

Unity Farm Sanctuary

17 Unity Lane
Sherborn MA 01770
508-848-8368

Unity Farm Sanctuary Volunteer Manual

REV. 1.04 25nd December 2025

Welcome!

Volunteer

The Unity Farm Sanctuary Volunteers are an important and valued part of the Sanctuary. Volunteers can participate in onsite care of many of the rescues here, or help with other tasks throughout the year.

Overview

Volunteers use a monthly SignUpGenius to come onsite for paddock tasks. Our paddocks are color coded for training, and Volunteers receive a badge that reflects the colors they are trained for at that point. Green, Orange, Blue, Purple and Black. Volunteers keep badges with them to wear when onsite.

Green Paddocks

All Volunteers start here no matter their prior experience. 100-300 pound ruminants. Green includes 'The Welcoming Corner' (goats/sheep), and all Feathered Friends.

Weekend Coop Cleaning Crew

A social group of dedicated volunteers do a full coop cleaning each weekend. There is a separate SignUp Genius link for that!

Orange Paddocks

Volunteers comfortable with equines and equids 300-700 pounds can train for the 'Hilltop Paddock' (donkeys), 'The Run Around' (ponies) and the 'Hideaway Paddock' (ponies and mini horses plus the 'Hideaway' with goats and sheep, and ponies), 'Alpaca Guys and Gals' (female alpaca and dogs), 'Kune Friends' (Kune Kune Pigs), and 'Mighty Matts' mini horses.

Blue Paddock

Volunteers comfortable with equines 1000-1200 pounds can train for the 'Sanctuary Paddock'.

Purple Paddock

Volunteers comfortable with mini pigs can train for 'Piggy Huts' where the miniature/potbelly pigs live.

Black Paddocks

A very small number of longtime volunteers and LEAP participants can train for a Black Paddock such as the 'Happy Pigs Paddock' for the large pigs.

Red Paddocks

Currently the bovines are not an option.

PURPOSE

Volunteers are a key part of making the lives of the rescues better by cleaning, socializing and brushing appropriate rescues. Volunteers can additionally help with social media, staffing the onsite store, writing posts and blogs, and helping at tabling events such as Vegfests. Volunteers do not come to the Sanctuary for purely a chance to "pet" animals, there must be additional benefits to the rescues. We are here for them, they are not here for us.

SCOPE

Volunteers do not have to pre-commit to any set number of hours, or span of participation. Some Volunteers have gaps or breaks of a long period and are welcome to return. If a volunteer

needs community service hours, it is their responsibility to complete the hours and use SignUpGenius for the Volunteer Coordinator to be able to track those hours before signing off on any forms.

Volunteers can participate in an Orientation followed by a Green Paddock one-on-one training by appointment. Cleaning paddocks, brushing rescues, socializing rescues, and exercising some rescues are some options. Any volunteer wishing to add more colors to their badge can make an appointment for training. Volunteers can help with the facilities maintenance too (raking and clean-up outside of the paddocks). Almost all feeding of the rescues is done by the Animal Caregiver staff, but food and water of the Feathered Friends can be done by volunteers with a training session to start.

Volunteers can help at our two events: Dudleyfest in June and Celebration of the Turkeys in November. Help at each paddock area is needed, or help with the store and other elements of running the event. More options abound!

PREREQUISITES

Age, Physical and Mental Ability

Volunteers must be at least 10 years of age to start direct in-paddock volunteering. From age 10 to when the Volunteer turns 14, the Volunteer will be with an adult at all times. At age 14, a responsible volunteer can ask to work in paddocks without an adult. Volunteers with any physical limits should make sure to only do activity that their body can sustain. Any Volunteer requiring full-time guidance for their safety or for the rescues' safety should have a monitor with them at all times. Paddocks are not wheelchair accessible. This is for the safety of our Volunteers and our rescues.

