



INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Effective: January 4, 2018



8. How do I find out about new volunteer opportunities?

To check for new opportunities:

- Click on "Already a volunteer"
- Enter your user id and password
- Click on Search for Opportunities (either that match your profile or search all)

This will bring up the list of opportunities that match your criteria. You may condense your search by searching by geographically region or type.

9. How do I only receive communications via email?

If you are interested in receiving only email correspondences including links for the newsletter, please send an email to: vspvolunteer@dcr.virginia.gov

- Select the entry for the opportunity you were engaged in, such as General Park Opportunity: Log my Hours (from the grey box)
- Click on the survey
- Click "New"
- Answer the questions that follow.
- Remember to click on "Close" when you are done.

Note: if you do not see any surveys, contact the Volunteer Program Office.

6. How to I check my hours to see if all the hours are listed?

Viewing your hours is an important feature of the on-line database. As a volunteer you can access your records immediately. To view your hours follow the steps below.

- Click on "Already a volunteer"
- Click on "View my log book"
- Change the date range for the hours you are looking for.
- Click "Refresh"

You should be able to see all your data stored in your log book.

One common problem is not changing the date field which is defaulted to the current date when you open the screen or not increasing the rows to include all information available.

7. What do I do if my hours are not correct or I made a mistake?

You can use the log book to review your hours and make a note of any problems or incorrect entries. If you do have a problem or an incorrect entry, contact us with the entry that needs correction. The Volunteer Program Office will make the change and email you when the record is correct.

Virginia State Parks

On June 15, 1936, Virginia became the first state to open an entire park system on the same day. The new parks offered modern outdoor recreational facilities while protecting areas with significant natural resources. The original six-park system has expanded to 37, with land recently acquired for additional state parks to be developed in the next decade. Each park has unique natural and/or historical resources that are carefully managed and preserved while providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Whether visitors enjoy boating, swimming, hiking, camping, or participating in special events or interpretive programs, Virginia State Parks offer opportunities for everyone to enjoy.

To learn about other DCR agencies and facilities at state parks, please visit the website at www.dcr.virginia.gov.

Call 1-800-933-PARK or email resvs@dcr.virginia.gov to reserve a cabin, campsite or shelter.

Mission Statement

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

To conserve, protect, enhance and advocate the wise use of the Commonwealth's natural, historic, recreational, scenic, and cultural resources.

Vision Statement

Virginia State Parks Volunteer Program

Volunteers provide passion, expertise and labor, and volunteerism generates a bond of understanding and support for parks, creating citizen stewards of the Commonwealth's natural, historic, recreational, scenic, and cultural resources.

Volunteering is Important

- Volunteering is an opportunity to help preserve our natural and cultural heritage for future generations.
- Volunteers are important ambassadors to create a better community-park partnership.
- Volunteers provide support to extend the programs of our parks to more visitors.
- Volunteering at parks can be a healthy experience.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers can share their time and talents in many ways. Listed below are some opportunities for those who would like to join our volunteer team. Not all opportunities are available at every park.

Core Volunteers – Those who volunteer on a regular basis are known as core volunteers. Some may volunteer on a weekly schedule, and others may assist the park several times a year. Volunteer positions include the following; individual parks may have additional positions available to support specific programs and facilities at their park.

Adopt a Trail, Stream, Spot, or Flower Bed
Gardening Assistant
Maintenance Assistant
Trail Maintenance Assistant
Contact Ranger (at the park entrance)
Visitor/Nature Center Receptionist
Clerical Assistant
Entertainer
Wildlife Monitor
Recycling Monitor/Educator
Interpreter Assistant
Historian - Researcher
Special Event Host
Volunteer Program Assistant

by the Volunteer Program Office. In most situations, the UserID is either your first and last name together - with no space or it is your last name (if your name is over six characters long). If your user id does not work, please contact us.

3. What do I do if I have forgotten my user id or password?

If you forget your user id, contact the Volunteer Program Office and a staff member will reset your user id and password to the default (see above question).

If you forget your password, you will need to create another password. Volunteer Program Office does not have a way to provide forgotten passwords. Click on "Forgot your password" and the system will generate a password. You may always edit your password/user id after logging into the system.

4. What is a survey?

Surveys are both the way you enter your hours and surveys of questions, such as evaluations. Under the database system your log book will contain a set number of surveys that end in "LOG MY HOURS", this choice allows you to enter your hours for your service. Other surveys will be questionnaire or evaluations that help Virginia State Parks keep in touch with our volunteers. Certain surveys will be available to selected groups of volunteers.

