

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative

Volunteering Policy

About us

The Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) is a partnership project working with communities and volunteers to control invasive non-native species (INNS) to benefit our native wildlife and freshwater environments.

SISI is led by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with the University of Aberdeen and 10 fishery trusts/boards as partners. The fishery trusts/boards are our delivery partners on the ground and are hosts to, and responsible for, our volunteering activities.

To find out more about the project please visit our website www.invasivespecies.scot

Role of volunteers

Central to the success of SISI is the establishment of a volunteer network that will be passionate about our freshwater environments and which will continue to control invasive species as a legacy to our project.

By setting up a network of trained and skilled, equipped and enthused volunteers we aim to embed and support action at a local community level, and supported by the local fishery trusts, so there is long-term commitment to the control and management of invasive non-native species after the SISI project finishes.

We also want volunteers to benefit from environmental volunteering with us, through for example; spending time outdoors and improving their quality of life and wellbeing, learning new skills and enhancing employability prospects, increasing social interaction and cohesion, and, perhaps most of all, by enjoying themselves and having fun whilst taking part in meaningful community-based activity.

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed and supported within SISI and the partner fishery trusts. It confirms our commitment that all volunteers will be treated fairly and consistently and will help set out the support available to each volunteer from us in return for their valuable commitment to SISI.

Principles

- We value the contribution volunteers make to SISI and recognise that it is integral and fundamental to the success of our project
- We recognise that volunteers are not staff, but are actively choosing to contribute their valuable time and talents to support our project
- We appreciate that volunteering must be enjoyable, and can enrich people's lives as a result
- We appreciate that different types of volunteer from different backgrounds and with different prior experiences will be involved in our project and, as a result, will contribute in different ways and to different degrees to SISI. We value and appreciate all of these inputs and contributions
- We recognise that in some cases volunteers will gain more as individuals from the volunteer experience we provide than we will immediately gain in direct practical project outputs. This

is part of our long-term investment in, and commitment to, volunteers and communities in support of sustainable invasive species management in the project area

- We will provide a safe and supervised working environment for our volunteers, and provide them with the necessary personal protective equipment, tools and materials for the task at hand
- We will provide both formal and informal training and other skill development and learning opportunities for our volunteers
- We will try to accommodate any volunteer - as long as we have sufficient resources to support them and based on the suitability of the volunteer to safely carry out the task in the context of the location

Support & supervision

All volunteers will have a designated local contact to use as a main point of contact for correspondence, queries, training requests, support or problem solving. This person is likely to be a SISI Project Officer or fishery trust staff member.

On registering, each volunteer will have access to our Volunteer Handbook with further details about all aspects of volunteering.

The SISI project also employs a *Project Manager* and a *Volunteer & Communications Officer*, either of whom can be contacted in relation to supporting our volunteering programme or to resolve issues or problems with a volunteer placement.

Our standards

We want, and will work hard to ensure that, all our volunteers have an enjoyable and rewarding experience with us. Our staff and partners are motivated and trained to provide this for all who volunteer with us.

SISI and the fishery trusts expect and require high standards of behaviour of our staff and volunteers and do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour. This can ruin the volunteering experience for others and, potentially, compromise the safety of the activity being undertaken.

If an incident occurs, we will first of all discuss this with the individual(s) concerned. If behaviours are changed they may continue with us as a volunteer. If they do not respond positively, work to change behaviours and then adopt improved behaviours, they will not be permitted to continue volunteering with us.

Anyone who behaves in a way to commit serious misconduct e.g. violence, theft, drug abuse, non-compliance with safety plan, harassment, etc. will be removed from the activity immediately. We reserve the right to report such incidents to other relevant authorities including Police Scotland.

We expect volunteers to respect any need for confidentiality and sensitivity.

Volunteer relationship

SISI recognises that volunteers offer their time freely and willingly. There is, however, a presumption of mutual support, reliability and responsibility on both sides. This relationship is based on shared understanding and trust.

No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise can be imposed on a volunteer to attend or set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise, SISI cannot be compelled to provide regular work or opportunities for all volunteers – though we will try to plan our volunteering activities to maximise benefits for all.

Training

We are able to provide, at no cost, training and qualification opportunities to our volunteers to enable them to become better equipped to undertake invasive species management. SISI is under no obligation to provide all volunteers with these opportunities - we will prioritise those volunteers that show enthusiasm, willingness and commitment. Equally, there is no obligation that volunteers must participate in or complete training or qualification opportunities we make available.

Recognition & reward

SISI recognises the importance of ensuring volunteers feel appreciated and valued and we want to acknowledge the work of our volunteers and highlight their achievements.

We will do this through publicising our volunteer partnerships via our newsletter, website, social media and press. Social events and additional training opportunities will also be held to say thank you and celebrate a job well done.

We recognise that volunteering for some people is a way to enhance a CV and their employability prospects and we are happy to provide a summary volunteer record to support this. Volunteers are welcome to request a reference from their local SISI contact.

Feedback

We welcome feedback from volunteers about their experiences volunteering with SISI and we will use this constructively to improve and enhance the volunteering experience we provide.

At intervals throughout the project we will set up specific mechanisms to collect feedback from across our volunteer network, but we are always willing to listen and hear feedback from our volunteers at any time.

Health & Safety

We take our responsibility for a volunteer's health, safety and wellbeing seriously. By law, everyone is responsible for looking after their own safety and that of their colleagues (including volunteers), at all times.

All tasks and activities will be risk assessed, and we will provide the necessary personal protective equipment, tools and equipment to volunteers.

In return, we expect all volunteers to follow the guidance and instructions they are given on the activity and the safe use of equipment, to inform us of any relevant medical conditions and to report any unsafe working practices, accidents or incidents to us so that, if and when necessary, we can improve our practices.

Confidentiality and data protection

SISI and the fishery trust will hold volunteer details and volunteer records to document the contribution made by volunteers, for insurance, health & safety and project reporting purposes. You can read more about why and how we hold your data in our [Privacy Notice](#)

Equality, diversity and inclusion

SISI strives to be an inclusive project, where everyone feels welcome and valued. We are committed to embracing and promoting equality and diversity. We expect our volunteers to support our commitment.

Safeguarding and child protection

We expect, and will work hard to ensure that, all volunteers, participants and beneficiaries are kept safe and free from harm while volunteering with us. Any staff or volunteers directly responsible for the supervision of children, young people or vulnerable adults will be required to have a satisfactory Disclosure Scotland / Protecting Vulnerable Groups background check.

Further information

Contacts;

Callum Sinclair

Project Manager: callum.sinclair@nature.scot

Vicky Hilton

Volunteer and Communications Officer: vickyhilton@fnlft.onmicrosoft.com

Website links;

Project information: www.invasivespecies.scot/about-us

Privacy notice: www.invasivespecies.scot/privacy-notice-and-cookie-policy

Volunteering information: www.invasivespecies.scot/how-you-can-help

Volunteer handbook: www.invasivespecies.scot/volunteer-now

www.invasivespecies.scot

*SISI Volunteering Policy
Last updated; October 2018*