



**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## **STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES**

### **VOLUNTEER / HOST POLICY MANUAL FOR PARK STAFF**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Volunteers in the Georgia State Park System help visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, ecological features, and recreational resources our state parks offer. Volunteers help our department respond to, contribute to, and support the Parks mission to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment, and to provide environmental education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

## **THE PURPOSE OF OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

To provide state parks and historic sites with knowledgeable and responsible volunteers to assist in providing visitor services, clerical assistance, interpretive skills, or educational leadership, and to enhance the recreational experience of others by maintaining or improving the grounds and facilities that they use.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY AND INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARKS**

Specific duties and responsibilities for volunteers at each park will vary to meet the needs of that particular site and to match the interests and talents of the persons who apply. The site manager is responsible for developing the Volunteer Program for the individual site, and for interviewing and selecting the volunteers to work with that program. Below are some examples of areas where we use volunteers:

- **Orientation and Information**-Volunteers may provide information to park and historic site visitors, update bulletin boards, lead interpretive tours, or explain rules and procedures to park and historic site visitors. They may offer information on upcoming programs, relate the history of the park or historic site, or explain how the visitor can best use and protect the site's resources.
- **Light Maintenance**-Volunteers may assist with litter pick-up around a park, help clean up a shoreline, construct a trail, re-stain picnic tables, repair bicycles, apply protective coating to artifacts, cut grass, and prepare wildflower beds or any number of other maintenance tasks waiting to be done. Light maintenance jobs are limited only by lack of imagination.
- **Park Programming**-Volunteer possessing special knowledge of history or natural science may be asked to assist with interpretive programming. Special organizational and promotional talents may be needed for special events, and persons experienced in working with children may be asked to help with Junior Ranger or other youth programs.
- **Collection of Fees and Sales**-Volunteers may be assigned to register participants and collect fees, assist with implementation of the Georgia ParkPass program, or sell tickets and merchandise.

## **DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE:**

- **Campground, Golf Course and Train Hosting:**

These volunteers live onsite from 2-6 months and help with the overall day-to-day operations on our parks, golf courses and train.

- **Community Volunteer:**

Many parks and sites need volunteers on a daily, weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly basis. This includes golf, conservation or train volunteers! These volunteers get an opportunity to be involved for whatever time they have to give.

- **Corporate, University, Scout and other Group Volunteers:**

Find a tailor-made project for your organization to make a difference in Georgia State Parks. Utilize the time and experience to build your team, increase morale while providing a valuable service to Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites.

- **School/University Community Service:**

If you have been asked to perform community service for school/university or other credit, please apply using the Community Volunteer registration form online and indicate this is for credit with your school.

- **Court-Ordered Community Service:**

If you are trying to serve Court-Ordered Community Service or reducing points for a traffic violation. Call the park closest to you and ask if they can have you assist their maintenance staff for court-ordered community service. You can find the list of park phone numbers and locations here: [www.gastateparks.org/parks/](http://www.gastateparks.org/parks/)

## **ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE**

You will notice when you log onto your account and click on the dates of your most recent assignment request that you are prompted to pay a mandatory annual registration fee of \$15 per person. This fee covers the cost of processing your application, the fee associated with the excess accident medical insurance and excess personal liability insurance for you and processing the criminal background check. You will only need to pay this fee once per person annually. It covers volunteering with any branch of Georgia Department of Natural Resources/Georgia State Parks, Historic Sites and Golf Courses as well as SAM Shortline Excursion Train. Excess insurance provides protection in excess of any other personal collectible insurance and is a requirement of volunteers. Upon receipt of your annual registration and a clear criminal history, your application will be forwarded to the park manager(s) for review.

**\*Exception: If you are volunteering for less than 40 hours annually (or less than once per month) and will be supervised directly by park staff,** you can just purchase the excess accident and liability insurance (unless you will be working directly with children or handling money). Insurance is required and is available through Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites division at the fee of \$5.00 per volunteer and can be paid onsite at the Park where you are volunteering. The Park Manager will be the one to determine if you fall within the appropriate guidelines for this option.

## **BENEFITS: What do volunteers/hosts get?**

- From the park:

- Volunteers/Hosts receive free or reduced usage fees, including boating, swimming, and rentals, in certain parks determined by park manager
- Volunteer uniform (\*as needed). (If a volunteer/host has uniform items that are still in great condition, they don't necessarily need a whole new set. Let the park manager know what you **do** need and place the order. This helps us to save money for Parks.)
- Hosts receive free RV Campsite and if available water, sewer, electricity hook-up in exchange for 24-40 hours served weekly per agreement and assignment
- A beautiful park setting to live, work and thrive for 2-6 months per year.

- From HQ:

- When you first register as a volunteer/host, the volunteer coordinator will enroll you in the State Parks Rewards program. This will allow you to earn points towards free camping as you log your hours on the Track It Forward website/app. As you continue to serve, you will accrue hours. Contact coordinator for details.

## **RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES**

- Volunteers self-report their hours at [www.gastateparks.org/volunteer/hours](http://www.gastateparks.org/volunteer/hours) (also linked on every volunteer webpage)
- Once ANY volunteer/host has achieved 500 hours of logged time in the system they will be mailed a ParkPass. All hours must be documented for additional incentives to be reached. Incentive levels indicated on reporting page.

## **RECRUITMENT**

Volunteers/Hosts are recruited through the Georgia State Parks volunteer website and by word of mouth. Volunteers/Hosts are encouraged to spread the word to friends, family and park guests who might be interested in service.

## **REGISTERING TO VOLUNTEER / HOST**

Make sure that you are registered in the volunteer database and that all of your information is correct and complete. You are entered automatically in the database if you filled out your volunteer application online. The registration fee of \$15 per person is an annual fee. The criminal history check is processed every 3 years. To determine when you will need to submit the consent form for the criminal background check again, you can see the expiration date on any pending or approved application links from your account page.

Registration links:

Hosts - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteerhosts>

Community Volunteer - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/community>

Group Volunteer - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/group>

## **SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING**

When the Volunteer Coordinator receives your application, she/he will verify that all parts are complete including payment and cleared background check. Once complete, the Vol. Coord. will forward the application to the park manager(s) for their review and will send notice of clearance of the application to the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with the Park Managers if they have not heard from the site within 2 weeks. The number for the park is located on each parks' website at [www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org)

## **CONFIRMING YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

Please review your confirmation email and park calendar and make sure the acceptance dates are the dates that you can report to duty. When you confirm you are accepting that assignment and the policies within this packet as well as that within the "Volunteer Structure, Policies, and Administration" section . If there is a conflict, please contact the volunteer coordinator immediately. If, during your time of duty, you must take leave of absence or you must shorten your duty due to an emergency, immediately contact the park management and then the volunteer coordinator. If you have signed up for a hosting slot and you cannot make the arrangement, please contact the volunteer coordinator immediately for cancellation.

## **HOST TENURE / LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT**

See section 5.6 below.

## **APPLY FOR FUTURE HOST ASSIGNMENTS**

To apply for future hosting positions, *regardless of how long you've been in the program*, a host must go online and complete a request/application at <http://gastateparks.org/volunteerhosts>. If you don't have easy access to the internet, work with the park staff to put in the request you may call the volunteer coordinator to put in your request.

## **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

To be effective, hosts and volunteers must be familiar with all the park facilities and services. The supervisor takes the volunteer/host on a tour of the park and notes any special information that affects campers or visitors. Volunteers/hosts should read all the materials provided about the park, tour the park again on his/her own, and ask questions to be well-informed about the site.

The supervisor introduces the volunteer/host to the other park staff and volunteers, explaining responsibilities and who can help the host with what topics. Volunteers/Hosts should be provided a list of staff and contact information.

Volunteers/Hosts should also be familiar with the community around the park, the region, and to some extent the state. Volunteers/Hosts should drive around the community to see where tourist attractions, grocery stores, laundry facilities, and shopping areas are located. Visiting the local chamber of commerce and tourism/welcome center is also a good idea.

The following materials should be included in the Orientation Packet for volunteer/host:

- General Park Map and brochure
- Overview of Park resources
- List of park staff and phone numbers of buildings/locations at the park
- Park specific brochures- trails, interpretive program schedule, museums-anything to inform visitors of the park's features and programs.
- Current fee schedule
- Camping and cabin rental information
- Georgia State Parks current Park Guide booklet

### **Job Training**

Volunteers/Hosts are trained by supervisors or designees regarding the specific of their job duties. Experienced volunteers/hosts probably have done similar tasks at other locations, but still need clear expectations for this particular park.

Training may include, but is not limited to:

- Cleaning procedures
- Identification of dangerous plants/animals, blood-borne pathogens
- Use of mowers, weed eaters, other grounds equipment as applicable
- Use of park radio or cell phone, if applicable
- Cash handling procedures
- Use of office equipment
- Operation of Visitor Center
- Safety training
- Emergency Management Plans
- Hazardous Materials training
- Basic first aid

\*Volunteers/Hosts are not eligible for Workers Compensation On-the-job injuries must be handled by their own insurance providers and the volunteer excess liability insurance.

# **STRUCTURE, POLICIES, AND ADMINISTRATION**

Revised June 1, 2015

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation would like to express appreciation to the Office of Volunteer Services, Department of Human Resources; the National Forests in Georgia; and the National Park Service for their contributions to the development of this program. Portions of these guidelines were adapted from the National Park Service's Volunteers in Parks Guidelines and North Carolina Department of Natural Resources Volunteers In Parks Guideline.

