



Highlands Center for Natural History

Volunteer Application

Even if you are a returning volunteer, please fill this out to ensure that our records are up to date.

PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY

Name: _____

Phone number _____

Email Address _____ Email is legible and correct? (Y) (N)

Primary Home Address (e.g, 1375 S Walker Rd, Prescott, AZ 86301)

Are you a new or returning volunteer? New Volunteer Returning Volunteer

If you are returning, how long have you been volunteering with the center? _____

Are you a Highlands Center member? I hold an active membership . I am not a member . Unsure .

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Phone _____ Relationship to emergency contact _____

Relevant Background, Skills, or Experience

Please use the space below to share any relevant experience, training, or skills you bring to your volunteer service. This can include past volunteer work, professional background, hobbies, certifications, or anything else you'd like us to know.



Highlands Center for Natural History

Volunteer Interests

Please **rank up to five** roles you are most interested in by writing **1 (most preferred)** through **5** on the lines next to those roles. Leave the rest blank.

While we will do our best to honor your preferences, **the final placement will depend on your organizational needs and your skills.** Full role descriptions are available in the Volunteer Welcome Packet.

Education

- Hike and Walk Leader
- Discovery Station Leader
- Field Trip Leader
- Nature Camp Support
- Family Forest Play Support
- Adult Programs Leader
- Community Science Team Member
- Outreach Team Member
- Craft Support

Facilities and Grounds

- Discovery Gardener
- Schoolyard Habitat Gardener
- Trail Maintenance
- Technical Support
- Tech Team Member
- Forest Play Maintenance

Finance and Governance

- Fundraising Team Member
- Committee Member
- Financial Resource
- Governance Resource
- Board Member

Operations

- Admin Support
- Store Operations
- Event Support
- General

- Photography Support



Highlands Center for Natural History

Certifications

Please indicate if you currently hold any of the following. Include expiration dates if applicable.

Do you currently hold any of the following certifications?

(Write "Yes" or "No" and include expiration dates where applicable.)

- CPR Certification: _____ Expires: _____
- First Aid Certification: _____ Expires: _____
- Level One Fingerprint Clearance Card (AZ): _____ Expires: _____
- Other certifications you'd like us to know about:

- Do you have any physical limitations or accommodations we should be aware of?

Volunteer Hours for School, Court, or Other Requirements

Are you volunteering to fulfill a requirement (e.g., school, court-ordered service, etc.)?

Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

Deadline or target hours (if applicable): _____

Photo Release

I grant permission for the Highlands Center for Natural History to use photographs or videos of me taken during my volunteer activities for promotional purposes.

Yes No

Acknowledgment and Signature

I certify that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I understand that my placement as a volunteer is based on the organization's needs and available roles.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Highlands Center for Natural History

About Us & Expectations

Wonder – Explore – Discover

Our mission is to help children and adults discover the wonders of nature and become wise caretakers of the land.

Our Vision

We envision a Central Highlands in which people at all stages of their lives develop connections with and learn to care for the natural world.

Our Belief

We believe that innate in everyone is a fundamental interdependence with nature. From the physical site to our programs, we dedicate ourselves to leading in environmental education.

Our Core Values

- **Wonder:** We value giving everyone the opportunity to discover and experience the awe and wonder of nature.
- **Reverence:** We respect, honor and celebrate the natural world and strive to be wise caretakers of the land.
- **Dedication:** We are committed to the mission of the Center, striving for quality in all that we do.
- **Integrity:** We uphold honesty, open communication, mutual respect and accountability in all words and actions.
- **Diversity:** The activities of the Center embrace the diversity found in the natural world, human communities, and individual perspectives.

Our Story Founded in 1996, the Highlands Center for Natural History (HCNH) is a nonprofit nature center located in the Prescott National Forest. HCNH was created from a community vision to connect people, especially children, with nature through science-based, hands-on education.

