

1. Volunteer agreement

Please read and sign.

2. Volunteer Health and Safety Guidance

2.1. Risk Assessment

Please read and apply health and safety guidance.

3. Lone Working Code of Practice

3.1. Lone Working – Buddy Form

When lone working is unavoidable, please ensure you follow these precautions to keep yourself safe.

4. Biosecurity Information

Ensure you do not spread non-native invasive species and disease.

5. Volunteer Resources



The River Thame

The River Thame Conservation Trust appreciates the help of volunteers to achieve its aims through survey work and practical work. This agreement describes the relationship between the River Thame Conservation Trust and the volunteer and ensures both the volunteer and the River Thame Conservation Trust are clear about expectations regarding communication, health & safety and other procedures.

Volunteers are defined as people who, whilst not employed by the River Thame Conservation Trust, have been assigned specific tasks on a voluntary basis, whose name and contact details are held centrally by the River Thame Conservation Trust and towards whom the organisation owes a duty of care.

River Thame Conservation Trust Contacts:

- General enquiries – enquiries@riverthame.org
- Hannah Worker, Project Officer, hannah@riverthame.org

Insurance:

Work conducted by volunteers on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust is covered under the River Thame Conservation Trust public liability insurance policy.

Requirements:

Before conducting any work for the River Thame Conservation Trust, volunteers must read and apply the risk assessment procedure provided in the ***Volunteer Health and Safety Guidance*** and ***Lone Working Code of Practice***.

Volunteers are asked to fill in the **Volunteer Information Form** which identifies a person can be contacted in the event of an accident. Details of relevant medical problems or illnesses should be recorded here.

The River Thame Conservation Trust agrees to the following:

- To provide adequate information and training to allow the volunteer to perform assigned tasks.
- To provide health and safety information and PPE (personal protective equipment) necessary for the volunteer to undertake the task.
- To respect the skills and needs of the volunteer, and to do our best to adjust tasks to individual's requirements.
- To provide feedback to volunteers on the results of data they have gathered.

The volunteer agrees to the following:

- I have read and understood the River Thame Conservation Trust's ***Volunteer Health & Safety Guidance*** and ***Lone Working Code of Practice*** documents.
- I agree to read and implement the ***Biosecurity Information*** for Volunteers to protect the health of the water bodies I am surveying.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to carry out voluntary work for the River Thame Conservation Trust, nor is the River Thame Conservation Trust obligated to use me as a volunteer.
- I understand that the work may involve manual activities outdoors, and I am fit and healthy enough to carry out the voluntary work that I will be involved in. I will inform the River Thame Conservation Trust of any special risks or requirements.

- I have received sufficient training and/or instructions to carry out the planned activities safely.
- I understand that I should not do anything that I do not feel able to do safely.
- I understand that I should not put others or myself in danger during the course of any voluntary activities.
- I consent to my personal details being held by the River Thame Conservation Trust, including in electronic form and for the River Thame Conservation Trust to be able to contact me about volunteering opportunities and work updates. Volunteer details will not be passed onto a third parties without the consent of the volunteer.
- I understand that any data I collect will be stored by the River Thame Conservation Trust. Records may be sent to National Biodiversity Network LINK, Local Record Centres and natural recording groups.
- I agree to look after and return equipment loaned to me by the River Thame Conservation Trust when asked or when I stop volunteering for the Trust.

Signed by volunteer

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Signed on behalf of River Thame Conservation Trust

Name:

Hannah Worker

Signature:



Date:

02/07/18

2. Volunteer Health and Safety Guidance

This document outlines best practice in terms of health and safety when monitoring and working around freshwater habitats, including streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and ditches.

If you feel unwell after undertaking an activity where you have been in contact with a waterbody seek medical attention and ensure you notify them of the activities you have undertaken, make sure to emphasize you have been around watercourses.

River Thame Conservation Trust Contacts:

- General enquiries – enquiries@riverthame.org
- Hannah Worker, Project Officer, hannah@riverthame.org

Volunteer Responsibility:

Whilst carrying out work for the River Thame Conservation Trust, the volunteer has the responsibility of ensuring they are undertaking the work considering their own health and safety and that of others around them.

As a volunteer you should never put yourself or others in danger, and you should never undertake work if you have concerns about your own or others health and safety. You are under no obligation participate in surveys or undertake work. You are under no obligation to visit a site, even if it is suggested by a member of the River Thame Conservation Trust staff.