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### **SECTION I**

*\*Staff please note that Section 1 is shared with the volunteers along with their Welcome Packet\**

## **1.0 DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Throughout the history of the Georgia state park system, citizens have played an important role in the growth and development of our state parks system. As the system continues to expand, we continue to strive to deliver the highest standard of public service available from any division in state government. But this growth, coupled with budgetary constraints, means we cannot alone accomplish all of our goals in terms of visitor service, environmental education and natural resource protection.

Citizen input and participation are more important than ever before in the history of the division. With the support of concerned and dedicated volunteers, we can provide the standard of service that the public has a right to expect from the Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation. Through the use of the many special skills of volunteers we will not only make the best use of our resources, but will also form valuable partnerships that will increase our base of public support and allow the public to become more fully vested in our state parks.

Volunteers have established a proud tradition in parks across our nation. Many parks and the services being provided, owe their very existence to the efforts of volunteers. Through the establishment of the Volunteer Program in the Georgia state parks system, we uphold this tradition, which is vital to our effectiveness, efficiency, and which is so much a part of our national and state heritage.

~Jeff Cown, Director Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites

## **2.0 MISSION STATEMENT**

Volunteers in the Georgia State Park System help visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, ecological features, and recreational resources our state parks offer. Volunteers help our department respond to, contribute to, and support the Parks mission to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment, and to provide environmental education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

# **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program was created to provide better services to the public, increase opportunities for citizen involvement, and allow for better stewardship of our natural resources.

Volunteers are a crucial component to our workforce. The major objective of the program is to utilize voluntary help in such a way that it is mutually beneficial to both the state parks and the participants.

Volunteers are accepted without regard to race, creed, religion, age, color, national origin, or handicap.

Volunteers are selected to participate in the program because they can fill an identified need. They are usually individuals or members of groups with specific skills and/or interests who will perform a specific function or type of work.

The implementation of the Volunteer Program will occur in each park. Using the following guidelines as a basis, the Site Manager or designated employee(s) develops and operates a volunteer program that fits the conditions and needs of that particular park. Each park program is a local operation. Recruiting, selection, training, recognition, and the many other aspects of a volunteer program are handled on-site.

# **4.0 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

## **4.1 Director**

The Director, through the Chief of Operations, sets program policy and standards.

## **4.2 Chief of Operations**

The Chief of Operations administers the program and ensures compliance with guidelines.

## **4.3 Assistant Chief of Operations**

The Assistant Chief of Operations oversees the Volunteer Program, Natural and Cultural Resource Management within the State, ensures compliance with guidelines and makes recommendations to Chief of Operations regarding program changes.

## **4.4 GSPHS Volunteer Coordinator**

- Develops guidelines and policies
- Provides technical assistance to the field
- Monitors the database to ensure compliance by parks
- Assists parks in recruiting volunteers and coordinating volunteer activities when needed
- Works with Site Managers to resolve problems
- Monitors the program for training needs and compliance with guidelines
- Answers public inquiries about program and directs interested volunteers to parks in their area of interest
- Makes budget recommendations with regard to the Volunteer Program
- Evaluates the program and makes recommendations to Division Management for changes needed
- Makes recommendations for General Management Plans as needed
- Updates guidelines as needed
- Maintains contacts with outside organizations in the field of volunteerism
- Processes volunteer applications, mail 5 day camping pass to cleared volunteers
- Run background checks on volunteers for every 3 years volunteer is in the system
- File insurance claims as necessary

## **4.5 Site Manager**

The Site Manager administers the program within the park, ensures compliance with guidelines, evaluates the program and volunteer, and makes recommendations to the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **4.6 Site Level Volunteer Manager**

- Each park will have a collateral duty Volunteer Manager. The Site Manager may delegate the responsibility to a member of the staff. In the case of a small park or an inexperienced staff, the Site Manager may choose to serve as the Volunteer Manager.
- Responsibility for the Volunteer Program will be in addition to other job responsibilities. Duties of the Volunteer Manager will be specified in that individual's Work Plan like other job responsibilities.
- The percentage of time to be spent on duties of the Volunteer Manager will be determined by the Site Manager based on employee's other job responsibilities and the needs of the Volunteer Program in that park.
- The Volunteer Manager is responsible for the efficient operation of the program. The Volunteer Manager ensures that the program meets the needs of the park as well as those of the volunteer. The duties of the Volunteer Manager are listed below.
  - Assist the staff in assessing needs and identifying work that can be accomplished by volunteers
  - Prepare job descriptions
  - Train staff members in proper management of volunteers
  - Recruit volunteers
  - Interview and assign dates to pending volunteer applicants submitted through system website
  - Maintain and update the volunteer time line of hosting opportunities
  - Coordinate volunteer orientation and training

- Maintain contact with Site Manager and Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that program procedures are followed
- Handle correspondence relating to the program
- Submit reports as necessary to the Volunteer Coordinator. Keep staff current on ideas and procedures for utilizing volunteers

#### **4.7 Supervisor**

- Every volunteer must have a designated supervisor. Although the Volunteer Manager is responsible for the overall coordination of the park's Volunteer Program, he or she usually does not directly supervise all the volunteers. Volunteers are generally supervised by the staff member responsible for the work the volunteers are performing. Where appropriate, a volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervisory volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member. The staff member who directly supervises a volunteer is responsible for the following:
  - Training and orientation
  - Supervision
  - Monitoring and evaluating the volunteer's performance
  - Maintaining close contact with the Volunteer Manager to ensure that the work is in accord with overall objectives

### **5.0 VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Who May Volunteer?**

Almost anyone may participate in the Volunteer Program. A volunteer is anyone who performs work for the Division of Parks and Recreation for which he or she receives no pay from the Division. The volunteer may receive pay, work credit, academic credit, or other compensation from sources outside the Division of Parks and Recreation. Parks and Historic Sites Division employees, both full-time and part-time may not volunteer regardless if on duty or off duty at any Georgia State Park which is operated by the Division. Family members and relatives of Division employees may serve as volunteers however, the Division representative signing the Agreement for Voluntary Service cannot be an immediate family member of the Volunteer. Students doing required course work, and individuals from the private sector whose employer is donating their services to the Division while still keeping them on their payroll (i.e., personnel from the local camera shop giving evening programs on photography) are also considered volunteers. Volunteers are recruited and accepted from the public without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, color, or national origin.

- Community Volunteers- Help on a day-to-day basis at a Park as they are available. Our community volunteers help with leading hikes, helping with maintenance, assisting with the visitor or retail center, guide new visitors to park activities and locations.
- Campground Hosts- Stay in their personal RV at designated free Host Site for 2-6 months in exchange for a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer work. See 5.6 for further details. Same guidelines apply for all Maintenance, Train and Golf Hosts.
- Group Volunteers-Civic, church, scouting, universities and other groups that come out for a day or a collection of days to work together collectively to accomplish a project for the Parks.

#### **5.2 What Can Volunteers Do?**

Volunteers may be utilized in any and all parts of the park management system with the exception of law enforcement. All levels and types of skills may be utilized. Any type of work may be performed as long as it is work that:

Would not otherwise be completed during a particular fiscal year because of funding or personnel limitations.

OR

Allows paid employees to accomplish work that would not otherwise be completed during a particular fiscal year because of funding or personnel limitations.

For example, a park might recruit volunteers to construct a trail, organize and catalog the photo file, conduct research on an endangered species, repair picnic tables, or paint and install signs in the campground--all work that needs to be accomplished but has been cut out by reduced funding and personnel limitations. Parks might recruit volunteers to help translate park documents, materials and signs, and provide translation services to help parks communicate with non-English speaking visitors. Another example might be a park that recruits a retired couple with an RV to temporarily (minimum 2 months, maximum 6 months) live and work in the campground as campground hosts; registering campers, giving out information, checking the campground and bathhouses, and doing minor maintenance. This would free a ranger to perform other necessary duties that otherwise might not be completed.

Parks should consider utilizing volunteer assistance as one means of accomplishing park management goals, but should also recognize that volunteers are not always free. They should only be utilized in situations where their participation is cost-effective.

There are a few constraints which must be considered when assigning volunteers to work projects. No volunteer should be required to perform any type of work that he or she does not feel comfortable doing or does not willingly agree to do. Nor can volunteers work in the role of law enforcement for the park.

Volunteers who are assigned to operate machinery or equipment (such as chainsaws, power tools, specialized equipment, etc.) must receive training and demonstrate their proficiency in the operation of that equipment to the satisfaction of the responsible supervisor. All applicable age restrictions relating to the operation of machinery or equipment must be observed. Volunteers must observe the same safety precautions and use the same safety equipment as park staff.

Volunteers may assist in the visitor protection functions of the park such as acting as park radio dispatcher on weekends and at other times when the office assistant or other staff are not available; acting as campground host providing a deterrent to vandalism and theft in the campground by their presence; or assisting in search and rescue efforts. Volunteers must not be assigned duties that would place them in a life-threatening situation, even as an observer (i.e. serving as backup on patrol). Volunteers do not issue citations or perform arrests.

Volunteers should not be assigned to hazardous work. When the task or equipment to be used indicates the need for operational and/or safety training, the volunteer will not be allowed to perform the job until all training is completed, the supervisor knows the volunteer's work capability, and the volunteer understands the job and its hazards. Consult the Volunteer Coordinator or Assistant Chief of Operations with any questions about whether a volunteer should be assigned a specific duty. It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to perform certain jobs. If further assistance is needed in determining appropriate activities for minors, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

The staff member that oversees volunteer projects at the park level, Volunteer Manager, shall be responsible for ensuring that youth groups are not assigned jobs that are hazardous or equipment that is illegal for youths to operate. The Volunteer Manager of the site and/or the Volunteer Coordinator shall also ensure that youth groups are supervised by an adequate number of adults.

