

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL



[wcparks.org](http://wcparks.org)

Everything you need to know to start  
Volunteering and making a difference today!

## Welcome Letter

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for volunteering with the Wood County Park District! To say that our accomplishments would not be possible without you would be an understatement. Volunteers help to forward the mission of the Wood County Park District everyday by providing their skills and services. Together with volunteers, we have accomplished many great projects and of that we are all very proud. You make a difference in the parks, the environment, and the community!

The Park District conducts over 500 programs each year, maintains over 1,200 acres of land, grows over 10,000 native plants, restores wildlife habitats, provides educational opportunities to Wood County citizens and more. All of this is possible because of our amazing volunteers.

We hope that this handbook will help you to feel comfortable with and informed about the volunteer program. We depend on you – your success is our success. Most of the WCPD activities, conservation efforts, programs and events would not be possible without you and your dedicated support. Thank you!

Welcome aboard. We are happy you're here.

Sincerely,

Chris Smalley

Wood County Park District

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Wood County Park District | 18729 Mercer Road, Bowling Green, OH 43402 | (419) 353-1897

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## Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook was prepared to give you essential information about the policies and procedures that have been developed to protect volunteers. This handbook also outlines requirements and expectations when volunteering with the Wood County Park District (WCPD).

WCPD reserves the right to modify the policies and procedures listed in this handbook without prior notification. Each new edition will replace the previous policies and procedures.

Please thoroughly read this handbook and keep it handy. If you have questions about the content, please contact Volunteer Services.

We also encourage you to be familiar with the WCPD Rules and Regulations, which are available on our website [www.wcparks.org](http://www.wcparks.org). It is helpful to understand Park District rules when out and about in the parks individually or with park visitors.

## Mission & Core Values

The mission of the Wood County Park District is to preserve, enhance and protect the natural and cultural resources of Wood County while providing quality recreational and education opportunities for Wood County citizens.

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*The Wood County Park District is a natural resources conservation agency.*

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- We save natural spaces,
- We protect the environment,
- We enhance special community spaces,
- We restore natural habitats,
- We safeguard the public within our properties,
- We provide quality educational programming in outdoor recreation, environmental sciences, and cultural heritage.

## Park District Information

Park District Headquarters is located at 18729 Mercer Road, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402. Office hours are 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Parks are open from 8:30 am until 30 minutes after sunset every day. Parking and entrance to all Wood County Park District properties is free. Contact us: (419) 353-1897

The Wood County Park District observes the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, , Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Holidays falling on Sunday are observed on the following Monday. Those falling on Saturday are observed on the preceding Friday.

### Fishing

Many of the Wood County Park District properties have ponds, streams or rivers on which people may fish during park hours.

Full Fishing is available at: Adam Phillips Pond, Buttonwood Recreation Area, William Henry Harrison Park, and Otsego Park.

Family Fishing means adults may only fish when accompanied by a youth 12 years or younger. Family fishing occurs at the following parks: Beaver Creek Preserve, Bradner Preserve, Cricket Frog Cove (bass are catch & release), and W.W. Knight Nature Preserve.

## Volunteer Information

The mission of the Volunteer Program focuses on three areas:

**Recruitment:** To provide a means through which the Park District can accept and utilize volunteer services from the public.

**Education and Training:** To provide a training program that provides volunteers with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform and excel at their volunteer tasks.

**Growth:** To augment the strengths and capabilities of Park District staff with trained volunteers to expand current services and create new opportunities for Wood County residents.

## Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the right:

- To volunteer in a healthy and safe environment.
- To have volunteer decisions, including engagement, assignment, and separation made in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.
- To request and agree to tasks according to ability, skill, interests, availability and training that have only as much responsibility as you can handle.
- To fill a position that is not otherwise held by a paid worker, or previously held by a paid worker.
- To receive the volunteer handbook, appropriate training, tools, workspace, support, and supervision for the tasks accepted/chosen.
- To have a role description and agreed hours of contribution.
- To be treated with respect and dignity, be acknowledged by staff and be in an environment free of harassment or discrimination.
- To make suggestions, share ideas and to be given appropriate recognition.

