



**Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Program
Volunteer Guide**

March 2015

Welcome

Welcome to the Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Program and to our team. In 2013, a devastating flood caused extensive damage to parts of southern Alberta including the backcountry. We need your help to reconstruct the trails and trail systems to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences are maintained. We are thrilled that you have decided to volunteer and we are eager to get you started on your own projects. The success of this program relies on volunteers such as you.

This program offers a wide variety of tasks that can accommodate your current skill level and provide opportunities to learn new skills. You can either volunteer as an individual or a group of you can sign up and work on team building. A number of options are available to you. We plan to match you with your preferred projects where you will participate, gain knowledge and take pride in rebuilding the backcountry trails that are enjoyed by many recreational users. We are committed to providing an experience that is meaningful to you.

This guide has been developed to help you become a well-prepared and effective volunteer for Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD). Please review the guide and if you have any additional questions please do not hesitate to ask your Volunteer Coordinator. This guide will give you information about:

- the history of the program and moving forward,
- what to expect from us and your volunteer responsibilities,
- volunteer information about the process, what to bring and what to expect on a typical day,
- volunteer safety, and
- helpful links to more information.

With your help, we will be able to return preferred trails and trail systems back to a usable and safe state. We are so grateful that you have chosen to contribute your time and enthusiasm to this team.

Program Information

In June of 2013, parts of southern Alberta were devastated from significant flooding. The South Saskatchewan and Red Deer North Saskatchewan Regions along the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies sustained significant impacts from the flood event. Damage to the main arterial recreation corridors has reduced access to backcountry areas and increased natural and man-made hazards that compromise the use of recreational experiences.

This program aims to restore trail systems in the flood affected areas to maintain recreational activities and provide critical support to the economic, environmental, and social benefits compromised by the flood. It is an opportunity to return the backcountry trails to a usable and safe state and continue to provide wilderness experiences for everyone to enjoy.

The Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Program is being led by AESRD and \$10 million has been allotted to restore and repair the backcountry trail systems on public lands that were damaged during the 2013 floods. It aims to restore priority trails and trail systems for both motorized and non-motorized recreational users. This program is an opportunity to re-establish some of the trail systems to become more resilient and sustainable in the event of future flooding.

This program is taking a collaborative and partnership based approach to planning and project implementation by utilizing knowledge and personnel of partners, volunteers, and stakeholders. This program can be successful with your help.

Responsibilities

Our mission is to provide safe, meaningful, and diverse volunteer opportunities for Albertans wishing to help restore the backcountry trail system on public lands.

Volunteer and partner involvement is the key to the success of this program as you will aid in the planning and execution of projects that will enhance the experience of trail users, protect the environment, and connect Albertans to the outdoors.

What to expect from us

- Safe, meaningful, and diverse volunteer opportunities that will harness your skills, interests, and availability
- Orientation and training to help you perform your job
- The opportunity to work as part of our team, to contribute to the betterment of your community, and to be recognized for your contribution
- The support you need to do your job, including the necessary equipment, supplies, training, and supervision
- The opportunity to provide us feedback on your experience

Your responsibilities as a volunteer

- Be realistic and candid in accepting your assignment considering your skills and interests and the needs of the Backcountry Trails Flood Rehabilitation Program
- Be willing to learn, take instruction, and stay in touch with your supervisor
- Contribute by being a reliable and dependable member of our team

- Follow all policies and guidelines and engage in appropriate public behavior at all time
- Complete your project in a safe and responsible manner
- Participate in the feedback process by letting us know about your volunteer experience and providing suggestions for improvement
- Do the job to the best of your abilities
- Have FUN

Volunteer Information

The process

After you have signed up to become a volunteer:

- Your Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to discuss the type of assignments available and the type of assignments you will like to complete
- Your Volunteer Coordinator will match you to a project and provide you with the time, date, and location of the project
- You will confirm whether you are able to attend
- If applicable, you may be asked to attend a training event regarding the nature of the project; however, most training will take place the day of the project on-site
- On project day, you will show up at the location, prepared and ready to participate

What should I bring?

- Eye protection (sun glasses or safety glasses recommended)
- Long sleeve shirt that can get dirty (acts as sun, insect and snag protection)
- Long pants that can get dirty (preferably breathable, quick drying)
- work boots (to prevent sprained ankles and provide day-long support)
- Jacket (suitable for dirt, snags, etc.)
- Rain gear including rain hat (suitable for dirt, snags, etc.)
- Work gloves
- Lunch/snack (no restaurants nearby)
- Water (to stay hydrated)
- Bug spray, sunscreen, toilet paper
- Hat (for sun protection)
- Backpack (for all your stuff)

What can I expect on a typical day?

Keep in mind that all projects are unique so this “typical day” can vary depending on your project.

- Meet and Greet - Meet your team and check in with your Volunteer Coordinator
- Paperwork – Each volunteer needs to read, understand, and complete a volunteer agreement before commencing volunteer activities

- Safety Orientation – We will go through a detailed overview of the work to be completed and itinerary, assess the hazards on-site, and review emergency procedures
- Training – On-site training may be needed depending on the scope of the project. AESRD staff will be there to take you through any necessary training and skill development
- Volunteer Project – Participate in the project assigned
- Wrap Up – You will check out with your Volunteer Coordinator and complete an evaluation form to provide us feedback on your volunteer experience

****Always remember your Volunteer Coordinator is there for YOU****

Volunteer Safety

General Safety, Security, and Emergency Procedures

You will receive task-specific training and collaborate with your team on the safety hazards on-site at your project. The following will provide you an overview of the general safety, security, and emergency procedures while you are a part of our team.

General Safety

- NEVER do a task that makes you uncomfortable
- ALWAYS make sure you have adequate training to complete your assigned task. If you are not sure, ask for extra training or another task
- WATCH out for one another, if you see a dangerous situation report it right away
- DO NOT work alone

Security

- Pay close attention to our check in/check out procedures. Your Volunteer Coordinator needs to know where you are at all times to ensure that you are safe.
- Pay attention to site specific hazards during your on-site orientation
- Alert other of unsafe situations
- DO NOT wander off, stay close to the group at all times

Emergency Procedures

- Emergency procedures for wildlife, accidents, weather, fire, and other incidents will be reviewed during our on-site orientation

Other Helpful Information

Web Links

We have partnered with Alberta Parks and Tourism to provide you with a one stop shop for signing up as a Flood Project Volunteer. Check out potential projects you might be interested in:

<http://www.albertaparks.ca/kananaskis-country/volunteering/flood-volunteering.aspx>

Learn more about the program and other flood related programs on the Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development web page:

<http://esrd.alberta.ca>

More specifically, learn about the Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Program:

<http://esrd.alberta.ca/focus/ersd-2013-flood-recovery-programs/backcountry-trail-flood-rehabilitation-program/default.aspx>