

Friends of Hell Wath Risk Assessment

Assessment: General Conservation Activities

Scope: All Tasks

Assessment Summary: General Conservation Activities;		
General Conservation Activities Written 1 st November 2024	Typical uncontrolled outcomes Minor cuts and bruises; burns; lower back pain; verbal abuse; electric shock; contracting disease; blisters; sunburn; Lyme Disease	Typical groups at risk Volunteers; general public
	Hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slips, trips and falls• Contact with hand tools• Manual handling• Contact with services• Contact with traffic• Volunteer's dogs• Contact with micro organisms• Irritant or poisonous plants• Insect bites and stings• Weather conditions	Controls <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep site and materials tidy.• Make safe trip hazards highlighting any where this is not possible.• Tools (including volunteer's own) should be in good state of repair and fit for purpose.• Where possible tools being transported should be contained within tool bag(s) with blades guarded.• Give tools talk at start of task to impart and reinforce knowledge. (Volunteers should know name, purpose and correct manner of use of tools, including carrying techniques, storage, safe working distances and applicable protective clothing.)• Set aside damaged or blunt tools for maintenance or to be discarded.• Sturdy footwear should be worn.• Swinging tools should not be used with gloves (at least not on the hand gripping the tool) or in wet conditions; observe safe working distances.• Regularly check that safe working distances are being observed.• Tools should only be used if the required PPE is available.• Tools not in use should be stored in tool bag or laid on ground in clear view where not a trip hazard.• Guides on the safe use of hand tools can be found at https://www.econetreading.org.uk/admin/BTCV%20Handtools%20Guide.pdf and on tools talks at https://www.econetreading.org.uk/admin/Tools%20and%20Safety%20Talk.pdf.• Demonstrate safe lifting and handling techniques.• If available, use wheelbarrows and other handling aids to move heavier items.• Ensure routes for transporting tools and materials are kept clear.• Take regular breaks when undertaking repetitive actions such as the swinging of a tool or lifting, to reduce the risk of strains and other injuries associated with such movements.

- Check for services as part of site inspection, mark and avoid. Avoid felling near overhead services. Pole saws must not be used.
- Protect any cuts, advise all volunteers to ensure tetanus inoculation. Avoid contact with stream and pond water. Wear gloves when handling soil.
- Warn of possible presence of irritant plants. Wear gloves and long sleeves when working with or near irritant plants; wash exposed skin thoroughly after work.
- Wear long sleeves if biting insects may be present, use insect repellent. If wasp or bees' nest found, highlight and stop working in immediate vicinity.
- Provide information about ticks and Lyme disease including symptoms. Advise volunteers to wear boots, long trousers and tops with sleeves to avoid ticks, tuck trousers into socks, and after task to check for ticks and bites and to seek immediate medical advice if they have concerns. Note: Although most common from late spring until autumn, tick bites can occur at any time of the year whenever the conditions exist for ticks to be active.
- In hot or sunny conditions, keep skin covered and use high factor sun cream on exposed skin; stop work if volunteers ill attired for conditions, in discomfort or the work is increasing in risk.
- Always wash hands or use cleansing wipes or gel before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Dogs brought by volunteers to tasks must be well behaved and under the control of their owner at all times, they must not put volunteers or others at risk by causing a distraction or otherwise disrupting the task.

Background Information

Lyme Disease

Bacterial infection transmitted from animals to humans by tick bites. Animal hosts include deer, foxes, sheep, squirrels and rodents. Ticks are most active in the early summer and autumn although they may be found at other times. They are often located on tall vegetation in woodlands and heaths from where they can attach themselves to their host. To protect yourself wear long sleeves and long trousers tucked in to your socks. Check for ticks on your return home, if found it should be removed immediately. Removal is best achieved with fine-toothed tweezers, pulling steadily away from the skin.

Only a small minority of tick bites carry Lyme Disease. Symptoms include a red, expanding rash parts of which may clear as it enlarges resulting in a "bull's-eye" appearance. Other symptoms are fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes. If you think you may have contacted Lyme Disease please seek medical advice immediately. Treatment is with antibiotics, without treatment a number of serious conditions can arise including a viral-like meningitis, facial palsy, other nerve damage or arthritis.

Further information can be found on the NHS Choices website, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>