### **5.3 Use of State-Owned Vehicles**

Volunteers who have a valid driver's license (and have signed the appropriate forms) may operate Division-owned vehicles when it is a part of their assigned work and is so stated in their job description provided they have successfully completed all agency requirements, i.e., defensive driver training. If the volunteer has an

out-of-state driver's license, a recent drivers history report in addition to signed SOP forms will have to be turned in before approved.

### **State Vehicle Liability Insurance**

Volunteers may be authorized to drive state vehicles as a part of their assigned duties. Property damage or personal injury liability claims from a third party arising out of a vehicle insurance program at no cost to the volunteer if the driver is authorized to drive the state vehicle and the accident occurred during the performance of assigned duties.

### **5.4 Volunteers Handling State Funds**

Volunteers may collect fees only in strict compliance with procedures authorized by the State Auditor's Office for collection of fees and only upon the specific approval of such duties by the Site Manager.

### **5.5 Definitions and Duties**

#### **a) Hosts**

The Campground Host program utilizes volunteers who can furnish their own lodging (camper, RV, or motor home). The volunteer(s) must commit to a specific amount of time to serve as resident Campground Hosts in State Parks and Recreation Area campgrounds.

#### **Length of Assignment**

The minimum required time is 2 months; the maximum assignment is 6 months, consecutively, at one site. Though a host may have reached the limitation of 6 months at one site, they are still able to host at other Georgia State Park(s) keeping within the 2-6 month requirement. After an assignment at a park, hosts may not return to previous assigned parks before 3 months' time, though they are free to host at other parks/Georgia State Parks during this 3-month window. \*Park Manager – An extension can be approved by the Region Manager based on the business plan and process of the site depicting the valid need for an extended assignment.

#### **Returning Hosts Window of Assignment**

Returning hosts may return during a specific window of time up to 3 years in a row. After that time that host must leave the park for 1 full year. This policy is in effect as of March 2014 providing all current applicants with clean slates. The first year of the 3-year maximum is 2014. \*Park Manager -An extension of this 3 year maximum can be approved by the Region Manager up to 2 times, one year at a time, for a maximum of 5 years at a Park. At which point, the host must not host at that property for 1 full year before returning. They are, however, welcome to host at any other Georgia State Park property.

Hosts are generally provided a free campsite near the main entryway to the campground or other central location so that they may be easily identified and available to visitors. The normal camping time limit is waived, the host minimum time commitment is 2 months and the maximum at one Park is 6 months. If available, utility hookups may be furnished at no cost. Hosts work under a specific agreement and job description just like any other volunteer or staff. They must receive sufficient orientation and training to enable them to adequately perform their job. Hosts should work under the supervision of the employee who has direct responsibility for the site in which they are located. This position requires working weekends, holidays and evening hours.

#### **b) Community Volunteers**

Community Volunteers help on a day-to-day basis at a Park as they are available. Some community volunteers elect to come in once a week, some choose once a month and some choose once a year. They work with the park staff to determine the need and coordinate their involvement. Some of the programs our community volunteers help with include leading hikes, helping with maintenance, assisting with the visitor or retail center, guide new visitors to park activities and locations and the list goes on. If you have a particular talent that you want to share with the park, be sure to include it on your application and let the

staff know. If appropriate, we will find a way to utilize volunteer talents to increase program opportunities for the public. Long-term volunteers serve over 100 hours annually.

### c) Group Volunteers

Group Volunteers can include Civic, church, scouting, universities and other groups that come out for a day or a collection of days to work together collectively to accomplish a project for the Parks. Group volunteer work days can increase team morale and spirit of servitude. Groups can volunteer together for a pre-arranged volunteer work day at one of our parks or a tailor made project can be created for you depending upon your group's schedule and availability. The Volunteer Coordinator in Atlanta would be happy to assist with this option.

## 6.0 PROTECTION

*Volunteers who are involved in the host programs or who work at the site on a regular basis and without direct supervision by Park staff must be currently registered in the DNR system.*

\*When determining if a volunteer should be registered in the DNR system with a background check, use this checklist to help make that determination.

- ✓ Does this person volunteer at the park at least once per month or 40 hours a year?
- ✓ Does this person interact with the public/visitors/customers without *direct* supervision by Park Staff?
- ✓ Are there opportunities that this person would be alone with a visitor/customer while performing role as volunteer?

If **any** of the answers are "yes", then the volunteer *must* be registered online. If the **all** answers are "no" the volunteer can pay the excess liability coverage (good for 1 year) at the site and commence to volunteer for the day/period.

### 6.1 Background Check

As required by the state of Georgia beginning June 2011, on a regular basis we will be running a criminal background check on our registered volunteers. We at the Department of Natural Resources and Georgia State Park and Historic Sites value the safety and experience of everyone that visits our parks and sites. The patrons and visitors that come to our park expect to be served in a safe environment. To help to ensure their safety, and the safety of our volunteers and staff, we now run criminal background checks on all staff and volunteers. Thank you for your understanding!

### 6.2 Excess Liability Coverage

Excess insurance provides the following coverage:

a. **Excess Accident Medical Insurance:**

Pays up to \$50,000 for medical treatment of the Volunteer, hospitalization and licensed nursing care required as a result of a Volunteer-related accident. Accidental death and dismemberment coverage is included. Certain limitations apply.

b. **Excess Personal Liability Insurance:**

Protects the Volunteer from personal injury or property damage claims arising out of the performance of the Volunteer's duties.

Excluded from the coverage are claims arising from 1) use of a vehicle, 2) rendering or failure to render medical services, and 3) any claim arising out of either sexual abuse or a licentious, immoral or sexual act.

In order for volunteers to receive this protection, it is imperative that they be properly enrolled and operating under written job descriptions containing specific information on the type of work they are

assigned to do. This is necessary in case questions arise on whether a volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her assigned duties.

## **No Workers' Compensation Provided**

Volunteers are not employees of DNR or the State of Georgia. Their volunteered services are accepted by DNR as a donation or gift to the State of Georgia. The structuring of the Volunteer Program is to make the acceptance of donated services as beneficial to the users of the State's facilities as possible, and to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience. Similarly, the assignment of hours of service and of duties is to allocate opportunities among the Volunteer corps and is not meant to exercise control or direction over the Volunteers. Injuries a Volunteer may suffer, including death or dismemberment, while participating in the Volunteer Program are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

## **State Vehicle Liability Insurance**

Volunteers may be authorized to drive state vehicles as a part of their assigned duties. Property damage or personal injury liability claims from a third party arising out of a vehicle insurance program at no cost to the volunteer if the driver is authorized to drive the state vehicle and the accident occurred during the performance of assigned duties.

## **Torte Claims**

With regard to the potential liability of volunteers, The Georgia Tort Claims Act specifically includes within the definition of "state officer or employee" a volunteer in a "structured volunteer program organized, controlled, and directed by a state government entity." O.C.G.A. § 50-21-22(7). Such volunteers in structured programs are not subject to lawsuits or liability for torts (for example, a negligent act that injures someone else) they commit while acting within the scope of their official duties as volunteers. O.C.G.A. § 50-22-25(a). They would, however, be liable for any acts that were not within the scope of official duties.

## **6.3 Use of Volunteer's Personal Equipment**

We highly encourage volunteers to use state-owned equipment and property in their work, rather than their own personal property. There are no provisions to reimburse volunteers for personal equipment or property that is lost, damaged or destroyed. With regard to personal clothing and equipment used by reenactment groups, Site Managers may, at their discretion, grant permission for their use. The State, however, assumes no liability for the damage or loss of these items.

## **6.4 Safety**

It is the responsibility of Georgia State Parks to ensure a safe working environment. The park provides training and safety guidelines for use of park equipment. Shop rules are to be followed. All equipment must be cared for and maintained. Follow park rules and regulations pertaining to equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the equipment or methods of use, ask for instructions.

The Park Service recognizes that volunteers are sometimes assigned duties that expose the volunteer to blood borne pathogens (bodily fluids) and other potentially infectious materials. Accordingly, the park will assist in reducing the risks and exposure for the volunteer who is performing such duties with potential exposure. For instance, if the volunteer is responsible for cleaning the comfort station, be sure to wear gloves and use the appropriate cleaning agents to sanitize the area. Become oriented with these procedures and policies by speaking to the volunteer supervisor.

Volunteers performing resource management duties are to wear appropriate personal protection for duties assigned. An example includes hand and eye protection if the volunteer is doing exotic removal. It is also a good idea to have insect repellent, sunscreen and water available as you are working in Georgia. Park staff will

provide information on emergency procedures, emergency phone numbers and first aid. Volunteers are not expected to perform any duty or job they do not feel capable of performing.

## **6.5 Volunteer injuries/accidents**

- Use the following guidelines when dealing with a volunteer injury or accident
- Administer first-aid treatment, call 911, if necessary
- Complete an immediate assessment of why the accident/injury occurred and take action to insure there is no reoccurrence.
- Fill out an accident/incident report form
- Gather information needed for report form [Volunteer Universal Claims Form](#)
- All injuries must be reported to your immediate supervisor (within 48 hours), even if the volunteer did not want to receive medical treatment.
- Send a copy of the accident/incident form and Universal Claims Form to Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer Coordinator should forward a copy to the Assistant Chief of Operations. If necessary, further investigation may take place.

# **7.0 UNIFORMS**

## **7.1 Identification**

There should be a clear and visible distinction between paid employees and volunteers, and volunteers must not be dressed in a manner that may duplicate the appearance of the State Park uniform. Volunteers should be easily recognized as State Park volunteers by the visiting public for several reasons. Park visitors should be aware that the volunteers are not State Park employees, nor are they community service workers. The presence of volunteers may also draw the interest of park visitors to inquire about other volunteer opportunities.