If you have concerns about your health and safety or that of others around you, you should stop the work and raise your concerns with a member of the River Thame Conservation Trust staff.

Requirements:

Before volunteering you must read and apply the **precautions/controls** provided in the **Volunteer Risk Assessment** and **Lone Working Code of Practice**.

Volunteers are asked to fill out the **Volunteer Information Form** which identifies a person that can be contacted by the River Thame Conservation Trust in the event of an emergency. Details of relevant medical problems or illnesses should be recorded here.

Health and Safety reporting

Please report any health and safety issues or concerns to a member of the River Thame Conservation Trust. All accident and incidents which could lead to harm must be reported to the River Thame Conservation Trust. Please record details of the incident and report it as soon as possible after the event.

General Precautions

- Always carry a charged mobile phone – as they may be useful in case of emergency. In case of emergency call 999.
- Take a map with you to avoid getting lost, especially in rural areas where they may be no phone signal.
- Always carry water with you, and food if you will be out for long periods of time.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving home and make sure to dress appropriately for the weather conditions.
- Avoid or abandon outdoor activities in adverse weather conditions.

2. Volunteer Health and Safety Guidance

Lone Working

Lone working should be avoided where possible. We strongly recommend that you are accompanied on your first visit to a site. If volunteers intend to work by themselves, they must read the Lone Working Code of Practice and follow the 'buddy system' procedure.

Volunteers should never undertake activities by themselves in the following circumstances:

- The activities are undertaken at night (e.g. newt torching).
- Activities where it is necessary to enter the water (aquatic invertebrate survey).

Key risks to be aware of

- **Difficult terrain:** Around waterbodies you may find difficult terrain; steep banks, boggy area, deep silt, loose rocks, underground burrows. Please ensure you mind your feet, especially near the water's edge.
- **Livestock and agricultural machinery:** Take special care when entering areas with livestock. Bulls, cows with calves and rutting deer can be aggressive. If livestock are present do not take a dog with you. Avoid working near large agricultural machinery.
- **Human confrontation:** Avoid confrontation with landowners, land workers or members of the public. You may wish to carry some form of identification with you to confirm the activities you are undertaking (i.e. a landowner permission letter or a RTCT volunteer card).
- **Waterborne diseases:** Working in water is a potential source of disease, including leptospirosis or Weil's disease, hepatitis A and tetanus. In all cases the best preventative methods are:
 - Be aware of how these diseases are caught and take precaution based on this knowledge.
 - Ensure tetanus jabs are up to date.
 - Ensure any cuts are covered by waterproof plasters and carefully clean cleans or grazes that occur while you are working.
 - Where appropriate wear protective gloves and clothing.
 - Avoid ingestion of water.
 - Always wash your hands after working around water, especially before eating or smoking.
 - If you have entered the water, wash thoroughly as soon as possible.
 - If you feel unwell after working near water ensure you seek medical attentions and inform them of your activities around water.
- **Lyme disease:** This is a bacterial infection transmitted by animal ticks and can lead to severe symptoms if left untreated (for more information see: www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease).

Volunteer Starter Pack

2.1 Volunteer Risk Assessment

This risk assessment outlines the potential risk and precautions a volunteer must be aware of before visiting a site or undertaking an activity on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust. Volunteers must read this before undertaking any work or surveys on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust.

Hazard	Risk	Risk rating (<i>low, medium, high</i>)	Precaution/controls	Risk after control (<i>low, medium, high</i>)
Animals:				
Livestock	Physical injury, trampling	Low	Be aware of livestock behaviour, if in doubt leave the site. Do not take dogs on site	Low
Dogs	Bites, disease, lacerations, infection	Low	Be wary of dogs off lead. Disinfect bites and seek medical attention. Be wary of dog faeces.	Low
Adders	Poisoning, allergic reaction, paralysis, death	Medium, high in winter	Check the area you are visiting to see if the species are present. Take care to look when kneeling or placing hands on the ground. Wear stout boots. Seek medical attention if bitten.	Medium
Wild Animals (i.e. deer)	Physical injury, bites, tick bites.	Low	Do not touch wild animals or approach those with young. See below for ticks.	Low
Biological/stings and bites	Disease, allergic reaction	Medium	Wear long trousers and long sleeved tops to limit tick bites. Tuck your socks over your trousers, as this is a key place tick can get under your clothes. Check for ticks after site visits and always remove ticks correctly if found. If known to be allergic to stings, take medication on site. If you are feeling unwell after a site visit, seek medical attention and notify them of the area you have been working.	Low
Infection/diseases:				
Leptospirosis/Weil's disease	Infection/disease	Low	Cover all open cuts with waterproof plasters. Do not ingest the water in which you are working. If you are feeling unwell after a site visit, seek medical attention and notify them of the area you have been working.	Low

