



# Friends of the Riverfront

## Trail Ambassador Program Handbook 2025

**Thank you for joining us as part of the team!**

### **Welcome to the Three Rivers Heritage Trail Ambassador program!**

This Trail Ambassador program is an initiative of Friends of the Riverfront. Our mission is to build safe, clean, and accessible riverfront trails as part of the Three Rivers Heritage & Water Trail systems to create and maintain an outstanding experience for trail users while providing economic, environmental, and health benefits to the Pittsburgh region.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail is a designated National Recreation Trail system that spans 33 miles along both banks of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. The Trail offers opportunities for recreation, transportation, education, and tourism, and connects to many neighborhoods, business districts, and attractions. Friends of the Riverfront works to expand the Three Rivers Heritage Trail, connecting to new communities, and creating large, interconnected Trail Networks like the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

As a Trail Ambassador, you will play a vital role in enhancing the trail experience for everyone who uses it and inviting in trail users to become a part of the Friends of the Riverfront community.

### **What is a Trail Ambassador?**

***As a Trail Ambassador, your main role is to be a friendly and helpful presence on the trail and connect trail users to Friends of the Riverfront's work.*** You will interact with the public in a friendly and professional manner, provide information and assistance, distribute maps and brochures, promote safety and etiquette, report problems and hazards, support events and activities, and represent Friends of the Riverfront and the trail in a positive way. You represent the Three Rivers Heritage Land and Water Trail and ensure that people like you feel safe and welcome to enjoy the Trail. Trail users can come to you for questions, to learn about Trail projects, for directions, or even trip experience suggestions!

You are not responsible for law enforcement, rule enforcement, trail maintenance, or emergency response. If you encounter any situation that requires these services, you should call 911 and/or report non-emergencies to 311. For non-emergency trail maintenance or safety issues you may report them via your Trail Ambassador post-shift volunteer report.

***You can find Trail Ambassadors out in the community tabling at events, cruising along on the Trail, sharing stories and photos, and/or helping Trail users while enjoying the outdoors!***

## Trail Ambassador Role Descriptions

There are several ways to be a Trail Ambassador, depending on your interests and skills. Here are some of the ways you can engage as a Trail Ambassador:

- ***Cycling/Walking/Paddling/Rolling ambassadors:*** These are ambassadors who can ride the Trail on their bike, paddle on the river, skate, or walk along the Trail looking for and reporting maintenance or safety issues, filling map boxes, and helping people on the trail as needed. Roaming ambassadors are especially important for covering more ground and reaching more trail users. These Ambassadors may also adopt a trailside business map drop-off location to help regularly stock maps at popular establishments for Trail users to access.
- ***Event Ambassadors:*** These ambassadors represent Friends of the Riverfront at events and community festivals through tabling. Event Ambassadors are responsible for setting up and taking down the table, displaying materials, engaging with the public, answering questions, and collecting contact information from interested individuals. In some cases, Event Ambassadors will assist staff with tabling and will not be responsible for setting up or managing the table on their own.
- ***Tabling on the Trail Ambassadors:*** These ambassadors volunteer by “trail-gating,” which involves setting up a small table with a visitor information sign to provide maps, information, and giveaways for trail users at designated locations along the Three Rivers Heritage Land and Water Trail launches. As "Tabling on the Trail" ambassadors, they are friendly, welcoming, and ready to offer directions, recommendations, and tips to enhance the trail experience. Volunteers can bring their favorite chair to relax and enjoy the peaceful surroundings while engaging with trail users who need maps, support, or guidance. Some ambassadors may choose to bring a small pop-up canopy tent, though many trail locations offer natural shade from trees, making the tent optional.
- ***Group Trail Guide Ambassadors:*** These are ambassadors who can lead walks, runs, or rides along the Three Rivers Heritage Trails. Programming can be educational, artistic, recreational, or for health. We love to hear your creative ideas and will support you in leading small groups in programming that you wish to host.
- ***\*NEW\* Ambassador Correspondent:*** This ambassador role is great for Trail Ambassador’s who want to practice or strengthen their writing, strengthen social media skills, and report fun Trail stories, trip experiences and ride suggestions, photos and videos from the Trail, writing blog posts, and contributed to content generation. This is a great opportunity for those who enjoy this type of contribution as a hobby, and also those wishing to build upon professional skills in this realm.

