

FRIENDS FOR THE ABBOTT MARSHLANDS VOLUNTEER MANUAL

2024



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH VOLUNTEER SERVICE



**FRIENDS FOR THE
ABBOTT MARSHLANDS**

Marshlands Volunteer Handbook 2023. For pe



TULPEHAKING
nature center
at the Abbott Marshlands

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Spring Lake in the Abbott Marshlands

Welcome to the Abbott Marshlands!

Nulelîntàm èli paan.... (Lenape ~ I am glad that you came).

We are excited that you have chosen to volunteer with the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands. The Friends organization is dedicated to enhancing the appreciation and protection of the Abbott Marshlands. We pay respect to the Lenape--past, present, and future--and to their continuing cultural heritage and connection to this homeland.

The Friends has an established and active Board of Directors, as well as an Outreach Coordinator to facilitate the vital role volunteers have in reaching our prioritized actions. Together, we can continue to successfully achieve our key service and advocacy goals for education, preservation, and stewardship in the Abbott Marshlands.

Our volunteers are essential in all areas of the Friends' operation including stewarding the trails and wetlands, welcoming visitors at the Tulpehaking Nature Center, and helping with fundraising, publicity, and outreach events.

We hope you find your volunteer experience with us to be rewarding and positive. The Friends for the Abbott Marshlands Volunteer Manual will cover opportunities, policies, procedures, and our mutual responsibilities. Our goal is to provide all the tools and information you might need to best represent the Friends, understand our values, and realize what each volunteer adds.

On behalf of everyone here at the Friends for the Abbott Marshlands, thank you for volunteering and joining a community that is determined to keep the ecological, educational, and recreational resources of the marsh available to be enjoyed by all.

Sincerely,

Cathy Frank

Outreach Director

cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org

215-266-9666



Abbott Marshlands



LOCATIONS (see corresponding numbers on map in red):

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Spring Lake at Roebling Park | 7. D&R Canal State Park (Towpath Trail) |
| 2. Tulpehaking Nature Center | a. Scenic Overlook at Rte 295, Bordentown |
| 3. Watson Woods at Roebling Park | b. Connector Paths to Duck Island Trail |
| 4. Northern Community Park | c. Trailhead at Lambertson Road |
| 5. Bordentown Bluffs / D&R Canal State Park | 8. Duck Island Created Wetland |
| 6. Bordentown Beach | 9. Trenton Boat Launch |
| a. Tressel Bridge over Crosswicks Creek (to D&R) | 10. Point Breeze, Joseph Bonaparte's former estate |

The Friends of the Abbott Marshlands

Our Board of Directors

Pat Coleman, President
Michael Skelly, Vice-President
Eugene M. Fuzy, Secretary
Pat Coleman, Acting Treasurer
Deb Brockway
Joel Dowshen
Mark
Gallagher
Margaret
Simpson



Our Advisory Board: Anthony Cucchi, Stephanie Fox, Mary Leck, Linda Mead, Kelly Rypkema

Our Founding Member: Mary A. Leck, Ph.D. Mary has been a strong advocate for the marsh since 1974 when, as a Rider University professor, her first project in the wetlands inspired her to many years of continued research, resulting in more than 25 marsh-related publications as well as two co-edited books. She has been instrumental in establishing the Abbott Marshlands as an important ecological resource, and in the establishment, direction and expansion of the Friends and their mission.

Our Outreach Director

Cathy Frank
cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org

Cathy leads the volunteer program of the Friends and is here to facilitate volunteer training, communication, and service.



Our Mission:

Engage and inspire a diverse community to experience the unique nature and history of the Abbott Marshlands.



**FRIENDS FOR THE
ABBOTT MARSHLANDS**

Our Priorities for Action:

- Expand the community of people who cherish the Abbott Marshlands and take part in their stewardship.
- Advance the Tulpehaking Nature Center as the Gateway to the Abbott Marshlands and the center for education and recreation programs that offer people various ways to connect to the Abbott Marshlands.
- Increase our organizational capacity so that we may better serve people who care about and benefit from the Abbott Marshlands.
- Work with the Abbott Marshlands Council in its Cooperative Stewardship efforts.
- Serve as a “Voice for the Marshlands” advocating for protection, preservation, and stewardship for the whole of the Abbott Marshlands.