Volunteer Starter Pack

2.1 Volunteer Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Risk rating (<i>low, medium, high</i>)	Precaution/controls	Risk after control (<i>low, medium, high</i>)
Tetanus	Infection/ disease	Low	Ensure tetanus jabs are up to date. Cover open cuts and make sure to wash and disinfect all cuts and grazing gained when on site.	Low
Hepatitis A	Infection/ disease	Low	Do not ingest water the water in which you are working. Cover all open cuts with waterproof plasters.	Low
Lyme Disease (from a tick bite)	Infection/ Disease	Low	Wear long trousers and long sleeved tops to limit tick bites. Tuck your socks over your trousers, as this is a key place tick can get under your clothes. Check for ticks after site visits and always remove ticks correctly if found. If you receive a tick bite and become unwell, seek medical attention and notify them of the tick bite.	Low
Environment:				
Sharp grasses & thorny shrubs.	Eye injuries, lacerations cuts, infection	Medium	Do not bend down in areas of known sharp grasses or plants. Disinfect any lacerations or punctures. Beware around eye level shrubs with hidden thorns – eg Blackthorn	Low
Concealed holes/ditches	Physical injury, ankle injuries	High	Take special care when walking through dense vegetation or areas with poor footing visibility.	Medium
Adverse weather	Physical injury	Medium	Check the weather forecast before visiting the site and dress accordingly. Do not visit site if adverse weather conditions and stop work if adverse weather starts when on site.	Low
Sun exposure/heat	Sun burn, heat stroke, dehydration, exhaustion	High	Drink plenty of water and do not rush. Apply sunscreen at points throughout day. Wear appropriate clothing (i.e. long trousers, long sleeves, hat). Plan in regular breaks	Medium

Volunteer Starter Pack

2.1 Volunteer Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Risk rating (<i>low, medium, high</i>)	Precaution/controls	Risk after control (<i>low, medium, high</i>)
Exposure to cold	Hypothermia	Medium	Wear appropriate clothing (i.e. thermals and waterproof).	Low
Uneven ground/difficult terrain	Physical injury, trips, falls, exhaustion	Medium	Wear footwear with good ankle support. Watch your footing, especially in muddy areas.	Low
Old and partially buried structures	Tripping, ankle injuries	Medium	Take care when footing is not visible. Look for signs of nearby partially buried structures (i.e. partially collapsed fence).	Low
<i>Waterbodies:</i>				
Deep water	Drowning	Medium	Take care near any waterbody. Do not work alone in/near deep/unknown water bodies where possible. Wear a life jacket when working near/in deep water.	Low
Floating mats of vegetation	Drowning	Medium	Avoid all areas where floating mats of vegetation grow over deeper water or mud	Low
Steep slopes/unstable ground	Physical injury, trips, ankle injuries	High	Avoid climbing steep slopes and take care with footing on unstable ground.	Medium
Slips/trips	Physical injury, death	Medium	Do not move quickly when in and around water. If you are unsure of depth, check first with a pole or net handle.	Low
Deep silt	Physical injury, death	Medium	Around water body edges always check your footing carefully before moving into the water. Deep silt is not always obvious to the eye.	Low
<i>Humans:</i>				
Sharp objects	Cuts, lacerations, infection	High	Take care when picking up potentially sharp objects. Wear gloves if appropriate. DO NOT TOUCH NEEDLES AND INFORM THE LOCAL COUNCIL	Medium

