

Becoming a volunteer guide on Tiritiri Matangi



The purpose of this document is to help people who are interested in becoming a volunteer guide for the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc (SoTM) understand how our organisation runs and what is involved in guiding. Read on to learn about the opportunities that are available.

Guiding on Tiritiri Matangi is an extremely rewarding and satisfying way to contribute as a volunteer in an area that you no doubt care deeply about – conservation and te taiao (the natural environment). Here is some information to help you understand our organisation, the island and our guide training procedure.

Organisations involved on the island

Department of Conservation

The island is an open sanctuary and scientific reserve administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and co-managed with SoTM. DOC Rangers are responsible for overseeing, amongst other things, the biosecurity of the island. Rangers meet and greet each ferry and provide a briefing to passengers before they begin their walks.

- DOC have their own volunteers who help with maintenance and biosecurity issues.
- DOC administer the bunkhouse on the island, which is bookable for stays by the public, volunteers and researchers.
- DOC provide support for visitors by transporting bags and backpacks between the wharf and the Visitor Centre.
- DOC Rangers are the lead contact people for any major incidents and accidents on the island.

Explore Group

Explore Group is the only public transport operator servicing the island. They provide free travel for a limited number of Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi volunteers on each sailing. The ferry departs from Viaduct Harbour in Auckland CBD, calling at Gulf Harbour on its way to the island. Volunteers can join the ferry either at Auckland or Gulf Harbour.

Ferries run Wednesday to Sunday throughout the year, apart from Boxing Day to mid-January when they run daily.

Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc (SoTM)

We are the organisation that provides the volunteer guides, the helpers in the shop and visitor centre and other volunteers who are involved in everything from monitoring wildlife (birds, reptiles, sea shore flora and fauna) to maintaining guiding tracks and the maritime history of the island – the lighthouse, the watchtower, the museum etc. We work very closely with the DOC Rangers to keep the island project going.

DOC have granted a concession to SoTM to provide guiding services on the island. The concession governs how and when we can conduct tours and other activities.

If you would like to become a volunteer on the island your first step is to become a member of Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc.

For more information, including applying to volunteer with DOC, go to this page on our website [Volunteer – Tiritiri Matangi](#) – scroll to the bottom of the page to join up as a member of Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi Inc.(SoTM)

Mana whenua

There are a number of iwi who settled on the island at various times. Te Kawerau-a-Maki settled the western coast and built Tiritiri Matangi Pa from which the island takes its name. Other settlements developed along the coastline. Ngati Paoa later moved into this area and established the Papakura (red rock) Pa on the northern tip of the island.

What is involved in becoming a Guide?

There are four elements to becoming a trained guide on Tiritiri Matangi –

Element 1 - Getting you on-board – is this the right opportunity for you? Are we a good match for your interests and values?

- You must be a current member of SoTM.
- You complete the Expression of Interest form from our website.
- We will schedule an initial phone call with our Guide & Volunteer Manager to discuss your application and answer any questions you may have about the role.

If you decide guiding is for you, and we decide we would like you on-board you will be asked to come to the island for an induction session. During this visit you'll meet with the Guide Manager for further discussions about your suitability as a Guide. If mutually agreed, you will be asked to nominate at least six further dates to come to the island to progress your training and provided with a significant amount of information to help you be well informed about the guiding role.

Element 2 - Develop or strengthen your knowledge of the history, flora and fauna of the island. This includes being able to tell the story of the history of the island; the ability to recognise and identify different birds; hear and recognise different bird calls; recognise and identify different reptiles, insects and plants/trees.

We will help you access information and coaching to achieve the required level of knowledge.

Element 3 - The skill of interacting with people – this includes building rapport with groups, reading body language to determine their engagement, giving instructions, interacting with questions, listening to people, keeping people on track and keeping the group on time.

We will help you develop and fine tune people skills through active feedback coaching from experienced guides.

Element 4 - Knowledge of our Health & Safety Plan. Health and safety is a very important part of the role of guide on the island. We will send you the section of our Health and Safety Plan that covers guiding activities. At the induction session we will review the plan and will go over the key elements. You will need to read and sign to say that you have understood the contents of the plan. All guides must read and sign annually.

Element 1 Match your needs?	Element 2 Knowledge te taiao	Element 3 People skills	Element 4 Health & safety
• Become a member of SoTM • Complete an expression of interest • Initial phone call • Yes/no to continue	• Attend the induction workshop • Build your knowledge, study, learn • Observation walks x 6 or more • Practice leading a guided walk • Feedback/reflection • Follow up if needed	• Small group practice guide • Feedback, develop • Support if needed • Assessment - fledge	• Monitor own health • Read health & safety plan and acknowledge you understand • Acknowledge safe to guide every visit • rReview plan every 12 months

Ongoing development for Guides

There are several ways to continue learning as a guide.

1. **GuideLines** is a publication disseminated online every two weeks with updates about the organisation. It includes links to relevant articles and articles by some of our experts. All of this adds to the knowledge base of our guides and is **required reading**.
2. **On-island training workshops** - we run short workshops on the island that guides can attend after their guiding activities are completed. These are planned to be held during school holidays when there is space in the Visitor Centre.
3. Currently we have two **Guides Days Out** each year. Held on the island, we assemble a range of experts who present workshops on specific topics in support of your guiding knowledge.
4. Our **School Educators** run **training days** for guides who enjoy working with students. This helps our guides engage with the students and help them best experience the island.
5. Our **SoTM website** has numerous articles on the [Blog page](#)
6. You can access the **Guides section** of the website through the link at the very bottom of the Blog page. You will be given the password to access after your second or third visit.
7. **Collegiality of guides** – this is one of the easiest ways to build your knowledge base. Make a point of talking with experienced guides, whether it is around the lunch table, on the ferry, on the wharf waiting for the ferry – take every opportunity to learn from others on the island.

Expectations the organisation has of guides

All of our guides are volunteers and the organisation could not function as it does without you. We are all here because of our love of the island and te taiao (the natural environment – the plants, the animals, the land itself). That, above all else, is the most important thing to remember.

It is a privilege to be involved in the project that is the restoration of the island and the running of the open sanctuary/scientific reserve.

We have a few **expectations of guides** that have been developed over the years SoTM has been in existence. Here are the main expectations:

- You are a member of a team – as team members we work together supporting each other to achieve common goals

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- All guides are expected to guide at least six times over any 12 month period to maintain their current guide status. We have a policy that defines what 'keeping current' with your guiding practice entails.
- You will guide when you can and you will keep your knowledge current with ongoing learning – keep evolving your guiding practice over your tenure in guiding.
- As you become more experienced you will be called upon to support new guides coming into the organisation.
- When you come to the island you willingly do the guiding you are asked to do – and you will ask for help if you feel you need it.
- If your services are not needed for guiding on any particular day, you will be willing to contribute in some other way – either supporting the DOC Rangers e.g. with weeding, pruning, clearing etc, or supporting staff e.g. with cleaning around the administration office/shop/visitor centre, helping unpack and label stock in the shop
- All guides are expected to do a 'buddy guide/check guide' annually. This underpins the 'always learning' ethic we hold dear in SoTM.
- All guides are expected to re-read the Health and Safety Plan annually and affirm they have done so.
- You monitor your own health and safety – and you advise the Guide Manager of any health concerns you have which may affect your ability to guide effectively and safely.
- All guides are requested to confirm each day of their guiding that they are safe/fit to guide and that they have read and understood the Health & Safety One Page document for guides

If you have questions please contact

Gail Reichert

Guide & Volunteer Manager

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Please note my workdays are Wednesday to Saturday.