

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## W.K. KELLOGG BIOLOGICAL STATION

### VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station (KBS)! We thank you for your willingness and interest in wanting to join our team. We are grateful and appreciative of your commitment. We welcome the skills and expertise you bring, and we recognize the value of the contributions you will make. Individuals like you provide an invaluable service and are an important asset to helping us meet our mission!

In an effort to make your volunteer experience safe, productive and enjoyable, we have developed this Volunteer Handbook. This Handbook describes various policies around general volunteer management issues and those pertaining to health, safety, and business practices. It is our hope that this Handbook will give you a sense of what you can expect by way of support. It also offers some security by telling you how you can expect to be treated. We hope these policies help to ensure that all volunteers will be treated equally and fairly. Our staff fully understands why individuals like you are involved in volunteering and what an invaluable role volunteers have within our organization. These policies hopefully demonstrate KBS's commitment to its individual volunteers. Welcome aboard!

#### **KBS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT**

The MSU Kellogg Biological Station Volunteer Program provides volunteers who share their individualized skills and enthusiasm with KBS staff, students and faculty to assist in achieving goals related to natural resources and environmental quality. Volunteers are committed to providing unique learning experiences as part of the station's active educational outreach program.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station is to increase our understanding of natural and managed ecosystems and their linkages to society. This entails three main integrative activities:

- Promote and support multi-disciplinary research in ecology, agriculture, natural resources and the environment across the continuum of basic to applied research.
- Provide MSU students with inquiry-based educational opportunities in ecology, agriculture, natural resources, and the environment.
- Provide outreach programs that bring KBS expertise to bear on environmental issues of public importance.

#### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

At MSU/KBS we are more than the sum of our parts. Our diverse community challenges us to share our own ideas while considering other points of view. Here, differences are assets -- they make us better learners, teachers, scholars, employees, and community members. MSU's roots as a land-grant university have created a culture that encourages all people to contribute their special talents and reach their full potential.

Diversity is defined as the state or quality of being different, and as individuals we are all uniquely different. To be an INCLUSIVE campus is to RESPECT and VALUE differences and to encourage and create opportunities to capitalize on those differences. A truly inclusive institution benefits all, both educationally and professionally, at MSU and beyond. See [Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives](#)

### **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers should be able to expect certain things from their volunteer experience.

#### **Volunteers have the right to:**

- Be treated as individuals whose time and input are valued.
- Be given a well-defined volunteer job description that outlines specific duties and assignments, along with clear expectations
- Be given a dedicated, safe workspace.
- Receive training and ongoing education
- Have flexibility in their volunteer schedule to integrate their volunteer work into a busy life schedule.
- Know as much as possible about the organization they serve.
- Be given the opportunity for varied experiences and be respected for their skills, dignity, and individual wishes, which KBS will do its best to meet.
- Consult with staff and be kept informed of possible changes
- Be insured against injury they may suffer or cause due to negligence.
- Apply the KBS equal opportunities policy.
- Have protection from liability, harassment, and other workplace concerns.

#### **Likewise, volunteers have the responsibility to:**

- Complete a volunteer application prior to participation in any of the KBS activities or events and sign a [background check](#) consent form and a media release form prior to any participation as a volunteer.
- Interview with a KBS staff member or a designated volunteer.
- Follow KBS's procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, to the best of their ability according to duties and assignments as outlined in the job description.
- Maintain confidential information of the organization and to its clients. Any proprietary information obtained while volunteering at KBS will be held in confidence and used only for the purpose of executing your duties or advancing the interests of KBS. Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.
- Meet the time commitments and standards that have been mutually agreed to and give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible.
- Represent the organization well to the public.
- Accept the guidance and decisions of staff.
- Be willing to participate in orientation and training.
- Attend unit trainings appropriate for their assignment(s).

- Contribute a minimum of 40 volunteer hours per year. (We do recognize individual circumstances and availability change from year to year).
- Keep volunteer information and emergency contact information updated.
- Keep informed of changes in the area(s) or units(s) where they are volunteering.

### **KBS OUTREACH OFFICES**

The Community Relations Office is located on the first floor of the Carriage House. As you enter KBS at 3700 East Gull Lake Drive, make a left turn and follow the driveway to the end. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Misty Klotz is the volunteer coordinator, and after hours and on weekends a message may be left on her voicemail at 269-671-2263.