Volunteer Starter Pack

2.1 Volunteer Risk Assessment

Hazard	Risk	Risk rating (<i>low, medium, high</i>)	Precaution/controls	Risk after control (<i>low, medium, high</i>)
Hazardous waste/fly tipping	Cuts, lacerations, infection, chemical burns	Low	Always wear gloves if you have to handle waste. If you are unsure about the contents of containers or if known to be hazardous contact emergency service or the local council.	Low
Motorcycle/horses being ridden recklessly	Physical injury through collision	Low	Be aware when walking in areas of poor visibility that may be used by motorised bikes (trail bikes or quadbikes) or horses. Wear high visibility jackets	Low
Assault	Physical injury, (sexual) assault	Medium	Avoid or try to diffuse confrontational situations. If possible, walk away. Contact the police if you feel threatened. If you are working alone, ensure someone knows where you are and what time you are expected back. Report abusive landowners to the River Thame Conservation Trust.	Low
Shooting	Physical injury	Medium	Do not approach any person suspected of carrying a weapon and immediately contact the police. If there is shooting allowed on the site, established where and when, so that you can avoid it, and wear high visibility clothing.	Low
Traffic	Collision with vehicles	Medium	Take care when crossing roads. Walk against the traffic when walking along roadsides. Wear high visibility clothing.	Low
Other:				
Manual handling	Physical injury, strains, sprains	High	Do not underestimate the weight of objects and remember that wet objects are heavier than their dry counterpart. Plan each lift, load, route, location and people. Always lift with your legs. Ask for assistance and use aids where possible.	Low

Volunteer Starter Pack

3. Lone Working Code of Practice

The River Thame Conservation Trust recognises there are inherent dangers in lone working and aims to reduce the associated risks within all of its activities.

The aim of this Code of Practice is to ensure that when lone working is unavoidable, it is conducted as safely as possible and to ensure there is always someone who knows where you are working and has emergency contact information for you. In order to achieve this River Thame Conservation Trust recommends using the buddy system outlined in this document.

Lone workers are those who work by themselves and without a close or direct supervision. Examples of lone working can include:

- Visiting isolated locations alone, where assistance is not readily available
- Visiting a location where you feel vulnerable
- Visiting locations alone outside of office hours
- When on site, working separately from and some distance away from colleagues.
- Working in an area where mobile telephone reception is poor or non-existent.
- Staying at over-night accommodation.

Lone working should be avoided where possible as it greatly increases the risk of injury and incident.

Some tasks should never be undertaken alone:

- Use of heavy machinery or tools (i.e. chainsaw, maul hammer).
- Working alone at night.
- Entering a river where the water level is higher than wellie boot height.

Before starting any task please consider:

- Are you capable of completing the task without assistance?
- Are you fully aware of the hazards involved and the risk that you may be exposed to?
- Do you know what you should do in an emergency?
- Are you aware of safe routes for withdrawing from a site of situation?
- Have you informed another person of your whereabouts, you planned time of return, and the action to be taken if you do not return through the River Thame Conservation Trust buddy system?

Employees and volunteer who are working alone should:

- Always carry a fully charged mobile phone and appropriate personal protective equipment (i.e. suitable outdoor clothing, first aid kit, fresh water, map).
- Ensure you have received appropriate training for the task to be carried out and that you fully understand the nature of the work you are to carry out, including potential hazards and precautions to be taken.
- Know your limitations and do not undertake unnecessary tasks. If you do not feel fit to carry out the task, do not do it.
- Identify yourself and the capacity in which you represent the River Thame Conservation Trust to land owners if you are working on private land.
- Avoid inflaming situations that arise, use your best judgement and apply common sense. Do not provoke violence.

For more information, please contact the River Thame Conservation Trust:
enquiries@riverthame.org, 07460 275627

Volunteer Starter Pack

3. Lone Working Code of Practice

- In the case of serious criminal damage or other serious offences please call for assistance by the police and inform your assigned buddy. When calling the police dial 999 and explain the situation. Try and avoid involvement until the police arrive. Observe the situation from a safe distance taking notes, photographs etc. When direct action is necessary, where possible ensure that an impartial witness to events is present. This is likely to reduce the risk of assault and will provide you with a stronger case if allegations are subsequently filed against you.
- Never confront someone with a firearm.

Lone Working Reporting System – The Buddy System

1. Before leaving home make sure you have all the information you'll need about the site you are visiting and who you are visiting, and all the appropriate equipment you'll need. Designate a 'buddy' and inform him/ her of your intentions and leave her/ him with contact numbers, name and address or location information. Ensure they know what time you will be expected to return so that they can raise the alarm if don't return by the allotted time.
2. When you arrive at a site check to see you have a working mobile phone with signal. If signal is good report into your buddy that you have arrived. If signal is poor think about locating a nearby phone box or moving to a place with signal to report in.
3. If a situation arises withdraw from the site. As a lone worker you are more at risk to incident and injury. Inform your buddy of the situation, and if necessary inform the police. No task is more important than your safety. Avoid confrontation and walk to a more public place where you can raise the alarm if necessary.
4. Once the task is completed, call your 'buddy' on leaving the site. If your 'buddy' is unavailable for any reason, leave a message with a second contact with strict instructions to pass it on.