## Training and Program Preparation

To become a Trail Ambassador, you need to complete the following steps:

- 1) **Attend an in-person training session** where you will learn background information about the Trail, updates on Trail development, frequently asked questions about the trail system, as well as the policies and procedures of the Trail Ambassador program.
- 2) **Sign a waiver** form where you will agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the program.
- 3) **Sign the Trail Ambassador agreement** that you will follow the handbook protocols.
- 4) **Commit to volunteer a minimum of 4 hours on average per month** during the Trail Ambassador program season (April – October). The more hours you volunteer, the higher perks and rewards you can earn!
- 5) **Optional:** If you would like to work with children while volunteering for Friends, you may complete a free background check and submit to Friends of the Riverfront. Youth events include volunteer opportunities like OpenStreets tabling and “Youth Skoot” events. Background Checks are no longer a requirement for volunteers but are useful to have on file if you wish to submit them.

*One of the best aspects of the Trail Ambassador Program is the flexibility to choose your own shifts and locations based on your availability and preferences. While volunteering for more than 4 hours a month is welcome and encouraged, Ambassadors who accumulate hours beyond the minimum requirement can earn swag as a token of appreciation.*



## Equipment and Resources

**As a Trail Ambassador, you will receive the following equipment and resources to use while on duty:**

- 1) **A Green Trail Ambassador vest** with the Friends of the Riverfront logo that identifies you as a volunteer.
- 2) **Maps, Friends of the Riverfront Volunteer Information, newsletter sign-up forms and additional printed resource materials and publications are released over the season.** You should distribute these materials to interested trail users or leave them at designated kiosks or map boxes.
- 3) When needed, all materials related to event tabling include tent, table, flag, chair, and printed tabling materials.
- 4) Trail Ambassadors who would like to set up a chair and/or small pop-up table will need to provide their own table and chair as needed or table on a location along the Trail where a table, bench, or chair are already located on the Trail. Tabling on the Trail Ambassadors will be provided with a pop-up yard sign and printed materials. Tabling on the Trail volunteers may bring a pop-up canopy tent but this is optional.

### **Trail Ambassador Vests:**

**All Ambassadors must return their volunteering vest at the end of the season** in November. Those who do not return their Trail Ambassador vest by December 1<sup>st</sup> will be charged a \$25 replacement fee. You may return your vest at the end of season volunteer celebration, arrange to drop it off at the office, or send it by mail.

### **Need more materials?**

Email Lavender ([Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org)) to arrange for a materials pick up at the office, at least one week in advance.

**-or-**

**Join us for an on-trail bike ride, one Wednesday a month for a group volunteer ride where you can pick up maps and materials.**

## General Volunteer Policies and Procedures

**1) Adhere to safety protocols** such as wearing appropriate clothing and footwear, carrying enough water and snacks, applying sunscreen and insect repellent, wearing a helmet if biking, staying alert and aware of your surroundings, avoiding confrontations or conflicts with anyone on the trail, respecting wildlife and plants, and following traffic rules and signs. You may want to carry a small bike repair kit, however that is not required for this role.

**2) Respect privacy and confidentiality** by not disclosing any personal or sensitive information about yourself, other volunteers, staff, trail users, or the organization. ***You should ask for permission before taking or sharing any photos or videos of anyone on the trail.***

**3) Follow ethical standards by being honest, respectful, responsible, and courteous to everyone on the trail.** You should also avoid any actions or behaviors that may harm or offend anyone or damage the reputation of Friends of the Riverfront or the Trail. Friends of the Riverfront has a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory behavior or actions towards trail users based on their race, class, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, mental illness, or housing status.

**4) Know when to say, “I don’t know”.** There will be many instances where you may not have enough information regarding a trail user’s request, complaint, or comment. You should be prepared to defer questions to Friends of the Riverfront staff when appropriate. Questions can be directed to [Friends@friendsoftheriverfront@gmail.com](mailto:Friends@friendsoftheriverfront@gmail.com).

**5) How to get more materials- maps, stickers, email lists, brochures, etc.** You can pick up materials at the office by arranging a time with the Trail Experience Coordinator at least **one week** in advance ([Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org)). You can also arrange to pick up materials at one of the public events where Friends of the Riverfront will be tabling. One Wednesday evening a month, you can join us for a group volunteer bike ride where materials will be available.

**6) If you have any questions or concerns communicate** with Friends of the Riverfront staff point person Lavender Sedlock at [Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org) or 412-313-4448. If you have direct feedback - you can document that along with any significant events or interactions using the post-volunteer shift reporting link: <https://wkf.ms/3FO9kEZ>

**If there is an emergency – do not contact Friends of the Riverfront- please use 911 and alert emergency services.**

Many issues that are non-emergencies can be reported using 311.  
<https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Resident-Services/311/Contacting-311>



## Policies and Procedures for Ambassador Roles

**Each Trail Ambassador role has unique responsibilities- these are the policies and procedures specific to each role.**

### Event Ambassadors:

To table at events, sign up at least 5 days in advance via [volunteersignup.org/M7EEB](https://volunteersignup.org/M7EEB). You can choose events that fit your schedule and location preferences. Notify Friends of the Riverfront at least 48 hours in advance if you need to cancel or change your shift. Event Ambassadors will assist full-time staff and will not be responsible for setup or tabling alone. If you experience cold or flu symptoms, contact Friends of the Riverfront to cancel your shift.