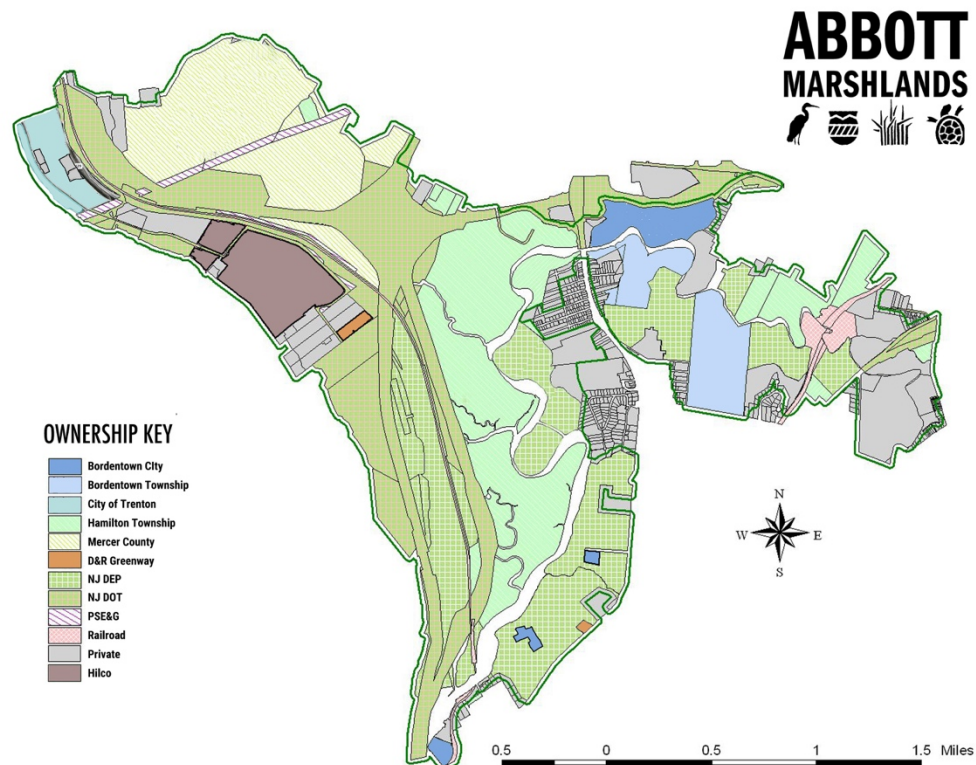
Our History:

In 2002, Friends for the Marsh was organized as a project of D&R Greenway Land Trust in support of preservation of the Marshlands following a recommendation of the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Management Plan. The name for the Friends was changed to Friends for the Abbott Marshlands in 2011 when the name for the Marshlands was changed to acknowledge and bring attention to the historical and natural significance of the area.

Since 2002, the Friends volunteers have organized and sponsored a variety of programs with the intent of educating people about the unique nature and history of the Abbott Marshlands and encouraging protection and stewardship. Programs have included field and canoe trips, trail maintenance and clean-up activities, symposia, nature walks and “Voices for the Marsh” juried photography shows. In 2020 the Friends formed a New Jersey corporation, and they received their federal 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation in 2021.

About The Abbott Marshlands

Understanding “how it all comes together” in the Abbott Marshlands is a challenging task. Considering the many entities that own parts of the Marshlands, its vast and varied ecological profile, the immense historical significance for over 10,000 years.... it’s a lot! Get started with this overview, which we expand upon in our volunteer orientation, on our website for [Abbott Marshlands](#) and in our Abbott Marshlands Ambassador Program.



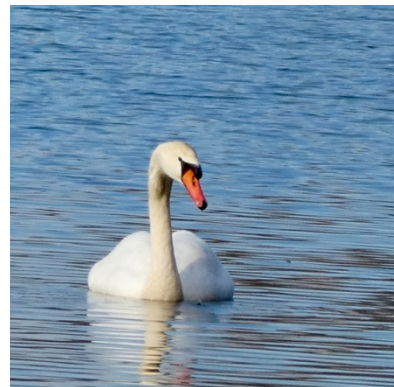
The Abbott Marshlands are a 3000-acre, unique freshwater tidal system of the Delaware River and its surrounding land, located in parts of Trenton, Hamilton, and Bordentown, NJ. It is an important local resource for historical, ecological, educational, and recreational reasons. The Abbott Marshlands are situated in Lenapehoking, the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Lenape.