Agree to follow the instructions of Managers and Animal Caregivers

Volunteers will follow any on-the-spot instructions from the Caregiving Team. For example, if instructed to stop doing something, or to move to a safe area, please do so. The Sanctuary reserves the right to let a Volunteer know that after a first reprimand for an un-permitted activity, the Volunteer can be asked to leave and not return.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Volunteers agree to perform volunteering tasks with attention to the safety of themselves, other people in their vicinity, and the rescues
- Volunteers will refrain from wearing animal fur on Sanctuary grounds.

- Volunteers will not bring meat/flesh, eggs, animal dairy onto the Sanctuary grounds. This is true of visitors as well.
- Please do not take any eggs home.
- Volunteers will not bring a companion animal in their vehicle in the parking lot.
- Volunteers will perform their volunteering tasks onsite and call/text the Volunteer Coordinator at (781) 366-3997 if a problem is seen. If there is an emergency, please also locate an Animal Caregiver or Shelter Manager nearby.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear (closed-toed shoes) so no sandals and crocs inside paddocks. You can bring spare shoes for the drive home and bag up your paddock shoes. Long pants are best.
- Do not come in heavy snow or rain conditions, nor severe cold or thunderstorms. We have handwarmers/toewarmers in the Muck Hut for winter comfort, plus a water bubbler there year-round.
- We ask that you do not enter the Healing Haven Quarantine Barn. You may visit the birds living there from the outside, and work in the Mighty Matts Paddock
- Volunteers will not feed any rescue unless under the direct request of an Animal Caregiver.
- Please help the Caregiving Team by allowing them to do their tasks - keep your conversations brief

PROCEDURE

For your safety and enjoyment please be mindful of basic procedures:

Green Paddocks

For 'The Welcoming Corner', and all 'Feathered Friends', park at the main parking lot unless otherwise directed. Start at the Muck Hut for tools, selecting the correct tools for the type of paddock you will be working in - swap tools as needed. Also select a rolling cart and red buckets. Use metal tools for freezing temperatures. Take them to the paddock, use the double gates for all (except Feathered Friends; which have no gates), only opening one gate at a time to allow you to prevent escapes. Securely close every gate each time. Clean the paddocks of the manure, leaves and waste hay. DO NOT FILL THE RED BUCKET MORE THAN 75%. Cover the red bucket if it is raining. Alert the Volunteer Coordinator of any problems.

- Please use the appropriate labeled bucket of brushes for the goats.
- Feeding and water for the Coop area is trained separately - contact the Volunteer Coordinator. (You need to be able to lift 50 pounds of water or grain safely ONLY for the Coop Crew area).

Coop Cleaning Crew

- Volunteers clear out the old bedding of shavings or straw and we recommend masks.
- Full red muck buckets can be left right outside the coops.
- Volunteers lightly apply First Saturday Lime powder (must wear mask) and permethrin spray, lay down new bedding (shavings or straw)
- Fill food and water.
- Volunteers do not clean the Safe Haven Coop
- Doors stay closed at all times on the Cottage Coop and the Little Voices Coop. Gate stays closed at all times on the Bodie Coop.

Orange Paddocks

For 'Hilltop Paddock', 'The Run Around', 'Hideaway Paddock', 'Alpaca Guys and Gals', 'Kune Friends', and 'Mighty Matts' park at the main parking lot unless otherwise directed. Start at the Muck Hut for tools, selecting the correct tools for the type of paddock you will be working in - swap tools as needed. Use metal tools for freezing temperatures. Also select a rolling cart and red buckets and take them to the paddock. Securely close every gate each time. Clean the paddocks of the manure, leaves and waste hay. DO NOT FILL THE RED BUCKET MORE THAN 50% for horse and donkey manure. Cover the red bucket if it is raining. Alert the Volunteer Coordinator of any problems.