As a volunteer, you have the responsibility:

- To complete a volunteer application and background check (if required) before you begin volunteering.
- To keep accurate records each time you volunteer, and to record and submit your volunteer hours.
- To follow staff directions and safety procedures, carry out the specified position objectives or task in the manner instructed, and ask for support when needed.
- To treat fellow volunteers, staff, and park guests with dignity and respect and refrain from using abusive or foul language.

- **To be reliable, honor your commitment(s), act appropriately, and arrive at your scheduled time.**
- **To wear a visible volunteer pin, patch, shirt or other identification when volunteering.**
- **To maintain a neat and clean appearance during volunteer service.**
- **To not speak negatively about the organization or its representatives.**
- **To refrain from threatening or causing bodily harm to yourself or others.**
- **To raise any issues you may have with your volunteer supervisor or volunteer services.**
- **To give notice when you wish to discontinue your volunteer service.**
- **To remember that you are a representative of the Wood County Park District and to help create a healthy, pleasant and safe park experience for all.**

## **Approval of Volunteers**

**The Wood County Park District retains sole discretion to approve and engage volunteers and make volunteer assignments. Volunteers agree that the WCPD may, at any time, for whatever reason, terminate the volunteer relationship with the WCPD, or make changes in the volunteer's assignment. Volunteers may also decide to end their service to the WCPD at any time. WCPD requests that volunteers provide adequate advance notice to Volunteer Services if they decide to stop volunteering for the WCPD.**

## **Equal Opportunity**

**The Wood County Park District does not discriminate against, nor does it tolerate discrimination or harassment or any person based on race, color, age, religion/creed, national origin, gender/sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability/handicap, genetic information, military**

or veteran status, or any other basis protected by Federal, State or local law. Volunteers are approved, engaged and assigned based upon volunteer skill, ability, preference, and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities.

## Volunteer Application and Registration

### **Program Volunteer:**

**Program volunteers should register for each volunteer experience online or by telephone.**

One-time program volunteers may register for a public volunteer program with the WCPD on a supervised project.

All other individual program volunteers must first complete a volunteer application and background check (if required), and then may register for a volunteer program in conservation, education recreation, administration or outreach.

### **On-going Volunteers:**

Most of our volunteers are regulars and we hope you will be too. On-going volunteer opportunities include: Park Ambassador docents, program preferred assistants, adopt-a-garden volunteers, project-specific volunteers, and more. If you are interested in an on-going volunteer opportunity, you should meet with Volunteer Services or on-site staff to identify a specific placement that provides you the best volunteer experience for your particular interests and skills.

Placements may be changed with notice.

### **Group Volunteering:**

Groups of eight or more may contact us to register for an engaging program. We have developed several team-building activities that you can incorporate into the beginning or end of each volunteering opportunity. Ask Volunteer Services for details.

### **Service Project:**

If you are interested in creating a service project for work, school, scouting or a service club, there are many potential projects within the Wood County Park District. Please fill out the Service Project Form and



send it to Volunteer Services so we can work with you to develop a project that is mutually beneficial. Volunteer service hours must be recorded and submitted by the end of the calendar year.

### **Court-ordered Community Service:**

Service hours for court-ordered service must be scheduled for specific days and times. Court-ordered community service hours will not be granted for attending a public volunteer program. Please contact Volunteer Services for available days and times.

## **Reference and Background Checks**

The Wood County Park District strives to maintain a safe and productive environment with honest, trustworthy, and reliable volunteers who do not pose a risk to fellow volunteers, staff, or park visitors. The WCPD reserves the right to require a formal background check and to check references for all repeat volunteers. All reference and background check information and results will be maintained in a secure and confidential method and file.