5. How do I log in my hours if I am already an active volunteer?

Logging in your hours is an important volunteer duty. Your hours help VSP secure funding, provide feedback to members on community participation and help VSP plan for future endeavors as well as potentially secure outside funding for new volunteer opportunities.

- Go to "Volunteer Login".
- Type in your user id and password.
- Click on "Report my service/fill in a survey" selection.



To View Past Hours:

1. CLICK on Report and View Hours. You now have entered your hours page where you can review your current logged hours or change the date range to view any period from the past.

To edit profile:

1. CLICK on Edit Profile to change and update all personal contact information.

If you experience any difficulties, please contact us.

Thank you for your commitment to the environment and for Volunteering!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How do I log in to become a volunteer or to check my records, if I am already a volunteer?**

If you are a Virginia State Parks volunteer, visit our [Volunteer Reporting](#) website.

If you are not a volunteer yet, [register to become one today!](#)

2. **How do I know what my User ID and Password are?**

If you did not choose your own user id and password when registering in the system, your user id and password have been set

Member of a “Friends of ...” Group – Most parks have formed Citizen Support Organizations or “Friends of ...” groups to support the park via special events, fund raising, and legislative issues. Membership includes a nominal tax deductible annual membership fee. Most Friends members are active in one or more volunteer areas of the park and complete a Volunteer Application and orientation training like core volunteers. However, some Friends members are inactive volunteers, supporting the park via their tax deductible donation. Anyone interested in more information on the Friends group at the park should contact the Park Volunteer Coordinator who will refer names to the appropriate Friends board member.

Volunteer Groups – Many volunteer hours are donated every year by groups who may work at the park on a regular schedule or only come one time. Scout troops, 4-H clubs, religious youth groups, civic and environmental organizations, schools (including home school groups), and corporations are encouraged to contact their local park for projects appropriate to their members’ abilities and time commitment.

Youth Volunteers – Volunteers under 18 years of age must have parent or guardian permission to volunteer. For the safety of minors, Virginia State Parks recommends that minors under 16 years volunteer with a parent or guardian or be part of an organized group that provides its own adult supervision. Check with your local park to learn of specific opportunities for youth.

Event Volunteers – Many parks have large events that require additional volunteers. Volunteering for a special event is an excellent opportunity for people to support the park if they have limited time for volunteering. Groups and individuals are encouraged to contact their local park to learn how they can assist with special events.

Volunteer Host Program – Hosts are an essential part of the park staff during camping season. They greet and assist campers, monitor the campground and perform light maintenance at the

park. Camp Hosts live in campgrounds at no charge for 30 to 60 days in exchange for performing their duties, which vary between parks. Hosts must provide their own camping equipment. Contact the Camp Host Coordinator at 804-887-8930 or visit our website at: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/camp-host.shtml>

How to Report my Hours:

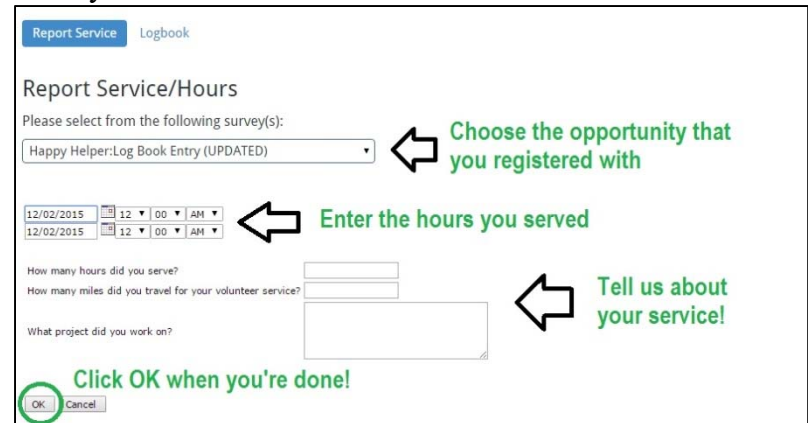
1. Click on Report and View Hours



Then...



Enter your date of service



- a) Please keep your dates within a calendar month. Use a new entry for a different month- do not overlap. You can use a lump sum on one day or enter the days of service individually.
3. Project information is optional but it provides you and us with a record of your activities.
4. Don't forget to hit OK!
5. Thank you Message will appear to indicate success!

