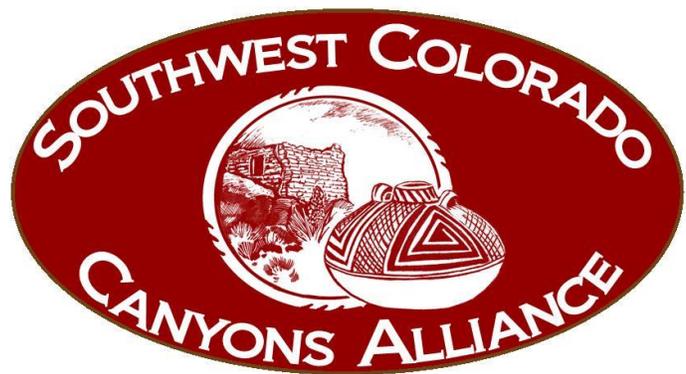


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VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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SCCA

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Volunteers, Our Most Valuable Asset



Thank you for being an integral part of Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance! SCCA is the only 501(c)3 dedicated specifically to Canyons of the Ancients National Monument (CANM) and its headquarters at the Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC). We greatly appreciate your willingness to contribute your time, energy, and enthusiasm to care for CANM and the AHC. We are glad you have chosen to volunteer with us.

You will have interesting and unique opportunities as you partner in the stewardship of CANM and assist the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in performing its mission. You are part of an elite team of like-minded people who care about these exceptional places and want to maintain and improve them. You will discover new opportunities and acquire new skills as you meet interesting and knowledgeable people. Our symbiotic relationship will include both your benefits as a volunteer and our benefits from your background knowledge and skills. Thank you for helping us to conserve the essential fabric of the West by playing a role in protecting the lands, wildlife, and archaeology of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Anasazi Heritage Center.

Volunteers donate thousands of hours each year to public lands. Your dedication will make it possible for BLM/CANM and AHC to achieve mandated goals in land management, stewardship, and conservation that they might not otherwise be able to achieve.

This handbook is to give our volunteers an understanding of their role and how it fits in with BLM's mission. Please contact your project coordinator if you have questions about your work as a volunteer.



SCCA ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance is the only non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated specifically to Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Anasazi Heritage Center. It was founded in 2013 by a group of citizens who were concerned about the future of their local Public Lands. They became determined to find alternative financial aid and volunteer support to complement the good works of the BLM in caring for the precious and delicate landscape of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, located in

Southwest Colorado, and its headquarters at the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado. SCCA holds a Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM/Tres Rios Field Office, which oversees CANM, to develop and provide volunteer projects and programs both on-site and via outreach. SCCA's mission statement is:

The Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance supports the missions of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Anasazi Heritage Center through financial and volunteer resources. We focus on the preservation of this irreplaceable cultural and natural landscape through education and research.

SCCA values its volunteers and is committed to providing a range of programs and opportunities to work with others to respect and enjoy the land. We aim to nurture volunteers' growth through training and respect. As SCCA continues to grow and partner with BLM, it will provide more opportunities.

Volunteer Basics

Volunteer Defined

The United States Department of Labor defines “volunteer” *as an individual who donates services, usually on a part-time basis, for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives with promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation.*

Volunteers for SCCA

SCCA welcomes and appreciates both long-term (program) and short-term (project) volunteers. We ask volunteers to share our passion for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, as well as other public lands, and the Anasazi Heritage Center. SCCA volunteers should have a common interest in the mission and work of SCCA.

An SCCA “Program” Volunteer is a person or group willing to help with ongoing activities. Program Volunteers make advanced levels of commitment and gives stronger assurances to contribute a minimum number of hours and effort to promote responsible care of the natural and cultural resources on Canyons of the Ancients or at the Anasazi Heritage Center. SCCA Program Volunteers are required to sign the SCCA Waiver and to participate in at least one SCCA orientation and required trainings. SCCA Program Volunteers are encouraged to support commitment to our mission by **becoming a member of SCCA.**

An SCCA “Project” Volunteer is a person or group electing to work for a limited timeframe and for a specific project. Project Volunteers are required to sign an SCCA Waiver prior to participating in the one-time event or the project.