There are many public landowners within the Marshlands, and together, along with the Friends, they formed the Abbott Marshlands Stewardship Council in 2011. The Council meets quarterly to update one another on challenges within the Marshlands, to coordinate stewardship efforts, and to report on activities in their individual areas.

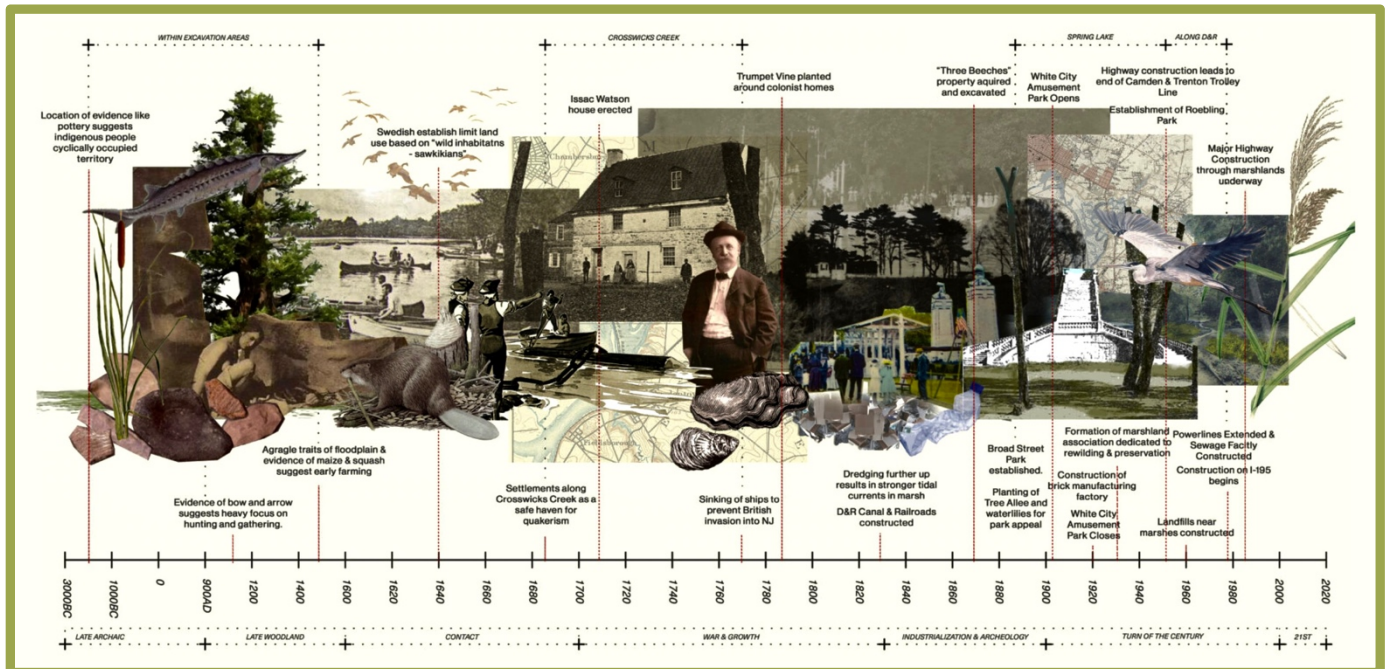
Ecology: The Abbott Marshlands are a mosaic landscape of wetlands and wooded uplands. This varied landscape has supported human habitation for over 10,000 years and provides habitats for many kinds of organisms, including microbes, fungi, fish, frogs, birds, mammals, and plants. The Office of Natural Lands Management of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has recognized the Abbott Marshlands as a [Natural Heritage Priority Site](#), a designation given only to sites representing some of the best remaining habitat for rare species and rare ecological communities in the state.