Today, we serve thousands of visitors each year through school programs, nature camps, guided hikes, family festivals, concerts, and community events. Our 80-acre campus includes the Discovery Gardens, a network of trails, outdoor classrooms, and the James Family Learning Center. These spaces support environmental education, community connection, and a lasting appreciation for the outdoors. Volunteers are essential to everything we do. Whether leading hikes, supporting events, helping with education programs, or working behind the scenes, your service directly supports our mission.

Volunteer Office Hours with the Operations Coordinator

Connor McKay, Operations Coordinator | Highlands Center for Natural History

The Operations Coordinator supports daily logistics, volunteer coordination, and the smooth delivery of programs, events, and visitor services. This role also serves as a point of contact for general volunteer questions, scheduling, role clarification, and feedback. **To provide ongoing support, Volunteer Office Hours are held every Wednesday from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.** Volunteers are welcome to drop in during this time with questions, concerns, or ideas—no appointment is necessary.

If a different time is preferred, a meeting can be arranged by emailing operationscoordinator@highlandscenter.org or by calling the front office at 928-776-9550.



Highlands Center for Natural History

Volunteer Expectations

As a representative of the Highlands Center, each volunteer is expected to:

- Commitment: Be dependable. Arrive on time and prepared. Notify your staff team leader if your schedule changes.
- Communication: Keep in touch with your staff team leader. Ask questions, clarify expectations, and share any concerns.
- Conduct: Treat staff, visitors, and fellow volunteers with respect. Be courteous, inclusive, and professional.
- Safety and Responsibility: Follow all safety protocols. Report injuries, unsafe conditions, or concerns promptly.
- Representation: Support the mission through your actions. Present a positive, welcoming presence.
- Confidentiality: Respect the privacy of visitors, volunteers, and organizational information.
- Training and Growth: Participate in required training and remain open to learning and growth.

We are grateful to have you on the team. Your time, energy, and passion help inspire a deeper understanding and care for the natural world.

Volunteer and Staff Roles

Volunteers and staff work together to support the mission of the Highlands Center, but their roles are distinct. Staff are responsible for managing operations and making organizational decisions. Volunteers are expected to operate within the scope of their assigned duties and follow the direction of staff.

We value the experience and insight volunteers bring and encourage you to share ideas or suggestions with your staff team leader. Clear boundaries help ensure respectful communication, accountability, and a safe, effective environment for all.

Volunteer Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to the Highlands Center for Natural History's mission, vision, core values, and volunteer expectations. I agree to support the organization's mission and uphold the principles of respect, responsibility, and engagement in all my volunteer activities. I will strive to represent the Highlands Center with integrity, contribute to a welcoming and inclusive environment, and act as a thoughtful steward of the natural world.

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Education

Hike and Walk Leader

Hike and Walk Leaders guide guests on interpretive hikes that explore the trails and natural areas surrounding the Highlands Center. Volunteers in this role support Wednesday Wanderings and Hiking Spree events, helping participants learn about local ecology and geology while promoting stewardship and safety.

Volunteers Needed: 4

Staff Team Leader: Education Director

Discovery Station Leader

Facilitates hands-on activities during Discovery Saturdays and public events. Volunteers bring nature to life for children and families through crafts and informal learning.

Volunteers Needed: 8

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

Field Trip Leader

Supports school group programs by leading hikes and activities tied to science standards. Ideal for those with teaching or youth experience.

Volunteers Needed: 4

Staff Team Leader: Education Manager

Nature Camp Support

Assists summer day camps by setting up activities, chaperoning, and helping staff lead games and nature exploration.

Volunteers Needed: 4

Staff Team Leader: Education Manager

Family Forest Play Support

Supports Forest Play programs by welcoming families, maintaining nature play zones, and assisting with materials.

Volunteers Needed: 3

Staff Team Leader: Early Childhood Education Specialist

Adult Programs Leader

Helps deliver adult education programs such as lectures, workshops, and guided walks. May serve as greeters, assistants, or presenters.

Volunteers Needed: 3

Staff Team Leader: Education Director

Community Science Team Member

Collects data for ecological projects like nest monitoring and trail cameras. Roles vary seasonally and may include field observation.

Volunteers Needed: 10

Staff Team Leader: Education Director

Outreach Team Member

Represents the Highlands Center at festivals and community events, sharing program info and interacting with the public.