A volunteer's background check must be completed and approved by the WCPD at its sole discretion before the volunteer may assist with public events, programs, or activities with vulnerable populations including, but not limited to children, seniors, and individuals with special needs.

Volunteers who agree to provide written consent to conduct a formal background check and to respond truthfully and completely to inquiries made in the background check process. Failure to cooperate with a required reference or background check process will result in termination of your volunteer service.

## **Minors**

Any volunteer under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or a responsible adult approved in writing by the minor's parent or legal guardian. Volunteers under 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. Any volunteer tasks assigned to a minor will be performed in a non-hazardous environment.

## Photo Release

Volunteers are an important part of our organization. Included with the sign-in sheets is a photo release form. If you do not want your photo taken, please tell us a.s.a.p.

## Absence and Lateness

Volunteer positions are crucial to the efforts of the Wood County Park District. Please try to follow through with your commitment. If you are unable to attend a scheduled activity, please contact the specific program leader with as much notice as possible. When possible, try to arrange for a qualified replacement for your scheduled activities.

## Conduct

As a volunteer, you are expected to follow the rules of conduct to protect the interest and safety of other volunteers, staff and park guests.

The following is a short, non-comprehensive list of inappropriate conduct which could lead to dismissal of service.

- 1) Unauthorized removal or possession of WCPD property, theft of personal property from another volunteer, staff member, or park guest
- 2) Volunteering under the influence of alcohol or drugs without a prescription
- 3) Possession or transfer of illegal substances or items
- 4) Creating a disturbance on park property or when representing the WCPD
- 5) Lack of cooperation or disrespectful conduct
- 6) Violation of laws or ordinances
- 7) Improper use of technology (telephones, computer equipment, technology systems, mail system, email system or other equipment)

**8) Unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information**

**9) Inappropriate discipline of another volunteer, program attendee or park guest.**

**Smoking – WCPD aims to provide a safe and healthy environment. Wood County Park District prohibits smoking and tobacco use of any kind on all Park District owned and/or leased buildings or vehicles. This includes the use of vapors, electronic cigarettes, etc.**

**Children and Pets – Because your volunteer commitment can require your full attention, it is recommended that volunteers do not bring their children or pets to a volunteer activity.**

**Recordings/Photographs – Due to potential issues, volunteers may not take, distribute, or post pictures, videos or audio recordings without permission from staff.**

## **Smoking and Tobacco Use**

**The Wood County Park District strives to provide a safe and healthy environment. The WCPD prohibits smoking and tobacco use of any kind in all BCPD buildings and vehicles. This includes use of vapors, electronic cigarettes, dip, etc.**

## **Conflicts of Interest**

**Volunteers shall not attempt to influence WCPD’s position on any issue, activity, matter, or transaction if it may result in a social or material gain for the volunteer, his or her relative, or someone close to the volunteer.**

**Volunteers shall not accept payment for services rendered to the WCPD including, but not limited to, speaking engagements.**

**Volunteers shall not impede any project of WCPD, or use WCPD ideas, activities or efforts for their own gain or for the gain of an outside agency.**

**Volunteers shall not represent that their political action, donations, or endorsements were made on behalf of, or with the endorsement of, the Wood County Park District.**

Volunteers shall not identify themselves as WCPD employees. Volunteers may not reprimand, interrogate or influence fellow volunteers, staff, or park visitors. Please speak to Volunteer Services if you have any comments or concerns.

## Sign-in Sheets and Record-keeping

As a volunteer, you donate something far more valuable than money – your time. It is important that we track and recognize the amount of time you donate. Your volunteer hours can help us achieve great things including grant awards.

Volunteers should record start and end times for each and every volunteer activity including meetings, training, presentations, outreach, events, office assignments, and field assignments. You are expected to keep a record of your hours and may give your hours as a cumulative total to Volunteer Services. All hourly reporting should be submitted on a regular basis and must be submitted before the end of the calendar year.

Volunteers are responsible to update personal and emergency contact information with your site coordinator and Volunteer Services.