A few fun ecology facts:

- * Marshlands habitats support over 950 species of plants, including more than 30 that are endangered, threatened, or rare for New Jersey.
- * The Marshlands have been designated by the New Jersey Audubon Society, as a [New Jersey Important Bird Area](#), with over 245 species being reported.
- * The Marshlands are home to over 38 species of dragonflies and damselflies, as well as over 50 species of butterflies and many other important pollinators.
- * Many mammals including beavers, muskrats, foxes, raccoons, and opossums make their homes in the marsh.
- * Toads, frogs, snakes (all non-poisonous) and of course, turtles, are among the many species of reptiles and amphibians that make their homes in the land and water.



History: The designation of much of the Marshlands and surrounding upland as the [Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark](#) in 1976 by the United States Department of Interior attests to its historical importance. The significance of the Landmark is multi-faceted and includes evidence of a long history of occupation by Native Americans, and recognition as the largest known Middle Woodland village site in the MidAtlantic /New England region.



Abbott Marshlands Timeline by Zoe Orlino

The landmark name recognizes the contributions of Charles Conrad Abbott (1843-1919), a noted archaeologist and naturalist, who lived on the bluff near Watson's Creek and whose artifact discoveries were the impetus for much of the archeological interest in the area. In addition to archeology, he was a prolific nature observer and author of many books and publications.

The highlights of the vast history and colorful stories that abound in the Abbott Marshlands include The Isaac Watson House, the Point Breeze Estate of Joseph Bonaparte, Bow Hill Mansion, and the White City Amusement Park. These are just a few of the historical features that bring visitors from near and far, and that have inspired many articles, books, and videos.

What to Do in the Abbott Marshlands

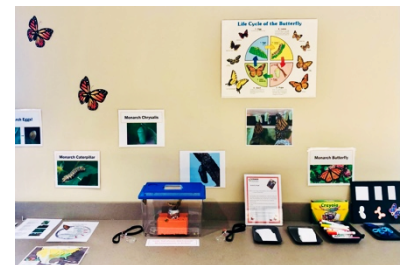
Public Programs: The Friends is active in hosting, organizing, and supporting educational and recreational programs throughout the Marshlands, often working with co-sponsors from Mercer County, New Jersey State Parks, and other local organizations. Our programs extend from our “home base” in the Tulpehaking Nature Center in Hamilton Township, to Bordentown City and Township in Burlington County. Our programs engage local communities in guided hikes, nature appreciation, environmental awareness and education, history and more.



Self-Guided Recreational Activities: Hiking, kayaking, birding, wildlife observation and study, picnicking, fishing, and family activities.

Tulpehaking Nature Center:

The Tulpehaking Nature Center (TNC) in Roebling Park is our beautiful home base. 'Tulpehaking' is a Lenape word meaning 'Land of the Turtle.' The building was acquired in 2005 with NJ DEP Green Acres Development Grants to D&R Greenway Land Trust that were matched by Mercer County. It is owned by Mercer County and operated by the Mercer County Park Commission. The Tulpehaking Nature Center opened to the public in October 2014.



Tulpehaking Nature Center
157 Westcott Ave, Hamilton, NJ 08610
Phone: 609-888-3218

The TNC hosts educational programs for all ages, both onsite at the Nature Center and offsite in the local community. Plans for expanding public interaction and interest through construction of interpretive exhibits are underway.

The TNC is run by Kelly Rypkema, Director of Environmental Education for the Mercer County Park Commission. The Friends works closely with Kelly, the naturalists, and staff of the TNC to provide support, volunteers, and additional publicity for their programming and special events.

Our Volunteer Program

Our Commitment Statement to Volunteers

Our volunteers are valued as an essential part of accomplishing our mission to steward the Abbott Marshlands and engage the public in its many recreational and educational opportunities. Every step in the services the Friends provides is made possible by the unique skills and dedication of our volunteers who are the backbone of our stewardship, educational, recreational, and outreach programs. We deeply appreciate all volunteers for helping increase public awareness, safe access, and diverse opportunities for both current and new communities to the Abbott Marshlands. In recognition of their vital role, we are committed to maintaining open communication with our volunteers to gain insight and recommendations toward continued improvement, service, and community.

Volunteer Appreciation- The Mary Leck Award

The “Mary A. Leck Award” is presented each year to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional volunteer service with the Friends. It is named in honor of Mary Leck in gratitude for her many years of service to the marsh.