### Cycling/Walking/Paddling/Rolling Ambassadors:

No advance sign-up is required, offering flexibility for weather and trail conditions. Choose shifts at times and locations that suit you, but consider peak trail usage (evenings and weekends). Track your hours independently and submit a post-shift reporting form after every shift to log hours, monitor trail conditions, and share experiences: <https://wkf.ms/3OwCfyz>.

### Tabling on the Trail Ambassadors:

No advance sign-up required. Choose shift times and locations along the trail that work best for you, with peak usage times being most effective. Track your hours and submit a post shift report after each shift to log hours, monitor trail conditions, and share experiences. Tabling must occur at designated locations along the Three Rivers Heritage Trail. For new locations, email [Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org) for approval. Confirm sites with Friends of the Riverfront, as some parts of the trail are private property or lack sufficient space.

### Group Trail Guide Ambassadors:

Lead group experiences in partnership with Friends of the Riverfront or other groups. Trips must be approved by staff. Once approved, the Ambassador leads the trip, with support from Friends of the Riverfront for promotion, marketing materials, and volunteer assistance. Independent group leaders are also welcome to collaborate with Friends of the Riverfront for cross-promotion and support.

### Ambassador Correspondent:

Submit photos, narrative, or try your hand at writing a blog article. You may also want to create a social media post, tag "Friendsoftheriverfront" or invite us to join you as a collaborator! Occasionally throughout the season, prompts for articles or blog posts will be shared in the monthly Trail Ambassador newsletter. All submissions for writing, articles, narrative, photos, and collaborative posts can be submitted to [Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org) and are subject to approval. No writing, photos, or posts are guaranteed to be published by Friends of the Riverfront.

## Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Friends of the Riverfront is committed to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and has a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory language or behavior. What do we mean by that:

- We do not discriminate against anyone based on race, class, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, mental illness, or housing status.
- We are careful with the language that we use so that we do not assert assumptions about anyone's experiences or identities or contribute towards stereotypes.
- We are willing to listen and apologize for wrong-doing if a person lets us know that they have been hurt or feel uncomfortable by our words or actions.
- We bring an open mind to listening to the experiences of trail users and try to refrain from judgements or criticisms.
- If you are not sure how to respond to a person's stories or experiences, or not sure what is appropriate in a conversation with a trail user, feel free to say, "I don't know.", "I am not sure.", "I don't feel comfortable discussing that." or "I don't have enough information about that to comment on that." "

We ask that all Trail Ambassadors follow these guidelines when representing Friends of the Riverfront as Trail Ambassadors.

## Perks and Benefits

Trail Ambassadors bring amazing benefits to the Trail community- a safer trail, eyes on maintenance needs, sharing fun and/or helpful tips to enjoying the Trail- and so much more!


As a Trail Ambassador, you will receive many benefits for your efforts such as:

- Invitations to partake in monthly group Ambassador volunteer rides or walks from May – September.
- Invitations to social events with other trail volunteers and staff via monthly Ambassador email updates and social events for Friends of the Riverfront volunteers.
- Exclusive updates on Trail development projects and Trail expansion initiatives.
- Representing Friends of the Riverfront at events, festivals, art fairs, and more!
- Professional skills development and professional networking opportunities.
- Leadership opportunities in leading group rides or walks and guiding the volunteer program.
- Invitations to volunteer appreciation celebrations with the larger group of trail volunteers.
- Discounts with our partners such as Three Rivers Outdoor Company.
- 20% Discount to our Autumn biannual fundraiser.
- Free admission to members-only FriendsFest.
- TRHT Swag Gift Levels for reaching a certain number of volunteer hours each season:

**Ambassador Perks (May – October)**

25 hours:	50 hours:	100 Hours:	Top 3 Cycling Jersey:
			
📍 25 hours logged: Trail Ambassador or Friends of the Riverfront Hat			
🌿 50 hours logged: Friends of the Riverfront Hoodie or Sweatshirt			
💧 100 hours logged: Gift Card to local Trail-side Business			

📍 **Top 3 Ambassadors:** who log the most hours over the season will be awarded a Friends of the Riverfront Trail Ambassador Cycling Jersey in place of other hours-based award.



