

Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature
Preserve Volunteer Handbook

Where you Make The Difference!

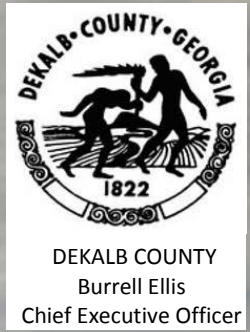
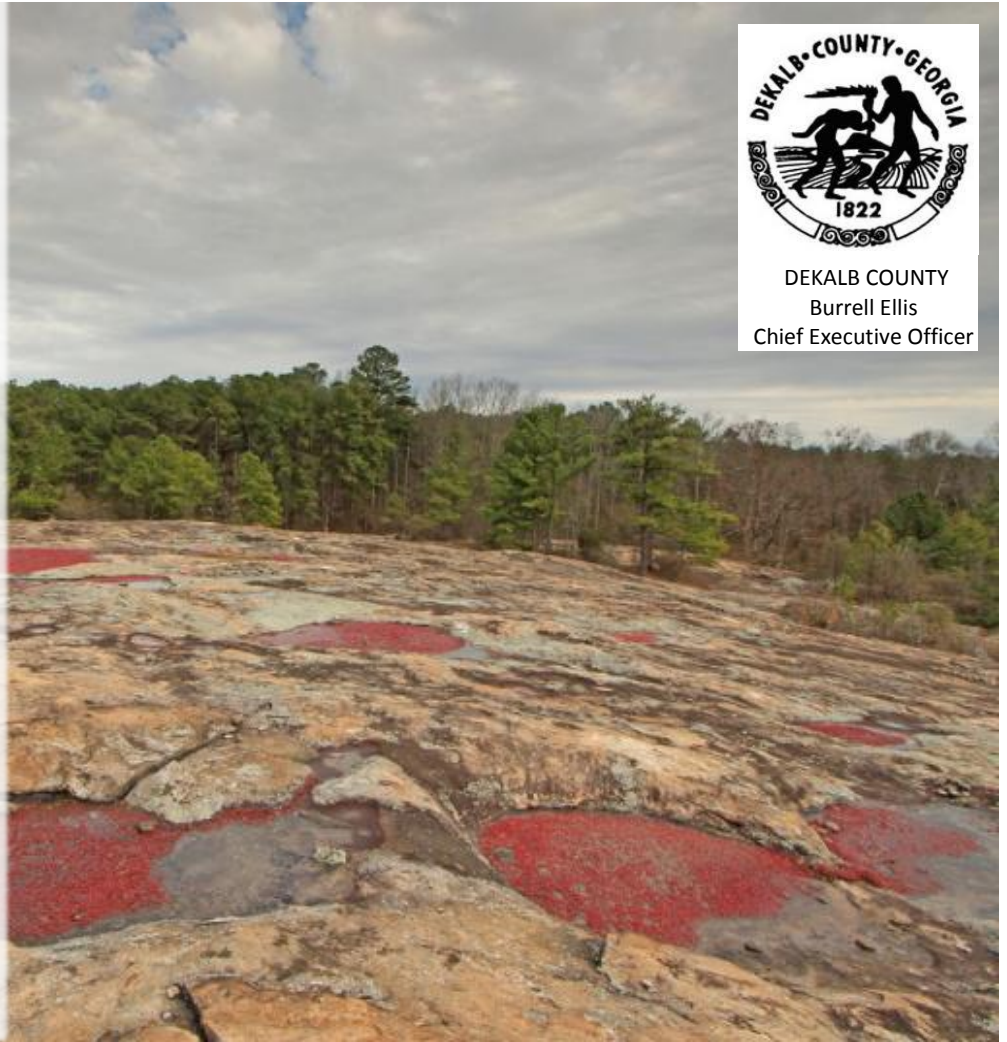


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Welcome!

Thank you for joining the Davidson – Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve (the Preserve) team! We have ambitious goals here and we couldn't hope to accomplish them without the work of dedicated volunteers. Every hour you complete here helps the Preserve provide more opportunities for our community to explore, learn about, and develop an appreciation and stewardship for our natural world.