Volunteer Training and Orientation

During volunteer orientation sessions we provide an overview of our organization, review the volunteer handbook, and provide a summary of volunteer opportunities and sign-up procedures. Please ask questions and give feedback! Additional trainings are provided for specific positions, teams, and tasks prior to starting in a specific role. We encourage all volunteers to contact the Outreach Coordinator to ask about or suggest additional trainings.

Abbott Marshlands Ambassador Program

Volunteers who want to know even more about the Abbott Marshlands are encouraged to participate in this certificate program which gives a deeper understanding of the key areas. The course is comprised of 6 sessions and is designed to provide volunteers with the level of understanding that is needed when interacting with the public to truly feel like “ambassadors” for the Marshlands. The program is provided at no cost in exchange for volunteer service.

Our Volunteer TEAMS

Stewardship - Volunteers help keep the trails, land, and waterways of the Abbott Marshlands safe, clean, and accessible.

-Trail Stewards - Trail stewards select one of the trails within the Abbott Marshlands to visit once a month. During their visit, they review trail conditions, perform some trail maintenance, identify potential hazards or problems, and file a report so the landowners can be notified. Volunteer hours average 2-3/month.

-Special Project Stewards- Special Projects in stewardship include invasive plant removal, cleanups, trail building and improvement, and more. Volunteer hours are project dependent.

Tulpehaking Nature Center (TNC)

Welcome Team- Members of the TNC Welcome Team help promote the Abbott Marshlands, serving as the “friendly face” that greets and assists those who visit the nature center, especially during programs and events. Welcome Team members are encouraged to use their talents in coordination with TNC staff members to help with administrative and creative projects during the shifts, and to assist with programs when appropriate. Volunteer hours average 3/month.



Community Outreach- Spreading your love for the Abbott Marshlands to interested folks is what makes this position so much fun. The Friends has a bright orange tent and lots of great information and activities that we bring to local fairs and festivals. We rely on our volunteers to interact with the community, answering questions and managing activities. Volunteer hours average 3 /event.



Programs – Volunteers help greet attendees and provide assistance for our programs, and in setup /breakdown. After training, interested volunteers with relevant expertise can lead walks and programs. Volunteer hours average 2/month.



Publicity- Do you have a creative side? Are you technically adept? Our Publicity Team helps with everything from graphics for flyers and social media, to videos and photography of events, to spreading the word of what we do to build connections to community and outward. Volunteer hours average 2-4/month.



Fundraising- We welcome those volunteers with experience or interest in fundraising to lend their skills in helping us better connect to our members and expand our base of support. Organizing and assisting at fundraising activities as well as phone, mail and email communications are part of this effort. Volunteer hours are variable.

Our Volunteer SPECIFIC POSITIONS

Training and mentoring provided for all Volunteer Specific Positions, which are open by application to adults 18 and up. Background check, screening, and interview are required for some positions. More information on selection process, schedules, time requirements, locations, and necessary background and skills available upon request.

Email cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org or call 215-266-9666.



Stewardship

Project Team Leader- Have you been active in stewardship cleanups or projects with the Friends or another group? Your experience could be useful in leading or assisting the Stewardship Head in cleanup activities and trail project sessions. Some possibilities are:

- Trail maintenance – Leading a small team in cutting back vegetation along a trail on a monthly basis during the growing season.
- Invasive plant removal – Directing a small team in removing targeted invasive plants along a specified trail on a seasonal basis.
- Water monitoring – Taking a lead role in the instrumental water monitoring program started last year or a new project to monitor macroinvertebrates.
- Clean-ups – Leading or assisting in targeted cleanups that are not part of our regular marsh cleanups.

Grant Writing

Grant Writer/Assistant - Would you like to use your grant writing skills to help us increase the scope of our stewardship, preservation and community projects? We have wonderful, much-needed projects that need funding, and your experience will be vital in developing proposals! Experience in grant research, writing, and reporting would bring a great fit for this role.

Marketing

Video Content Creator - Have you been told you're a great storyteller and don't mind being on camera? We're looking for 2-3 people to work with our video director as engaging hosts in a series of short videos that highlight the Abbott Marshlands and its history. Some knowledge of the Abbott Marshlands is helpful but not necessary if you remain open to coaching and feedback.

