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Washington State Parks Guidance on Volunteer Activity During COVID-19

Washington State Parks acknowledges and values the important contributions that volunteers make each year to support park operations and visitor services. The health and safety of our volunteers, staff and visitors are very important to us. As the state continues re-opening under Governor Inslee’s “[Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery](#)”, a phased COVID-19 recovery plan (beginning January 11, 2021), the agency has developed the following guidance for volunteer activities within State Parks owned and managed lands.

General Guidance

- Please consult with park staff to determine if volunteering is the right fit for you at this time. We ask you to carefully consider your comfort level in participating in volunteer activities and following public health guidelines in light of COVID-19. We respect your decision to cancel or postpone.
- Vulnerable populations and older adults should consider staying home.
- Only members of the same household should travel in cars together.
- Self-monitor for symptoms and stay home if sick.
- Please remember that State Parks volunteers are representatives of the State of Washington and should follow all guidance from [Washington Department of Health](#), [Washington Department of Labor and Industries](#), and [CDC guidelines](#).

Host Requirements

This guidance has been developed to ensure the health and safety and minimize risk of exposure of approved volunteer hosts required to stay within state parks to fulfill their duties. Please understand that your role as a host may look different from what you previously expected. Your responsibilities may change based on evolving safety requirements and procedures as we adapt to the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19. Also, be aware that some of our parks are located in remote locations and local health centers may have limited ability to respond to severe cases of COVID-19.

We ask that you review the requirements outlined below and openly communicate with your Host Coordinator or Supervising Ranger about specific roles and responsibilities to determine if continuing as a host is the right fit at this time. You should carefully consider your comfort level in completing your duties and following public health guidelines in light of COVID-19. We respect your decision to continue to serve with us in 2021, or to cancel or postpone. Please inform us as soon as possible either way.

Prior to arrival at park

- All volunteer hosts are required to review, complete, and sign a new [2021 Host Agreement](#) in order to continue to volunteer in 2021. This agreement outlines the agency’s Terms and Conditions of Volunteer Service during COVID-19 including the following requirements:
 - Hosts must be fully self-contained and able to self-quarantine for 14 days without the use of public facilities (e.g., restrooms & showers). No tent hosts will be allowed.
 - Hosts must provide an emergency contact that can respond within 24 hours, in the event they become sick or symptomatic. The emergency contact should be available to

act as a liaison to assist hosts with relocating and/or meeting day-to-day needs such as supplying medication and food.

- Contact the Host Coordinator or Supervising Ranger to confirm your start date before traveling to and arriving at the park.
- Prepare for your trip to the park and follow [CDC guidance for travelers](#).
 - Bring enough of your medicine to last you for the entire trip and host assignment.
 - Pack enough alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
 - Bring a cloth face covering to wear in public places.
 - Prepare food and water for your trip. Pack non-perishable food in case restaurants and stores are closed.
 - Bring cleaning supplies and clean surfaces inside your RV daily, including steering wheel, doorknobs, light switches, handles and dash controls.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Following agency guidelines, all hosts must conduct a self-assessment before arriving at or entering the park. If you answer **YES** to any of the [screening questions](#), do not enter the facility and notify park staff.

Health and Safety Requirements

- Once you are at the park, staff will provide you with an orientation and safety training to go over expectations and safety requirements.
- Following agency guidelines, hosts must conduct a self-assessment daily. If you answer **YES** to any of the [screening questions](#), stop interacting with visitors and immediately notify park staff.
 - Hosts who are sick or symptomatic or have been in close contact with someone who is, will be asked to relocate to a non-state park site, if possible. Hosts who are unable to relocate to a non-state park site may be asked to relocate to an alternate site within the park that may not have full utilities.
- Hosts must wear cloth face coverings at all times while performing duties, except when working alone outside, in a private area or in other circumstances where there are no other people outside their household.
- Engage in physical distancing, staying at least six feet away from other people. Be prepared to go somewhere else or come back at another time if an area looks crowded.
- Practice social distancing etiquette. Give way to park staff and visitors to allow for ample social distancing.
- Avoid sharing tools and other equipment. When sharing tools is required, wear gloves and disinfect tools between uses according to CDC guidelines.
- Use proper hygiene practices and wash hands frequently.
- You are encouraged to stay at home/in your RV as much as possible. Only leave for essential services (groceries, gas, medical help, local outdoor recreation), or to fulfill your host responsibilities.