The method for identifying non-regular community volunteers to the public for non-regular volunteers will be a stick-on pre-printed label that reads —"Volunteer" and has the GA State Parks logo on it. Long-term volunteers should have a volunteer pin/name tag worn on the right front chest of their shirt.

The Division will attempt to obtain shirts from outdoor clothing and gear companies to be provided to volunteers who meet certain criteria. The shirts will have —Volunteer and the GA State Parks logo on it. Volunteers may wear these t-shirts as well as their name tag once they have received one by meeting the required criteria.

## **7.2 Clothing (street or outdoor type)**

The volunteer may elect to wear either volunteer shirt or hat/visor with regular street clothes. Regardless, the volunteer nametag should always be worn. Some parks may require certain clothing for safety reasons, such as closed-toe shoes or long pants when working outdoors. Gloves may be provided or required for certain jobs.

## **7.3 Historical Period Clothing**

Volunteers involved in historic reenactment programs are not required to wear the stick-on volunteer label; however, an effort should be made to let the public know that volunteers are involved in that particular activity.

## **7.4 Sources of Supply**

The stick-on and pin volunteer nametag or label is available from the Volunteer Coordinator. If the Division is able to obtain shirts from outdoor clothing and gear companies, those will also be available from the Volunteer Coordinator. Supply request can be found on Staff Resources: Volunteer Forms. Volunteers may also wear other items which can be approved by the Site Manager.



## 8.0 HOUSING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers may be lodged in State Park facilities and will not, as a matter of policy, be charged rent. Site Managers should use prudence in assigning rent-free quarters to volunteers to assure fairness to state employees who are required to pay rental rates. Criteria for such assignments should be as follows: It must be clearly understood that the unit being considered for volunteer occupancy is not needed at the time for employee housing or other park needs. The volunteer assigned to the quarters must contribute sufficient hours or make a significant contribution to the park to justify free housing in the park.

Listed below are some examples of lodging volunteers in State Park facilities.

- Parks might allow volunteers groups such as scouts or another organized group to camp for a free night or weekend if they were working on a significant project while they camped.
- Ft. McAllister offers housing for students who are volunteering for an internship for the summer. They work alongside and have the same duties as other hired seasonal in addition to any projects required by their school.
- Watson Mill Bridge State Park has an equestrian campground site for a campground host. The hookups and site are free to the host in exchange for hosting a minimum of 24 hours per week.
- Site Managers are encouraged to utilize otherwise unoccupied, decent, safe, and sanitary quarters to house volunteers whenever appropriate. In doing so, parks will be able to utilize volunteers from outside the local commuting area. This should result in an increase in the number of highly skilled volunteers parks are able to attract and an increase in the amount of high priority work accomplished.
- Rental Agreements as determined necessary on a case-by-case basis

## 9.0 RECOGNITION EVENTS

As part of their budget and/or in conjunction with Friends partnership and support Parks host recognition events for the volunteers in the park. Another option to reduce costs but increase participation, motivation and morale of staff and volunteer is to host pot-luck events at the site. Park staff are encouraged to seek the participation of support groups, local merchants, or other private sources for additional goods or services to carry out these events. Each park may want to have an annual recognition event for volunteers. Cookouts and other informal gatherings are nice ways to get staff, volunteers, and their families together for recognition. Local merchants, community leaders, and support groups may be invited to participate. This is a good way to interest potential volunteers and get the community involved.

*\*Staff See Section II: 13.19 for more suggestions on retaining and recognizing volunteers.*

## 10.0 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

### Orientation

Orientation to the Volunteer Program for new volunteers will begin once the volunteer completes a Volunteer Application and the Volunteer Agreement Confirmation. Orientation to the Park includes basic training, policy discussion and position description. The scheduling and frequency of orientation will vary from park to park, in general it takes place within the first week of assignment. Supervision can range from park management to a ranger to a volunteer supervisor. The Park Manager or Volunteer Manager of the site will communicate the volunteer work hours, duties and responsibilities. The Park Manager is ultimately responsible for that park's program.

## **Training**

Volunteer training is ongoing. As a volunteer spends more time at a park, his/her duties can change or the volunteer will take on more responsibility. Park management provides ongoing training for general interests and specific duties. Park management will communicate training schedules. Express to park management your interest in areas that you would like additional training.

## **Park Management**

The Park service is dedicated to its volunteers. The agency encourages teamwork between employees and volunteers. Park management is ultimately responsible for the park's volunteer program. The Park Manager's responsibility includes the program's compliance with the Division of Recreation and Parks philosophy and policy.

## **Harassment**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources does not tolerate the harassment of agency employees, customers, vendors, volunteers/hosts or applicants. Harassment relating to an individual's race, color, sex/gender (including same sex), religion, age, national origin, disability or citizenship status is a violation of this procedure. All employees and volunteers (including supervisors and managers) are expressly prohibited from engaging in any form of harassment or sexual harassment. Violations will subject an employee, volunteer or host to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Definitions:**

Harassment (Other Than Sexual Harassment): Verbal or physical conduct that disparages or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of that person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability constitutes harassment when:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; or Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance.

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

For purposes of this procedure, examples of potentially harassing conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive remarks, jokes, slurs, pictures, drawings, photographs or written materials, including e-mail, pertaining to an individual's race, color sex/gender, religion, age, national origin, disability or citizenship status;
- Offensive sexual remarks, sexual gestures, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;
- Offensive or unwelcome physical conduct/contact, including gestures, touching, leering, patting, pinching, and brushing against someone's body, regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;
- Foul or obscene language;
- Threatening a reprisal or retaliating against an employee for refusing to respond to a sexual advance or a request for a sexual favor, or for reporting a violation of this policy.

## **11.0 RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING**

The most updated versions of forms and policies are linked to <http://gastateparks.org/Staff-Volunteer> (Staff Resources section of Georgia State Parks website).

## VOLUNTEER AND HOST RESOURCES

- [Volunteer/Host Manual for Park Staff](#)
- [Online Volunteer Supply Request - order uniforms here!](#)
- [Evaluation of Volunteer During Assignment - how did they do? post here and save time reference checking later!](#)
- [Evaluation Results of Volunteers - see what others had to say about them](#)
- [Volunteer Program Manual - sent to all volunteers/hosts when they accept and confirm an assignment](#)
- [Tracking Volunteer Hours - Volunteers are encouraged to track their own hours to not increase park staff time/responsibility](#)
- [Group Volunteer Liability Waiver \(Adult\)](#)
- [Group Volunteer Liability Waiver \(Minor\)](#)
- [Insurance Claim Form \(for volunteers injured at your park\) - SEE BELOW for more information regarding claim process](#)

### ➤ **DNR SOP- Drivers History Report for Out-of-State Employees and Volunteers**

All volunteers that drive park vehicles must now sign the driver acknowledgement form and if from out-of-state must submit their driver's history report. (These can be obtained through their home DMV or their vehicle insurance provider) \*this may be modified in the near future.

## FRIENDS OF GEORGIA STATE PARKS

- [Friends Membership Registration Requirements](#)

## INTERNSHIPS

- [Internship Information](#)
- [Intern Candidates](#) -- Please note, these candidates have NOT completed the background check. Once you select and approve one, let me know and I will assign them to you and have them go through the background check. They will also receive the volunteer excess liability insurance. They do not pay for these. If injured while interning, they DO NOT file under workmans comp. They will file like all volunteers, only through the excess liability insurance.

## PAPER VERSIONS - FOR HOSTS/VOLS WITHOUT INTERNET OR COMPUTER ACCESS

- [PAPER VERSION - Volunteer Criminal Background Check Form](#)
- [PAPER VERSION - Volunteer/Host Application Packet](#)

## EXCESS LIABILITY INSURANCE CLAIM FORM & INJURED VOLUNTEERS

- [PAPER VERSION - 2014 Volunteer Insurance Form](#) - for those serving less than 40 hours per year or less than 1 x / month. Send copy and receipt back to HQ. Do not send money to HQ, process in Active under 'Volunteer Insurance'.

### ➤ **If volunteer is injured, use THIS PROOF OF LOSS FORM for liability insurance -**

IMPORTANT REMINDER from our Excess Volunteer Liability Insurance Provider

If the injured volunteer has other health insurance coverage, including Medicare, the claim must be submitted to that provider at the same time as submitting the Proof of Loss Form to us. When the volunteer receives an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) Form from their primary provider, they should submit that form to Preferred Care immediately, as the claim cannot be processed without this information. A detailed, itemized bill from the medical provider, describing the treatment and listing treatment codes, is also required for claim processing. Please let your volunteers know that, as their claim is being processed, they may receive letter from Preferred Care, if more information is required. They may also receive an Explanation of Benefits from QBE Specialty Insurance, noting the amount that is being paid on their claim.

### ➤ **Volunteer's Evaluation of Assignment**

Each volunteer should be given an opportunity to evaluate the volunteer program and his or her assignment. This form should be completed by the volunteer at the end of their assignment or as they feel the need presents. The purpose of this form is to help parks improve their volunteer programs.

## APPENDIX

### EXAMPLES OF HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **CAMPGROUND HOST**

- Provide information and explain rules and regulations to visitors
  - Assist visitors with services available
  - Collection of fees from visitors (as long as it is in compliance with authorized procedures)
  - Distribute maps and brochures to visitors
  - Perform light maintenance work around the campground such as picking up litter, cleaning and stocking restroom facilities
  - Perform emergency repairs
  - Perform emergency assistance for visitors such as unlocking gate in emergency situation, and keeping first aid kit on hand for minor cuts and abrasions
  - Help reduce litter and vandalism (mainly by your presence)
  - Gather information on use of facilities
  - Keep park staff informed of any problems
  - Work in the visitors center and retail centers
  - Perform other duties as appropriate
- 

#### **MAINTENANCE HOST**

The maintenance hosts work only with the maintenance staff at the park taking on projects to keep the park looking good. These can include: mowing, trimming, leaf blowing, building new campsites, pressure washing, and electrical repairs to name a few. The maintenance staff will determine what projects meet the volunteer's skills and build the duties that way. The host doesn't interact with the public as much in this role.

