



Eno River Volunteer Steward Guidelines

Preserves in the Eno River Trail Stewards Program

Confluence Natural Area

Access Point(s):

4214 Highland Farm Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Staff Lead(s):

Indigo Roper-Edwards: indigo@enoriver.org, (919) 695-6672

The Confluence Natural Area is a 272-acre preserve owned and managed by the Eno River Association. This preserve was opened to the public in 2020, seven days a week from sunrise to sunset. The Confluence has roughly 6 miles of trails, primitive bathrooms, and a pavilion. Rules, maps, and other information are available at <https://www.enoriver.org/features/confluence-natural-area/>.

Eno River State Park

Access Point(s):

Few's Ford: 6101 Cole Mill Road, Durham, NC 27705

Cabelands: 4950 Howe Street, Durham, NC 27705

Cole Mill: 4770 Pleasant Green Road, Durham, NC 27705

Pump Station: 4023 Rivermont Road, Durham, NC 27712

Staff Lead(s):

Ranger Alex Tyson: alexander.tyson@ncparks.gov, (984) 250-1370 (park office)

On-call Ranger: (919) 616-2959

Eno River State Park opened in the 1970s and has since grown to 4,500 acres, with roughly 30 miles of trails. The park has a picnic shelter, restrooms, and a visitor center at the Few's Ford access. There are

tent camping sites accessible from the Few's Ford and Cole Mill accesses. Rules, maps, and other information are available at <https://www.ncparks.gov/state-parks/eno-river-state-park>.

Historic Occoneechee Speedway

Access Point(s):

320 Elizabeth Brady Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Staff Lead(s):

Ranger Alex Tyson: alexander.tyson@ncparks.gov, (984) 250-1370 (park office)

On-call Ranger: (919) 616-2959

The Historic Occoneechee Speedway operated as a NASCAR track from 1948 until 1968 and has since been converted into a 44-acre preserve with roughly 2 miles of hiking trails. The preserve was transferred to North Carolina State Parks in 2025. Maps and other information can be found at <https://www.enoriver.org/features/occoneechee-speedway/>.

Mountains-to-Sea Trail

Staff Lead(s):

Bill Boyarsky: bill.boyarsky@gmail.com

Fred Dietrich: dietrich@duke.edu

The Mountains-to-Sea Trail is not a single preserve, but rather a trail spanning almost 1,200 miles from Kuwohi in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge in the Outer Banks, including almost 725 miles of completed footpath. The trail crosses the Historic Occoneechee Speedway, Eno River State Park, West Point on the Eno City Park, Penny's Bend Natural Area, and several other parks and preserves in Durham and Orange Counties.

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area

Access Point(s):

625 Virginia Cates Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Staff Lead(s):

Ranger Alex Tyson: alexander.tyson@ncparks.gov, (984) 250-1370 (park office)

On-call Ranger: (919) 616-1832

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area is a 221-acre preserve owned and managed by the North Carolina State Parks Service. Rules, maps, and other information are available at <https://www.ncparks.gov/state-parks/occoneechee-mountain-state-natural-area>.

Panther Branch Natural Area

Access Point(s):

2437 Lebanon Road, Efland, NC 27243

Staff Lead(s):

Indigo Roper-Edwards: indigo@enoriver.org, (919) 695-6672

Panther Branch is a 56-acre nature preserve owned and managed by the Eno River Association with roughly 2 miles of trails. Rules, maps, and other information are available at <https://www.enoriver.org/features/pantherbranch/>.

Penny's Bend Nature Preserve

Access Point(s):

Intersection of Old Oxford Road and Snow Hill Road, Durham, NC 27712

Staff Lead(s):

Neville Handel: nhandel@email.unc.edu, (919) 962-2380

Penny's Bend Natural Area is an 84-acre preserve with over 2 miles of trails, owned by the Army Corps of Engineers and managed by the NC Botanical Garden. Rules, maps, and other information are available at <https://www.enoriver.org/features/pennys-bend-nature-preserve/>.

West Point on the Eno City Park

Access Point(s):

5101 North Roxboro Street, Durham, NC 27704

First left turn on North Roxboro Road northbound from above access

4404 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27712

Staff Lead(s):

Desmond Miller: Desmond.Miller@durhamnc.gov, (919) 560-4405 ext. 27210

West Point is a 404-acre preserve with roughly 4 miles of trails owned by the City of Durham and operated by Durham Parks and Recreation. West Point has restrooms, a picnic shelter, and a variety of historical features. More information is available at <https://www.dprplaymore.org/facilities/facility/details/West-Point-on-the-Eno-76>.

