



## Save Oswit Canyon • Oswit Land Trust (OLT) Volunteer Information, Waiver, and Release of Liability

Thank you for being a volunteer with Oswit Land Trust. This agreement is designed to help protect both you as a volunteer and the organization. Oswit Land Trust volunteers work in six capacities: Crew/Land Maintenance, Trail Ambassadors, Outreach Volunteers, Event Volunteers, Compost Volunteers, and Administrative & Research Volunteers. While not all the information below may apply to your volunteer activities, it is good information for potential future involvement with OLT.

Many of the volunteer experiences at OLT do carry some risk. All volunteers are responsible for their own safety, as well as that of others. To help us maintain a safe environment, everyone must be safety-conscious at all times.

**Wildlife First:** OLT's mission is to protect wildlife. If your volunteer experience is negatively impacting wildlife, please stop and let OLT staff know.

**Know Your Capabilities:** Please understand your physical capabilities. For some tasks, you risk broken bones, strained backs, heat-related injury, or even death. Only accept tasks to your level of comfort, experience, and physical ability, and you acknowledge that you take personal responsibility for these risks. As a volunteer, you agree that you have no medical or physical conditions which might interfere with your participation in OLT programs and activities.

**Right to Refuse:** You have the right to refuse any task that is asked as part of your volunteer experience. You have the right to leave any volunteer experience at any time. If you ever feel at risk for any reason, stop the activity. When possible, please let your supervisor know of your concerns.

**Heat Risks:** We are working in a desert environment. Heat is a real risk, which can cause direct or indirect injury. Please take personal responsibility for bringing your own sun protection and water. If you start to feel overheated, nauseous, dizziness, or experiencing an elevated heart rate, stop immediately, drink water, and find a cool place to rest. You may always leave your volunteer experience or cancel a volunteer experience because of heat.

**Prevent Eye and Skin Injury:** You may work around plants, animals, insects, and machines that may cause eye or skin injury. When clearing vegetation, palm fronds and many desert plants have thorns that can cause bodily damage. If you experience a cut, please clean the wound, no matter how small as soon as possible. We recommend wearing long pants and long-sleeve shirts for many activities. Eye injury is a real risk when working with or around machines like weed whackers, mowers, or when pulverizing rock. Eye injury can also be caused when moving plants with sharp edges or thorns. Eye protection must be worn when working around or handling these types of machines/plants.

**Water-Related Injury:** When working within water features, floatation/life jackets must be worn. The water in some ponds may contain harmful organisms. Always wash any cuts immediately. Eye protection when working in ponds is recommended. Wearing contact lenses when working in ponds is not recommended.

**Footwear:** You must always wear closed toe footwear. Certain projects may require footwear with higher safety standards.

**Snakes, Spiders, Scorpions, Ants and Bees:** We work in the desert environment. Some animals and insects bite or sting and this is a real risk. Always pay attention to where your hands and feet are going to avoid injury. Be aware of areas where snakes may be hiding. Watch for risks from ants, wasps and bees.

**Trash Can Hurt:** Some tasks may involve the handling of harmful trash. Some items like broken glass and old nails in boards carry some risk to you as a volunteer. Some items should only be handled by OLT staff such as needles, human/animal waste, dangerous construction debris, or containers with chemicals.

**Dirt and Dust:** Some tasks may involve the handling of dirt/sand. Sometimes dust may kick-up during an activity. And at times in the Coachella Valley dust may be in the air. As a volunteer, please self-evaluate your level of comfort and safety. You might consider wearing a dust mask or stopping the day's activity because of dust or bad air quality. Be aware that Valley Fever is carried in dust and is active in our desert. This can cause injury, especially people new to the desert or experiencing other illnesses.

**Bring Your Own Safety and Comfort Equipment:** While OLT may provide certain equipment for some tasks, we ask our volunteers to be self-sufficient with water, gloves, masks, hats, eye protection, sunblock, or other items that improve your comfort and personal safety.

**Medical Treatment:** OLT is not a medical organization. Our staff and volunteers are not required to administer or pay for medical treatment arising from activities or injuries. As a volunteer, you should have adequate insurance to cover any such treatment.

**Interaction with People:** You may come across a person living or sleeping on an OLT property. You may come across angry or violent people on our properties. Your role is to educate, but not to engage with angry or potentially violent people. Your role is to report the person or incident to OLT staff or the police in an emergency. Stay safe. Walk away when in any danger or call 911 if needed.

**Power Tools:** Some tasks may require the use of power tools. Before a volunteer can use any OLT equipment, they must be trained on the tool, regardless of past experience. Many power tools are not approved for volunteer use. Do not use a power tool you are not approved to use. If using or around power tools, all safety precautions must be taken.

**Dress:** As an Oswit Land Trust volunteer, you will be given an Oswit Land Trust logo t-shirt. Please wear it when volunteering in a public area. You may select a t-shirt size that fits over a long-sleeve shirt for added protection.

**Use of Images / Disclosure of Name or Email:** At times, OLT or others associated with OLT may photograph or film volunteers in their work experience. OLT may use these images on social media, our website or other media. Security cameras exist at OLT properties and there is a chance your activities are being recorded for security reasons only. Your name and email address may be disclosed to other staff or volunteers through group emails or other communications.

**Media / Politics:** It is possible that as an OLT volunteer, you may be approached for interviews or comments by the news media or asked your opinion about a political candidate or proposition. In your role as an OLT volunteer, you may not comment on these issues. Please refer such questions to OLT staff.

**No Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco:** You may not be under the influence of, or impaired by, an illegal or controlled substance, alcohol, or cannabis while on your volunteer shift. OLT prohibits tobacco products and vaping on all premises.

**Positive Volunteer Environment:** If you have any negative experiences as a volunteer, please report to your staff supervisor. We will try to resolve these experiences to provide you with a positive volunteer experience when possible. As a volunteer you have the right to report any negative experiences to any staff person or any Board member.

**Agreement and Liability Waiver:** Signing below signifies that the volunteer agrees to the terms and conditions of the agreement stated above. As a volunteer, you agree to hold harmless OLT, its officers, directors, employees, members, instructors, and other volunteers from any personal injury, illness, death, loss, liability, damage, vehicle damage, or costs that may be incurred as a result of my participation in such programs and activities.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Provide and Emergency Name and Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to your supervisor or mail to Oswit Land Trust, PO Box 4020, Palm Springs, CA 92263**