

Volunteer Handbook

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Volunteer Handbook

*“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.”
- Unknown*

Handbook updated October 2019

Volunteer Program Goal

The goal of the Volunteer Program is to support the staff in all departments by relieving them of duties that volunteers are able to perform, thus allowing staff to focus on tasks that cannot be done by volunteers.

Volunteers can best assist staff and visitors by learning and understanding the task at hand, working independently with minimal supervision, and asking the proper person questions when instructions are unclear or situations arise.

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*“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”
- Elizabeth Andrews*

Mission Statement

The mission of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association is to conserve birds of prey worldwide by providing leadership in raptor conservation science and education, and by maintaining Hawk Mountain Sanctuary as a model observation, research and education facility.

Adopted by the Board of Directors

March 11, 2006

Volunteer Code of Ethics

As a Hawk Mountain volunteer, I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the field in which I volunteer. I assume certain responsibilities and am accountable for what I do and what I am expected to do. I will keep confidential matters confidential.

I have agreed to work without monetary compensation, but having been accepted as a worker, I am making a commitment and expect to complete responsibilities according to the same standards as paid staff members.

I promise to have an open-minded attitude about my work, to be willing to be trained for it, and to follow the guidelines and procedures set by Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. I believe that my attitude toward volunteer work should be professional. I believe that I have an obligation to my work, to those who direct it, to those for whom it is done, to my colleagues, and to those who support and visit Hawk Mountain.

Eager to contribute all that I can to further the mission of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association, I accept this code of ethics and will follow it carefully, cheerfully and to the best of my ability.

Signed _____

Date ____ / ____ / ____

Volunteer Benefits

- Discount of 15% in the Mountain Bookstore for volunteers as soon as they have worked 35 hours in the current year.*
- *Hawks Aloft*, the delightful story of Maurice and Irma Broun, and *Rosalie Edge; Hawk of Mercy*, may be purchased at 15% discount upon completion of first day of service.
- Learn about raptors and the natural history of the Central Appalachians.
- Free Hawk Mountain Sanctuary *Flight Guide*. Please see Tammy Jandrasitz or Annie Trexler to receive free copy.
- Invitations to volunteer social events: e.g., annual volunteer-board-staff party, field trips, etc.
- Educational workshops and training sessions.
- Meeting other volunteers, conservation science trainees, and interns from around the world.
- Use of Sanctuary campgrounds or shelters on volunteer day (based on availability).
- Income tax deduction for mileage to the Sanctuary.
- Satisfaction of furthering the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary mission of conservation, education, and research.

**Volunteers who worked 35 hours the prior calendar year are eligible for the discount on January 1 of the current year. Discount does not apply to clearance or food items. Discount applies to current/active volunteers and their spouses—not relatives or friends—but spouses may not combine their hours to a sum of 35; one person must have worked a total of 35 hours. Training sessions and workshops may count toward 35 hours, but not field trips. Please advise the bookstore personnel that you qualify for the volunteer discount before your purchase is rung into the register.*

When You Are on Duty

Remember—as a Hawk Mountain Volunteer, you may be the only “official” representative of the Sanctuary with whom a visitor has contact, and the impression you make is very important. No matter what your job, please be professional, pleasant, courteous and helpful to ensure that all our visitors have a positive experience.

- 1 Sign in at the Volunteer Center and let the appropriate staff know you are here.
- 2 Wear your volunteer name badge and an armband if necessary.
- 3 Help yourself to coffee or tea and any snacks on the lunch table in the volunteer/staff lunchroom. Please place used dishes and cups in the dishwasher.
- 4 Smile and greet visitors.
- 5 Tell us what we can do better—your suggestions are welcome.
- 6 Ask questions if there is something you don't understand or isn't clear.
- 7 Dress and act appropriately for representing an international organization: no short shorts or revealing clothing.
- 8 Volunteer patches are available to all volunteers, but for consistency, must be worn only on a collared khaki camp shirt—long or short sleeves.
- 9 Communication is the key to a smooth operation in all areas of volunteers' duties.
- 10 Familiarize yourself with the Volunteer Handbook and be prepared to help visitors.

Volunteer Parking

September through November

Weekends: All volunteers are **required to park in the reserved lot** (by the Clivus) or **behind the Visitor Center** to allow the maximum amount of space for visitors in the public parking lots. (Staff parks on the service/fire road.)

Weekdays: Please park anywhere except the staff lot directly behind Headquarters, i.e., park in the grass “reserved” lot by the Clivus or public parking lots.

December through August

Weekends and Weekdays: Same as above “weekdays.”