Program Volunteers must attend an SCCA orientation and training for their respective program. Volunteers involved in only one-day projects are not required to attend orientations or trainings.

Photographer Ansel Adams once stated: *“We who are gathered here may represent a particularly elite, not of money and power, but of concern for the earth for the earth’s sake.”* SCCA volunteers reflect this statement in their daily love and respect for public lands so that current and future generations may learn from and enjoy them.

This Handbook is geared toward all Program Volunteers.

Expectations:

Volunteers can expect SCCA to:

- Value and appreciate their time, talent, and expertise.
- Treat all volunteers with respect and decency while nurturing their growth.
- Provide a broad range of rich and enjoyable programs.
- Inspire individuals to work together to respect and enjoy the land.
- Protect their privacy and not release their contact information without their permission.
- Maintain a positive work environment.
- Communicate adequately through several mediums.
- Provide trainings and materials necessary for participating in programs.
- Provide educational opportunities throughout the year.

We expect Volunteers to:

- Keep safety as their top priority.
- Consider volunteer work a professional commitment.
- Represent SCCA and our agency partner (BLM/CANM and AHC) in an appropriate and responsible manner always.
- Be non-confrontational while performing SCCA volunteer duties.
- Act as members of the SCCA volunteer “team” when working with other volunteers and SCCA staff.
- Be prompt and reliable in reporting for duty and follow through on all commitments.
- Dress in an appropriate manner for their positions and wear required identification (nametags, uniforms).
- Follow their activity descriptions.
- Participate in continuing education to enhance their skills.
- Provide their own transportation and gear unless otherwise stated.
- Practice Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! ethics.

SCCA Volunteer Policies include:

- Safety is our top priority. All activities will be performed with the safety of the volunteers as the main consideration. Volunteers are encouraged to travel in pairs.
- Volunteers will complete required paper work (such as required reports and time sheets) in a timely manner.
- Volunteers will sign an SCCA waiver of release of liability.
- Volunteers will attend orientation and training sessions as scheduled.
- Volunteers will report injuries immediately to the Executive Director.
- Volunteers will notify the Executive Director if they are unable to complete their volunteer commitment.
- Volunteers should communicate with SCCA any problems or concerns about their position.
- Volunteers should provide, in writing, their desire to discontinue their volunteer work with adequate notice so that the position can be filled.
- Volunteers will contact the Executive Director via text, email, or phone call prior to going into the field to perform assigned duties.
- Volunteers will comply with Federal Sexual Discrimination and Harassment laws.
- Volunteers may not carry weapons while on duty.

SCCA Protects the Privacy of Volunteers

SCCA will not give out volunteer information to other sources without permission. This includes e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and physical addresses. We use the bcc function (so that other volunteers do not see your email) when contacting groups.

Harassment / Sexual Harassment

SCCA is committed to providing a positive working environment that encourages productive, efficient, and creative work. In compliance with applicable laws, SCCA will not tolerate any verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another’s work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

Harassment is defined as offensive verbal, non-verbal, or visual conduct based on race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, or any other individual status or condition. *Sexual harassment* is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Any volunteer harassing another will be disciplined, up to and including termination. If you, as a volunteer, believe you have been subjected to harassment, or you have witnessed the harassment of, another, you should report the incident immediately to the Executive Director (ED). Complaints will receive prompt attention and appropriate action will be taken.

Resolving Issues

If a situation develops that you cannot resolve with the ED, please make an appointment to discuss the issue with the Board of Directors. All complaints and questions will be considered carefully and discussed with the individual who raises them.

Political Activity

Volunteers may not wear campaign items or promote political positions when on duty. We also highly recommend that you refrain from “talking politics” or commenting in a negative way, about SCCA or our agency partner while on duty.

Keeping Track of Hours and Mileage

Your volunteer hours are a valuable contribution and become a permanent record for SCCA. Additionally, we track your mileage to and from your volunteer activity. We must report your hours and miles to BLM. More importantly, we use these hours and miles to demonstrate our involvement in the community and to fundraise for programs. The BLM fiscal year begins October 1 and runs through September 30. At the end of the calendar year, SCCA sends volunteers an accounting of the hours and miles they reported. Mileage may be used on your income tax return. (Check with your accountant.)