## Emergency Procedures and Contacts

Inclement Weather: Programs and volunteer experiences will be cancelled during all levels of snow emergency, or other declared state-of-emergency.

You should call a park ranger when an incident report needs to be taken, or when immediate park law enforcement action is required.

To call a park ranger, contact (877) 726-4376 to have a park ranger dispatched to your location. Our rangers are certified peace officers.

You should call 911 – in any life-threatening situation in which immediate medical attention is needed or there is immediate danger.

## Technology Policy

Any volunteer with access to WCPD email account or computer must complete and pass cyber-security training. While volunteering, it is not

appropriate to conduct personal business, use personal social media, or make personal calls.

Computer systems and peripheral technology, including internet access, may only be used for facilitating the WCPD mission and values, research or development of WCPD-related programs, or communication with WCPD employees or volunteers.

WCPD technology systems may NOT be used for the following purposes:

any illegal activities, inappropriate content, discrimination or harassment, permitting materials protected under copyright or trade rights without authorization from the owner, damaging or altering the operation, content, function, or design of technology systems including software and hardware, commercial or partisan political use not related to WCPD-authorized activities.

## Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying

Wood County Park District volunteers are expected to treat other volunteers, staff, and park visitors with respect and dignity at all times. Everyone has a right to be in an environment that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices and harassment. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or environmental, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Since an individual's volunteering may extend beyond the confines of the workplace, conduct that occurs off duty and off premises may also be subject to this policy.

Prompt reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment is necessary. The Wood County Park District will thoroughly investigate such reports. Retaliation against individuals who report discrimination harassment (and/or participates in an investigation) is prohibited.

Definition of harassment and bullying is defined as unwelcome or unwanted conduct of an offensive nature (whether verbal, visual, or physical) in which: 1) submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used or threatened to be used as a factor in decisions

affecting any aspect of volunteer service; or 2) this conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's volunteer service or experience or creating and intimidating, abusive, hostile, or offensive environment.

Examples of harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued volunteer service; repeated jokes which include offensive references to age, color, gender/sex, race, national origin, disability/handicap, religion, creed, marital status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or veteran status, health conditions, or any other protected status; unwanted flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic, verbal, commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering; whistling; touching; pinching; assault; coerced sexual acts; suggestive, insulting, threatening, or obscene comments or gestures; dissemination or display of objects, written materials, or pictures which include offensive references; asking questions about sexual conduct; racial or ethnic slurs or epithets; slandering, ridiculing, or maligning person or his or her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting, offensive, or humiliating; targeting a person for jokes; damage to a person's service area or property; social or physically excluding or disregarding a person in volunteer-related activities; ignoring or interrupting; publicly humiliating a person in any form; public reprimands; spreading rumors and gossip; or manipulating the ability of someone to do his or her work.

### Reporting a Complaint

The Wood County Park District encourages all individuals who believe they are being harassed or bullied to firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. The WCPD does, however, recognize that, in some instances, power and status disparities between the alleged harasser or bully and the individual may make such a confrontation impossible. If such informal, direct communication between individuals is either ineffective or impossible, the following steps should be followed in reporting a complaint.

## **1. Notification of Complaint**

**Individuals who believe they have been subjected to harassment or bullying, or has knowledge of harassment or discrimination, should report the incident to their site supervisor or the Volunteer Services.**

**WCPD encourages prompt reporting of complaints so that it may take rapid response and appropriate action. However, due to the sensitivity of these problems and because of the emotional toll such misconduct may have on the individual, no limited time frame will be instituted for reporting complaints under this policy. Delays in reporting of complaints will not in and of itself preclude WCPD from taking remedial action. All conduct an individual believes in good faith rises to the level of harassment or bullying or, if left unchecked, will rise to such a level, should be reported within seven days, even if the individual is unsure the conduct violates this policy.**