History of the Trail Stewards Program

The Trail Stewards Program was created in 2011 as a cooperative effort between multiple land managers to assist with the monitoring and maintenance of trails and facilities at parks and nature preserves along the Eno River. Trail Stewards assist with the monitoring and basic maintenance of trails.

General Expectations

Have fun! You are a volunteer, and we want you to enjoy yourself while helping to maintain trails. You are expected to comply with all rules and policies for parks and nature preserves.

You are representing the preserve where you are a steward, and you should be courteous towards other preserve visitors. While you may inform visitors of the rules if they ask or you feel so inclined, **you are not responsible for enforcing the preserve rules.**

You will be provided with a Trail Steward hat which you are expected to wear while visiting your trail.

If at any point you want to step down from your position as a Trail Steward, you should contact Indigo at indigo@enoriver.org or (919) 695-6672 to alert us. You will be asked to return your hat if you have served for less than one year as a Trail Steward so it can be washed and re-used for future stewards. If you have served one year or more as a Trail Steward, you may choose to keep your hat, or you may return it if you do not want it.

Reporting Expectations

As a Trail Steward, you are expected to walk the entire length of your assigned trail at least once per month. On this visit, you will monitor the trail and surrounding area for problems or maintenance needs, and you will report any issues you encounter via JotForm by following the link or QR code below. In this report, you will log the number of hours you worked, the trails you are reporting on, and any issues you encountered on your visit. You may submit one report immediately following each visit, or you may submit a single report at the end of each month. You will receive a reminder email for this purpose.



<https://form.jotform.com/231245840539154>

If you expect to miss a report, please reach out to Indigo at indigo@enoriver.org or (919) 695-6672 ahead of time to let us know. If you fail to submit a report for 60 days, you will receive an email reminder. **If you do not submit a report or respond to this email within another 30 days, you will be removed from your position as a Trail Steward.**

One of your responsibilities as a Trail Steward is to report issues you encounter on the trail, which are categorized as major or minor for the purposes of reporting. Issues you may encounter on the trail fall into two categories:

Minor Issues

Minor issues may be disruptive to trail users, but do not directly interfere with the normal use of a trail. These issues include, but are not limited to:

- Fallen trees which can be stepped over or around without leaving the trail.
- New or developing social trails.
- Faded or missing trail blazes.
- Small amounts of trash.
- Minor erosion which reduces the quality of the trail surface but does not present a safety risk.
- Off-leash dogs which are not aggressive or otherwise disruptive to trail users.

Major Issues

Major issues severely disrupt or prevent the safe and typical use of a trail. These issues include, but are not limited to:

- Fallen trees which cannot be stepped over or around without leaving the trail.
- Large, dead trees directly overhanging the trail.
- Missing or severely damaged signs.
- Severe erosion, such as a wash-out, that makes the trail unusable or presents a safety hazard.
- Damaged or deteriorated bridges, boardwalks, steps, or other structures.
- Large quantities of trash or repeated dumping of trash.
- Off-leash dogs which are aggressive or otherwise disruptive to trail users.

If you are unsure about how to report something, don't hesitate to contact your staff lead!

If you encounter an immediate safety hazard, such as a highly aggressive off-leash dog or a severely injured hiker, call 911, and then call the office or on-call number for your preserve.

Stewardship Expectations

In addition to monitoring your trail, there are several aspects of trail maintenance that you are expected to assist with as a Trail Steward:

Maintaining the Trail Corridor

The “trail corridor” refers to the tread of the trail that you walk on, as well as the cleared area above and beside it.

In general, single-use trails, which are intended for use only by hikers, have a 2-foot tread with an additional foot of clear space on either side, for a total width of 4 feet and are typically kept clear of vegetation up to a height of 8 feet. Some single-use trails are built on old roadbeds, and these trails may have a cleared width of 8-10 feet, but only the central 2-foot tread and 4-foot cleared area need to be maintained.