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#### **YURT HOST**

The yurt host is where the host is responsible for the yurt section of the park. Going in prior to a reservation and make sure that the yurt is ready for occupancy as well as doing a final clean up afterwards. Guests bring their own linens for yurts. Generally, turn over would be wiping down all surfaces and emptying the trash. Yurts are unique to most folks in Georgia so being a Yurt Host can also mean showing the guests where things are inside as yurt and also showing them where the closest bathhouse is. It is always good customer service to know about the park amenities and local businesses/restaurants to meet their needs.

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#### **EXCURSION TRAIN HOST**

- Ability to work with people in a team environment
  - Ability to work for long hours on days scheduled
  - Knowledge of trains, electrical, construction, landscaping a plus
  - Must have a customer service and people-person driven personality
  - Must attend training and orientation regarding operations and safety of volunteering on the train
  - Must be cheerful and helpful to passengers at all times
  - And other duties as required for the smooth, successful functioning of train operations
  - Time Required: 24 hours per person/per week; may vary depending on season and train schedule
-

## GOLF COURSE HOST

To help the staff at our golf course enhance the experience for our guests who utilize the golfing facilities.

### Requirements:

- Ability to work with people in a team environment
- Ability to provide excellent customer service
- Some experience working in a volunteer capacity
- Good physical condition needed for course management duties, including possible lifting, maintenance, cleaning, ladder work, etc.
- Maintain committed schedule for host slot allotted
- Some experience working with groups
- Plus the requirements of all Georgia State Park and Historic Sites Volunteers

**Time Required:** 24 hours per week, per person; may vary from course to course depending on need.

**Supervision:** Required daily contact with the course assigned supervisor

**Duties:** The duties of the golf host may vary from course to course. The day usually begins around 7:00am. In an effort to fully disclose what responsibilities you may be required to perform, the following is a list of duties.

#### Around the Driving Range:

- Run Ball Picker to retrieve range balls. Gather all balls from areas picker cannot reach
- Wash all range balls and fill ball machine
- Move ropes to new teeing area as scheduled
- Add sand (top dressing) to teeing area. Fill all divots.
- Pick up trash and broken tees from range area
- Retrieve all baskets and stow near ball machine

#### Patrol Golf Course for Trash:

- Empty trash receptacles on course and driving range
- Empty trash receptacles around clubhouse
- Check parking lot, driveways and curbs for trash

#### Patrol Golf Course and Clubhouse for Routine Maintenance:

- Fill all divots with sand—tee boxes and fairways
- Check, fill if needed, sand bottles at stations or on carts
- Check greens and repair ball marks
- Fill and maintain ball washers
- Clean cart paths
- Paint hazard stakes
- Straighten Stakes and tighten ropes
- Clean and maintain bathrooms to standard defined in orientation
- Rake sand traps or bunkers if needed
- Check water stations, clean and refill with water/ice as needed
- Groom areas around hole markers/signage
- Groom areas around clubhouse i.e. shrubbery, walkways, grounds

- Assist with clubhouse cleaning—sweeping, dusting, mopping, vacuuming
- Assist with cleaning on bathrooms, toilets, etc
- Restock coolers and inventory as needed
- Report major concerns to appropriate staff
- Pick up limbs and debris around course
- Assist with leaf removal
- Assist with maintaining landscaped areas
- Assist with seasonal projects
- Assist with cart maintenance and cleaning
- May be asked to paint outside or inside areas
- May be asked to use some machinery, in the performance of duties, after orientation and training

#### Customer Service:

- May serve as Marshall or Starter to assist players with daily rules of play and control of pace of play
- Caution golfers when rules broken
- Performs all courtesies of golf when performing duties around golfers
- Assists with some programming, teaching, tournaments, outings, cookouts, and other events that may be conducted at course
- May be asked to answer phones or assist with customer service in clubhouse
- May be asked to set up at Par 3 location to gather information from golfers i.e. Name, email address, etc. for marketing
- May be asked to move directional traffic control signs
- May be asked to help secure guests and course in cases of emergencies
- May be asked to help with other responsibilities on the general park if needed

## CODE OF CONDUCT AND HOST AGREEMENT

**This agreement is entered into between the Host and Georgia State Parks when you accept an assignment. The Host agrees to perform the tasks outlined in the initial orientation and expectations meeting. The Host further agrees to the following:**

- The Host shall maintain nightly availability at the campground for a minimum of 4 nights per week, to include many (if not most) weekends and holidays. The schedule will be determined by the Park Manager working with the Host. By the nature of the position, Hosts will often find themselves working independently of supervisory personnel, particularly during evening hours.
- Hosts will be scheduled for at least 24 hours of service time per week for a minimum of eight weeks and may not exceed 6 months per year at one site. Should the park requirements indicate as acceptable, couples may divide the 24 hours of service time per week between the two people. Golf course and train hosts are often expected to host 24 hours per week per person. Hosts work various duties per park need and schedule. As some parks are busier than others, hosts may work 24-40 hours per week.
- Hosts will hand out information pamphlets, copies of park rules and regulations, or other general information items to other visitors as they enter the area. They may assist visitors, answer questions by visitors, or issue plastic trash bags. Tact, diplomacy, and courtesy shall be exercised at all times in dealing with other visitors, staff and the public.
- Harassment, including sexual harassment, is inexcusable for staff, vendors, customers and volunteers/hosts. A copy of the Ga DNR Policy against Harassment is in the park office. Accepting your host/volunteer position acknowledges you have read or will read and become familiar with this policy and comply with it. If you believe the policy has been violated in any way, report it immediately to the manager. Understand that any violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Hosts will report all disturbances or inappropriate conduct of park visitors to park staff. Hosts shall not attempt to discipline or apprehend any park violators. Hosts are in the role of being an educator, *not an enforcer*, of park rules.
- Hosts are encouraged and expected to keep written reports of complaints and criticism of park facilities, report situations that could affect the health and safety of visitors, and report any maintenance items that need attention. They should maintain other written records as requested by the Park Manager.
- Hosts are to wear the shirt, hat, or nametag if provided when completing assigned tasks and when acting in a public relations capacity on behalf of Georgia State Parks.
- Hosts shall not have firearms in their possession while on the park, unless they are abiding by Georgia's gun laws.
- All Hosts should conduct themselves in an orderly manner so as not to disrupt other visiting public. No alcoholic beverages shall be consumed while performing Host functions; nor shall the evidence of alcohol previously consumed be evident during the Host's scheduled service time.
- The Host shall maintain any assigned campsite in a clean and sanitary condition at all times. Outside structures and facilities will not be permitted (including portable hot tubs or "kiddie" pools). No dog pens, horse corrals, poultry cages, or similar facilities for pets or for the raising of animals will be allowed. Permission may be granted on a case by case basis by the Park Manager for house pets only. Pets shall be kept under physical restraint at all times. Upon completion of the volunteer service the Host's camping equipment must be removed and the campsite area must be left clean and in good repair.
- The Park Manager should be contacted and given advance notice of absence or illness.

- The Park Manager of each park may include special Host functions necessary to effectively operate individual campgrounds.
- Overnight visits with the Host by dependents, relatives, and friends is discouraged but may be permitted by the Park Manager on a case by case basis. An assigned campsite is specifically for use of the named Host only.
- The Park Manager or Assistant Manager has the right to terminate volunteer or host assignment at any time should they feel the assignment and/or volunteer are not functioning at the expected level.

**Georgia State Parks and the Host mutually agree as follows:**

The Park Manager, or his designee, shall decide on all questions that may arise as to the quality, fitness, promptness and acceptability of service provided by the Host to the park visitor, and the State Parks Volunteer Coordinator, or his/her designee may void or cancel this agreement by giving oral notice to the Host thereby voiding or canceling the host assignment. The Volunteer Coordinator, or his/her designee's, determination and decision shall be final and conclusive. The Host may cancel this agreement and assignment at any time for any reason, giving notice to the site supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

Hosts are volunteers. They do not receive wages or stipend. They are not eligible for benefits applicable to state employees.

Hosts are not covered by Worker's Compensation. There is no insurance coverage for damage or theft of personal property.

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Signature of Host & Date

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Signature of Site Level Supervisor & Date

# Park Staff Addendum for Implementation of Volunteer Policy

## SECTION II

### SECTION II – VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Section I of these guidelines provides policy and procedural guidance for the Volunteer Program. Section II covers program planning, development and operation. The objective of this section is to assist managers in determining their need for volunteers, developing and operating their own volunteer program, and increasing the efficient use of volunteer services.

Volunteerism is an American tradition that over the years has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations and individuals throughout the country. A recent poll found that over one-third of the American public has been or is now a volunteer. Over half of those presently involved in volunteer work are also employed in full or part-time jobs. The image of volunteers as bored individuals searching for something to do has given way to today's realities. Volunteers are doing everything from working in hospitals to operating visitor information stations and performing search and rescue operations. Today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals of all ages who possess the skills, desire, patience and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks.

#### 1.1 Why Use Volunteers?

There are many advantages to working with volunteers other than the obvious one of accomplishing a job at minimal expense. Enabling people in the community to be actively involved with Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites programs increases public support and helps them understand the work and planning behind

management decisions. With volunteers, parks can undertake projects that would, otherwise, not be possible and expand existing programs beyond the limits imposed by personnel shortages and budget constraints. A volunteer can also provide skills or expertise needed on a temporary basis.