Community Liaison - Do you like to hang out in local businesses and organizations? We are looking for someone who can help us create connections with our local communities by stopping by and spreading our brochures and the news about our programs, projects, and mission. Requires an outgoing, interactive and enthusiastic personality.

Web Search Engine Optimization and Synchronization- Have you ever had to change your name or address? If so, you understand our problem :D! The Abbott Marshlands has a long history, with many different names and locations. Getting it all “on the same page” and boosting our internet presence is the goal of this position. Knowledge of SEO tools and searches would be great or having some computer skills and willingness to learn.

Online Event Submission- Help us reach folks so they can “HEAR ALL ABOUT IT!”! We have great (and often free) programs and events happening in the Abbott Marshlands all the time. We need a dedicated volunteer to send the events out weekly or monthly to local online event listings and publications so we are included. Basic computer skills and attention to detail are what is needed here, we will be thrilled to show you the rest!

Membership

Database Entry Assistant- Would you like to take some of the data overload off our backs? Help us keep our membership records and newsletter databases current and correct. Straightforward data entry requiring basic computer skills as well as attention to detail is needed.

Programs

Walk Leaders/Assistants- Are you familiar with one (or more) of the trails in the Abbott Marshlands? Why not share your interest by guiding a group of people on that trail for an organized yet informal walk? All it takes is a little chatting and leading the way. Not sure you want to lead? We could also use assistants on our “topic” walks to interact with participants. In-depth knowledge is NOT required for these roles, just a general understanding of the Friends mission and the trail.

Table Event Leader- We always appreciate volunteers with deeper knowledge of the marshlands who want to run table activities such as Abbott-zoned Pottery and Stone Tools at outreach events. This is a very neat way to interact with the public and introduce them about the wonders of the marsh! Training provided.

Website Calendar Assistant- Are online databases and spreadsheets your jam? In this position, you will work closely with the Outreach Director to keep our website programs accurate and updated. WordPress experience is a plus, though we are happy to train you in all you need to know. Requires attention to detail and a moderate level of computer skills.

Fundraising

Sponsorship Liaison- If drumming up support for a worthy (but small) nonprofit from the local business community sounds like a fulfilling way to spend your time, we could use your help building and sustaining sponsorships and donations. Requires an outgoing and resolute personality. This role involves both remote and in-person responsibilities.



Friends/ Tulpehaking Nature Center Joint Projects

Library Assistant - If you love books, we would love having you give us a hand making sure the books that define the Abbott Marshlands, past and present, are available for future generations! Scan and upload books in the Tulpehaking Nature Center Library as well as organize and curate the nature books available to the public. We need a dedicated person that will take the care necessary to do this job well.

Storekeeper- Calling all retail-minded nature lovers! Yes, we do have a store at the Nature Center, and one we want to grow. Our storekeeper would manage our inventory, displays, and help with sales and orders of our products as well as interact with visitors to encourage sales. Some experience in retail is helpful!

Tulpehaking Nature Center

Education Docents- Are you passionate about sharing the wonders of science and nature with kids and adults by helping to lead educational activities for visiting schools? You do not need to come in with knowledge of the material, only an interest in nature and an ability and desire to interact with others.

Preschool Readers- Do you love to read and share stories with kids? We are looking for readers for a weekly preschool story circle. We require readers to be creative, enthusiastic, and comfortable to be in a room full of energetic preschoolers and their caregivers.

“Let’s Explore!” Leader- If you would like to lead kids and families in making seasonal, creative projects in the Nature Center, this is for you! This runs on the last Saturday of each month from 1-2 pm and is perfect for you if sharing your love of crafts and nature with our local families sounds fun.



Mutual Respect and Accountability

We are a small organization that values interaction in a friendly and respectful nature with each other, related organizations, and the public. Each person is asked to exhibit integrity, kindness, and consideration toward all others. When volunteering for the Friends, you are a representative of the organization, and are required to comport yourself according to our guidelines and policies. On our part, we recognize our responsibility to treat all volunteers according to the same high standards.