**Additional Perks:**  
 10% off purchases at Three Rivers Outdoor Company  
 20% off Aerotech Designs (Promo code: FOTRF)  
 Free admission into FriendsFest 2025  
 Opportunities for Raffles and Giveaways





## Appendices

*This section includes additional information or documents that may be useful for you as a trail ambassador. You can request any Ambassador materials from Friends of the Riverfront staff.*

### Friends of the Riverfront - Contact Information:

#### Friends of the Riverfront Contact Information:

Trail Experience Coordinator (Ambassador Program Manager) - Lavender Sedlock- 412-313-4448, [Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org)

General Friends of the Riverfront phone number and email where all staff can be reached- 412-488-0212, [friends@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:friends@friendsoftheriverfront.org)

### Friends of the Riverfront - Social Media:

Bluesky- <https://bsky.app/profile/friendsoftheriverfront.org>

Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/FriendsoftheRiverfront/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/fotr.pgh>

LinkedIn- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/friends-of-the-riverfront/posts/?feedView=all>

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**In case of emergency:**

#### **311 and 911**

##### ***When to call 311 vs 911:***

[https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/311/documents/residential\\_911-311\\_final.pdf](https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/files/assets/city/v/1/311/documents/residential_911-311_final.pdf)

##### ***Tips for contacting emergency services on trails:***

<https://www.ecoatm.com/blogs/news/how-to-share-your-location-on-iphone-and-android>

<https://www.alpinesavvy.com/blog/how-to-make-a-backcountry-911-call>

## Tabling on the Trail Locations:

- Southside Riverview Park
- Color Park
- Millvale Riverfront Park
- Duck Hollow Water Trail Launch (Parking Lot)
- Lawrenceville Water Trail Launch (Picnic Area)
- Eliza Furnace Trail (Second Ave entrance, Picnic Area)
- Westhall Water Trail Launch Area

Ambassadors are welcome to suggest locations for tabling on the Trail to the program manager. Please reach out to [Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org](mailto:Lavender@friendsoftheriverfront.org) if you have an idea for a tabling location that works best for you.

## Group Volunteer Trail Ride Schedule (dates and times subject to change):

**May** – Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7pm – Millvale Riverfront Park Start

**June** – Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7:30pm – Special Guest- Trail Development Team- Westhall Start

**July** – Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7pm – Southside Riverfront Park Start

**August** – Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7pm – Duck Hollow Start

**September** – Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm – 7pm – Herr’s Island Start

## Map Box Locations on the Trail:

**Eliza Furnace Trail Head**- Located on the wooden beam of the picnic table area by 2<sup>nd</sup> St Parking lot

**Baldwin**- Affixed to the leg of the interpretive signage map (permanent interpretive signage of the Trail map)

**Mon Wharf Connector Switchback**- Located at the top of the Mon Wharf switchback at the end of the Smithfield St bridge

**Westhall**- Located on the Boat Rack in Westhall, next to the Water Trail Map Box.

**Millvale Riverfront Park**- Affixed to the bulletin board by the bathrooms at Millvale Riverfront Park

**Important: Please do not place Land Trail maps in Water Trail map boxes. Land Trail map boxes have a clear lid, Water Trail map boxes have a white lid. If you notice that a map box is missing, please take a photo and submit in a Post Shift Report.**

## Important links and QR codes:

- **Post-Volunteer Shift Reporting Online form (required after every shift):**

<https://wkf.ms/3FO9kEZ>



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- **Sign up to volunteer as a Trail Ambassador for upcoming outreach events:**

[volunteersignup.org/M7EEB](https://volunteersignup.org/M7EEB)



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- **Trail Ambassador Facebook Group**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/683021370113805>



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- **Reporting Trail Maintenance Issues or City of Pittsburgh managed issues using 311:**

<https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Resident-Services/311/Contacting-311>



**AMBASSADOR  
PLEDGE**

**friends**  
OF THE RIVERFRONT



I hereby commit to serving as an official Three Rivers Heritage & Water Trail Ambassador with Friends of the Riverfront for 2025, understanding the nature of the role, its expectations, and the opportunities derived from it.

I pledge to:

- Commit to my role as Trail Ambassador
- Be an active participant in the cohort
- Submit my hours and activities
- Be honest about my own capacity
- Treat others with respect
- Make safety the highest priority
- Promote Trail guidelines and etiquette
- Adhere to all applicable laws and regulations
- Act as an advocate for Friends of the Riverfront
- Return my Trail Ambassador Vest
- Have fun!

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**SIGNATURE**

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**BY SIGNING HERE, I AGREE TO RETURN MY TRAIL  
AMBASSADOR VEST AT THE END OF THE SEASON  
OR PAY \$25 REPLACEMENT FEE**

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**DATE**