The Executive Director will work with volunteers on how to submit hours and miles. Always try to be timely with reporting; we often must give interim reports to BLM or be able to submit these hours when applying for funding.

Communications: E-news, Volunteer Opportunities

SCCA produces a monthly newsletter which contains information about opportunities to volunteer. E-mail addresses are kept confidential when you sign up for e-news.

Volunteer Recognition

An annual celebration of volunteers will take place each summer, date TBD. We encourage volunteers to participate and to meet other volunteers.

Resignations

Volunteers will update their commitment to volunteer in a program annually. They will sign a Letter of Commitment with an updated activity description. By signing this letter, volunteers indicate that they are still interested in remaining in a program and that SCCA should keep the volunteer on the roster.

If you decide to leave your volunteer position, we ask that you do the following:

- Contact the Executive Director about your change in volunteer status **in writing**.
- Return any handbooks, uniforms, name badges, site forms, or **any other materials that were provided to you or generated in support of your volunteer position**.
- If you wish, you may schedule an exit interview.

Terminations

Volunteers who do not adhere to SCCA policies and procedures or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments are subject to dismissal. Depending on the situation, a volunteer may be given an opportunity to improve performance. If performance has not improved within a reasonable amount of time, the volunteer may be terminated, in writing, by SCCA.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing volunteer activities
- Theft of property or misuse of agency funds, equipment, or materials
- Illegal, violent, or unsafe acts
- Unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of SCCA and/or the objectives of the program

Inactive Volunteer Status

Volunteers may be in either **Active** or **Inactive** status.

Inactive Status:

- No hours submitted for over 24 months
- Mail returned or undeliverable
- No activity for 3 years or the volunteer has resigned in writing
- Request received from volunteer to change to inactive status

A volunteer in Inactive Status will not receive mailings, nor be contacted by SCCA for volunteer opportunities. If you no longer receive volunteer information by mail and wish to continue being an SCCA volunteer, simply contact the Executive Director to change your status to Active.

Tax Deductions

Southwest Colorado Canyons Alliance is a 501(c)(3) organization.

The following list offers examples of the types of expenditures that volunteers may possibly deduct on their tax returns:

- Supplies purchased to perform volunteer duties
- Telephone bills
- Cost of upkeep of uniforms
- Auto mileage
- Dues, fees, or assessments made to a qualified organization
- Non-cash contributions of property (e.g. clothing, books, household items, equipment, etc.)
- Cash contributions

Please contact the Internal Revenue Service and/or your accountant for more information.



Getting Started SCCA Program Volunteers

- Complete Volunteer Profile
- Complete an interview with Executive Director
- Attend SCCA Volunteer Orientation
- Choose a program
- Complete the program training

Volunteer Profile

All new volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Profile prior to service. Personal information that you provide will be strictly confidential. If you are 18 years or younger, acceptance into an SCCA program is at the discretion of the Executive Director. Parental permission will be required.

- Volunteers **may** be subject to a background check, especially if working with youth.
- Volunteers working with youth **may** be required to have additional training.
- Some programs may require you sign a “Code of Ethics.” Check with the Executive Director.

SCCA Volunteer Orientation

SCCA Program Volunteers will attend SCCA orientation; this may be online, in a classroom, or at the discretion of the Executive Director. Topics will include:

- Introduction to SCCA, its background and mission
- Membership
- Serving BLM/Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Anasazi Heritage Center
- BLM general regulations
- Introduction to Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) on CANM
- Volunteer Profiles and Agreements, Liability Waivers
- Reporting Time and Mileage
- Volunteer Safety
- Reporting Injuries

Volunteering for an SCCA Project or Event

SCCA sponsors one-day projects or events, such as a trash pickup or fundraising event. Volunteers are usually asked to pre-register and will be required to sign an SCCA Waiver of Release of Liability. The project or event coordinator will be responsible for recording volunteers’ time.



Public Contact

Not all volunteer activities require that you contact the public. The following information includes suggestions that will assist you in making decisions about how to address different situations any time you interact with the public.