## **2. Protection against Retaliation**

**WCPD will not in any way retaliate or tolerate retaliation against any individual who makes a good faith report of misconduct under this policy or who assists or cooperates in an investigation under this policy. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have violated this policy by retaliating against another individual for making a report under this policy or for assisting or cooperating in the investigation thereof will be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for other violations of this policy.**

## **3. Investigating the Complaint**

**Any allegation of misconduct under this policy brought to the attention of the WCPD will be thoroughly, promptly, and impartially investigated. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible throughout the investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances. Volunteers are encouraged to respond to questions by the investigator and participate, as appropriate, in the investigation.**

#### 4. Resolving the Complaint

Upon completing the investigation of a complaint of misconduct under this policy, WCPD will communicate its findings and intended actions to the complainant, target, and the alleged harasser or bully. If the investigation finds that a violation of this policy has occurred, the person engaging in misconduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, as listed below. If the investigation determines that no violation has occurred, this finding will be communicated to the complainant in an appropriately sensitive manner.

##### Disciplinary Sanctions

Individuals found to have engaged in misconduct in violation of this policy will be disciplined promptly, consistently, and in proportion to the severity of the misconduct, up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship with WCPD.

Although WCPD's ability to discipline a non-volunteer or employee harasser or bully (e.g., park visitor) is limited by the degree of control, if any, that WCPD has over the alleged wrongdoer, any individual who has been subjected to harassment or bullying by such an individual should still file a complaint and be assured that WCPD will take actions it deems appropriate in an attempt to bring such misconduct to an end.

##### Dress Code

We hope that you will be proud to be identified as a volunteer with the Wood County Park District. We will provide you with volunteer identification in one or more of the following forms: button, name badge, shirt, pin, patch, hat, or other approved identifier. Please do not wear WCPD volunteer identification when you are not volunteering or when you are off park property, except in travel to or from volunteering. When volunteering outdoors, volunteers should dress in weather-appropriate clothing. Flip flops, and inappropriately revealing clothing are prohibited.



## Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers are not expected to pay for supplies or materials out-of-pocket. If you need tools, materials, or other resources, please ask your site supervisor, or Volunteer Services. WCPD does not reimburse volunteers for their travel expenses.

## Recognition

The Wood County Park District recognizes its volunteers an annual banquet at which it presents earned incentive awards. If you are unable to attend the banquet, your earned incentive awards will be provided at a later date.

2018-2019 Volunteer Incentive Program	
Volunteers with 5+ volunteer hours:	Volunteer Recognition Dinner invitation
10+ Hours Per Calendar Year:	T-shirt
20+ Hours Per Calendar Year:	Drinking Vessel
50+ Hours Per Calendar Year:	Hat
100+ Hours Per Calendar Year:	Camp Chair or Walking Stick
1000+ Cumulative Hours:	Engraved Brick on Commemorative Trail

## Volunteer Conduct and Corrective Action

The Wood County Park District expects its volunteers to be conscientious, reliable, and honest, and to treat others with dignity and respect. It is Wood County Park District's policy to treat all volunteers equitably and to administer all policies, procedures, rules, and regulations consistently. WCPD retains discretion to take appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of the volunteer relationship, when a volunteer's performance is unsatisfactory or when a volunteer violates WCPD's rules or policies.

Set forth below are examples of inappropriate conduct that may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of volunteer service:

- 1) Violation of laws, ordinances, any WCPD policy, or park rules and regulations

- 2) Destruction, damage, or theft of WCPD property or of personal property of fellow volunteers, staff, or park guests
- 3) Use, possession, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while volunteering or while on WCPD property
- 4) Unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information
- 5) General acts of misconduct, including but not limited to:
  - a. Rudeness, discourtesy, or other unprofessional behavior toward any volunteer, staff member, park visitor, or other individual encountered on WCPD property or while volunteering for WCPD
  - b. Horseplay
  - c. Discriminatory or retaliatory conduct
  - d. Inappropriate discipline of a fellow volunteer, staff member, program attendee, or park guest
  - e. Failure to exercise reasonable judgment that has a serious impact on the park or park visitors
  - f. Insubordination, including but not limited to refusal to cooperate with volunteer assignments or supervisor instructions, failure to observe park rules or regulations, or belligerent, defiant, abusive, or threatening conduct or speech toward the Volunteer Services Specialist, site supervisors, park rangers, or any other WPCD management personnel