## **1.2 Who Volunteers?**

Volunteers no longer fit a stereotyped image. They may be elementary school children who volunteer as a group to pick up litter, or active retirees, with both knowledge and experience to share with others. They may be doctors, lawyers, carpenters, or biologists, who may or may not want to use their professional skills in their volunteer jobs. They may be skilled people seeking to learn new skills, or people who come to the parks without any specific training.

Volunteers come with different backgrounds, abilities, and desire to interact with other people. Some may prefer working alone. Others may prefer an opportunity to work with other people, or look at volunteering as a way to make new friends with similar interests. Socializing among volunteers and between volunteers and staff is an inherent part of any volunteer program. Groups are a special category of volunteers. Through group involvement, projects requiring large numbers of people, such as the maintenance of a long segment of trail or the handling of a special event, can be accomplished. Special-interest groups may be recruited (or may approach the park) for projects that relate to their interests. School (elementary through college), church, or scout groups might propose specific projects they would like to do, or they may be willing to assist with Division-proposed projects. The parks may wish to design projects that would also fulfill requirements for school work or scout merit badges.

## **1.3 Why Do People Volunteer?**

The reasons people volunteer are as numerous as the types of work they do. Most volunteers have more than one objective. Volunteers are motivated by factors other than a paycheck. Unlike many paid jobs, volunteering gives people the opportunity to do things they want to do and can do well. Although many people will volunteer to use their available skills, other volunteers will want to do work that is totally different from their everyday work.

Volunteering is a way to provide a public service and fulfill responsibilities to society. It provides an opportunity for people to be helpful. Volunteering can provide opportunities for learning, opportunities to follow an avocation, and can be an outlet for creativity and energy.

## **1.4 How Long Do Volunteers Stay?**

Volunteers may want to donate their services for a day, for a few hours each day, a month or two, or a period of years. They may volunteer to complete just one project, or work on several different projects at different times.

# **2.0 PLANNING FOR VOLUNTEERS**

The decision about how volunteer services will be utilized in a particular area must be based on a thorough analysis of management needs, goals, and available volunteer resources.

## **2.1 The Park Volunteer Manager**

The first step in planning a volunteer program is to designate someone on the park's permanent staff to coordinate the analysis of management needs and volunteer resources. This should be a staff member who can assume the responsibility for coordinating the overall Site Level Volunteer Program as a collateral duty once it becomes operational. Since most of the park staff will be involved in this initial assessment, and may be actively involved in using volunteers once the program is initiated, the manager should be able to work directly with the various staff members on a daily basis. The designated site level volunteer manager should have time to adequately perform the duties of a park volunteer manager as described in Section I, 3.6 of these guidelines. Those duties must be included in the person's position description and work plan.

## **2.2 Assessing Needs**

In assessing the needs for volunteers, it's helpful to determine how volunteers can help and the type of volunteer skills that are needed. There are many ways to approach this task, but it is helpful for the entire park staff to be involved.

Volunteers may be helpful in tasks that need to be accomplished, if there were the time, personnel or funds. There may be tasks that are currently being done by the staff, but with which they need assistance. There may be one-time assistance needs or small jobs such as filing or organizing a storage room. Volunteers may be needed for events for a specific day.

## **2.3 Determining Volunteer Resources**

Determining the resources available in a geographic area will help with volunteer program planning and development. One of the most effective ways to locate volunteer resources is to contact volunteer organizations and program leaders in the communities within a reasonable commuting distance of a park. Good sources of information are program leaders and volunteers in volunteer action centers, volunteer bureaus, volunteer clearinghouses, local city governments, chambers of commerce. Sources of volunteers may include schools, clubs, churches, professional and trade organizations, special interest groups, senior citizen organizations, private corporations, and hospitals.

## **2.4 Developing Job Descriptions**

Volunteer descriptions need to be written for each volunteer job available, including projects or tasks that are appropriate for groups. Job descriptions define the tasks or duties expected under the Volunteer Agreement, and are important in preventing misunderstandings. The job description also provides a basis for volunteer evaluation, as it describes specific tasks to be accomplished and particular skills that will be developed or used. It defines the specific training necessary to do the job, and any training to be provided by the Division.

A standard job description may be written for similar jobs, such as volunteers working at an information desk or campground hosts. Specific conditions concerning amount of time committed, training requirements, etc., which may differ for each volunteer should be discussed and included in the Agreement for Voluntary Services. Individual job descriptions should be written for jobs that differ significantly from those covered in standard job descriptions. Volunteers are successful when they are providing services they look forward to and want to do. Volunteer jobs should be interesting, challenging, and rewarding. The job needs to arouse enthusiasm so the volunteer will be excited about doing the job!

All volunteer job descriptions, whether standard or individualized, should contain the following:

- Title of job
- Major objectives
- Specific tasks and responsibilities
- Qualifications
- Training and/or preparation
- Time and place
- Length of commitment
- On-the-job supervision
- Name and title of supervisor

Four factors to consider in designing jobs your volunteers will want to do are:

1. **Responsibility** – Your volunteers need to have a sense of personal responsibility for the services they provide.
2. **Authority to Think** – Give your volunteers an opportunity not only to do the work, but also to play some part in planning and deciding how to do it.
3. **Accountability for Results** – Being accountable for the outcome keeps volunteers focused, and gives them the satisfaction of making progress toward a meaningful accomplishment.
4. **Keep Score** – Regular evaluation will help your volunteers know if they are succeeding in their job and will help fuel their motivation

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## Volunteer Job Description [**Sample**]

Hamburgler State Park

Volunteer Position: **Gardner**

**Assigned Tasks:**

Objective: Keeping our Park Beautiful

Tasks: Planting, watering, weeding and general maintenance of gardens and/or related areas

**Supervisor:**

Park Manager or designee: Maintenance Supervisor

**Number of Hours Required for Position:**

A minimum of 3 hours per week

**Qualifications and/or Skills Required:**

Past experience and interest in garden related activities such as watering, planting and weeding experience in garden or yard, love of nature and thrill for immediate gratification of a beautiful product.

**Standards and Performance:**

Volunteer will report to work on day(s) assigned. The volunteer will check in with the supervisor for the day's duties and shift sign-in. Once the volunteer has finished their shift, they will sign out or will use the online form to document the day's hours. If the volunteer cannot make the assigned date, he/she will notify the supervisor before the shift starts.

## 3.0 MANAGING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

### 3.1 Recruiting

Most recruitment for volunteers will come from the volunteers themselves. Word of mouth is the number 1 referral process. The GSPHS Volunteer Coordinator in Atlanta will go to volunteer recruitment fairs, correspond with volunteer referral organizations, universities and trade shows to bring more individuals into the park system. Beyond these efforts, a good place to look for volunteers for your park:

- Speaking to park visitors
- Local News media
- Club meetings
- Social functions
- Church gatherings
- Professional societies
- Senior citizen groups
- Shopping malls
- Fairs or conferences
- Private businesses
- Industries
- State and federal agencies
- College clubs, student unions, newspapers
- College job placement centers
- Professors teaching courses related to the needs of the park
- High school and elementary school teachers, principals, guidance counselors, and clubs
- Special interest groups (local hiking club, Boy Scout troop, etc.)
- Social Media, web sites
- And, of course, Chapter Friends Groups

An excellent source of volunteers is the increasing number of high schools and universities that are requiring students to perform volunteer work through community involvement in order to graduate. School officials are good contacts to locate volunteers, and requesting to recruit for volunteers with posters in the school will help to advertise for volunteer positions.

Radio and television are effective means of conveying volunteer needs, as public service announcements are heard by thousands of people. As a public service, some newspapers offer free space for advertising volunteer needs. All media contacts must be cleared through the Marketing Department for DNR.

### **3.2 Determining if Volunteer Should be Registered with DNR**

When determining if a volunteer should be registered in the DNR system with a background check, use this checklist to help make that determination.

- ✓ Does this person volunteer at the park at least once per month or 20 hours a year?
- ✓ Does this person interact with the public/visitors/customers without *direct* supervision by Park Staff?
- ✓ Are their opportunities that this person would be alone with a visitor/customer while performing role as volunteer?

If any of the answers are “yes”, then the volunteer must be registered online. If all answers are “no” the volunteer can pay the excess liability coverage (good for 1 year) at the site and commence to volunteer for the day/period.

### **3.3 Interviewing and Placing**

Volunteers should be interviewed as it provides the volunteer and the supervisor a chance to gather information and ask detailed questions before any commitment is made. The interview should identify the individual's skills, interests, and limitations. It also offers the opportunity to provide specific information on training, orientation, equipment, liability protection, and any other specific benefit or requirement of the Volunteer Program. All volunteer applicants must be informed of the decision once it is reached.

### **3.4 Criminal Background Check**

The Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites reserves the right to conduct a criminal background check on volunteers who are not directly supervised by Park Staff. Criminal background checks are part of the application process. All volunteers should apply online, if possible. No data will be recorded, in compliance with standing regulations. Notification of pass/fail will be given. Results will be documented in the volunteer file. GASPHS staff will not be privy to the reasons or the record of the volunteer, only Pass/Fail status. Notification will be made to the affected volunteer by mail from within the department.

### **3.5 The Volunteer Agreement**

When an agreement has been reached on the specific work a volunteer will perform, specific time commitments, official starting date, and other negotiable items, the volunteer will confirm and accept an assignment online. Note that a complete Volunteer Welcome Packet must be sent to the volunteer after he/she has accepted the assignment. The Agreement for Voluntary Services is a contract between the Division of Parks and Recreation and the volunteer. It individualizes the job description by identifying rights and responsibilities, time frames and commitments and support. A properly executed agreement is a key tool for successful volunteer program management.