### **POLICIES**

New policies will need to be written from time to time and old policies will need to be revised or eliminated. KBS reserves the right to make these changes without notice but will strive to advise volunteers on a timely basis of any changes affecting their volunteer status.

Each volunteer will have access to this Volunteer Handbook. If you have any questions about any part of these policies, it is your responsibility to get clarification from your staff mentor.

**Absences:** Volunteers who cannot report for their job assignments should notify their staff mentors at least 24 hours prior to the time they are expected at KBS. They should also inform staff in advance of vacations and other plans that will cause them to be away.

**Addressing Volunteer Concerns:** We believe the best way to handle any volunteer concerns or misunderstandings is to communicate honestly about them as soon as they happen. We have an open door policy for bringing volunteer concerns to the attention of the people who can best do something about them. We stress that no staff member is too busy to answer questions or discuss your concerns. We believe that good communication among all volunteers and staff will help prevent most concerns from arising. A volunteer who has a concern about a work-related issue should discuss the issue with his/her staff mentor. Every attempt will be made to resolve a problem informally through the discussion process. However, if a matter remains unresolved, it will be referred to the volunteer coordinator, whose decision will be final.

**Sexual Harassment:** Michigan State University and the Kellogg Biological Station are committed to maintaining a learning and working environment for all students, faculty, and staff that is fair, humane, and responsible - an environment that supports career and educational advancement on the basis of job and academic performance. Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and offends the integrity of the University community. It is not tolerated at Michigan State University. See [MSU University Policy on Relationship Violence & Sexual Misconduct](#)

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Volunteers who identify unmet needs of visitors, other volunteers, or members who are disabled are encouraged to bring those needs to the attention of the volunteer coordinator. KBS is committed to compliance with the ADA and will make appropriate accommodations when possible. See [MSU Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)

**Attendance:** Volunteers who sign up to participate in events but are no-shows for two events without just cause and notification will be removed from the volunteer list, pending review by the unit mentor.

**Attire:** Volunteers must dress appropriately at all times and should reflect, to the extent possible, the same manner of attire as paid staff.

**Confidentiality:** Any proprietary information obtained while volunteering at KBS will be held in confidence and used only for the purpose of executing your duties or advancing the interests of KBS. Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

**Time Sheets:** It is vital that KBS have a record of the amount of time given by volunteers. All volunteers must record the hours they volunteer using KBS's official volunteer time sheet. Your mentor will review this during orientation. Time sheets are posted in Information/Time Sheet Locations at each unit.

### **HEALTH, SAFETY AND BUSINESS PRACTICES**

**Business Documents:** Any documents produced by a volunteer during the course of his/her participation are the proprietary property of KBS and, therefore, are not to be copied or transmitted to any other parties by any method, including but not limited to email transmission or physical removal without the prior written consent of the volunteer coordinator.

**Email:** The email and Internet access provided by us to volunteers is solely for business purposes. Volunteers are not permitted to access the email or Internet activity of any other volunteer. No one may solicit, promote, or advertise any organization, product, or service through the use of our email accounts. Volunteers are not permitted to send email that contains ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed to harass or disparage others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or religious or political beliefs. If at any point you receive any email you feel is inappropriate for any reason and you believe you have received it in conjunction with your involvement with us, please forward the email and other details about the communication to the volunteer coordinator.

**Fundraising:** Volunteers may encourage donations for KBS at any time. All correspondence should be handled through KBS to keep our books in order and eliminate any miscommunication. Please contact Sarah Carroll, development and community relations coordinator, at 269-671-2444 (Office), 269-838-8263 (cell), or [scarroll@kbs.msu.edu](mailto:scarroll@kbs.msu.edu).

**Volunteer Hour Match:** You may work for a company that matches the hours you spend volunteering by providing donations to your favorite organization. Many companies will match an employee's time volunteering with a financial gift to the nonprofit – and the donations help us do important things!