VOLUNTEER DATABASE

Keep your Volunteer Profile Up To Date and Log Your Volunteer Hours

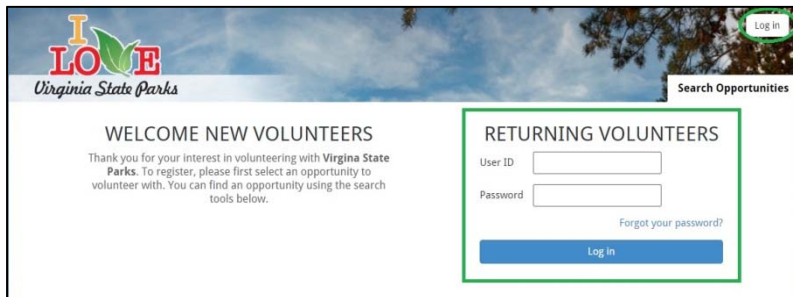
How to Login:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/volunteer.shtml

Select Volunteer member login



Enter User ID and Password then click LOG IN



1. **ENTER** your user ID (this is a login name you chose when you signed up for an opportunity the first time)
2. **ENTER** your password (this is the password you chose on your volunteer profile. If you do not remember your password, use the forgot password link. The Volunteer Program team does not have the ability to look up your password for security reasons.)

VIRGINIA STATE PARKS INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

HOURS	BENEFIT
ASAP	Name Tag
25	Park Manager's Certificate & Pass to Park of Service
50	Polo Shirt
100	1 Year Pass to All VA State Parks
150	1 Week Camping (indivisible)
300	1 Week Camping (indivisible)
500	1 Week Cabin (outside prime season / indivisible)
750	Lifetime Parking, Boating & Equestrian Pass to All Parks
1000	Name on Park's 1000 Hr. Plaque & 1 Week Cabin (outside prime season / indivisible)
Every 400 Hours after 1000 ¹	Option of: 2 Weeks Camping (indivisible) OR 1 Week Cabin (outside prime season / indivisible)
2000	Sec. of Natural Resources Certificate
3000	Bench OR Tree Dedicated to honor volunteer at Recognition Ceremony

¹ I.E. 1400 hrs., 1800 hrs., 2200 hrs., etc.

Benefits are solely intended for use by the individual reaching that hourly plateau. Only one annual / lifetime pass per immediate family.

Local Park Benefits – Parks may issue park specific benefits at their discretion.

Benefits for Groups – Groups do not pay the daily parking fee when volunteering. Depending on the number of hours and type of service given, the Park Manager may allow some additional benefits for groups like admission to a park program or activity. Groups who work an extended period may be housed in selected facilities available at some parks. Camping privileges may be granted by the Park Manager if the volunteer task and time are equal in value to the daily camping fee.

How to Volunteer

Individuals

Complete a Volunteer Application Form – Each individual must complete a Volunteer Application. The signature of a parent or guardian is required for youth under 18 years.

Interview with the Park Volunteer Coordinator – A preliminary interview may occur via phone or email to help determine the volunteer's interests, skills and availability. A personal interview is scheduled later and can occur the first day of volunteering, or at orientation.

Volunteer Placement – Volunteers receive a written position description for the appropriate volunteer job. The volunteer signs the description, agreeing to a specific time commitment (days, hours, and duration). A supervisor is assigned that works in the area related to the volunteer assignment. The supervisor may be a paid staff member or an experienced volunteer.

Orientation Training – Orientation may be with a group of other new volunteers or one-on-one. A checklist ensures volunteers have received all the necessary information and training to perform their tasks. Orientation includes a tour of the park, introduction to staff, policies and procedures, safety and emergency issues and much more. We want volunteers to be comfortable in their job and knowledgeable to answer visitor's questions.

On-the Job Training – Many volunteer positions are learned on-the-job as new skills or information is needed. Park manuals and reference books are available for those who may be involved in historic, cultural, or environmental areas.

Volunteer Review – After 2-3 work days on the job, or before 25 hours, new volunteers will have an informal review with their supervisors to ensure the volunteer is in the right position and they are comfortable with the various facets of the job. An annual

Helpful Information to Know

Check with your park to learn where fishing licenses can be purchased and whether a fresh water or salt water license is required in your area. Visitors may ask you for this information.

Volunteer Rights

A volunteer has the following rights:

- To be treated as a coworker.
- To be given a suitable assignment.
- To know as much about the organization as possible.
- To receive training for the job.
- To receive continuing education for the job.
- To have regular evaluation of their volunteer performance.
- To be given sound guidance and direction.
- To be given promotion and a variety of experience.
- To be heard.
- To be recognized.
- To receive enabling funds when needed.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

A volunteer has the following responsibilities:

- To be sincere in the offer of service and believe in the value of the job to be done.
- To be loyal to the community service they work with.
- To maintain the dignity and integrity of the community service with the public.
- To carry out duties promptly and reliably.
- To accept the guidance and decisions of the Volunteer Coordinator.
- To be willing to learn and participate in orientation, training programs, meetings and to continue to learn on the job.
- To understand the function of the paid staff, maintain a smooth working relationship with them and stay within the bounds of volunteer responsibility.