Volunteers Needed: 8

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

Craft Support

Prepares craft materials and supports hands-on projects for events and family programs.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Education Director

Facilities and Grounds

Discovery Gardener

Works with staff to care for native plant gardens, including weeding, planting, and pruning.

Volunteers Needed: 5

Staff Team Leader: Facilities & Grounds Director

Schoolyard Habitat Gardener

Maintains school gardens at partner campuses, supporting outdoor learning environments.

Volunteers Needed: 5

Staff Team Leader: Schoolyard Habitat Coordinator

Trail Maintenance

Assists with trail upkeep by clearing debris, addressing erosion, and improving path conditions.

Volunteers Needed: 5

Staff Team Leader: Facilities & Grounds Director

Technical Support

Provides skills in trades like plumbing, irrigation, carpentry, or solar. Volunteers are called as needed for infrastructure projects.

Volunteers Needed: 3

Staff Team Leader: Facilities & Grounds Director

Tech Team Member

Supports audio/visual setup and IT troubleshooting for programs and events.

Volunteers Needed: 3

Staff Team Leader: Facilities & Grounds Director

Forest Play Maintenance

Maintains the outdoor play space used in Forest Play programs by repairing materials and supporting safety.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Facilities & Grounds Director

Finance and Governance

Fundraising Team Member

Supports development campaigns like Wander the Wild and the Annual Appeal through outreach, mailings, and donor engagement.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Executive Director

Committee Member

Advises on strategic topics such as finance or programs. Typically involves board-level working groups.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Executive Director

Financial Resource

Provides budgeting or accounting guidance on an as-needed basis.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Executive Director

Governance Resource

Advises on nonprofit governance and best practices. Ideal for former board members or nonprofit professionals.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Executive Director

Board Member

Provides strategic oversight and fiduciary guidance through formal board service.

Volunteers Needed: ~12 (Speak with Sarah if interested in future board opportunities)

Staff Team Leaders: Executive Director and Board Chair

Operations

Admin Support

Helps answer phones, manage records, and support general office tasks.

Volunteers Needed: 2

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

Store Operations

Greets visitors and assists with transactions in the Benson Family Nature Store. Includes basic point-of-sale training.

Volunteers Needed: Up to 10

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

Event Support

Assists with setup, parking, guest hospitality, and cleanup at public events.

Volunteers Needed: ~8 per event

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

Public Relations

Distributes flyers, posters, and rack cards to local locations to promote HCNH programs.

Volunteers Needed: 6

Staff Team Leader: Operations Coordinator

General Volunteer

Flexible role supporting any department as needed. Ideal for those who want to help in a variety of areas.

Volunteers Needed: Varies

Staff Team Leader: All staff as needed

Photography Team

Captures high-quality photos of events, programs, and nature for marketing and documentation purposes.

Volunteers must supply their own equipment.

Volunteers Needed: 2+

Staff Team Leader: Marketing Coordinator

HCNH Volunteer Background Screening Instructions

As part of the volunteer onboarding process at the Highlands Center for Natural History (HCNH), **all volunteers—whether new or returning—are required to complete a background screening**. This applies regardless of past volunteer service. To continue or begin volunteering, you must complete this screening.

Our secure partner, NCSI, provides this service to help ensure a safe environment for all guests, children, and staff. **Follow the steps below to complete your background screening:**

1. Visit the secure application link:
<https://thehighlandscenterfornaturalhistory.quickapp.pro/>
2. Please complete the online form with your personal details.
3. Submit your consent for the background check when prompted.
4. **Cost:**
 - **New volunteers:** \$20 (payable to the Highlands Center via check, cash, in the Nature store, or over the phone).
 - **Returning volunteers:** Your cost is covered (but donations are always appreciated!)
5. Once submitted, your results will be sent directly to HCNH, and will remain completely confidential. All screenings are due 2 months from application submittal.

QR Code to NCSI Screening:



Questions or issues? Contact:

Connor McKay
Operations Coordinator
operationscoordinator@highlandscenter.org
(928) 776-9550