## **Safety and Law Enforcement**

The Wood County Park District is committed to providing a safe environment for volunteers, staff, and park visitors. Please exercise caution in all of your volunteer activities. Your safety and well-being are important to the Wood County Park District. If you are unsure about a task or procedure or method, please ask. Your safety is important to us!

**Volunteers are expected to exercise prudence and caution and to follow any provided safety procedures or instructions, including the proper use of all equipment safety, and any required personal protective equipment (e.g. safety glasses). Volunteers must have training and competency testing conducted by a staff member prior to using power tools.**

**If you observe, or are made aware of serious violations of WCPD Rules and Regulations, please**

- 1) Get to a safe location within the area**
- 2) Call 911 in case of fire, immediate danger or medical emergency**
- 3) Contact a WCPD ranger in a non-emergency situation (877) 726 - 4376**
- 4) Contact your supervisor**
- 5) Stay to give a witness statement**

**Restraining Orders: Please report any restraining orders or public protection orders with which you are associated to the ranger department and Volunteer Services.**

**Accidents and Injuries: Wood County Park District encourages volunteers to maintain their own medical and disability insurance.**

**Volunteers over 16 years old who sustain an injury or illness in the course and scope of their volunteer activity as designated by their volunteer position description may have coverage under Ohio Worker's Compensation Law. There is some liability insurance coverage for volunteers. Please inquire with Volunteer Services for more information.**

**If urgent medical attention is ever required in the course of your volunteer activities, please seek medical treatment immediately.**

**The volunteer activity related injury reporting process is as follows:**

- 1) Seek immediate medical attention as needed.**
- 2) Immediately notify the on-site supervisor.**

**3) Work with the supervisor to fill out an accident/injury report.**

## **Resignation and Exit Interviews**

**Volunteers may resign from their park service at any time. We ask that volunteers who intend to resign do so by advanced written notice and complete a volunteer exit interview form. This form includes your position information, date of exit, reason for leaving, suggestions for improving the volunteer program or position, and your interest in volunteering in another capacity with the Wood County Park District.**

**Volunteer Services Contact: Jamie Sands Volunteer Services & Communications Specialist**

**[jsands@wcparks.org](mailto:jsands@wcparks.org)**

**office: (419) 353-1807 x 104**

**work cell: (419) 806-2227**

**18729 Mercer Road**

**Bowling Green, OH**

**43402**



## Volunteer Agreement

To be read, signed and returned prior to beginning any volunteer activities.

I understand that this handbook does not imply or constitute a contract or employment agreement of any kind between the WCPD and myself. I understand that I am not a volunteer with the WCPD until the volunteer application and background check (if applicable) are completed and approved. I also understand that WCPD has the right to end the volunteer relationship at any time, and that I have the right to resign from volunteer services at any time.

I understand that this handbook contains general statements about current WCPD policy , and that WCPD retains the right to depart from, or to revise or modify the terms, information, and policies at its discretion at any time.

I understand that if I have knowledge, either direct or indirect, of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, safety violations, or any other policy violation contained in this handbook, I am obligated to report the circumstances immediately to the site supervisor or Volunteer Services.

By Signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Wood County Park District Volunteer Handbook, and that I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies and any revisions made to them. I understand that this Volunteer Handbook replaces and supersedes and previous volunteer handbook or manual and any previous communications regarding policies and procedures, whether written or oral. I understand that I should consult with Volunteer Services or the site supervisor regarding any questions or concerns I might have about WCPD's policies and practices.

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Volunteer Signature

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date

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Volunteer's Name (printed)