Virginia State Parks Regulations

All Virginia State Parks rules and regulations fall under Section 10.1-104 of the Code of Virginia and are classified as Class I misdemeanors which carry a punishment of not more than one year in jail, and a fine not to exceed \$2,500 or both. All state laws are enforceable as well. A complete copy of the Virginia State Parks Regulations is available at the park office.

Volunteers are asked to report any violations observed in their presence to a staff member as soon as possible. Do not attempt to correct the actions of park visitors, but rather note the vehicle tag number and/or the clothing the individual is wearing.

Among the violations you will most commonly observe are:

Flowers, Plants, Minerals, etc. No person shall remove, destroy, cut down, scar, mutilate, injure, take or gather in any manner any tree, flower, fern, shrub, rock, plant, historical artifact, or mineral in any park. Special Permits may be obtained for scientific collection from Natural Resources Management.

Note: Cones, seed pods, berries and similar renewable products may be collected without a permit but require permission from the park manager. A single shell or fossil lying on the beach may be collected – not buckets full and no digging for them.

Public Use or Display of Alcoholic Beverages If you observe park guests consuming alcoholic beverages outside of their cabin or camping unit, please make note of the tag number or what the person is wearing and notify a staff member. Special use permits may be obtained for group functions where alcohol is served but they require the Park Manager's approval.

Firearms In 2003, DCR amended the regulations to allow people with a valid concealed weapons permit to carry concealed weapons in state parks. Otherwise, firearms are prohibited in the park, including air guns, or BB guns. This does not apply to authorized hunts in state parks; parks are closed to the public on those days. If you observe a violation, please make a note of the tag number or what the person is wearing and notify a permanent staff member immediately.

Leash Laws All pets are to be kept on a leash, no longer than 6 feet, during the visitor's stay at the park. Pets may not be left unattended. Pets are allowed overnight in the campground and cabins by paying an extra daily pet fee.

review gives the volunteer and supervisor a chance to discuss the job situation even further. Volunteers may wish to change their work schedule or try a different volunteer position.

Group Volunteers

Complete a Volunteer Application Form – A representative of the group must complete a Group Volunteer Application. Individuals in a group may wish to complete the Individual Volunteer Application to qualify for the benefit program.

Interview with the Park Volunteer Coordinator – A preliminary interview may occur via phone, email or in person to match a group project to the group's interests, skills and availability.

Group Project Agreement – The back of the application form includes an agreement section to outline the project, time frame, and logistics involved. If a group completes a project and returns to the park at regular intervals, a Supplemental Group Project Agreement is completed to outline any additional projects. The agreement must be signed before beginning a project.

Orientation and Training – Groups that are working on a one-time 2-3 hour project will be doing a task that requires minimal training. Orientation may be as brief as a tour of the site where the group will work, restroom locations, and a packet of park information. Groups that come to the park on a regular schedule or extended period may have more extensive orientation and training appropriate to the task(s) assigned.

Intern and Service Learning Opportunities – Students can use volunteering as an introduction to careers or for school volunteer requirements. The application, position description and training are the same as for core volunteers. Parent or guardian permission is required for those under 18 years of age.

Special Event Volunteers – Groups or individuals should contact the Park Volunteer Coordinator for schedules of events and complete the Volunteer Application.

Corporate Partnerships – Corporation can provide funding and volunteers from their staff to undertake special park projects.

Other – Other sources of volunteers may be Virginia State Parks Youth Corps, court ordered volunteers, or inmate laborers. Each of these groups has organization specific application procedures.

NOTE: The Worker's Compensation Plan provides for employees of the Commonwealth but does NOT apply to volunteers.

Volunteer Guidelines

Park Volunteer Coordinator

The first point of contact for new volunteers is the Park Volunteer Coordinator, who is a part time employee or a full time staff member who has other park duties. The coordinator ensures volunteer applications are completed and that position descriptions, supervision and training are appropriate for each volunteer.

Volunteer Hours

Records are maintained within an online database for each volunteer at the park where he/she is volunteering. These records include dates of service, training, positions held, reviews of work, and benefits received. Each volunteer should maintain their hours in the database in order to keep accurate records. For more information on the database, see page 12. If you do not have internet access, you can record your time and submit it to your park's Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer hours document your contribution for benefits and the value of your time at the park, even if you do not desire benefits.

Change of Address, Phone or Email

To help the park keep in touch with you, please inform the Park Volunteer Coordinator if you have a change in address, phone number or email.