This manual is your guide to the Preserve and will help you become acquainted with our basic guidelines. It will also answer common questions, serve as a reference, and provide volunteer job descriptions.

Basic Information

The Preserve encompasses over 2,550 acres in DeKalb County. This area includes Arabia Mountain as well as other large formations of exposed granite, wetlands, pine and oak forests, multiple streams, and two lakes. The rare native plant species, such as the signature red diamorpha in the winter and fall's yellow daisies, make it seem as though the rock is in constant metamorphosis.

The park has a nature center with classroom space and Preserve information. This center often serves as the gateway to the Preserve for visitors. The nature center is open to the public every day from about 8am to 3:30pm as long as a staff member is present.

The Preserve also has miles of hiking trails and a multiuse PATH bike trail. The trails of the Preserve are open to the public from dawn to dusk. There is no fee for parking or for use of the trails. Leashed dogs are welcome and fishing is permitted, with a valid state license, at Arabia Lake.



Important Contact Information

Name/ Event	Phone	Email
Medical Emergency	911	n/a
Fire Emergency	911	n/a
DeKalb Medical Emergency	(404) 501-1000	n/a
DeKalb Police Non-emergency	678.937.2852	n/a
Nature Center	(770) 484-3060	n/a
A.W.A.R.E. Wildlife Rehabilitation	(678) 418-1111	n/a
Robby Astrove Park Ranger	(770) 484-3060	rlastrove@dekalbcountyga.gov
Kimberly Estep Arabia Alliance Volunteer Coordinator	(770) 542-7131	Kimberly@arabiaalliance.org
Charlie Monroe Natural Resource Manager	(770) 484-3060	camonroe@dekalbcountyga.gov

Volunteer Program Overview

Purpose of Volunteer Program

The purpose of the Preserve's volunteer program is to allow community members to directly connect with and positively impact their environment. We welcome the individuality and diversity that volunteers offer, and value the wealth of ideas they foster.

Volunteer Training

You will receive the appropriate training for each volunteer position offered at the Preserve. You are also highly encouraged to initiate training requests as you feel the need and ask questions if you are not comfortable with any aspect of a project.

Recruitment

Applicants will be considered for service based on their qualifications and availability without regard to race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, marital status, or physical abilities. Under the direction of the Natural Resource Manager, the volunteer coordinator has the responsibility of interviewing and placing volunteers. In order to be considered for a volunteer position you must complete and sign a volunteer application (at the end of this handbook), which will be retained in your personnel records.

Liability

Volunteers are not covered by Worker's Compensation. We encourage every volunteer to carry their own health insurance. If an injury occurs, report the injury to a supervisor or staff person immediately. Please remember that first aid kits are located throughout the Nature Center and in all county vehicles.

After ANY incident or injury, no matter how slight, that involves volunteers, staff, or visitors, a Preserve staff member must be notified. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911 and then contact the closest staff member.

Volunteer Rights

- ◆ To be respected as an individual by the staff and other volunteers
- ◆ To be appreciated for your work and dedication
- ◆ To receive adequate training so you can perform your job confidently
- ◆ To be listened to when you have a question or concern
- ◆ Have a positive work environment

Benefits

As a Preserve volunteer you can expect to receive many benefits; just a few of these benefits are listed below.

- ◆ Learning from professional and experienced naturalist
- ◆ Developing new skills and gaining valuable experience
- ◆ Having the opportunity to expand your knowledge and learn new talents
- ◆ Having the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a difference in the community and in the world
- ◆ Earning Community Service hours for high school, college, etc.
- ◆ Making social and professional contacts
- ◆ Receive personal invitations to various volunteer social events throughout the year, like potluck events and volunteer development
- ◆ After 40 hours of volunteer service you are eligible to receive a written reference for continuing education, employment, or any other need
- ◆ We love our volunteers and are always looking for new ways to thank them!