- Hilltop - use the gate on the inner fenceline instead of the wood door.
- Run Around - use a gate to enter that does not have a pony standing right there.
- Hideaway - be aware there is a double gate to allow for Sweetie Pony to have a feeding area. Hilltop area you can also go in and clean or visit with the sheep. Winston has head butted before, but not since he was placed in this area. Sully Sheep can be walked with the assistance of an Animal Caregiver who can halter Sully for you.
- Mighty Matts - make sure not to let any of the mini horses into the exit alcove!
- Alpaca Gals and Guys are easy going but they don't want to be touched. The dogs will love your attention - please just **make sure the dogs do not escape**
- Mirabella, Belladonna, Wulfie, Phillip, Willie Blake and Eddie Poe love attention! Give them belly rubs and pet them if they won't let you get out of the 'Kune Friends'.
- Please use the appropriate bucket of brushes for the paddock you are in at the time.
- Dogs can be walked, talk to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Blue Paddock

For 'Sanctuary Paddock', park at the main parking lot unless otherwise directed. Start at the Muck Hut for tools, selecting the correct tools for the type of paddock you will be working in - swap tools as needed. Use metal tools for freezing temperatures. Also select a rolling cart and red buckets and take them to the paddock. **Securely** close every gate each time. Clean the paddocks of the manure, leaves and waste hay. **DO NOT FILL THE RED BUCKET MORE THAN 50%**. Cover the red bucket if it is raining. Alert the Volunteer Coordinator of any problems.

Purple Paddock

For 'Piggy Huts, park at the main parking lot unless otherwise directed. Start at the Muck Hut for tools, selecting the correct tools for the type of paddock you will be working in - swap tools as needed. Use metal tools for freezing temperatures. Also select a rolling cart and red buckets and take them to the paddock. Securely close every gate each time. Clean the paddocks of the manure, leaves and waste hay. Cover the red bucket if it is raining. Alert the Volunteer Coordinator of any problems.

If you are scheduled to assist the feeding of the mini pigs, keep an eye on Nikki to ensure she only gets her smoothie. Tofu eats quickly and will try to take Roger's food unless they are kept separate. Use a red pig-board as needed for your safety. Lunchbox can be nippy. Brushes for the minipigs are in the deckbox at the Piggy Huts gate.

Black Paddocks

'Happy Pigs Paddock' instructions are given directly to the trainee.

Red Paddocks

Not available at this time.

RISKS

Even the smallest rescue at the Sanctuary can accidentally injure a volunteer, so please watch your surroundings and the body language of the rescues you are with.

- Be mindful of tripping on rocks and roots. Hay feeders are heavy metal, don't bump your head.

- Wash hands thoroughly after being onsite.
- Goats/Sheep/Llama/Alpaca/Bovines do not have top incisors, but they still do have bottom incisors!
- Don't allow the goat horns to be near your eyes/head.
- Birds are attracted to the shiny character of eyes or lips, so don't place your face near them.
- Horses and donkeys have a full mouth of teeth. Only offer them a flat hand near the mouth and don't linger your hand long - especially do not put your face near their mouths. Horses and donkeys have a 330 degree field of view and cannot see you walk up to them in the rear. They can startle and bolt at almost any sudden unexpected object or noise, so be aware of your position and body language with horses and donkeys.
- Bovines remain off limits (Dudley's horns, Pal is unpredictable, Wallace charges people)
- Pigs are complicated! Bad eyesight and a fantastic sense of smell hundreds of times better than yours. They can snap at you when nervous, and they love food so don't offer your hands to the mini pigs or the big pigs. You may always interact with the Kune Kune, especially with belly rubs.
- We have med kits at every barn area with band-aids etc.

Last thoughts

We appreciate you! Please make the Sanctuary a place of joy and respite for you. We encourage you to bring family and friends to walk around the Sanctuary with you - but please don't bring them into the paddock with you. Any romaine lettuce treat should be cleared with the Volunteer Coordinator first. If you have ideas on how to help make the Sanctuary a better place for all, we would love to discuss. Welcome to the Sanctuary Family!

Kathy Halamka

Executive Director

Volunteer Coordinator

781-366-3997