

**STATEMENTS OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES
WITHIN THE MADISON PARK SYSTEM**

AUTHORIZATION

The Madison Board of Park Commissioners is the approving authority for policies governing the Madison Park system. This policy is intended to encourage volunteerism by efficiently and effectively utilizing volunteers in the Madison Park system to meet the recognized landscape, facilities and recreation management needs of the system in accordance with the goals identified in the adopted Park and Open Space Plan and individual park master plans.

This policy defines the role and responsibilities of individual volunteers and volunteer groups. It also identifies the role and responsibilities of Madison Parks to coordinate with and assist volunteers by defining the process and procedures for individual volunteers and volunteer groups, approving their activities, recording their accomplishments, coordinating staff efforts and evaluating results of the program.

PROCEDURE

Individuals or groups interesting in volunteering with Madison Parks initially complete an interest inquiry outlining their interests and commitment level. Parks staff reviews requests and matches individuals and groups based on Park needs and feasibility. All activities by volunteers and approved or supported by Parks staff shall be consistent with the adopted Park and Open Space Plan and the park master plan where applicable.

1. One-time Volunteers

- a. One-time volunteers are matched with available projects, events or needs in the Parks system. Examples include volunteers for Earth Day, Ride the Drive, etc.
- b. **City of Madison Release Waiver** – All volunteers must sign a release waiver before performing any services in the park system.

2. On-going Volunteers

- a. Individuals or organized groups who intend to participate in an ongoing project shall complete a detailed volunteer program application provided by Madison Parks. The program application shall include the location (name of park or parks), activities to be conducted, and the names, addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact names and phone numbers for at least two individuals in the group. Supplemental information may be requested as needed as the project scope is developed. Applications are reviewed by Parks Staff. Examples of ongoing projects include groups wishing to Adopt-a-Park, volunteer flower gardeners, ongoing invasive species removal, etc.
- b. Once ongoing projects are approved by Madison Parks, an agreement that outlines the approved activities and scope of work shall be executed before any volunteer activities commence in the park. Agreement forms may be renewed on an annual basis and may identify the extent of volunteer activities contemplated over a 12-month period.
- c. **City of Madison Release Waiver** – All volunteers must sign a release waiver before performing any services in the park system.

- d. Groups conducting Madison Parks' approved projects shall provide information on the intended activities and schedules for conducting the approved activities.
- e. While Madison Parks is willing to provide supporting services and/or supplies needed to accomplish volunteer projects, they may be limited in what they can provide based on the priorities and constraints of the Madison Park System and budget. Examples of services and/or supplies that have been provided in the past include trash bags, mulch, tools, expertise, and best practices for completing the project.
- f. Project agreements shall be renewed on an annual basis with the volunteer providing monthly reports on the locations, hours and activities conducted. Volunteers will report their hours and activity logs to Madison Parks.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERISM

1. A volunteer is defined as a person or group who provides free services for the betterment of the Madison Park system. Volunteers may participate in a single event or may have a formal relationship at one or more parks as an individual or through a recognized volunteer group.
2. Volunteer recruitment, selection, orientation, and supervision will depend on the project and the volunteer organization. There are two primary levels of volunteer management:
 - a) **Madison Parks' events and volunteer days** (e.g., Ride the Drive, Earth Day) are the primary responsibility of Madison Parks and are led by Madison Parks' staff.
 - b) **Madison Parks' approved volunteer activities** (e.g., landscaping or ice stewardship) are often led by an organized volunteer group, neighborhood association or a 3rd party entity. It may also include individuals who have shown dedication in providing a needed service to the Madison Park system.
3. All organized groups participating in on-going volunteer activities, whether a registered 501c(3) group or an ad hoc interest group, shall follow the guidelines in the *City of Madison Parks Adopt-A-Park Program Volunteer Handbook*.
4. Parks staff will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance and assign activities suitable to their skill and physical abilities. Volunteers are required to understand and abide by safety guidelines and must abide by all park rules and ordinances.
5. Volunteers providing the following services shall provide evidence of current certification in approved safety and/or training courses in these areas: application of registered herbicides, using chainsaws or other power equipment, participating or conducting controlled burns, and/or tree climbing for the purposes of tree pruning or other services. Madison Parks will identify training/certification needed and provide information on the availability of such courses to volunteers. Volunteers shall not be required to obtain training or certification greater than that of city staff providing comparable services.
6. This policy is intended for Madison park properties and events, and may include activities on other properties such as greenways or street ROWs (e.g., street ends or boulevards) which are under the purview of City Engineering and/or Transportation.
7. This policy is not intended for volunteers participating in activities requiring permits or other City of Madison approvals (e.g., neighborhood festivals, sporting teams or organized events by 3rd parties).