget to click the blue “Submit” button at the end of the form!

A screenshot of the 'Arboretum Volunteer Logbook' form. The form is white with a green border and is set against a background of a garden with purple flowers. The form title is 'Arboretum Volunteer Logbook'. Below the title, there is a paragraph of instructions: 'Please use this form to help the Arboretum at Penn State keep track of how much time you spend volunteering, what you worked on, and if you observed anything of which you think staff should be aware. The Arboretum runs on volunteer power. Thank you for everything you do to make it a better place!'. There are three required fields, each marked with a red asterisk: 'Email address \*' with a text input field below it labeled 'Your email'; 'What is your name? (First, last) \*' with a text input field below it labeled 'Your answer'; and 'What day did you volunteer? \*' with a date input field below it labeled 'Date' and a placeholder 'mm/dd/yyyy'.

Screenshot of the online volunteer logbook

## PARKING IN THE ARBORETUM LOT

Parking in the Arboretum lot is free for all visitors, provided they obtain a parking permit from the office door and display it in their cars. Parking passes are required from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. They are not required on the weekends or holidays. Paid parking is available across Bigler Road in the Katz Building parking lot for \$1/hour. During major Arboretum events, overflow parking is available free of charge.

Penn State's Parking Office requires the Arboretum to obtain parking permits for frequent volunteers. Parking permits are distributed free of charge every six months. If you plan to volunteer regularly during the year, please contact Kelly Oleynik regarding obtaining a parking permit.

## REPORTING FACILITIES ISSUES

Volunteers are encouraged to bring facilities issues, such as an overflowing sink or damaged garden feature, to the attention of Arboretum staff. Alert volunteers often notice these issues before staff are aware of them!

If you notice an issue related to facilities, report what you have seen.

### **Weekdays:**

- Stop in at the Overlook Pavilion office and tell Shari or Mandy.
- Call the Overlook Pavilion office at (814) 865-8080.
- Call the Arboretum's main administrative office at (814) 865-9118.

### **Weekdays after hours or on weekends:**

- Call the Office of Physical Plant (OPP) Service Desk at (814) 865-4731 to report the issue

## SAFETY INFORMATION

### **If you encounter an emergency, urgent, or crime situation requiring police assistance:**

- **Call 911.**
- If you do not have a cell phone, Outdoor Campus Emergency Phones are located at the parking lot entrance to the Arboretum nearest the Overlook Pavilion and on Bigler Road at the entrance to the Katz Building. These phones will connect the caller with University Police.
- Report what you have seen to Arboretum staff.

### **If you encounter suspected child abuse:**

- If you see imminent danger, **call 911.**
- Report what you have seen to PA Child Line: (800) 932-0313.
- Report what you have seen to Arboretum staff.

## **First Aid and CPR**

- Do not administer CPR or first aid UNLESS you are trained and certified and are acting within the parameters of your certification.

## **Non-emergency situations requiring police assistance:**

- Call University Police at (814) 863-1111.

## **Weather emergencies:**

In the event of threatening weather, volunteers should seek shelter in the cave in the children's garden, under the Overlook Pavilion canopy, or across the street at the Lewis Katz Building (Penn State law school), and may direct visitors to do likewise. The Glass House in the children's garden does not provide safe shelter in a storm. School groups and child-related organizations are responsible for observing their safety plans, protocols, and procedures to ensure the safety of children in their care.

## COMMUNICATING WITH ARBORETUM STAFF

Arboretum volunteers are encouraged to communicate with staff if they need guidance or notice a problem in the garden.

The Arboretum has a small staff, most of whom have offices in the Forest Resources Building (across the street from the Arboretum). The garden office at the Overlook Pavilion is shared by Shari Edelson (director of horticulture and curator) and Mandy DiBella (horticulture and plant records coordinator). If you are volunteering in the garden on a weekday and have a question or notice a problem, stop by the office and let Shari or Mandy know. In the summer, Tim Gould or Rebecca Horwitt are also in the children's garden and may be able to provide guidance.

**Kim Steiner**

Director

Email: [steiner@psu.edu](mailto:steiner@psu.edu)

Phone: (814) 865-9351

**Shari Edelson**

Director of Horticulture and Curator

Email: [ske13@psu.edu](mailto:ske13@psu.edu)

Phone: (814) 865-8080

**Timothy Gould**

Public Programs Manager

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**Kathleen (Kate) Reeder**

Events and Marketing Coordinator

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**Kelly Oleynik**

Development Assistant/Volunteer and Tour Coordinator

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**Amanda (Mandy) DiBella**

Horticulture and Plant Records Coordinator

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**Rebecca Horwitt**

Children's Garden Education Assistant

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