Visitor Guidelines¹

- Hiking is permitted **only** on designated trails.
- No pets.²
- No smoking.³
- No loud noise, radios, or other audio devices.⁴
- No alcoholic beverages.
- No bicycles, mountain or trail bikes, ATVs, snowmobiles, or horses.
- Do not pick or remove anything! (plants, critters, stones, etc.)⁵
- Lunches may be eaten at any Lookout, picnic tables in the Amphitheater, or tables by the parking lots—not in the Information Pavilion or Habitat Garden.
- Carry-in, carry-out trash. “If you brought it with you, please take it with you when you leave.”
- No fires or grills.

¹ Please remember when you are informing visitors of these guidelines that they often don't think about the rules, don't know the rules, or don't notice/read signs.

² Pets are not permitted on Sanctuary grounds, even on a leash; they may be left in the car. Dogs can be walked nearby on the Appalachian Trail and on PA State Game Lands on either side of the mountain; Service dogs and dogs in training are the exceptions.

³ Hawk Mountain Sanctuary property is smoke-free, but we cannot prevent smoking on Hawk Mountain Road. Volunteers and staff who smoke may do so on the back porch.

⁴ Headphones are acceptable provided sound cannot be heard by other visitors.

⁵ If a visitor attempts to remove something from the Mountain, politely ask them to not to do so and leave whatever has been collected. You could say, “Please remember Hawk Mountain is a sanctuary, and perhaps you are not aware that nothing is to be removed from the grounds.”

Admissions Policy

Members

Members of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association are admitted to the trails free of charge. Memberships are valid for a year, and expiration dates are March 1, June 1, and October 1.

Individual (\$50) memberships admit one person. A **Family** (\$60) membership admits a couple and their children (18 and under) or grandparents and their grandchildren (18 and under). **Family Plus** (\$80) admits family members (as above) plus two guests every visit—family or friends, etc. See membership benefit card for additional benefits for higher categories.

General Admission

Fees are collected in the Visitor Center and tickets must be shown at trail entrance.

Non-member trail fees are:

Adults	\$10
Children 6–12	\$5
Seniors (65 and up)	\$7
Children 5 and under	Free

Business Members

One employee of the business receives a membership card, which is basically the same as a family membership; business members also receive complimentary guest passes. Membership card must be presented at the Visitor Center or Gate.

Special Guest Pass

Special guest passes are good for **one admission—one person, one time**. Each pass must have a name and address filled out.

Groups

A discount is available to groups, provided they meet the requirements (info available in the bookstore and the website).

Groups (Explore-on-your-own)

Groups without staff pay in the Visitor Center.

School Field Trips with Staff/Volunteers

Field trips led by Sanctuary staff and volunteers and are set up through the Education Department.

Appalachian Trail

Hikers leaving the Appalachian Trail through the Sanctuary should pay the regular trail fee.

Hiking Trails

Visitors entering the trail system should have a Trail Map, proper footwear, and the essentials (water, food, insect repellent, etc.) to complete the hike safely. A detailed description of the trails is on the back of the Trail Map.

Lookout Trails

Orange Blaze

North Lookout Trail is a one-mile trail that leads from the Visitor Center, past the South Lookout to North Lookout, and takes about 30 minutes. The main part of the trail or “scenic route” is fairly easy as the first third is groomed. The remainder is rocky and there is a 60-step stairway near the end. The **Accessible Trail** meanders through the woods leading to both the Laurelwood Niche and South Lookout. It is wheelchair accessible and has many resting benches. The **Express Route**, which leads off the main trail, is a steep, rocky shortcut to the North Lookout. The **Escarpment Trail** is rough, rocky, and goes over boulders along the edge of the ridge between North and South Lookouts. **Sunset Lookout Trail** requires climbing over boulders.

River of Rocks Trail

Red Blaze

The River of Rocks Trail is a rough and very rocky trail which starts at the South Lookout, loops around the River of Rocks, continues north around a research area and ends on the Lookout Trail near the North Lookout. This trail is approximately 3.5 miles long and takes an experienced hiker about 3.0 hours at a steady pace. It should not be attempted by anyone who is not prepared for a strenuous workout.

Skyline Trail

Blue Blaze

This trail follows the ridge east from North Lookout (there is a 30-foot ascent/descent to/from North Lookout) past East Rocks, and joins the Appalachian Trail; it is approximately 2.0 miles. It is rocky and rugged terrain, recommended for experienced hikers only.