Dual-use trails, which are intended for use by both hikers and equestrians, typically have a tread width of 4-8 feet, with an additional 2 feet of cleared space on either side and are kept clear of vegetation up to a height of 10 feet. The only dual-use trails in the Trail Stewards Program are the Shakori, Ridge, Knight, and Piedmont Trails in Eno River State Park.

The trail corridor should be kept clear of sticks and other large debris. As you walk your trail, keep an eye out for items in the trail which could pose a tripping hazard and remove them from the trail. If you encounter small logs, tree stubs, or other obstacles in the trail that you feel you can remove with hand tools, please do so. You may choose to carry a folding hand saw when you visit your trail for this purpose, or you can check out hand tools from the Eno River Association shed on Guess Road in Durham.

Especially during the spring and summer, you may find trees, shrubs, or other vegetation growing into the trail which makes it less enjoyable or even unsafe to walk on. If you notice this, we ask that you bring a pair of loppers with you the next time you walk your trail and trim any vegetation that reaches into the trail corridor. If you do not own a pair of loppers, you can contact Indigo to check out a pair from the Eno River Association shed on Guess Road in Durham.

Clearing Water Bars

Water bars, typically made of wood, are structures that cross the trail at an angle to direct water off of the trail and prevent erosion. While this method of preventing erosion has been replaced with other structures in many places, there are still water bars on many trails along the Eno.

In the fall, these water bars tend to collect leaves and other debris, which prevents them from functioning properly. If you notice leaves collecting along water bars on your trail, you have a couple options. You can bring along a shovel to scrape the water bar clear next time you visit. If you're itching to clear the water bar right then, you can always use your foot to clear a water bar, but this isn't recommended if you don't have waterproof shoes on. When you clear a water bar, be sure to move leaves and debris at least one foot past the downhill end to leave a channel for water to flow.

Covering Social Trails

Social trails are trails that form from repeated use but are not sanctioned by the preserve. These trails often bypass erosion prevention features such as stairs, take shortcuts at trail intersections, or access features of interest. However, because these trails typically have not been planned appropriately, they can increase erosion, damage sensitive plants, or create a hazard for trail users.

As a Trail Steward, we ask that you try to cover social trails when you encounter them, but we recognize that this may not always be possible. If you encounter a small social trail, place large sticks, leaves, or other debris over it, particularly where it intersects with real trails. This prevents the social trail from taking on the appearance of a real trail and leading hikers astray.

Safety Information

Bear in mind that as a volunteer you are not eligible for worker's compensation. It is expected that each volunteer will always operate in a safe manner. Some of the hazards you may encounter include, but are not limited to:

- Tripping or fall hazards.
- Bodies of water (including a river).
- Thorny or poisonous plants, including poison ivy. Be sure you know how to identify these plants.
- Stinging or biting insects or spiders, especially mosquitos, ticks and chiggers. Wear insect repellent and check your body for ticks when you are done with any trail work.
- Venomous snakes, particularly copperheads. Be sure you know how to identify these snakes.
- Inclement weather, including extreme temperatures - volunteer work should not be done during inclement weather and should always take place while the park is open. Sunscreen is highly recommended, including during sunny days in winter.

- Wild animals - if you are approached by a wild animal, it may be sick. Do not approach wild animals, and if you suspect an animal is sick, contact your staff lead as soon as possible.
- Domestic animals - you may encounter off-leash dogs in the preserve. If you encounter an off-leash dog, alert the preserve staff in your report. While staff may not be able to directly address the issue, it is important that they are aware of it. If the dog is aggressive towards people or other dogs, contact your staff lead directly as soon as possible.

Please keep the following safety tips in mind while on the trail:

- Bring water and stay hydrated.
- Wear work gloves when using hand tools.
- Wear proper socks and footwear and appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.
- Travel in pairs or groups where possible. If this is not possible, bring a cell phone and let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Carry the preserve office phone number with you. If you are injured during volunteer work, you need to report it. In the event of any medical emergency, call 911 first and then call the preserve office, or the on-call Ranger for Eno River State Park, Occoneechee Mountain Natural Area, or the Historic Occoneechee Speedway.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Stewardship Workdays

If you are interested in additional stewardship volunteer opportunities along the Eno, you can sign up for volunteer stewardship workdays at www.enoriver.org/stewardship. These workdays focus on building and maintaining trails, removing invasive plants and trash, preparing sites for prescribed burning, and a variety of other tasks.