

Save Oswit Canyon • Oswit Land Trust (OLT)

Volunteer Information, Waiver, and Release of Liability

Thank you for volunteering with Oswit Land Trust. This agreement protects both you and the organization. Volunteers work in many different capacities to support the mission of the organization. While some of the information below may not apply to your volunteer activities, it is good information for future involvement.

Many of the volunteer tasks 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 tasks are 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 worse. Only accept tasks to your level of experience and physical ability. 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 of you as a volunteer. You have the right to leave any volunteer assignment at any time. If you ever feel at risk for any reason, stop the activity. Please let your Volunteer Coordinator know of your concerns.

Heat Risks: We work in a desert environment. Heat is a 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, nauseated, dizzy, or experience an elevated heart rate, stop immediately, drink water, and find a cool place to rest. You may fully cancel or leave your volunteer assignment because of heat at any time. Please let your Volunteer Coordinator know of your concerns.

Prevent Eye, Skin and Foot 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 or 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. Please wear gloves to protect hands. You must always wear closed-toe footwear. Certain projects may require footwear with higher safety standards.

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.

Water-Related Injury: When working in water, flotation/life jackets must be worn. Water in ponds, washes, and streams 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 dangerous. If you receive a splash of pond or stream water in the eye, stop, and rinse your eye with clean water or saline as soon as possible.

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. Rattlesnakes are present on OLT properties.

Trash Can Hurt: Be careful as items like broken glass and old nails in boards carry some risk to you as a volunteer. Items like human/animal waste, construction debris, or containers with chemicals should be handled by staff.

Dirt and Dust: Some tasks may involve the handling of dirt/sand. Sometimes dust may kick up during an activity. At times, 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 illness, especially in people who are new to the desert or who are experiencing other illnesses.

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.

Wildlife Programs: Some volunteer activities involve working with or near wildlife in both natural and urban settings. Volunteers who choose to participate in these programs understand that working around wild animals involves inherent risks. These may include being bitten, trampled, knocked down, or otherwise injured by an animal. Additional risks may include falling on rocks and exposure to vehicles and traffic when wildlife enters streets or other urban areas. By participating in these programs, volunteers acknowledge and accept these risks.

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. Use your judgment and assess any risk before approaching guests. If someone appears threatening and/or is acting erratically, let it go, walk away and report the incident instead to OLT staff or the police in an emergency. Stay safe.

Power Tools: Some tasks may require the use of power tools. Before a volunteer may use any OLT equipment, they must be trained on that tool, regardless of prior 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, its website, or other media. Security cameras exist at most OLT properties and there is a chance your activities are being recorded. Your name, email address, or phone number may be disclosed to other staff or volunteers through group emails/texts 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 Volunteer Coordinator. We will try to resolve these concerns to provide you with a positive volunteer work environment when possible. As a volunteer, you have the right to report any concerns to any staff member or Board member.

Agreement and Liability Waiver: Signing below signifies that you agree to the terms stated in this document. As a volunteer, you agree to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Oswit Land Trust, its officers, directors, employees, members, instructors, partner organizations, and other volunteers from any personal injury, illness, death, loss, liability, damage, vehicle damage, or costs that may be incurred as a result of your participation in such programs and activities.

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Provide and Emergency Name and Contact Number: _____

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