

Life Without Volunteers

Kenneth Nalley, Park Naturalist/Volunteer Coordinator

This volunteer spotlight article will be different than previous ones. Due to the circumstances of the past few months, the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge was unable to host volunteers during the closure. We rely heavily on our volunteers — the heart of our workforce — to help us with a range of tasks, from animal care to greenhouse production.

With the vast amount of volunteer work normally conducted at the Nature Center, keeping up with operations has proven to be a challenge for our small staff. Natural Guard is one area where we heavily rely on volunteers. This opportunity allows volunteers to help maintain the Refuge through trail maintenance, invasive plant species removal, and special projects throughout the property. To keep the Refuge maintained during the closure, our staff has tirelessly worked together to make up for the lack of volunteer support. All staff have cleared trails, completed ongoing projects, and learned new skills and techniques along the way that have made us better at what we do.

Another area where we heavily rely on volunteer support is at the greenhouse. Our greenhouse houses the native plants that staff and volunteers have collected from seed and nurtured through every stage of development. Currently, our customer service staff has taken over daily duties and caretaking responsibilities at the greenhouse. While they cannot do all of the work or complete all of the projects that our greenhouse volunteers usually undertake, they have done a fantastic job of keeping the greenhouse thriving while we patiently await the return of our army of green thumbs.

While we have adapted the best we can to the current situation, we are looking forward to the day when our volunteers are back donating their time doing what they love. Our hope is that this time has inspired more people to fall in love with nature and that they will seek out opportunities here at the Nature Center to share their newfound appreciation with everyone who visits.



Education staff pitched in to help maintain trails during the closure. FWNC&R Staff Photo.