Volunteer Opportunities

The Preserve volunteer positions are broken into four categories, service, education, administration, and recreation. See below for detailed job descriptions for positions within each of these categories. Each volunteer job has its own time commitment. You will have the opportunity to volunteer as often as you like. Volunteers who choose to become ongoing volunteers will be given an official job assignment, specialized training and leadership opportunities. Experienced and trusted volunteers can even assist in large-scale projects and events.

Service Volunteer

Summary: The Preserve is comprised of over 2,000 acres of granite outcrop, wetlands, pine and oak forests, streams, and a lake. This vast area needs to be constantly maintained to keep it accessible and to protect visitors. Without the help of volunteers it would not be possible for the Preserve to maintain the trails or clear new areas.

Possible Projects: Patrolling, trail building, trail maintenance and repair, and trail mapping are just some of the needed activities. Help build new trails by moving debris and flattening the route, clear brush or invasive plant species, create signage for nature walks, and build bridges. Single day large-scale projects are also possible. These projects could include clearing large areas, trash cleanups, exotic plant removal, and much more.

Qualifications: Good physical condition and the capacity to work outdoors in the heat and cold. Prior maintenance experience is not necessary. There is a wide variety of tasks during each project and there is always something for everyone to do.

Time Commitment: Service projects are some of the most flexible volunteer activities, allowing volunteers to work from one day, to several months, and with different levels of difficulty depending on experience and overall health.

Education Volunteer

Summary: These volunteers assist with guided tours at the Preserve for schools, the community, and other organized groups, explaining the ecology and natural history of the local area. Tour guides are required to attend training sessions (including programs offered by staff) where basic ecology, natural history, wildlife, and interpretive techniques are taught, along with observing experienced tour guides before leading groups.

Possible Projects: The possible subjects for tours are only limited by your imagination! History, culture, ecology, edible native plants, bike tours, and endemic species are just some of the topics that could be covered.

Qualifications: No special scientific background is required, only a love of nature and people. Research for topics will be assisted by park staff and experienced volunteers.

Time Commitment: Generally, we ask Education Volunteers to lead a tour at least once per quarter, but more tours are possible. Many volunteers spend time before or after tours hiking on their own or learning more about natural history topics.

Administration Volunteer

Summary: See a county park from the inside! Running all of our great programs requires lots of work behind the scenes.

Possible Projects: Assist with the important work of staffing the nature center, answering visitor questions, answering phones, posting fliers, restocking fliers, photographing the Preserve, videotaping events, and other office projects.

Qualifications: No previous office work experience is required and all needed training will be provided. We do ask that Administration Volunteers be well organized and have a friendly attitude towards park staff and visitors.

Time Commitment: While volunteers are always welcome, the most critical times Administration Volunteers are Saturdays and Sundays.

Recreation Volunteer

Summary: Help the general public explore this special place!

Possible Projects: Lead groups through the Preserve and answer general questions. Help visitors experience less accessible areas of the Preserve in a safe and fun way.

Qualifications: No previous tour guide experience is necessary. Volunteers will be given a thorough park orientation and access to a Park Ranger to help answer questions.

Time Commitment: General tours are set throughout the year but the busiest times are in the spring and fall.

Volunteer Responsibilities

In return, volunteers shall be responsible for taking their volunteer position seriously, representing the Preserve in a responsible and respectable way, taking part in all application and training processes, following through on commitments, dressing appropriately for job requirements (i.e. long pants, closed-toed shoes), taking care of tools, supplies and equipment borrowed from the Preserve and returning those items when finished and following the same rules and policies of Preserve staff.

Each volunteer must record his or her hours each day they serve. Your time sheet serves as verification of your attendance for your records and helps us keep accurate records of active volunteers.

Please remember that the Preserve is required to keep an accurate record of all volunteer time. This record is valuable in reflecting participation and accomplishments of the volunteer program. It also allows potential funding organizations and the general public to recognize the value of community support given through volunteer participation.