Volunteer rights:

- Contribute time engaged in meaningful and satisfying work that fits your interests and skills.
- Work in an environment that is inclusive, safe, professional, and supportive.
- Participate in trainings that give a clear outline of what is expected in your volunteer assignment, as well as an understanding of the Friends' policies.
- Have access to a coordinator, leader, or mentor for guidance and questions.
- Participate in the Abbott Marshlands Ambassador Program to increase your understanding, knowledge base and confidence in interacting with the public and for your own benefit.

Volunteer responsibilities:

- Participate with enthusiasm and honor time commitments to the best of your ability.
- Be honest and direct if you do not feel comfortable or have any questions about any volunteer activity you are given.
- Give clear feedback if any task or project that was agreed upon is not able to be completed.
- Participate, read, and review training materials given by the organization.
- Communicate to the project leader or outreach coordinator regarding any problems or conflicts that arise as soon as possible.
- Never take unnecessary risks, especially concerning safety, and keep activities focused on those defined in the volunteer position description.
- Adhere to the philosophy and guidelines outlined in this manual regarding interactions with all Marshland inhabitants, visitors, places, and property.

The Friends rights:

- Makes final decisions regarding placement of our volunteers.
- Reviews volunteer performance and gives feedback according to organizational policies and procedures when necessary.
- Addresses any complaints or concerns regarding a volunteer in accordance with policy.
- Respectfully declines or releases volunteers whose behavior does not fully support the philosophy or mission of the Friends.

The Friends responsibilities:

- Provides a clear outline of volunteer training, position descriptions, schedules, time investment, and supervision structure.
- Assigns tasks to volunteers with respect to their training, experience, and personal interests.
- Provides an appropriate alternative to any volunteer who expresses discomfort or inability before or during an assignment.
- Informs volunteers about the organization's policies and guidelines.
- Communicates expectations and gives clear feedback when these are met, exceeded, or missed.
- Acknowledges volunteers as valuable members of the organization.



Our Policies

Confidential Information

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Volunteers must not share this information with anyone without approval from a supervising agent. The Friends is responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding all volunteer personal information.

Volunteer Complaint and Dismissal

In the circumstance where the behavior or performance of a volunteer has raised concern or complaint, the Friends will initiate a conference with the volunteer to discuss the issue. If additional training or position re-assignment is needed, it will be provided as possible. A follow-up will be scheduled at the discretion of the Friends to ensure the issue has been satisfactorily resolved. If after the initial conference, the behavior or performance of the volunteer is deemed not to meet the standard and expectation set in this handbook, the volunteer will be dismissed. The Friends reserves the right to dismiss immediately any volunteer whose behavior is in clear violation of any of its policies and guidelines.

Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination

The Friends is dedicated to the principles of non-discrimination. This policy extends to volunteers as well as employees. The Friends does not discriminate based on age, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender expression or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. For safety reasons, children under 18 may not volunteer without direct supervision of a parent or guardian.



Background Checks and Screening

Some volunteer positions do require a background check that may include standard practices such as fingerprinting, screening, or reference checks. The Friends will cover expenses accrued for these processes when required.

Zero Tolerance Harassment

The Friends is committed to ensuring that volunteers and employees work in an environment free from unwelcome or inappropriate speech or conduct and is committed to addressing complaints of harassment of any kind. Any volunteer who believes they have been harassed should immediately notify their supervisor, project leader or the outreach coordinator.

Communications

Volunteers should not contact any media source, government agency, other organization, or individual as a representative of the Friends without prior approval.

Media Release

When an individual accepts a volunteer role with the Friends, they understand and agree that the Friends may use their name, voice, photograph, testimonials, and demographic information for promotional purposes and publicity.



Thank you for taking the time to read this manual! All volunteers need to complete and sign the documents listed on the next page prior to beginning the volunteer program. Questions? [email: cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org](mailto:cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org).



VOLUNTEER DOCUMENTS LIST

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**VOLUNTEER MANUAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT**

STEWARDSHIP LIABILITY WAIVER (if applicable)

*Please complete and return
volunteer documents to:*

Cathy Frank, Outreach Coordinator

By email: cathyfrank@abbottmarshlands.org

By mail: 157 Westcott Ave, Hamilton, NJ 08610

In person: drop off at the Tulpehaking Nature Center Front Desk