Meeting visitors in the backcountry

SCCA public contact programs operate under the philosophy of the “good host” or “good-will ambassador.” This means we try to treat each visitor or contact as an invited or welcome guest on public land. As a volunteer, you represent SCCA and BLM. Interactions with the public must be educational, friendly, and non-confrontational. Take pride in a job well-done in serving the public and public lands. *If you are involved in a program that involves contact with the public, please review and understand the following Dos and Don'ts.*

Dos and Don'ts of Public Contact

Do

Keep in mind that our #1 goal is provide information and education about site and trail etiquette, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly Ethics, and public land stewardship.

Three key factors when making a public contact:

1. Your approach. Start with some small talk. Here are examples:
 - Hi, I am a volunteer.
 - Where are you from?
 - Are you enjoying your visit?
 - Where are you headed?Then you may lead into an important message. Some examples:
 - May I share some information with you?
 - Are you aware that cutting switchbacks causes erosion?
 - Are you familiar with Leave No Trace or Tread Lightly?
 - Are you aware of the cryptobiotic soils and how they help stop erosion?
 - Would you like more information?
2. Your attitude. Be positive, friendly, and interested in the visitor. Focus on finding out what the visitor might have to offer you as well as what you might offer them. Examples:
 - Have you been here before?
 - Do you live in the area?
3. The impression you leave with the contact. Leave the visitor with the feeling of having gained information that will make their experience on public lands more enjoyable. Example:
 - Stewardship information they can pass along to friends and family
 - A Leave No Trace card
 - The feeling that they are happy that someone is out and providing helpful information

Other Dos

- Let the visitor know that you are a volunteer of SCCA.
- Remove your sunglasses when speaking with a visitor. Eye contact is warmer and friendlier.
- Stand shoulder to shoulder when sharing information. This is a less threatening stance.
- Avoid abruptness. Lead up to your message.
- Stay positive.
- Be a good listener.
- Ask if you can share some valuable information with them about being a good steward on public lands.
- Focus on the “Authority of the Resource” not the authority of the agency or regulations. Remember we have no policing or law enforcement capability. Our responsibility is to provide information in a friendly and non-confrontational manner.
- Answer all questions if possible.
- Avoid dangerous situations or confrontational visitors. Just tell them to have a nice day and walk away if you feel threatened. Document the situation and give it to the program leader or the law enforcement officer.

Don't . . .

- Invade the visitor's personal space or “get into his face.”
- Display an overbearing attitude.
- Be critical or sharp.
- Be self-righteous.
- Assume an aggressive posture (crossing your arms or pointing a finger).
- Lose your cool.
- Respond to abusive language in anger.
- Act in an elitist manner.
- Talk about politics or be negative about the agency for whom you volunteer.

Volunteer Safety

Your safety as an SCCA volunteer is our most important concern.

SCCA requires volunteers involved in SCCA programs to inform the Executive Director when they are going in the field to perform their volunteer duties.

Notifying the Executive Director protects the volunteer's rights if they are injured while volunteering. SCCA policy is that no activity will be started unless it can be completed in a safe, effective manner. Most of SCCA's volunteer activities take place outdoors. Volunteers must keep in mind the following potential risks when outdoors:

Weather

Weather in Southwest Colorado is unpredictable and requires preparation. Volunteers should:

- Dress appropriately for the activity they are undertaking.
- Be aware of changing conditions and bring extra clothing and rain gear.
- Carry a day pack with water and emergency supplies such as a first aid kit, fire-starting materials, cell phone, and food.
- Avoid going in the field if storms or lightning is present.

Terrain

- Wear appropriate sturdy shoes, such as hiking boots.
- Wear appropriate clothing (pants, long sleeves) if you will be in brushy terrain.
- Know your ability and avoid dangerous situations.

Using Stock

Many volunteers use stock in their activities and should be prepared by:

- Using only well-trained and well-conditioned stock for volunteer activities.
- Checking your stock's gear (such as cinches, bridles, and saddle pads) before going in the field. Make sure the gear is in good condition.
- We highly recommend wearing a helmet when riding a horse.

Volunteer in Pairs

SCCA highly recommends our volunteers travel in pairs for their own safety.

Reminders

Before going to the field to volunteer:

- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Have a partner.
- Call your Executive Director to say you will be out performing your volunteer job.
- Carry essential equipment.
- Be observant in the field.
- Stay calm if you get lost. Stop, sit down, think.
- Learn to read and understand topographical maps of the area.
- Never act in a "law enforcement" capacity.
- Carry important contact information with you.