Individual and Group Volunteer Requirements

This guidance is intended for existing, approved individuals and group volunteer organizations. While we are accepting applications for volunteers beginning January 11, some parks may not be placing new volunteers until the health emergency passes.

Prior to arrival at park

- Contact park staff before arriving at the park. All volunteers must be authorized by the Region Manager before conducting any volunteer work on State Parks owned and managed lands.
- Any existing, approved volunteer organization wishing to conduct volunteer work on State Parks owned and managed lands must first submit a written proposal for approval by the Region Manager. The proposal must include:
 - **Description of work to be performed including the number of participants involved.** Any activities or duties proposed must be currently allowable under the Governor's [Reopening Guidance for Business and Workers](#) and consistent with State Parks' guidance on [allowable activities](#) (see below).
 - **A list of the COVID-19 requirements and safety measures that the organization will implement to ensure the health and safety of volunteers.** Please see the Governor's Reopening Guidance and [DOSH Directive 1.70](#) for a list of requirements and recommendations.
- Following agency guidelines, volunteers must conduct a [self-assessment](#) before arriving at or entering the park. Any volunteers that feel unwell, show any signs of COVID-19, or are a close contact of a confirmed case will not be allowed to participate in volunteer activities.

Health and Safety Requirements

- Park staff will provide volunteers with an orientation and safety training to go over expectations and safety requirements prior to beginning duties.
- Volunteer activities are limited to **a maximum of 12 participants**. Physical distancing is required between participants of different households.
- A daily attendance log and contact information for all participants must be kept and retained for 28 days after each volunteer event to assist with contact tracing in the event of a possible exposure.
- Come prepared. Volunteers may find reduced or limited restroom services in the parks. Volunteers are advised to bring soap, water, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper, as well as gloves and a mask or facial covering to shield their noses and mouths.
- Volunteers must wear cloth face coverings at all times, except when working alone outside, in a private area or in other circumstances where there are no other people.
- Engage in physical distancing, staying at least six feet away from other people. Be prepared to go somewhere else or come back at another time if an area looks crowded.
- Practice social distancing etiquette. Give way to park staff and visitors to allow for ample social distancing.
- Avoid sharing tools and other equipment. Volunteers are encouraged to bring and use their own tools, when appropriate. If sharing tools is required, wear gloves and disinfect tools between uses according to CDC guidelines.
- Pack out what you pack in. Take any garbage with you, including masks and disposable gloves.

Volunteer Activities – What's Allowed?

Certain volunteer opportunities and host responsibilities will be limited during the phased re-opening of Washington State. See the lists below for more information about which activities are currently allowed. If you have questions about specific activities not listed below, please consult with park staff.

Allowable Activities

The following activities are currently allowed consistent with the Governor's "[Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery](#)" plan:

- **Trail Maintenance** – includes work necessary to operate trails for day-use recreation activities.
 - Clearing debris and downed limbs
 - Trimming vegetation
- **Landscape Services**
 - Gardening
 - Lawn care (e.g., watering, raking, mowing, etc.)
 - Weeding
 - Greenery and hardscape maintenance
- **Outdoor Maintenance**
 - Power washing
 - Painting and staining
 - Structure and outdoor surface cleaning (e.g., campsites, firepits, picnic tables, etc.)
 - Litter pick up
 - Sweeping/blowing sidewalks, roads, and parking lots

Activities That Require Authorization

The following activities require an appropriate mitigation plan approved by the Region Manager. Please consult with park staff to determine if these activities are authorized and what safety measures will be required to perform these duties. These activities may require personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves. If park staff ask you to perform these duties, the park will provide the necessary PPE.

- **Money handling including firewood, ice, shower token and Discover Pass sales**
- **Cabin/yurt cleaning**
- **Restroom restocking and monitoring**
- **Garbage/recycle pickup**
- **Operate reception/info desk**
- **Operate gift shop/bookstores**
- **In-person interpretive assistance**
- **Assist in museums (Phase 2)**