Once the agreement has been confirmed, and before he or she begins work, the volunteer should be introduced to the people he or she will be working with, and oriented with the park. The volunteer should be provided with materials that will familiarize him or her with the park and its operation.

### **3.6 On-Site Readiness**

Preparation for the volunteer on their first day of work is important. The Division wants the volunteers to know their services are appreciated, and being prepared before they arrive helps to demonstrate that appreciation. The volunteer should know who their immediate supervisor will be, where their work space will be, and when the training starts. The schedule should already be determined, and the staff should know the volunteer is coming. The specifics of what the Volunteer Manager will do versus what the supervisor will do with regard to the paperwork and orientation should also be decided before the volunteer arrives.

### **3.7 Orientation**

Most volunteers, even those who bring specific skills and knowledge, will require some orientation to acquaint them with the mission of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, to introduce them to the park, their job and co-workers, their specific worksite, and the performance and attitudes expected of them. Orientation begins at the moment of placement and provides volunteers with their first real indication of how the park staff feels about them. Proper orientation, skillfully designed around the volunteers' needs, will help them to feel welcome and get the most from their volunteer experience.

The job of orientating a new volunteer is easier for the immediate supervisor when a "formal" orientation session is held. Some of the important things to cover in the orientation are as follows:

- The volunteer's assignment: where, what, when, why, and with whom
- Who to go to for help
- Work schedule
- Time keeping arrangements
- Use and care of state-owned equipment
- What to do in case of an accident or injury
- How the job relates to the rest of the park operation
- Liability protection and the importance of working within the scope of the volunteer agreement

### **3.8 Training**

Careful recruitment, directed at potential volunteers who already have the specific skills that the park staff has identified in the initial assessment process can significantly reduce the need for on-site volunteer skills training in the park. Some on-site training, however, will always be required in an active volunteer program. The time devoted to volunteer training will be well invested, providing not only greater program efficiency but also increased job satisfaction among volunteers.

Volunteer training can be designed to serve a variety of needs. Pre-job training usually acquaints the new volunteer with the work that he or she will be doing and is sometimes combined with orientation. On-the-job training can be used to clarify expectations, extend knowledge, improve skills, or to meet individual needs. Sometimes advanced training is provided to encourage personal growth. However training is used, it should be an ongoing process; not a one-time activity.

### **3.9 Supervision**

Supervising volunteers requires the very same skills and techniques as supervising paid employees.

Volunteers want adequate supervision, direction, and guidance so that their donated time is utilized effectively. Just as in supervising paid employees, the goal of a good volunteer supervisor is to help the volunteer feel productive, successful, supported, recognized and rewarded.

Volunteers receive no monetary reward for their work; their "reward" is a feeling of accomplishment and a sense of belonging. Volunteers want to take pride in their work and in their association with the Division of Parks and Recreation. A successful volunteer supervisor knows this, and keeps morale and productivity high by making each volunteer feel wanted and a part of the working team.

It is extremely important to respect and value volunteers' time. Even though they are not being paid, their time is valuable to them and is beneficial to the park. Their work should be scheduled appropriately, and consideration given to how their productivity might be increased through better methods, coordination, equipment, and training. It is also important to involve the volunteers in decisions that affect them. Volunteers who are informed and feel a part of the operation produce better quality work.

Parks with a small staff and large volunteer programs, or programs that require more coordination might consider recruiting a volunteer to serve as Assistant Volunteer Manager. This individual could handle some of the administrative tasks such as scheduling, training, and perhaps recruiting. However, the designated park Volunteer Manager must directly supervise such a volunteer and must not lose touch with the program's operation.

Volunteers may decide to end their services for any number of reasons: the completion of a specific project, a conflict with personal or family obligations, or the acquisition of a new job. Whatever the reason the volunteer's service ends, the supervisor should evaluate the volunteer with fairness. The volunteer also should have an opportunity to evaluate the volunteer program. If the volunteer intends to use the work experience as a means of qualifying for a particular job, he or she may request a letter from the supervisor verifying the type of work performed. Completion of service should be noted on the Agreement for Voluntary Services.

**Supervision is NOT:**

- bossing people around
- constantly telling people what to do
- frequently checking up on them
- doubting their willingness and ability to do a good job
- doing the work for them

### **3.10 How Much Should I Expect From My Volunteers?**

Volunteers—like all workers—need to know what is expected of them. Good supervisors clearly communicate their expectations. No volunteer sets out to do a **bad** job for you. So, with that in mind, supervisors should define what doing a **good** job is. Don't believe that just because volunteers are unpaid, you shouldn't expect much from them. If you have high expectations from your volunteers you will most likely receive good results. If you believe that volunteers cannot do a good job for you or cannot be trusted to do a good job, then you will probably get minimal results.

Challenge your volunteers! Moderately difficult work, even very difficult work, is more motivating than work that is too easy. Most comments made by volunteers during informal evaluations indicate that many of them do not return year after year, or leave our organization because they were bored rather than because they were worked too hard.

Make sure your volunteers know how much you count on them to arrive on time, produce the desired products/services they have agreed to, present a good customer service attitude, and be sure they understand why their work is important.

Clearly communicate your expectations regarding:

- reporting work-related problems
- not doing tasks beyond the scope of their responsibility
- maintaining appropriate relationships with co-workers
- following established procedures

### **3.11 How Much Should My Volunteers Expect From Me?**

In addition to making your expectations known to volunteers, don't forget to ask about their expectations too. If some expectations are unrealistic, say so.

Volunteers have a right to:

- A clearly defined job.
- Adequate training.
- Tools to do the job well.
- Adequate workspace.
- Cordial relations with paid staff and other volunteers.
- Be involved in all decisions that affect them.
- Feedback (positive and negative) on their work.
- Be appreciated.
- The opportunity to discuss issues or problems concerning their work
- **Most of all...** volunteers have a right to expect the Division to be respectful of their time and to make certain that the time is invested in tasks and activities that are truly important.

### **3.12 Communicating With Your Volunteers**

Supervisors must be available to volunteers. Volunteers should have the ability to meet with, report to, and talk with supervisors on a regular basis. Availability encourages volunteers to consult with their supervisor if they encounter difficulties. If a volunteer has a question, they need to know to whom they can go to for an answer. You don't want them to waste time wondering what to do, or worse, doing the wrong thing.

Open and free communication is perhaps the most important aspect of building a sense of equality among volunteers and staff. Don't let your volunteers begin to feel like they are not an integral part of your work. Keep your staff informed about where and when volunteers are working for your program and what job they are performing. Including volunteers in staff meetings is a good way to foster open communication and good working relationships.

Here are a few additional ways to communicate with staff members and volunteers.

- Bulletin Board Messages
- Volunteer Cubbies or Mail Slots
- Include Volunteers in Your Routing System
- Notebook or Log Where Volunteers Can Leave Messages For You
- A Suggestion Box for Those Who Don't Speak up During Meetings
- Newsletters and Memos—Paper or Electronic
- Meetings
- Minutes and Special Reports
- Maximum Use of the Telephone

### **3.13 Supervising Groups**

Keeping supervisory control over the actions of a volunteer club can be tricky. A club has its own identity, its own structure and rules, and they will view themselves as volunteering as a group rather than as individuals. In this situation a balance must be struck. The volunteers need to feel ownership of and responsibility for the project. On the other hand, having your park or program stay in control over what is being done in its name requires finesse. Here are some ways to balance the two needs:

Offer clear, simple guidelines in a step-by-step fashion. Make sure the outcome of the effort is clearly defined. If the project/activity has been done before, give the group all the information you have about what was done previously, and what worked and didn't work.

Be clear about the various jobs that need to be done. Indicate how the jobs work together toward the common goal.

Clearly outline supervisory responsibility between you, the group, and its individual members. Make sure everyone is in agreement about who is in charge of what and of whom.

Establish dates and a channel for communications between you and the group.

Get the group to appoint its own —volunteer manager with whom you will work. This is especially important for a one-shot event, such as a weekend construction project. Work with this person to help with recruitment, on-the-job supervision and overall management. Make sure that someone understands that he or she is in charge of overseeing the project.

In delegating —chunks of work to an outside group you are entering into a relationship with a partner who might become an advocate for you, and this relationship will be somewhat different from other types of supervisory relationships. The group will probably not look at you as its supervisor but may be willing to look toward you as an advisor who will help it do its work successfully. Your role is to gain trust, help define what needs to be done so that the Division gains successful results, and then to give the group whatever assistance is needed.

### **3.14 Handling Difficult Volunteers**

Yes they exist- contrary to the —be nice mentality that surrounds volunteerism.

Who are they:

- People who demand control and have been around long enough to bring other friends, relatives and other like-minded dysfunctional into the program
- Volunteers who are abusive, verbally, emotionally, and even physically.
- Volunteers who are corrupt, unethical- betraying confidences and inappropriately becoming involved in matters not their concern.
- Bullies, threatening people with their power, or threaten to withdraw support if not pleased. They use influence to blackmail.
- Volunteers who are inept, yet who are —untouchable because of some protector- person, tradition, or length with program.
- Self-serving, spoiled volunteers whose behavior has not been checked.

#### **MYTHS About Problem Volunteers:**

**Ignoring the problem will make it go away.**

WRONG: It may go underground, but it won't go away.

**No one else notices. I'm the only one suffering.**

You must be kidding. Others see it and shift their anger and frustration to you, wondering why you haven't taken care of the problem.

**I can fix/change the person.**

WRONG. You can't and you shouldn't. That's not why you are there- it will only drain your time and energy, and cause you to ignore the 98% of your volunteers doing a great job.

**There's good in everyone. I just need to give them time to show it.**

WRONG. Some people are just nasty, how they got that way isn't your problem.

**If I confront them, it will make things worse.**

Not confronting it will cause more issues, and it won't if you do it carefully and calmly.