**Volunteer Hour Matches should be directed to Sarah Carroll.**

**Tax Deductions:** Mileage, parking, and training expenses are tax-deductible for volunteers who itemize on their tax returns. These items add up, especially if you volunteer for several organizations. Keeping track of your trips is easily done with a small calendar kept in your car. Time sheets are another record that will be helpful. Mileage time sheets are available through Misty Klotz, the volunteer coordinator, or on the KBS website: [www.kbs.msu.edu](http://www.kbs.msu.edu).

**Insurance:** Volunteers will be insured under KBS's liability coverage for any accidents or injuries related to fulfilling their responsibilities. MSU staff, students, faculty, and volunteers are covered under the University's general liability policy. In general, this covers bodily injury and property damage that we may cause to others. The general liability insurance certificate also provides evidence of Automobile Liability and Workers Compensation (Michigan). [See MSU Risk Management Office and Insurance; you may contact this office at](#) 517-355-5022 (phone), 517-432-3854 (fax), or at [riskmgmt@msu.edu](mailto:riskmgmt@msu.edu).

**Media Procedures:** So that efforts are not duplicated and information is accurate, you must bring any dealings with the media to the attention of Sarah Carroll. Media includes anything printed, broadcast, or televised about KBS. We welcome any contacts or story ideas you may have and ask that you direct them to the Communications and Marketing Assistant, Anne Boone.

**Personal Information:** The personal safety of our volunteers is important to us. To that end, we will not release a volunteer's phone number, age or other personal information to anyone outside our organization or to any other volunteer without that volunteer's written permission to do so.

**Health and Safety:** All volunteers should be in general good health. Any physical limitation should be noted on the application for volunteer service so appropriate work may be selected. It is KBS policy to provide our volunteers with safe equipment, quality materials, and established work procedures and rules to create a safe place to work and volunteer.

Our objective is to complete all work without injury and losses to personnel or equipment and to eliminate or minimize all job hazards. Volunteers, employees, mentors, and management are expected to cooperate to achieve these objectives. Any violation of these rules and procedures or unsafe activity will initiate appropriate disciplinary action.

For your personal protection, volunteers should use proper lifting methods when moving boxes of files or supplies. A dolly should be used to move heavy items. Use proper ergonomics when sitting at desks or computer terminals. Be aware of the location of the exits from office buildings and keep all exits clear and unobstructed. You must be aware of the location of fire alarms and fire extinguishers in buildings. Report any unsafe conditions so they can be corrected as soon as possible. A volunteer will not be discriminated against for bringing to our attention any unsafe conditions or participating in our safety activities.

**Smoking:** MSU and KBS have a [Smoke-Free Policy](#). This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on July 16, 1993.

**Driving:** University-owned vehicles may not be used by volunteers. [See MSU Risk Management Office and Insurance.](#)

**MSU Drug and Alcohol Policy:** Behavior at any site where individuals on behalf of Michigan State University perform work must be consistent with state and federal laws regarding drug-free workplaces, schools and communities. This policy applies to all MSU facilities, buildings and vehicles and to all KBS Units, Kellogg Forest and Brook Lodge. **Use of alcohol and controlled substances is not permitted on MSU/KBS grounds or in facilities.**

## **VOLUNTEER STATUS**

### **Inactive Volunteers:**

- No longer meets active volunteer criteria.
- Will be contacted to inquire whether they wish to continue volunteering.
- One year following an individual being moved to inactive status, a volunteer update email will be sent.
  1. If the individual indicates a renewed interest, his/her name will remain on the volunteer mailing list.
  2. If there is not a renewed interest or there is no response within 30 days of the update email, the individual will be moved to inactive status and removed from the mailing list.

**An inactive volunteer may be re-instated to active status by contacting the Community Relations Office and completing the New Volunteer application process.**

**Termination:** If a volunteer's performance does not meet appropriate standards, ordinarily she/he will be given a reasonable opportunity to correct and/or improve performance. The volunteer program coordinator should, after consultation with the assigned staff mentor, prepare and give to the volunteer a statement summarizing the specific problem(s) that warranted the termination action. Possible reasons may include:

- Failure to adhere to volunteer policies and procedures.
- For conduct on duty that would be detrimental to the organization, including any breach of confidence.
- Conduct off duty that would adversely affect the organization.
- Reporting to any event under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Theft of property or funds.
- No call/no show for two events.
- Releasing of confidential information.
- Gross misconduct or insubordination.