

## **MANAGING YOUR TEAM**

You hold a special and important responsibility as a volunteer leader, which is the management of your team. The Trail Conference has always been volunteer-powered and there's no exception when it comes to leading the over 2,000 active volunteers we have today.

Empowering and supporting your people will increase their satisfaction, which leads to better volunteer retention rates, which results in more in-depth volunteer engagement, which means a greater impact for the trails and natural lands.

### ***General Best Practices***

1. The most important skill for successfully managing your team is communication. Communicate openly and proactively.
  - a. When you receive a new volunteer interest respond as promptly as possible. It's important to capture them while their passion is fresh.
  - b. If there are big changes, accomplishments or progress being made in your region, share the news with your team so they feel part of the big picture and see their efforts have an impact.
2. Take the time to authentically welcome new volunteers and orient them to their new role so they know exactly what's expected of them.
  - a. Supervisors should onboard each new volunteer by reviewing their assignment in person for the first time. This is an ideal opportunity to review responsibilities, expectations, and any procedures unique to their volunteer role.
3. Encourage volunteers to learn and grow. Some things you can do include:
  - a. Suggest trainings and workshops for them to take to further their skills and knowledge. This can be as easy as forwarding them an e-walker that lists workshops, reminding them of the online learning library, or encourage them to check out more opportunities at [nynjtc.org/volunteer](http://nynjtc.org/volunteer).
  - b. Offer the opportunity to join you at a meeting or on a project specific to your leadership role. Shadowing is a great way for them to learn.
4. Give and receive feedback (both good and bad). Think someone's doing a fantastic job? Tell them! Is someone not completing their volunteer duties? Check in with them to make sure they're not overwhelmed or perhaps have a personal situation contributing to the issues. Constructively provide feedback so they can learn and do better.
5. If someone is not completing their duties and this does not change after you've addressed it with them, it's OK to let them go from the position. Remember to be respectful and compassionate. You can work with the Volunteer Engagement Team, or designated Trail Conference Staff, on how to approach and manage this situation.
6. Acknowledge successes and hard work. While you may not need or want recognition, a lot of folks are motivated by it and it makes them feel good.
  - a. Nominate your hardworking team members for the annual volunteer awards.