



YorkshireDales
Rivers Trust

Volunteer handbook

**Working together to ensure our
rivers thrive**

VOLUNTEERING

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust volunteer and helping us improve our river environments. We're a small team with a big job on our hands, so it's only with the help of volunteers like you that our rivers will be protected, now and into the future.

Whichever activities you choose to get involved in, you really are making a difference to the health of the river and the wildlife that inhabits them. We aim to make your experience volunteering with us as enjoyable, rewarding and educational as possible. Sadly, we can't do much about the weather, but we carry on, rain or shine!



As a volunteer with us we don't ask for any minimum time commitment, but we do ask that you let us know if you are no longer able to make an event you have signed up for. Volunteer opportunities will be advertised and you can decide what to sign up for to fit round your other commitments.

The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust cares for rivers in some of the most valuable and attractive landscapes of England and much of the area is included in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Trust covers an area of approximately 4854 Km² (1874 sq.miles) with five major rivers systems: Swale, Ure, Nidd, Ouse, and Wharfe. This gives us a total river length of 6690Km (4157 miles) of rivers to care for, with a range of environmental challenges to improve their ecological status.



OUR RIVERS

ACTIVITIES

We have a wide range of activities volunteers can get involved with, but this is not a complete list so please contact us if you think there is something else you could do that would help the Trust achieve it's aims.

Sampling, Surveying and Monitoring

These tasks all help build a picture of our river's health, and can contribute to a bigger project, such as water testing to help communities achieve bathing water status, or helping determine where invasive species are present with the aim of improving habitats.



Practical task days

Outdoor, practical sessions to help carry out some of the works that are required to improve the rivers.

Examples are:

- Balsam bashing
- Leaky dam building
- River clean ups
- Tree planting
- Removal of tree guards
- Maintenance of past projects
- Bank Stabilisation works

Desk Based Activities

Helping with research or data analysis

Some tasks are seasonal so not all activities will be available at all times.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Clothing

Please bring waterproof clothing suitable for the time of year.

We suggest:

- waterproof coat,
- waterproof trousers,
- walking boots or wellies,
- sun-cream,
- hat
- insect repellent.

We do sometimes get muddy so wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty. We supply durable gloves for most activities and waders if the activity requires them. All other tools and equipment are also supplied.

Food and drink

Please bring a packed lunch and drinks. Light refreshments (tea, coffee and biscuits) are sometimes provided.

Travel expenses

Generally we can't cover volunteers' travel expenses to and from the site. Expenses are only covered in exceptional circumstances but if travel costs are prohibitive to your volunteering experience then please talk to a member of the team.

Smile - you're on camera!

Photos and video clips of our volunteers in action keep our publicity alive. We love to show off the exceptional contribution our volunteers make to improving our rivers. Please be aware that by attending our volunteer events, you may appear on our website, social media, press releases, newsletters and other publications. If you do not wish to appear, please let a member of the team know. For our volunteers under 18 we will ask for a parent or guardian to complete a photo consent form.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

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We'll make sure you:

- understand how your work is benefitting the river and its wildlife
- have a good understanding of Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and its objectives
- feel welcome, respected and a valued participant of the team
- know who your leader is and who you are answerable to
- have safe working conditions
- are carrying out tasks suitable to your ability
- know how to do your tasks safely and effectively
- have access to relevant training
- are insured to take part in our volunteering activities
- know who to approach if you have a problem



If the leader of the task has concerns about your behaviour or contribution as a volunteer, they will discuss the issue with you and take appropriate steps to address it. However, if the issue cannot be resolved, your volunteering with Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust may have to cease.



In return we ask you to:

- be reliable and punctual - our work sites are often difficult to find so if you're not at the meeting point on time, you may struggle to find the group.
- Inform your supervisor of any personal health and safety requirements that you may have.
- pay attention to and adhere to the leader's health and safety advice
- carry out your tasks as your leader has instructed
- ask for support if you need it
- be respectful and courteous to your fellow volunteers
- adhere to Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust's equality and safeguarding policies
- respect the land on which you are working follow the countryside code and take any litter home with you - even if it's not yours!
- Plan and organise your own travel to volunteering events with particular regard to health and safety aspects of getting to the event ie. check weather forecast and assess weather and road conditions at the time.

KEEPING YOU SAFE

Accidents

Our actions should not put volunteers, staff or the public at risk. The best practice is to prevent accidents from happening in the first place so we must look out for each other and if you see a potential hazard, warn your colleagues and report it to a leader straight away. If an accident does occur, ensure that it is noted in the Accident Book.

First aid

All of our staff are trained to administer emergency first aid and a first aid kit and welfare kit is present at every volunteer event.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered under Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust's Public Liability insurance policy, providing the volunteer is undertaking an activity suitable for their ability. Regrettably Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust cannot cover loss or damage to your personal possessions. Any equipment or materials necessary for your activity will be provided by Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust.

Lone working

If you are working alone in an isolated area please ensure that you have a mobile phone with you. At times there may be limited signal therefore more important that you operate the lone working procedure. Please ensure:

1. That someone knows where you are going
2. Roughly when you will return
3. What to do if you do not return on time.

If you haven't returned on time your contact will need to try to make regular contact until you answer, this could be hourly. If after a couple of hours you have not returned then your contact can telephone the Yorkshire Rivers Trust office or officer mobile number. If they cannot be contacted then the police will need to be informed and will need to know location and car registration. Please keep your contact details up to date and phone charged if you are out on site alone.

Please contact us if you require further clarification of the above

Risk assessment

We undertake risk assessments for all volunteering activities and identify the safest ways of working. To ensure your safety, we ask that you comply with the methods of working as set out in the risk assessment and demonstrated by your Volunteer Supervisor. If you are unsure how to do something safely, ask your Supervisor.

Equality policy

Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust endeavours to ensure that no volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependants, age, belief or disability and that volunteers are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant skills and experience. Volunteers also have an individual responsibility for complying with and promoting this policy.

GDPR

Our privacy policy complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Any data that we obtain is stored safely, never shared with third parties, and only ever used with consent for the purpose that it was originally provided.

Safeguarding

Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust works to safeguard the welfare of the young people we work with by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm, and neglect. A copy of our safeguarding policy is available on request.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We use an app or website called Volunteer Impact to help manage volunteers and to invite you to sessions that you may be interested in.

To register as a volunteer so you get invited to tasks please use the link on our website

www.ydrt.org.uk or e mail volunteering@ydrt.co.uk