Golden Eagle Trail

Yellow Blaze

The 1.75-mile Golden Eagle Trail loops north off the River of Rocks Trail, follows the Skyline Trail along the ridge, and rejoins the River of Rocks Trail. The trail begins in the valley and leads straight up and down the side of the ridge; it is very steep and rocky and **is not recommended for the inexperienced hiker**.

Appalachian Trail

White Blaze

The Appalachian Trail is east of the Sanctuary boundary as shown on the Sanctuary trail guide.

Appalachian Trail guides and maps may be purchased in the Bookstore. To get to the AT, go east on Hawk Mountain Road; turn right at the school bus shelter in Eckville; after half a mile, turn right to the Game Lands parking lot. There is a map at the far end of the parking lot showing access to the AT. (Written directions to the AT are available for distribution in the Visitor Center.) Hikers exiting the AT through Hawk Mountain pay trail fees.

The “Trail Guide to North Lookout” brochure, which identifies the numbered markers along the trail, is a good source of natural and cultural history about the Sanctuary for visitors. Visitors may also obtain the information by scanning QR codes on each marker.

Hawk Mountain “Lingo”

You may hear some terminology on the Mountain that is unfamiliar. The following definitions should be helpful.

Acopian Center for Conservation Learning or “AC”—the three-building complex located along Route 895, just west of Hawk Mountain Road, comprised of a Research Center, Trainee Residence and Visiting Scientist Residence. The facility is not open to the public.

Aspen Cut or the campground—campground which is available to Broadwing Club (\$125 and above) and volunteers who are on duty.

Cobble—the rocky outcropping on the ridge, behind the Visitor Center. Formerly used as a site for spring migration counts. This area is not open to visitors.

Clivus—Clivus Multrum composting toilets, which are located across from the amphitheater, near the North Lookout, and at the campground. The composting unit in the Visitor Center is a Bio Sun system.

“The count”—the official number of migrating hawks tallied; e.g., “How is the count today?”, “What is the count?”, “I’m going to call north for the count.”

Common Room—The Education Building, located along Hawk Mountain Road east of the Visitor Center. Guided school groups assemble here before going on the trail. Workshops, programs and courses also meet here.

Downstairs gallery—the lower meeting/exhibit area in the Visitor Center.

Exhibit gallery—area of educational exhibits to the right, inside the door of the Visitor Center.

Garden/seed shed—the small building located at the left rear of the Visitor Center where garden tools and bird seed are stored.

“The gate”—the small covered booth across the road at the entrance to North Lookout Trail. “I must relieve the Vol at the gate.”

Headquarters—the Visitor Center or “VC” is the main building which houses educational exhibits, the Mountain Bookstore, and staff offices.

Hill House—staff residence off Hawk Mountain Road east of headquarters. (Not open to the public.)

Information Booth—booth/counter immediately inside the Visitor Center front door.

Information Pavilion—structure along the trail between the Visitor Center and Hawk Mountain Road, across from the Native Plant Garden.

“Main”—the large parking lot closest to the Visitor Center entrance; “There’s a car in main with its lights on.”

Meadow/meadow lot—the large grassy parking lot to the left after the last bend in the exit road; “There’s an overheated car in meadow.”

Mews—where live raptors used for educational programs are housed. (Public access is not available.)

Native Plant Garden or Habitat Garden—fenced garden across from the Information Pavilion which demonstrates how to use native plants that attract and benefit wildlife.

“North”—North Lookout; e.g., “I’m going to north”, “What’s the count from north?”, “Meet me at north.”

Owl’s Head—the closest slope/rocky outcropping along the ridge southeast of the Visitor Center, visible from north and south.

Pinnacle—the farthest slope along the ridge to the southeast, visible from north and south.

Raptor enclosures—see mews.

Seed shed—see garden shed.

“The shed”—maintenance shed where large equipment, i.e., backhoe, dump truck, etc. and tools are stored; located on the service road east of the Visitor Center; “I’m going to the shed for a hammer.”

Schaumboch’s (or Schaumbach’s)—tavern built in the early 1700’s served as a residence for Maurice and Irma Broun and the first headquarters building. It is currently a staff residence. (Not open to the public).

Reserved lot—the grassy areas where Vols may park, across from the Clivus, near the amphitheater, inside the gate on the way to the rear of the Visitor Center and staff lot.

“South”—South Lookout; e.g., “I’m going to south”, “How’s the count at south?”

Visitor Center—see headquarters.

Volunteer Center/Vol Center—The desk and area in the Visitor Center lunchroom where Vols sign in and memos are located.

Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions

Facility and Grounds

Where are the restrooms?

