



May 24, 2006

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Dear Extension Volunteer:

You might find yourself in a situation where you chaperone and/or chauffeur youth while serving as a Texas Master Naturalist, i.e., an Extension Volunteer. If you chaperone and/or chauffeur youth as an Extension Volunteer, you must be screened through the Youth Protection Standards (YPS) process.

1. *For those with prior screening (within last three years):* Submit the attached YPS volunteer screening form with a letter from your employer/coordinator on organization letterhead documenting the results of your prior screening. No \$10 payment required, or
2. *For those with no prior screening:* Submit the attached YPS volunteer screening form. Include a \$10 check or money order payable to "ANR Committee", and
3. Mail the completed form and your \$10 payment to:

Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Texas Cooperative Extension, Harris County Office
3033 Bear Creek Drive
Houston, TX 77084

Please call or email me with your questions and comments. All information will remain completely confidential. I will compile a list of all Gulf Coast Master Naturalist Volunteers who are willing and eligible to work with youth.

What is the YPS Program?

The YPS program is the tool that Texas Cooperative Extension uses in the application and acceptance of volunteers. This program began more than three years ago and continues to affirm the best practices related to volunteer administration. The purposes of the program include:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for youth and adults;
- Educate Extension employees and volunteers regarding and prevention of abuse;
- Implement the best practices related to the management of volunteer service risk; and
- Protect the image and integrity of Texas Cooperative Extension.

The following are program details.

Consistency Among all Extension Volunteer Programs: All Extension Volunteer programs should adhere to the procedures of the Youth Protection Standards program. This program is required for ALL volunteer programs who have the potential of working with youth audiences or who are currently working with youth. The screening process is both a safeguard for volunteers and clientele, youth and adult alike.

Screening Frequency: Volunteer applicants will be re-qualified through the YPS program every three years.

Prior Screening: Volunteers will document a prior criminal background check from another entity on the enclosed application. Texas Cooperative Extension will only accept those screenings done by entities on the approved list (below). If a volunteer's screening entity is not an approved source, they must be screened through the YPS process.

Approved Prior Screening Entities

- School Districts
- Churches
- Youth Groups/Associations (Little League, Sports Associations, etc...)
- Youth Agencies/Organizations (e.g., Big Brother/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.)
- Law Enforcement (County, State or Federal)
- Texas Youth Commission
- Department of Defense - Child and Youth Services
- Department of Defense - Family Programs

Texas Cooperative Extension is committed to providing a safe environment for our employees and clientele. In doing this, we are also protecting the integrity and image of our agency and system. Extension Volunteer support and implementation of the Youth Protection Standards program are keys to our success in this area.

Sincerely,

Wayne H. Thompson
County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources
Harris County Office

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK FORM

CONSENT FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND HISTORY CHECK
AUTHORIZATION/WAIVER/INDEMNITY

I verify that I have been previously screened including a criminal background check and **PASSED**. Yes No

If yes, by who? _____ When (year)? _____

For what purpose? _____

If you did not pass a previous check, what restrictions were imposed? _____

Please sign at the bottom of the form. If you have not been previously screened, please complete section below.

APPLICANT'S PRINTED NAME

COUNTY

1st FIVE NUMBERS OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

BIRTHDATE

ADDRESS

CITY ZIP

DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER (optional)

GENDER (Check One) Male Female

Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? Yes No

RACE (Check One): White Black Asian American Indian Alaskan Native Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander

I hereby authorize VeriFYI and or its Service Provider and Texas Cooperative Extension to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including but not limited to my Criminal History, Credit History including a consumer report under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681. I authorize Texas Cooperative Extension or any of its components to make reference checks relating to my volunteer service. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility as a volunteer/employee with Texas Cooperative Extension.

The criminal history, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct as committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by client/agency and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I further release and discharge VeriFYI and their Service Provider and all of their Subsidiaries, Affiliates, Officers, Employees, Contract Personnel, or Associates, from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request for information or records pursuant to this authorization, procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable.

I understand that I have the right to make written request within a reasonable period of time to VeriFYI for additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment/volunteer purposes, and I have carefully read and understand this authorization.

Date

Applicant's Signature