

Volunteers In Action

Volunteer at Eastern Neck NWR, Maryland

Leann Miller, Volunteer:

Well, I've been volunteering here for about ten or eleven years now, so invasive species isn't my first job down here.

But, this place—National Wildlife Refuge—it's just a gem. And it's close to home, whatever I can do to help, just to be out in the outdoors here. Coming up the road today an eagle flew right by and there was a fox crawling off...you know, it's just beautiful. Why not volunteer here?

I love to volunteer. That's my job and sure there are challenges to volunteering, like, you know, bugs and water and maybe a snake or two. Especially, when you're on places on the island that other people can't go, that the public can't go. We're sent to those places to do this mapping and sometimes you run into some especially nasty bugs. But, when we're volunteering here generally, we just do anything that the staff wants us to do. It's a great, just a great situation.

I didn't have much experience with invasive species. I really didn't know that much about them. I knew that when Rachel came on, that's what she was working on. And she had a very good training session for us using the GPS and how to go about it.

Then she went out with us individually to back up that training and one of the things you really had to learn was how to identify these plants. She gave us a lot of very good pictures and in my case when she went out with me it was Johnson grass. How do you tell Johnson grass from other grass? So, it's been quite a learning experience and now I know there are quite a few invasive species on this island, so we've got a lot of work to go.

Text:

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge relies on volunteers for many of its programs and activities: from maintaining trails to conducting wildlife surveys to mapping and removing invasive plants. Volunteers also play a key role in public outreach and staffing the visitor center.