Rest rooms with composting toilets that require no water are located in the Visitor Center, across from the Amphitheater and near North Lookout. Pit toilets are located at the beginning of the Lookout Trail just past the entrance gate.

Where can I get a drink?

Bottled water and other cold drinks are sold in the Bookstore. Water fountains are located in the Visitor Center hallway to the rest rooms and outside the Visitor Center along the brick walkway to the Lookout Trail.

Do you have facilities for the physically disabled?

Yes, there are bird feeding stations to view from the Visitor Center, our rest rooms are equipped for the physically challenged, and the Native Plant Garden has a brick walkway. The new accessible trail leads to South Lookout where there is a special area to accommodate wheelchairs. A motorized scooter is available in the Visitor Center at no charge, and a golf cart can be requested for special circumstances.

How far is it to the North Lookout?

Approximately one mile from the Visitor Center and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the trail entrance—about a 30-minute hike. The first $\frac{1}{3}$ is groomed, the second $\frac{2}{3}$ gets rocky.

How far can I see from North Lookout?

On a clear day you can see approximately 50 miles, but years ago, when the air was less polluted, visibility was approximately 70 miles.

Where are the trash cans?

The Sanctuary has a “carry-in, carry-out” policy and therefore does not provide trash receptacles (problems with bears looking for food is one reason). Visitors are required to carry out any trash they carry in. We do provide receptacles for trash generated by items we sell such as bottled water and frozen fruit bars.

Where are the bird cages?

We do not exhibit birds in cages. Our non-releasable raptors are used for school groups and education programs on weekends during spring and fall. A schedule of weekend programs is posted by the Visitor Center and at the Lookout Trail entrance.

Where did you get them?

All the raptors used for education programs would be unable to survive in the wild and therefore cannot be released. The birds came to us after being injured (shot, hit by a car, etc.) and rehabilitated. Others have been imprinted, which means after being raised by humans, they have not learned how to survive in the wild.

What is the Native Plant Garden?

The garden demonstrates how native plants can be used in a low-cost, low-maintenance, pesticide-free home garden. The native wildflowers, vines, grasses, shrubs and trees featured in the garden attract butterflies, songbirds, and other wildlife by providing food, shelter, and a place to raise their young.

Who maintains it?

The Native Plant Garden is maintained solely by volunteers with minimal staff supervision.

What is the sculpture in the Native Plant Garden made of?

The Golden Eagle by Mary Taylor, daughter of former board chairman Joe Taylor, is made of welded steel rods. It took four months to complete, is 14 feet high, weighs 530 pounds and the span between wingtips is nine feet. It was crated and shipped 3,200 miles from California on a flat-bed trailer.

When was the Visitor Center built?

The current Visitor Center was built in 1974. The rear addition for staff offices and conference room were added in 1987. The new exhibit gallery and expanded bookstore were added in 1991.

What is the Acopian Center?

The Acopian Center for Conservation Learning is a three-building complex comprised of the Research Center which houses staff and conservation science trainees offices, a map lab, a library, conference room and archives storage room. The other two buildings are the Conservation Science Trainee Residence and Visiting Scientist's Residence. The facility is not open to the public.

May I use the library?

Members are welcome to use the Acopian Center Library if they call in advance for an appointment, but books may not be taken out on loan. A small library in the Visitor Center is available to Volunteers.

What is the Education Building?

The Education Building, also known as the Common Room, located on Hawk Mountain Road east of the Visitor Center, is used for education programs, workshops, seminars and meetings. An adjoining apartment serves as a residence for seasonal staff.

What is Schaumboch's?

Schaumboch's, on Hawk Mountain Road east of the Visitor Center, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was a tavern in the early 1900's and later served as Visitor Center and residence for Maurice and Irma Broun. Currently, it is a staff residence.

Is it haunted?

Some residents have had unusual experiences, such as the light switches turning on and off by themselves.

How late are the trails open?

The trails are open dawn to dusk daily except during PA deer season. There is no winter maintenance.

When is the Visitor Center open?

The Visitor Center is open every day of the year except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Hours are from 8-5 September through November and 9-5 December through August.

Where may we eat our lunch?

We request that you only eat in designated areas. Picnic tables are located near several of the parking lots, and you are welcome to eat on any of the Lookouts.

When did you start charging to hike the trails?

Trail fees have been in effect since autumn 1938 and Irma Broun was the first "Keeper of the Gate."

May I bring my dog?

Pets are not permitted anywhere on the Sanctuary, but they can be walked on the nearby PA Game Lands or the Appalachian Trail. Service dogs are allowed.

