



# Great Swamp Watershed Association

P.O. Box 300 • New Vernon, NJ 07976 • 973-538-3500 • [www.GreatSwamp.org](http://www.GreatSwamp.org)

*Protecting our waters and our land for 30 years*

## **Volunteer Safety Policy**

*Thank you for volunteering your time and skills for the Great Swamp Watershed Association. We sincerely appreciate all that our volunteers do and we want to ensure your safety when assisting the organization. We will do our part to provide the safest possible work environment, and we ask that you adhere to the following procedures to keep you safe in all that you do for us. Please ask GSWA staff at any time if you have questions or concerns.*

### **General Safety Procedures**

Always go into the field with at least one other person. Prior to going into the field, let someone know where you will be and when you expect to return, and what to do if you do not come back within a certain period of time.

GSWA will maintain first aid kits at GSWA Headquarters and the Conservation Management Area (CMA). GSWA staff will have a first aid kit at volunteer activities taking place at other sites. Volunteers are encouraged to carry their own first aid kit when going into the field without GSWA staff.

Utilize safe parking sites, such as parking lots and private driveways (with prior permission). Two orange parking cones are available at GSWA Headquarters for volunteers to borrow (please make arrangements ahead of time).

There are several natural hazards found in the Great Swamp watershed. Be aware of ticks and take precautions to avoid them. After field work, check yourself for ticks. Be aware of poison ivy and take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure. Avoid excessive sun exposure. On hot days, wear light colored clothing, stay hydrated, and take breaks as needed to avoid heat exhaustion. Watch where you are walking and step carefully as many GSWA volunteer activities take place in natural areas with uneven terrain.

Take breaks when needed for rest, water, food, and/or restroom. When volunteering in a group setting, notify your team leader that you are taking a break.

If you are assigned a task that you are uncomfortable completing for any reason, ask the team leader or GSWA staff for better instructions or to assign you a different task. Volunteers are volunteering their time and may opt out of any activity at any time for any reason.

Any volunteer may stop an operation for a safety issue. The operation will not continue until the safety issue has been resolved.

### **Safety Equipment**

Dress appropriately for the field; long sleeves, long pants, a hat, and appropriate footwear are recommended for most GSWA field activities. Additional clothing recommendations will be made based on the activity. Please consider insect repellent as appropriate.

When needed, GSWA will supply all necessary safety equipment to complete a task including work gloves and eye protection. Orange safety vests are available for volunteer use. Two will be kept at the Conservation Management Area (CMA), and two will be kept at GSWA Headquarters. (Please make arrangements ahead of time to borrow the vests at GSWA headquarters.)

**Chainsaws**

Before utilizing chainsaws all GSWA volunteers will ensure that they will follow best management and safety protocols for safe chainsaw use. This will include watching a short online safety course video, or obtaining other chainsaw certification that surpasses this basic operation and maintenance guide. No external (corporate or community) volunteers will be permitted to operate a chainsaw during workdays unless they also have this level of safety understanding. Chainsaws may only be used by volunteers ages 18 and up.

**Other Power Tools**

Including, but not limited to trimmers (weed whackers), lawn mowers, generators, power drills and drivers, and leaf blowers. GSWA volunteers will follow manufacturer's guidelines and will operate powered machinery in a way consistent with safety guidelines provided in the manufacturers operating instructions. Appropriate safety gear should be worn where appropriate. Circular saws will be operated only by trained GSWA volunteers and not by corporate or community volunteers unless they can provide proof of competency.

**Stream Monitoring Procedures**

Check the weather prior to leaving for your monitoring site. Do not monitor if severe weather is predicted or if a storm occurs while at the site. If you feel unsafe at any point during stream monitoring, leave the site and do not compromise your safety.

Do not wade into water deeper than your knees or water that is flowing swiftly. Exercise caution when walking on a stream bank as banks can collapse. Be cautious of your footing on stream banks as they can be steeply sloped and/or have uneven terrain. When walking in a stream, step carefully as rocks can be slippery and muddy bottom streams can be difficult to walk in.

**Pesticide Application**

Where appropriate or necessary to apply herbicides or pesticides, as determined solely by GSWA staff or expert, they shall be applied in accordance with manufacturer's safety and application guidelines as per labeling. Appropriate safety gear (Tyvek disposable suits and gloves, appropriately labeled containers) shall be utilized, and where required or otherwise appropriate, application shall be made under the supervision of a licensed pesticide applicator. Pesticide application may only be carried out by volunteers ages 18 and up.



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## VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT/RELEASE

*Thank you for agreeing to volunteer for the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA). The lasting impression you make will help us protect our waters and our land.*

Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Waiver:

I/We understand that participation in the Great Swamp Watershed Association as a volunteer involves activities that may pose a potential risk of personal injury. Some examples of these activities include working outdoors in weather that can turn unexpectedly hot, cold, windy, or stormy; walking on unstable stream banks, near, and within waterways; using pesticides, power equipment, and/or authorized chainsaw use.

I/We assume all risks associated with participation in the programs/activities and hereby waive and release for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, GSWA including but not limited to trustees, employees, and agents from all claims, liability, risks or loss from injury.

### Agreement:

I/We certify that I/we have received and understand the safety information prior to my/our participation in the programs/activities. I/We understand that while this information contains instructions intended to protect me from injury, even my full compliance with those instructions will not guarantee that no injury will occur.

### Photo Release:

I/We authorize GSWA and its partners to photograph/video me and my child(ren) without payment or any other consideration. I also agree that any photos/videos taken, copied, or otherwise altered, may be used in any and all GSWA (or partner) publications. I/we waive the right to inspect/approve any final product, and hold harmless GSWA and its partners from all claims, demands, and causes of action which I/we may have by reason of this authorization.

**GSWA CAN use my photo**

**GSWA CAN NOT use my photo**

Print Name

Signature

(Signature of parent/legal guardian if volunteer under 18)

\_\_\_\_\_

### Chainsaw Certification:

I certify that I am at least 18 years of age and I have watched an online safety training video and am capable of operating a chainsaw in a safe manner. I agree with this statement by initialing here: \_\_\_\_\_

### Emergency Contact Information:

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