Emergency procedure for buddies if lone worker fails to report in:

- 30 minutes after the lone worker was due to report in, call on the given number every 5 - 10 minutes (using mobile, office, and home contact numbers). For lone workers known to be travelling, attempts should be made to contact the destination to check for news of traffic delays. Continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After a further 30 minutes have elapsed the 'buddy' must plan a search, plus continue to attempt contacting the lone worker.
- After one hour a physical search must commence. If contact cannot be established within two hours of the elapsed report time the police must be contacted.

For more information, please contact the River Thame Conservation Trust:

enquiries@riverthame.org, 07460 275627

A lone worker should complete this form, giving a copy to their buddy and keeping a copy themselves before every lone working occasion. The information provided will ensure your buddy can implement the emergency procedures. You may have more than one buddy, in this case please give a complete form to each buddy.

Your buddy will ideally be a colleague, family member or friend that you have regular contact with. Please ensure you 'buddy' is familiar with the emergency procedure.

In the event of failure to report in by the specified time, follow the procedures on the proceeding sheet.

Lone Worker

Name of Lone Worker:		
Contact Address:		
Contact Phone numbers:	Mobile: Work:	Home: Other:

Buddy

Name of Buddy:		
Contact Address:		
Contact Phone numbers:	Mobile: Work:	Home: Other:

Dates of lone working
Area(s) of lone working (details, and grid reference if possible)
Travel/vehicle details (i.e. car registration, make and colour)
Known risks to inform emergency services if emergency procedures are implemented
Report in time

Do not transfer organisms between waterbodies, in mud or in water. Help to stop the spread of non-native invasive species and harmful diseases by following the simple biosecurity protocol below.

Be aware:

- Visit the River Thame Conservation Trust website to learn how to recognise invasive species (www.riverthame.org/invasive-species/).
- If you know a non-native invasive species is present on site take extra special care to prevent spreading it between freshwater habitats.

Biosecurity Protocol

Always follow this protocol before and after visiting a site to prevent the spread of non-native species and disease between freshwater habitats.

1. Check –

- Check your equipment, clothing and shoes for live organisms, plant fragments and seeds, even the difficult to see spots.

2. Clean –

- Scrap off wet and dry mud off all footwear and equipment with a stiff brush, a screwdriver or stick may be useful to clean shoe treads.
- Clean and wash all clothing, equipment and footwear thoroughly.
- Disinfect equipment (nets and footwear) in blech solution (1 part bleach to 16 parts water).

3. Dry –

- Dry all equipment, clothing and footwear, as some species can survive for days in damp conditions. UV light (sunlight) can help to kill organisms. Leave equipment to air dry completely, preferably in a sunny location, before using at another site.

For more information, please visit:

- Check-Clean-Dry - www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry
- Non-native species factsheets - www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=47
- Amphibian Disease - www.arc-trust.org/Pages/Category/disease

Non-native species facts

- New Zealand Pigmyweed can regrow from a fragment just 2mm long.
- Killer Shrimp can survive in damp conditions (i.e. the bottom of your wellie) for 5 days.
- Himalayan balsam can fire it seeds over 5m away.
- Floating Pennywort can grow 20cm a day.



New Zealand Pigmyweed

Volunteer Card

Please print and carry this card with you on surveys you undertake on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust. If any problems arise while undertaking your survey from the public or local landowners, please leave this card with them and ask them to direct enquiries to the River Thame Conservation Trust.

Only use this card while under taking surveys on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust; where sites have been agreed and landowner permission has been sought by the Trust or yourself.

Fold along this line and stick

 <p>River Thame Conservation Trust Volunteer</p> <p>W: www.riverthame.org E: enquiries@riverthame.org 07460 275627</p>	<p>The holder of this card has received training or sufficient information to conduct themselves without harming the habitat that they are surveying.</p> <p>They have been granted permission from the landowner to carry out this survey on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust.</p>
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 <p>River Thame Conservation Trust Volunteer</p> <p>W: www.riverthame.org E: enquiries@riverthame.org 07460 275627</p>	<p>The holder of this card has received training or sufficient information to conduct themselves without harming the habitat that they are surveying.</p> <p>They have been granted permission from the landowner to carry out this survey on behalf of the River Thame Conservation Trust.</p>
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