- Provides against “discrimination suits” related to equal employment opportunities regulations.
- Provides against claims involving negligent supervision or lack of supervision.

Health Insurance

- Coverage for medical payments up to \$10,000 is provided to volunteers injured while performing duties on behalf of the Commonwealth or one of its agencies. This is excess coverage, which is activated when an individual does not have health insurance or after the individual’s own personal health insurance is exhausted.
- The Department of Conservation and Recreation also has a separate, excess insurance policy covering volunteers. Neither plan includes payment for lost wages resulting from an injury.

Statewide Automobile Insurance

- Liability coverage is provided for all state-owned vehicles for bodily injury and property damage. Some vehicles have physical damage coverage with a \$1,000 deductible (comprehensive and collision).
- This insurance follows the vehicle. There is coverage whether the permissive driver is an employee or a volunteer.
- Legal defense costs are included.
- The non-owned and hired vehicle portion of the policy provides excess coverage for volunteers who are using their personal cars to conduct business for the Commonwealth. This coverage applies only after the individual’s own personal insurance is exhausted. For volunteers driving their own cars, their private insurance is the primary coverage.

Volunteers should notify their supervisors or the Park Volunteer Coordinator of any accident or injury.

Health

Volunteers should notify their supervisor if a change in health conditions may affect the ability to perform volunteer duties.

Safety

Volunteers should learn where First Aid Kits and AEDs are located and procedures to follow in case of an emergency; however, do not administer First Aid/CPR/AED unless currently certified. Contact the park staff in case of any emergency, so they can complete an accident report. Training for many volunteer positions includes viewing of various safety videos and discussing emergency procedures. Be wise, and be safe!

Background Checks

A criminal background check is required for all new prospective volunteers. This is run by park staff and there is no cost for the volunteer.

Tax Deductions for Volunteers

Volunteers who itemize on their taxes may deduct mileage to and from a volunteer job according to the current rate allowed by the IRS. Also any out of pocket expenses for phone calls, supplies, uniforms, or training can be deducted; receipts should be kept. Volunteers may not deduct the value of time donated, dependent care or meals (unless away overnight). Deductibility varies by individual; please consult your tax professional.

“No Shows” and Promptness

“No Shows can impact the quality of programs and service to our visitors. Emergencies do arise; however volunteers are asked to give as much notice as possible if they are unable to work their scheduled time. Promptness is also important, for being late inconveniences others.

Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace

The Commonwealth of Virginia's policy on alcohol and other drugs in the workplace also applies to volunteer workers.

Volunteers will sign a statement acknowledging this policy.

Use of Internet and Electronic Communication Systems

Some volunteers may use state owned computers to assist park staff. Computer use is limited to park business and internet usage is monitored. Volunteers will sign a statement acknowledging this policy.

Driving State Owned Vehicles

Volunteers are permitted to drive state vehicles if necessary to do their job. A copy of the volunteer's drivers' license is required for the park's files. This privilege can be revoked if a volunteer has points from traffic offenses.

Non Discrimination

Volunteer opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, religion, age, gender, color, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. Virginia State Parks are committed to providing a work environment free from discrimination, intimidation or coercion in any form, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Volunteers will sign a statement acknowledging this policy. Please contact your Volunteer Supervisor or the Park Volunteer Coordinator if an unwelcome situation occurs.

Volunteers who are unable to complete their volunteer time commitment must notify their supervisor or the Park Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers are an important part of the park's work force and staff needs to know when schedule adjustments must be made.

Dismissal of a Volunteer

Parks accept the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the park. Completion of an

application does not guarantee placement within the park's volunteer program. The park may at any time decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the park. Volunteers who do not observe the policies and procedures of Virginia State Parks will be counseled and warned. If a volunteer blatantly violates any laws, policies, rules or regulations, termination will be immediate. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to: gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, misuse of park equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of visitors or co-workers, failure to abide by Virginia State Park rules, regulations, policies and procedures, misrepresentation of the park's position on issues affecting the park system, and/or failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Complaints

Volunteers have a right to discuss a complaint with their supervisor. The supervisor will handle the complaint in the appropriate manner.

Insurance Coverage for DCR Volunteers

Volunteers for state government agencies are covered by tort liability insurance, excess health insurance and automobile insurance.

Tort Liability (meaning "negligence")

- Protects the Commonwealth as an entity, the agency as an entity and/or the volunteer.
- Provides liability protection for injury to other persons or damage to other person's property resulting from negligence during the performance of duties.
- Protects against bodily injury, property damage and personal injury (damage to one's character resulting from libel, slander, false arrest, etc.)
- May provide legal defense via the Attorney General's Office.