**If I confront them they'll leave and the program will die.**

WRONG. That is simply too much control, power and dependence on one person.

**If I push them out, they'll be mad at me.**

Maybe. Maybe not. If they become angry, so be it. You did what was best for the program and the people you serve.

#### **Hard Truths about Problem Volunteers:**

**Truth 1 Volunteers are not your clients**

Because a lot of your work is nurturing and supporting volunteers you may think that you are responsible for them as individuals. Not so. As a Volunteer Service Leader you are responsible for the actions of all your workers, volunteer, paid, stipend or assigned, etc.

You work to support, direct, and control those actions aiming at a specific goal and the general mission of the Division. When workers- paid or non-paid- spend their energies in a negative way and cause trouble that impedes progress, harms others, or otherwise keeps you from reaching goals, you must be ready to exert control and stop the negative behavior.

What you would not tolerate in a paid staff person you should not tolerate in a volunteer

**Truth 2 You can't accept everyone who wants to work in your program**

You are not responsible for the fact that some people just are NOT a good match. Inclusiveness is a philosophy, not a mandate. For instance someone with a drinking problem should not be a shuttle driver or operating mowers.

### **Truth 3 Some Adults act like Spoiled Children**

They believe the park or program is theirs and no one, especially you, should mess with it. Such people pout, threaten, and gather others to fight any change and can become vicious if they are not obeyed. They can easily lose sight of their goal of serving the park/ program and visitors and substitute it with their needs.

### **Truth 4 It can be hard to mix established volunteers with new volunteers.**

Typically long-term volunteers comfortable with their patterns of helping and established routines balk at job-sharing, episodic volunteers, and new volunteers. It is a wise Volunteer leader who can see their criticism and discomfort, as stemming from uncertainty over change and act on it before it becomes nastiness.

## **3.15 Ways to Confront and Control a Problem Volunteer**

### **Step 1: Talk to them in private:**

Document the effects their actions have had. Remind them of the commit they have made and how more appropriate actions are necessary to fulfill these. Ask why they chose this action.

Listen carefully to response, correcting improper assumptions and understandings; do not project acceptance of their behavior, but explain why it was inappropriate. Don't get in a debate, avoid side issues, focus on the problem.

Set a way to measure new behavior: establish timeline for correction, and a meeting to review behavior. Focus on issues, never on personality: avoid negative —you|| messages. End with a projection of your confidence that they can change the behavior.

### **Step 2: Second Meeting**

Review the actions that have taken place since first meeting. Document any continued problems and efforts. Set a very short time frame in which they must correct behavior. Follow meeting up with a letter outlining progress along with assurance that behavior will change before next meeting; outline consequences. Put letter in file.

### **Step3: Third Meeting**

If the behavior is not corrected by this time, produce document from #2, review the agreement and consequences of non-compliance. Follow through on consequences. Document your discussion and place in file.

Most people, who have acted inappropriately, will correct the problems immediately after you have pointed them out. Some people are testing you to see what they can get away with. Sometimes, they are simply looking for a way to have their concerns heard, and a quiet discussion with you may satisfy this need and remedy the situation.

As difficult as it is to —fire a volunteer, it is more difficult in the long run to hide from the confrontation that will either remedy the behavior or remove it from contaminating everything you and your staff and volunteers are working so hard to achieve.

## **3.16 Evaluation**

Frequent, informal evaluations by the supervisor and the volunteer can be a great help to a volunteer program. Supervisors should conduct an informal interview with each new volunteer after the first month or six weeks. This will identify potential problems before they arise and give both parties a chance to review the job description. Volunteers should receive a written evaluation from their supervisor as follows:

- Completion of a major project
- When the volunteer terminates his or her services
- When a volunteer's services are terminated by the Division
- At least annually for continuing volunteers

These evaluations should be brief and should refer to tasks defined in the job description. The written evaluation provides a basis for the decision to continue a volunteer's services and gives the volunteer

feedback on his or her work. The volunteer may use a copy of the evaluation as a reference for future employment or volunteer work.

Volunteers should be asked to evaluate the Volunteer Program at the same time they are being evaluated. They can provide a lot of information about a volunteer program.

### **3.17 Resignation**

Volunteers may terminate their service with the Division at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision. Additionally, both the volunteer and volunteer's supervisor should officially terminate the Volunteer Service Agreement in writing by signing and dating the form that was previously completed before service began.

### **3.18 Termination**

A volunteer may be terminated by park staff with no advance notice. Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites is not obligated to keep a volunteer in service if he or she is not performing satisfactorily. The volunteer supervisor should terminate the agreement if the volunteer repeatedly does not fulfill responsibilities, and attempts to correct the situation have failed. Terminating an unsatisfactory volunteer can be an awkward situation. When a problem first appears, the supervisor should bring it to the attention of the volunteer (and the Volunteer Manager) and work with the volunteer to find a solution. If problem-solving measures do not improve the situation and the volunteer cannot be assigned to another project or task without repeat of the problem, he or she should be given notice (unless circumstances warrant immediate termination) that his or her services will no longer be needed. Just as in an employment situation, adequate notice gives people a chance to adjust their schedules. Even in cases of required termination, the supervisor should evaluate the volunteer with fairness, and the volunteer should be given an opportunity to evaluate the program.

Any volunteer who works with the department may be dismissed or otherwise disciplined for any of the following causes:

- Failure to perform the duties and carry out the obligations imposed by the state constitution, state statutes, or rules of the department.
- Inefficiency, incompetency, or negligence in the performance of duties.
- Physical or mental incapacity for performing assigned duties, if NO reasonable accommodation can be made for the disabling condition.
- Refusal to accept a reasonable and proper assignment from an authorized supervisor.
- Insubordination or conduct unbecoming a Division volunteer or conduct detrimental to good order and discipline in the department.
- Intoxication on duty.
- Careless, negligent, or improper use or unlawful conversion of state property, equipment, or funds.
- Conviction of official misconduct in office, or conviction of any felony, or conviction of any other crime involving moral turpitude.
- Habitual pattern or failure to report for duty at the assigned time and place.
- Unexcused absences.
- Misstatement or deception in volunteer enrollment process.
- Possession of illegal substances.
- Project or job is complete and no additional help is needed.

### **3.19 Recognition and Awards**

One of the key elements of a successful volunteer program is recognition. Recognition provides the volunteer with incentives to continue working, and is central to the retention of volunteers.

#### **Understanding Motivation**

Don't assume that all volunteers will feel adequately recognized by receiving a pin or a certificate.

Remember...the reasons why people want to volunteer for GSPHS are almost as numerous as the types of work they can do. All behavior is motivated by something -- even poor performance. Volunteers who are motivated to succeed at the jobs we have to offer find satisfaction in our organization and in the job they do. Generally, people are motivated by three basic needs: a need to belong, to achieve, and to have status.

## A person who wants to belong:

- Needs personal interaction with you and your staff.
- Works to make friends.
- Likes to get involved with group projects.
- Likes to have a close working relationship with their supervisor.
- Works most easily with people they know well.
- Needs to be perceived as a —good person.
- Needs to be liked.
- Wants to keep people happy.
- Seeks socialization opportunities.

## A person who wants to achieve:

- Needs specific goals to work toward.
- Works well alone.
- Sticks to tasks until completed.
- Needs feedback.
- Seeks responsibility.
- Likes to problem solve.
- Needs tangible rewards.
- See problems as challenges.
- Needs specific parameters set to measure success.

## The person who wants status:

- Needs to impact and influence others.
- Can work alone or with a group.
- Enjoys teaching others.
- Can respond to needs of people or programs.
- Keeps an eye on overall goals of the agency.
- Responds to a job title that denotes authority.
- Will seek and accept a position of authority and responsibility.
- Is persuasive.
- Is self-starting.

Everyone, whether paid or unpaid staff, wants and needs to have his or her efforts acknowledged. A key part of supervising volunteers is recognition—showing appreciation for a volunteer's work and offering meaningful rewards for exemplary performance and a job well done. Recognition provides incentives to the volunteer to continue working with you and is central to the retention of volunteers.

Recognition is not just trinkets or events; it is an **ongoing** process. Both formal and informal recognition should be an integral and ongoing part of your volunteer program. The most effective volunteer recognition occurs in the day-to-day interchange between the volunteer and staff as thank-you's and atta-girls are freely bestowed.

## Creative Recognition Ideas:

- Stop by while volunteers are working to speak to each one
- Smile and call them by name
- Remember birthdays, anniversaries, etc. (they are listed on their service agreement form)
- Labeled area to place coats, hats, personal items
- Opportunity to decorate a personal work space
- Keep track of the length of time they have worked for you
- Suggestion box
- Volunteer of the week
- Bulletin board with pictures of your volunteers at work
- Inclusion in staff meetings
- Referring to your work corps as —staff—some unpaid, some paid
- Job descriptions for volunteers that are specific to their position, clear, and flexible
- Occasional surprise treats to say thank you
- Wall plaques noting service.
- —Volunteer Spotlight article to the local newspaper.

Each park may want to have an annual recognition event for volunteers. Cookouts and other informal gatherings are nice ways to get staff, volunteers, and their families together for recognition. Local merchants, community leaders, and support groups may be invited to participate. This is a good way to interest potential volunteers and get the community involved. Presentations of awards at annual recognition events may be made by Directors and/or Chiefs. Funds donated to the Volunteer Program through the Division or the Friends of State Parks may be used for special recognition of volunteers who exhibit exemplary performance, or long-term service. Pending availability, these funds may be used for recognition events. These are just a few of the ways we can recognize volunteers. However, recognition should not wait for an annual event. It is a daily effort by park staff to show appreciation for the volunteer's work.

For Additional Questions or Concerns  
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