Why not?

Hawk Mountain is a wildlife refuge and dogs are not appropriate as they may disturb wildlife, and during the fall, there are too many people. Dogs are not permitted even on a leash.

Isn't this a state park?

No, Hawk Mountain is a private, non-profit organization but is a National Landmark and Schaumbach's is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Where do you get money to support the place?

Hawk Mountain is supported by memberships, admission fees, grants, and gifts. We receive no federal or state funding for our daily operations but may receive grants for special projects from government agencies.

May I use my "Golden Age Passport"?

I'm sorry, golden age passports are for admission to national parks, and Hawk Mountain has no state or federal affiliations. Trail admission is free to Hawk Mountain members.

Natural History

Why do the hawks migrate?

Hawks migrate south in the autumn because of inadequate food supplies in winter. They migrate

north to breed in the spring because there is abundant food in the north during the summer and less competition within their niche.

Why do hawks migrate past Hawk Mountain in fall?

Hawks migrate past Hawk Mountain because they expend less energy by riding the wind currents and thermals created along the Kittatinny Ridge.

When is the best time to see hawks?

The official hawk count takes place August 15 to December 15. The first few days after a cold front comes through, when winds are from the northwest is best. In September there can be large numbers of broadwings, and in October there is the greatest number of different species.

Can I see hawks here in the spring?

Yes, but the spring migration isn't nearly as concentrated as in the fall because birds take a more direct route north to get to their breeding grounds. Hawk Mountain is less well suited to sight birds from a southerly direction. There are some very good spring hawk migration sites, like Derby Hill, NY.

Is there anything to see here during the year other than fall?

The Sanctuary is interesting at any time of year. During the winter, the trails are peaceful and winter resident wildlife may be seen. In the spring migrant birds pass through and the summer resident birds set up territories. Dogwood trees bloom around Mother's Day, and in early June, the Mountain Laurel is in bloom. Also, the Native Plant Garden is beautiful at any time of year.

Are there bears on the Sanctuary?

Bears are occasionally seen on the Sanctuary, usually from mid-summer until they go into hibernation. If you encounter a bear, do not try to approach it. If it comes toward you, make loud noises and wave your arms to scare it away.

Was there ever a river at the River of Rocks?

No, but there is a small stream (Kettle Creek) that flows under it in spring from snow melt.

How was the River of Rocks formed?

The generally accepted theory is that during the last ice age (which ended about 11,000 years ago), the glaciers stopped about 50 miles north of here. Freezing and thawing during that time caused the rocks to break up, and tumble to the valley below. The stream and depth of rocks keeps the forest from reclaiming the River of Rocks.

What kind of rocks are on the North Lookout?

Tuscarora Sandstone.

When does the mountain laurel bloom?

Around the second week in June, and the rhododendron blooms about July 4.

Are there snakes in the woods?

Snakes are not seen often, but when one is sighted it usually is a black or milk snake. Rattlesnakes and copperheads are seen less frequently.

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Environments

Where is the closest ATM machine?

West: Hawk Mountain General Store—Intersection of Rt. 895 & Rt. 61 (4 miles).

East: Rabert's Sunoco Mini Mart—Intersection of Hawk Mountain Road and Rt. 143 (7 miles).

Where is a good restaurant? ...motel? ... bed and breakfast?

A list of restaurants, accommodations, and attractions is available at the Visitor Center and the gate and on fall weekends at the Information Booth and Information Pavilion.

Where is the Appalachian Trail/Pinnacle? ...the nearest food/gas? ...Hawk Mountain Scout Camp?

Printed directions to the above locations are available at the Visitor Center.

How do I get to _____?

A Pennsylvania state map is available at the Visitor Center or the gate.

Miscellaneous

How crowded does it get on the fall weekends?

On our busiest fall weekend day, we recorded over 3,000 visitors. The crowds, migrating raptors, and the foliage all peak in mid-October, but you can avoid the crowds by coming on weekdays, early in the day on weekends, or visiting the Sanctuary during spring, summer, and winter.

Do you rent binoculars?

Binoculars may be rented at the Visitor Center for \$5. A credit card is required, and if binoculars are not returned by 5 p.m. or are returned damaged, the credit card will be charged \$150.

How many volunteers does Hawk Mountain have?

Currently, there are more than 200 individual volunteers and many organized groups that volunteer at Hawk Mountain. Volunteers contribute as many as 15,000 hours a year, which is equal to seven additional staff. According to figures from the Points of Light Foundation, this contribution is valued at more than \$200,000.