Background Check

The Preserve requires criminal background checks of all long-term volunteers. These measures have been instituted in an attempt to ensure the safety of participants, guests, employees, and volunteers. Only legal infractions which are a direct risk to the Preserve or its visitors will be considered when determining a volunteer's eligibility.

Professional Communication

At the Preserve, we do not tolerate unprofessional communication, defined as any comment, conduct or abusive language which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment for anyone associated with the Preserve. Examples of unprofessional communication include speech or conduct which demeans, belittles, or berates a person personally, as opposed to that which provides them with constructive criticism. Volunteers must bear in mind that they are a role model at all times, and appropriate language is always required.

Appearance

Volunteers are asked to dress neatly and appropriately for their assigned job. Please keep in mind that the nature of your job will determine what you wear. You are asked **not** to wear clothing that may be offensive to others, as you will be representing DeKalb County Government to visitors.

Volunteer Dismissal

When necessary, volunteers may be dismissed for cause. Reasons for dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unreliability or failure to follow through with scheduled commitments
- ◆ Conviction of a crime which is related to job performance

- ◆ Theft or misuse of property
- ◆ Inability to work cooperatively with others to an extent that it interferes with job performance
- ◆ Unwillingness to maintain the high standards of the Preserve or follow the Volunteer Handbook guidelines

Illegal Substances

The Preserve maintains a work environment that is free from the effects of alcohol use and illegal or improper drug use. Violation of this policy will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination and permanent dismissal.





DeKalb County

Natural Resources Management Office

Community Service/Volunteer Sign-In Waiver

By placing my name on this form I have agreed to be a Community Service/Volunteer participant with the Natural Resources Management Office and understand that I will not be paid for participation nor will I be covered by worker's compensation insurance, as are employees of the County. As a participant in the Community Service/Volunteer program, I release and hold harmless DeKalb County, its agents and employees, from all liability of any kind whatsoever which may arise out of my participation and waive all rights which I may have against De Kalb County, its agents and employees.

I will not make any claim nor bring any legal action of any kind and will not assist any other person or entity in making a claim or bring any legal action against DeKalb County for any matter that might arise out of my participation in the Community Service/Volunteer program.

Authorization for Treatment:

In the event that an emergency occurs and the emergency contact person that I have designated cannot be reached, I hereby give my permission to the medical persons selected by the DeKalb County to secure and administer all necessary treatment, including hospitalization, ordering x-rays and routine tests, release of any records necessary for insurance purposes, and any necessary related transportation for me.

Individuals and groups with participants less than 18 years of age must provide signed parental permission slips that include the department's waiver and authorization for treatment statements.

Name: _____
first last date

Contact Number: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Emergency Contact _____
name phone number relationship

Parental Permission Slip

Name: _____
first last date

Contact Number: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

Relationship to volunteer under 18 _____

Volunteer Work Log

Volunteer Name: _____

Facility: _____ Supervisor: _____

Date	Start Time	End Time	Daily Total

Total Hours Worked

Volunteer Signature: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Criminal History Check

Recreation, Parks, Cultural Affairs Department,
and Natural Resources Management Office
1300 Commerce Drive, Room 300 Decatur, GA 30030
Fax (404) 371 - 3088

My signature below authorizes the above company to receive any criminal history record information pertaining to me that may be on file at any state or local criminal justice agency in the state of Georgia.

Location: Davidson Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve

Position: Volunteer

Name: _____
first last date

Home Address: _____

City State Zip

Height: _____ **Weight:** _____ **Sex:** _____ **DOB:** _____ / _____ / _____

Driver's License #: _____

Social Security #: _____

signature date



Revised 2012

Volunteer Application – Agreement Form

To be read, signed, and returned to the volunteer coordinator before beginning any volunteer activities.

I (printed name), _____, have received a copy of the Davidson – Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve Volunteer Handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures as listed in the handbook.

Signature

Date

Return to:

Kimberly Estep, Volunteer Coordinator Davidson – Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve