

Mount Rainier

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park
Washington



Volunteer Handbook 2026



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Welcome Letter

Welcome and thank you for choosing to volunteer with us at Mount Rainier National Park! Volunteers are an integral part of the National Park Service and serve as pillars of our core values. The National Park Service's mission is to preserve the natural and cultural resources and values of our parks for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations. The National Park Service works with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. This would not be possible without the help of volunteers.

In 2025, almost 123,000 volunteers donated more than 3.7 million hours to our national parks nationwide, an equivalent value of \$119 million. At Mount Rainier National Park in 2025 more than 1,900 volunteers and interns donated more than 68,000 hours of service to the park, at an estimated value of over \$2 million. These individuals not only helped us to protect the park and serve our visitors better, but they also had a unique and special experience. Mount Rainier is now “their park” in a manner which cannot be matched any other way.

In February 2026 we wished Kevin Bacher a happy retirement after a 32-year career with the National Park Service. For 23 years, Kevin served as our trusted Volunteer & Outreach Program Manager at Mount Rainier. You may still see him around as Kevin plans to volunteer as a Meadow Rover this summer. Park leadership is actively working on options for hiring a permanent replacement for the Volunteer & Outreach Program Manager, but in the meantime, Laura Shenk will fill in temporarily as the Program Manager for the summer, mid-June through mid-October.

Within this guide you will learn more about the mission of the National Park Service. You will also learn about the specific history and structure of Mount Rainier National Park and about your role, rights, and responsibilities as a volunteer. It is important that you understand your role in providing accurate information and making sure our visitors have a safe, meaningful, and pleasurable experience.

Thank you for volunteering with us at Mount Rainier!

Sincerely,

Volunteer & Outreach Program
Mount Rainier National Park

David Divelbiss – Sunrise Meadow Rover Coordinator
Brekyn Dyar – Paradise Meadow Rover Coordinator
Lily Martin – Volunteer Assistant (Northwest Youth Corps)
Jennifer Rand – VIP Assistant & Outreach
Dave Rynerson – Longmire Stewardship Campground Host
Laura Shenk – Volunteer & Outreach Program Manager



Program Overview

The National Park System of the United States is comprised of more than 400 units. These areas span over 83 million acres in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The National Park Service strives to protect these sites for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of future generations.

Mount Rainier National Park holds many significant resources. From extensive glaciers to old growth forests, alpine meadows to geothermal hot springs, and rare wildflowers to vibrant wildlife, the ecosystems that exist here are intricate and unique. The land administered as Mount Rainier National Park has been since time immemorial the Ancestral homeland of the Cowlitz, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, Yakama, and Coast Salish people. By following Elders' instructions passed through generations, these Indigenous Peoples remain dedicated caretakers of this landscape. Their Traditional Knowledge and Management of this Sacred Land will endure in perpetuity, and we honor each nation's traditions of landscape stewardship in our endeavors to care for, protect, and preserve the features and values of the mountain.

It is our mission to maintain the natural and cultural resources of the park in a way that celebrates the landscape and its visitors. As we facilitate high quality experiences, we promote park values, foster community development, and encourage environmental stewardship. With integrity, teamwork, pride, and motivation, we demonstrate environmental leadership and deepen our understanding of the park's ecosystems and history. We value our diverse range of individual contributions by showing respect and concern for each other and the park. Together, we preserve the resources at Mount Rainier National Park for future generations and we view its protection and preservation as our legacy.

Volunteers-In-Parks Overview

Volunteers are integral to the success and function of the National Park Service (NPS). Authorized by Public Law (PL) 91-357 in 1970, the NPS Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program created a way for NPS to accept voluntary help and services from the public in a manner that is mutually beneficial to the site and the volunteer.



Through the VIP Program, the NPS works together with communities to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in meaningful volunteer opportunities. Volunteers are accepted from the public without regard to race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, national origin, or disability. Volunteers may be recruited without regard to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations because *they are not federal employees for any purposes other than liability, tort claims, and workers' compensation.*



Volunteers-In-Parks at Mount Rainier National Park

The Mount Rainier National Park VIP program is comprised people of all ages and abilities. Some volunteers donate their service for only a day, others full or part-time over a season, and some give thousands of hours over the course of many years. At Mount Rainier, we seek to use the volunteer program as a tool to broaden citizen understanding and support for the park. Realizing the skills, talents, and services that our volunteers provide is a vital part of park operations and protecting the resources that make Mount Rainier unique.

We have a wide variety of volunteer opportunities ranging from single day projects to full-time, recurring positions. Certain projects may be more suitable for some groups than others due to the nature of the opportunity and associated safety concerns. Projects vary depending on park needs. Individuals under 18 may volunteer with parental approval.

Popular Programs

Most VIP positions are active between the months of May and September. Volunteers perform a wide variety of jobs, from maintaining trails to leading guided hikes.

Here are some examples of summer volunteer positions at Mount Rainier:

- Campground Host
- Community Scientist
- General Maintenance/Repair
- Greenhouse Assistant
- Historical Curator/Librarian
- Meadow Restoration/Planting
- Meadow Rover
- Roadside Assistance Volunteer Network (RAVN)
- Trail Repair & Maintenance
- Visitor Information Assistant



Volunteers working on a maintenance project. NPS Photo: Bacher

Fewer positions are available during winter months when snowfall is heavy, though we may still use volunteers as Nordic Ski Patrollers or interpretive ranger assistants at Longmire and Paradise on weekends and holidays.



Volunteer Rights, Benefits, and Protections

Volunteers have the RIGHT to:

- A safe work environment.
- Receive the same fair personnel practices as paid staff.
- Have their time used effectively.
- Receive clear and non-conflicting guidance and direction.
- Be kept informed of activities pertaining to their volunteer assignments.
- Not undertake assignments they do not wish to do.
- Receive appropriate orientation, training and supervision.
- Be assigned jobs which are worthwhile and challenging.
- Be made aware of the overall operation of the park.
- Have opportunities for growth.
- Be offered a variety of experiences.
- Receive regular, clear feedback on the quality and effectiveness of their work.
- Be recognized for their contributions.
- Have an opportunity to provide input into the volunteer program.
- Be trusted with the information needed to carry out their jobs effectively.
- Be assigned a direct supervisor.

Volunteers have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- Make safety their highest priority for themselves and those they are working with.
- Represent the National Park Service in a professional manner.
- Follow the park's policies and guidelines and seek to understand and work within its organizational structure.
- Seek and accept the guidance and support needed to complete assignments effectively.
- Work as a team with park staff and other volunteers while respecting mutual roles.
- Be reliable in communication, attendance, and fulfilling assignments.
- Respect access to information, facilities, equipment, and resources.
- Attend, actively participate in, and learn from training sessions and meetings.
- Make a good-faith effort to resolve differences or conflicts.
- Care for park resources.



Volunteers may be eligible for the following BENEFITS:

- Free entrance into the park on the days the volunteer is working.
- The option to stay in the Longmire Stewardship Campground or White River Campground free of charge the night before and/or the nights of service.
- Housing for long-term, full-time volunteers who donates 32 hours/week or a couple that donates 24 hours/week each.
- Training and professional development opportunities.
- A year-long volunteer pass that is good for entrance to any federal fee area. Passes are awarded for every 250 hours served with any federal land management agency.
- A name tag for volunteers who have served at least 100 hours.
- Brass recognition bars (to be worn with name tags) that commemorate service milestones of 500 hours, and years in increments of five.
- Evaluation of work by the project supervisor that can be used for resumes and job applications.

Zero Tolerance Policy for Harassment

The NPS is committed to providing a work environment free from discrimination and harassment and will not tolerate sexual or non-sexual harassing behavior against any NPS employee, intern, volunteer, contractor or other nonfederal employee, visitor, or other member of the public. The NPS also will not tolerate adverse treatment of employees because they report harassment or provide information related to such complaints. The NPS is committed to taking immediate and appropriate corrective action, including appropriate disciplinary action, to eliminate harassing conduct regardless of whether the conduct rises to the level of a violation of law.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is broader than, the legal definition of harassment and sexual harassment. Harassing conduct is defined as unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, including intimidation, ridicule, insult, comments, or physical conduct, that is based on an individual's protected status or protected activities, when the behavior can reasonably be considered to adversely affect the work environment, or when an employment decision affecting the employee is based upon the employee's acceptance or rejection of such conduct.

The National Park Service has a zero tolerance policy on harassment. This means that harassment of any kind will not be tolerated under any circumstances and is cause for immediate termination from the Volunteer Program. Even off-duty misconduct may be cause for discipline if it is likely to have an adverse effect on the NPS (for example, harassing a co-worker, visitor, or volunteer during off-duty hours). Harassing conduct can occur in person, through phone calls or in writing, or using social media and other forms of technology.

Employees who report harassing conduct or discrimination, file a claim of harassment, provide evidence in any investigation, or intervene to protect others who may have suffered harassing conduct are also protected from retaliation.



Any employee who has been subjected to harassing conduct is encouraged to inform the person(s) responsible for the conduct that it is unwelcome and offensive, and requests that it cease. If the conduct continues, is severe, or if the employee is uncomfortable addressing the responsible person(s) about the conduct, the employee is encouraged to report the matter to the supervisor of the employee engaging in the misconduct, another supervisor, or an employee relations specialist. Employees, including volunteers, who know of or witness possible harassing conduct directed at others **are expected to** report the matter. Supervisors and managers who observe or are informed of allegations of harassing conduct must report the conduct or allegations to the appropriate officials; ensure that a prompt, objective, and thorough investigation is conducted; and take steps to ensure the harassing conduct is appropriately addressed to deter further misconduct, including taking appropriate disciplinary action.

Details of this policy can be found in Director's Order 16E, which can be found online at [Director's Order #16E: National Park Service Anti-Harassment Policy \(amended 3/3/2025\)](#)

Zero Tolerance Policy for Discrimination

To protect and provide access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage, we are committed to creating a work environment in which a diverse workforce is valued. Equal access to volunteer opportunities is assured for all volunteers without regard to their race, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a parent, or marital status, and without retaliation for engaging in protected activities.

Volunteers are not to make comments or jokes based on these categories. The National Park Service has a zero tolerance policy on discrimination. This means that discrimination will not be tolerated under any circumstances and is cause for immediate termination from the Volunteer Program.



Prioritizing Safety

Your most important duty as an NPS volunteer is to do your job safely. If a job cannot be done safely, it should not be done at all.

All jobs in the park, including those done by volunteers, should include a detailed description of duties, a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) that reviews potential safety concerns and how to mitigate them, thorough training and supervision, and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Volunteers should review their description of duties and any associated JHAs with their supervisor before beginning work and should request any training and PPE necessary to do their job safely.

Mount Rainier National Park operates under the principle of “Operational Leadership,” which states that every employee has the authority to ensure their own safety. If you feel at any time that a job or situation is unsafe, you have the authority to take steps to ensure your safety, including declining to do the job or requesting that everyone take a step back to assess the situation. Many supervisors are trained in procedures for evaluating risk, based on factors including job complexity, team fitness, and environmental conditions. Still, in the end, everyone is responsible for their own safety.

The park's safety goal of zero incidents can only be realized if all park staff, volunteers, and visitors proactively work toward that goal. As a volunteer we ask that you stay aware of your surroundings when in the park and speak up when you see something that is unsafe, whether it relates to your job, the job of another employee or volunteer, or the experience of a visitor. Even something seemingly small, like an unreported radio malfunction, can result in tomorrow's incident when a volunteer grabs a radio that is not functional, impacting their ability to communicate with emergency responders. If you witness a situation that places a person in immediate danger, approach that person and explain what you see and the possible consequences of the situation, then report it to your supervisor. If the situation is not urgent, contact your supervisor, explain the situation and ask what you can do to help mitigate the risk.

If you are in a situation where you feel your safety concerns are not being adequately addressed, you can contact the Volunteer Program Manager or the park's Safety Officer directly.



Volunteer Liability

Volunteers need the following completed forms to begin work:

1. Volunteer Service Agreement (OF301A for individuals, OF301B for group). Must be reviewed and signed annually.
2. Valid Position/Service Description
3. Signed Job Hazard Analysis

Like NPS employees, liability is covered while performing **official duties**. Official duties must be clearly defined in the Service Description. If a volunteer performs a task outside of the written duties, you will not be covered in the event of an injury. For your own protection, volunteers should review the description of duties to ensure that it covers all the tasks you are being asked to complete. If your duties exceed those listed on your agreement, or if new duties are added over time, make sure those duties are added to your documentation. A supplementary agreement or Service Description may be filled out, or the additional duties may be written in or attached to the original agreement, along with initials or signatures by the volunteer and supervisor. If any of the above documentation is missing, you are not legally covered as an NPS Volunteer. More information about these forms can be found on the following page.

For volunteers who are medical professionals, any claim of malpractice while performing official duties is also covered. Coverage is extended to “off the clock” time while the volunteer is on travel status. Some volunteers perform their service outside the physical boundaries of park and may be asked to stay overnight as part of their official duties, such as virtual volunteers, volunteers attending conferences, etc. If the volunteer’s work and duty station is specified in the volunteer service agreement, liability is extended to them in cases of workers’ compensation and tort claims



Volunteers in proper PPE. NPS Photo: Bacher

Federal Compliance

Park residents, employees, and volunteers are subject to Federal laws and regulations regardless of state law. This prohibits employees and volunteers from carrying a firearm while on duty. This also prohibits the use and possession of marijuana.



Documentation (It's Important!)

Individual Volunteer Service Agreement (OF-301A)

- All volunteers must have a signed service agreement prior to doing any work. A service agreement is a legal document prepared by the volunteer supervisor that formally enrolls the volunteer with the Mount Rainier Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program.
- The service agreement is only valid for the length of the project and is never valid for longer than one year. The service agreement should be reviewed by the volunteer and the supervisor on a regular basis (at least every year) and updated any time there is a change in task assignment.
- All volunteers under the age of 18 MUST have a release form signed by a parent or legal guardian in the service agreement.

Group Agreements (OF-301-B)

- If you are serving with a group (for example, a one-day trail project through Washington Trails Association), your group leader will have the service agreement for the team, and you will sign a sign-in sheet.
- By signing the sign-in sheet you are covered by the group service agreement which should be made available for your review by your group leader.
- Parental consent forms may be filled out at registration or upon arrival if the youth is accompanied by a parent/legal guardian or obtained in advance if unaccompanied.

Service Description (formerly Position Description)

- Official duties can be outlined in the service agreement, or in a supplemental Volunteer Service Description. This outlines the exact duties of the volunteer along with any potentially dangerous or hazardous activities and their associated mitigation procedures.
- To protect yourself, never do any work unless it is clearly defined in a service description.

Job Hazard Analysis

- Volunteers must review and sign a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) as determined by their supervisor that is relevant to the duties they will perform. Volunteers will observe the same safety precautions and be provided with the same safety equipment and training as paid staff members. VIPs will be included in pertinent park training whenever possible.

Additional forms may be required for certain volunteers including background checks for computer access. Your supervisor will provide you with more information as necessary.

Both the Volunteer and the NPS Volunteer Supervisor are responsible for ensuring the documentation is in place prior to any work taking place. Protect yourself and ensure you are covered with a valid Volunteer Service Agreement (must be signed annually), a Volunteer Service Description that outlines your official duties and you have reviewed and signed any applicable Job Hazard Analysis. Should an incident occur, the documentation outlined above will be used to determine whether the volunteer was working within their assigned duties and following proper safety procedures.



Volunteers and Social Media

In accordance with this policy, employees, volunteers, and contractors will abide by the following principles for personal use of social media. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

1. Do not discuss in a publicly accessible forum any NPS-related information that is not public information. The discussion of sensitive, proprietary, or classified information is strictly prohibited. This rule applies even in circumstances where password or other privacy controls are implemented.
2. Be aware of your association with the NPS when participating in online social networks. If you identify yourself as an NPS employee or have a public facing position for which your NPS association is known to the general public, ensure that your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as an NPS professional, appropriate to the public trust associated with your position, and consistent with existing standards such as the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. Remember, there should be no expectation of privacy when using social media; what is posted can go far beyond your circle of friends.
3. When in doubt, stop. Do not post until you are certain that your post will be considered protected speech that does not violate DOI and Executive Branch conduct guidelines and laws such as the Hatch Act.
 - Consider adding the following Office of Government Ethics approved disclaimer to your social networking profile, personal blog, or other online presences: “The views and opinions on this page/site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Park Service or the United States”.
4. Do not post photographs showing sensitive topics. Photographs of sensitive topics (e.g., Cascade Red Fox and other threatened and endangered species and their breeding sites, law enforcement incidents, search and rescue operations) taken on or off duty by an employee, volunteer, or contractor shall not be posted to personal social media without approval of the Superintendent, Public Information Officer, or a designee. This includes photographs of sensitive locations or activities you may have special knowledge of by virtue of your NPS work. Your discretion is appreciated to help protect the privacy of individuals affected by incidents and to support the wellbeing of protected species within the park.
 - Staff involved with Resource Management operations, including external partners, shall abide by the Code of Scientific and Scholarly Conduct and DM 305 Scientific Integrity Procedures Handbook. All Resource Management and Law Enforcement activities are considered “sensitive” and will not be discussed on personal social media. This includes animal locations.
5. Photographs taken on duty are subject to agency ethics and information regulations. Photographs, operational information, and individual affiliations with the park may not be used for personal gain or to promote businesses or brand names. Staff must avoid any appearance of impropriety associated with endorsements stemming from service with the NPS.

If you are unsure about a post relating to the NPS, discuss your proposed post with your supervisor and ask for guidance.



Logistics of Volunteering

Background Investigations

Volunteers are subject to background checks if they perform any of the following duties:

- Handle fees or government currencies
- Have unsupervised access to federally controlled spaces/building
- Have access to Department of Interior (DOI) networks
- Have unsupervised access to minors
- *Personal Identity Verification (PIV) Card*
 - o To fulfill assigned duties some volunteers will need access to a government computer. To access government systems, you will need to complete a federal background check and be issued a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card.
 - o This process can take more than one month and should be initiated as soon as possible. Your supervisor will let you know if this applies to you during the onboarding process.

Uniforms

For many positions, uniforms will be provided for you by the volunteer coordinator or by your supervisor. The uniform will identify you as an official volunteer for the National Park Service and should only be worn while officially on duty. Some programs have specific uniform requirements that will be relayed to you by a supervisor.

At Mount Rainier National Park uniforms consist of a tan long or short sleeve shirt with a 3¼" National Park Service Volunteer patch sewn on the left shoulder, and a green/tan ball cap or tan sun hat with a similar patch in the 2¼" size. Volunteer patches are also available to be sewn on outerwear.



Volunteer in uniform. NPS Photo

Elastic arm bands with volunteer patches on them may also be available to use with outerwear. You must supply your own pants and shoes suitable for your position. Ask your supervisor if you have any questions.

Entrance and Parking

Entrance into the park is free to volunteers on the days they are volunteering. Please keep in mind that the park experiences heavy traffic flow during busy season. Remember to plan accordingly to ensure prompt arrival to your duty station. Some volunteers may be asked to park in previously identified spaces for project duties.

When entering the park, please wear your uniform to help the entrance station staff identify you as an employee. If you do not have a uniform, either print or have a digital copy of the confirmation of



your volunteer work the day you are entering the park. Volunteers who work on a regular basis can submit an Entry Card Request Form to the Fee Office. Volunteers should reach out to mora_vips@nps.gov for additional information.

Housing and Camping

Housing options are extremely limited at Mount Rainier National Park for volunteers (and all employees). There are a few spaces in shared housing and RV sites with hookups for volunteers who serve at least 32 hours/week for one individual, or 24 hours/week each for a couple. Housing is provided to volunteers free of charge but is billed to the department for which the volunteer is working. The volunteer announcement to which you applied will indicate whether the position is eligible for park housing, and housing options should be discussed with your supervisor prior to signing the service agreement. This information should be outlined in your service description.

The Longmire Stewardship Campground is available for short-term volunteers to use at no cost while they are volunteering. There are 41 sites of various sizes and several platform tents available for use (summer only). RVs and camper trailers are limited as The Nisqually Historic Suspension Bridge to reach the campground from Longmire has a weight limit of 3 tons or 6,000 lbs. While there are no hook-ups at the campground, a shower building is available for volunteer use during the summer months. Food lockers are located throughout the campground to keep wildlife from scavenging campsites.

The White River Campground is also available for short-term volunteers to use at no cost while they are volunteering at Sunrise during the summer season. Your supervisor or coordinator will help you obtain a site. Sites at White River are more limited than at Longmire. NOTE: at the time of publishing this handbook, there is no water at White River campground. Restrooms are available in a vault toilet in Loop B or port-a-potties throughout the campground. Anyone staying at White River should be prepared to bring all water they will need for the duration of their stay.

All campsites are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis and are not guaranteed.

Food, Water, and Supplies

Volunteers will need to bring their own food on days they are working in the park. If you are volunteering in a group through one of our partners, the group lead may have arranged for refreshments and will specify that in the program description.

Keep in mind that options to buy food in the park are limited and may not be feasible depending on where you are working in the park. Refrigeration and microwaves are also extremely limited, so aim for non-perishable, high energy snacks.

Limited Phone Service and Internet

Cell phone service and Wi-Fi are unavailable in most areas of the park. There is minimal cell phone service in the Longmire district around the employee lounge, and at Tahoma Woods depending on the provider. There is moderate Verizon coverage at Paradise near the Jackson Visitor Center.



Public Wi-Fi can be accessed at the following locations. **Bandwidth is limited so streaming services like Netflix are not permitted.**

- Longmire Administration building/Wilderness Information Center (WIC)
- Longmire Employee Lounge (L112)
- Longmire Museum
- Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise
- Sunrise Visitor Center

Volunteers living in the park may use office computers after hours to check personal email if they have a PIV card.

Reimbursements

Reimbursements are sometimes provided to volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a direct result of volunteer activities (local transportation, meals, uniforms, lodging, etc.). Such reimbursements are only provided if the volunteer is unable to volunteer without assistance and must be arranged with a supervisor prior to starting work. Per National Park Service policy, most reimbursements are only permitted to volunteers that are not also being provided with park housing. If you have been approved to receive reimbursements, your supervisor will provide you with further instructions.

Tracking Your Hours

Accurately tracking volunteer hours is extremely important for the park as well as the volunteer. Every year the number of volunteer hours donated directly affects the park's budget and funding for the Volunteers-In-Parks program. For the volunteer it is important to track the number of hours for resume purposes and receiving volunteer benefits.

All volunteers are responsible for tracking their own hours and reporting them to the volunteer program. A standardized form can be supplied by your supervisor or the volunteer program manager.

Volunteer Evaluation

Every volunteer has the right to an evaluation by a supervisor to receive feedback on the quality and effectiveness of their work. This can be through a verbal conversation or more formal documentation if the volunteer intends to use it for a resume or reference. Volunteers may also be evaluated if their work does not meet the needs of the project manager. Often a simple increase in support, communication, and explanation of expectations can resolve any issues that arise. There are also times when the duties of the volunteer may be revised in the volunteer agreement to better match the skills of the volunteer with the needs of the park.

Evaluation by a supervisor is one of your rights as a volunteer and you should not hesitate to contact your supervisor for review.



End of Volunteer Term

It is the right of both the volunteer and the park to terminate the volunteer agreement at any time for any reason. We encourage supervisors to evaluate and communicate issues with a volunteer and try to resolve any conflicts before termination. If you are having an issue as a volunteer and are unsure how to approach your supervisor about it, you can contact the volunteer program for support.

Upon ending the volunteer agreement, we ask you to please return any park supplies or equipment to your supervisor. (Ex: radios, keys, uniforms, tools, etc.)



Mount Rainier Volunteer Code of Conduct

It is the policy and expectation for Mount Rainier National Park volunteers to maintain high standards of honesty, impartiality, character, and conduct to ensure the proper performance of government and the continual trust and confidence of those it serves.



WHEN WORKING AS A VOLUNTEER, OR REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AS A VOLUNTEER, I WILL:

- **Exercise Good Ethics.** I will place ethical principles above private gain, as public service is a public trust.
- **Make Good Effort.** I will put forth an honest effort in performance of my duties.
- **Show Fairness and Act Impartially.** I will not give preferential treatment or recommendation to any private organization or individual.
- **Take Care of Equipment.** I will protect and conserve Federal property and not use it for other than authorized activities.
- **Be Non-Partisan.** I will not engage in political activity or solicit or receive political contributions while on duty or in the Federal workplace.
- **Respect Other People.** I will work respectfully with others regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, or disability. The National Park Service has zero tolerance for harassment.
- **Professional Behavior.** I will exercise professional and courteous behavior to other volunteers, visitors to the park, park partners, and National Park Service staff always.
- **Non-Public Access.** I will not use non-public access to NPS staff or resources for private gain.
- **Refrain from Advocacy** (while representing myself as an NPS volunteer). I will not use my position as a volunteer to leverage any type of influence or gain.

Violation of this code of conduct will result in corrective action and/or termination of your volunteer agreement with Mount Rainier National Park.



Frequently Asked Questions about Mount Rainier National Park

When was Mount Rainier established as a national park?

Mount Rainier National Park was established March 2, 1899, 17 years before the National Park Service (NPS) was established. Mount Rainier is the fifth oldest national park, following Yellowstone National Park (March 1, 1872), Sequoia National Park (September 9, 1890), Yosemite National Park (October 1, 1890), General Grant National Park (October 1, 1890) (enlarged in 1940 and renamed to Kings Canyon National Park).

How large is Mount Rainier National Park?

Mount Rainier encompasses 236,381 acres; 369.3 square miles. Of that, 228,480 acres (97% of the park) have been designated as Wilderness. The park's National Historic Landmark District (NHL) includes 2.7% of the park. The park has 260 miles of maintained trails and 147 miles of roads.

How many people visit the park each year?

Generally, about 1.5 million people visit Mount Rainier each year. In 2023, the park had 1,674,294 recreational visitors.

Is the park open all year?

Yes, but many areas close for the season in mid-October or early-November depending on snow conditions and do not reopen until summer. Longmire is open all year, including the Museum and National Park Inn. The road from Longmire to Paradise is generally open on winter days, although it is closed and gated at Longmire every evening and any time snow, ice, or potential avalanches make travel to Paradise unsafe. Tire chains must be carried in all vehicles inside the park November through March. The Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise is open weekends and holidays in the winter, and daily from mid-June through early October. The Paradise Inn is typically open from late May to early October only.

How high is Mount Rainier?

The official USGS measurement is 14,410 feet above sea level. Mount Rainier is the tallest volcano and fifth highest peak in the contiguous United States, after Mount Whitney in California and Mounts Elbert, Massive, and Harvard in Colorado. (There are twelve taller peaks in Alaska, including Denali.). Mount Rainier has the third greatest prominence (a measure of how much a summit rises above its surroundings) in the United States, after Denali in Alaska and Mauna Kea in Hawaii.

How many people climb the mountain each year?

About 10,000 people climb Mount Rainier every year, and about half of them reach the summit.

How old is Mount Rainier?

The volcano was built up above the surrounding country by repeated eruptions and successive flows of lava. It is a relatively young volcano, only about 500,000 years old.



Is Mount Rainier an active volcano?

Geologists consider this mountain to be an 'episodically active' volcano, meaning one which will erupt again sometime in the future even though it may be quiet now. There are active steam vents at the summit. New research indicates Mount Rainier is far more active than previously believed. We now understand there are risks associated with the volcano and its glaciers which require visitors and staff to be aware and prepared. Events of sufficient size to be dangerous are rare, but the risks are real. Mudflows (also known as lahars) and glacial outburst floods can occur without warning, and could damage roads, invade campgrounds, and cause injury to park visitors and staff. The Longmire Historic District, Cougar Rock, Ohanapecosh, Ipsut Creek and White River campgrounds are all vulnerable to geologic hazards. Be sure to review information posted at park campgrounds and inns.

When was the last time the volcano erupted?

The last major eruption which deposited lava occurred 1,100 years ago. The most recent eruption to leave a recognizable ash deposit took place between 1820 and 1854, as determined by tree-ring dating. As recently as 1894, observers reported seeing ash and steam at the summit; however, most geologists do not think these observations were of an actual eruption.

Do I need to worry about volcanic activity?

Mount Rainier is an active volcano, but large activity is unlikely to occur. The greatest risks come from lahars (mudflows specifically associated with volcanic activity) and glacial outburst floods. Listen for a rumbling or wave-like sound when you are in the park, especially if you are along a creek or river, because that is a warning that something like a lahar or glacial outburst flood was triggered above you. The best action you can take in either situation is to get to high ground as fast as you can without crossing a major body of water. This could be on foot or by vehicle. As you familiarize yourself with the area, note possible escape routes. Some resources: [Volcanoes and Lahars](#); [“Are you ready for an eruption?”](#) flyer.

How much snow and ice are on Mount Rainier?

About 20.8 square miles of permanent ice and snow cover Mount Rainier—more than all other Cascade volcanoes combined—but a 42% reduction since first measured in 1896. Of all the glaciers in the contiguous U.S., Mount Rainier's Emmons Glacier has the largest surface area (4.3 square miles) and volume. Carbon Glacier is the longest (5.7 miles), thickest (700 feet), and has the lowest terminus elevation (3,500 feet) in the contiguous U.S.



Contacts & Resources

If you have any additional questions or needs as a volunteer, the Mount Rainier Volunteer Program is here to support you. The Volunteer Program Office is located on the second floor of the Longmire Administration Building, above the Wilderness Information Center.

Volunteer Program Manager <i>Temporary assignment mid-June through mid-October 2026.</i>	Laura Shenk Laura_Shenk@nps.gov 360-569-6561
Interpretation, Education, & Volunteers Division Chief	Terry Wildy Terry_Wildy@nps.gov 360-569-6562
Volunteer Office Email <i>Monitored by all VIP Program staff</i>	mora_vips@nps.gov

Resources

Some of the following links may only be accessible on a government device:

- DO 7: [Director's Order #7: Volunteers-in-Parks \(amended 3/3/2025\)](#)
- RM 7: [Director's Order 7 and Reference Manual 7 - Volunteer With Us \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)
- [MORA Local Volunteer Policy, March 2026](#)
- [MORA Local Policy Addendum, February 2026](#)
- [DO 70: Governance and Management of the National Park Service Digital Experience](#)
- [Hatch Act Guidance on Social Media](#)
- WASO IEV Volunteers-In-Parks Sharepoint: [Volunteers-In-Parks](#)
- [Volunteer Service Agreement, PDF Fillable, OF 301A](#)
- [Volunteer Service Agreement form for groups, PDF Fillable, OF 301B](#) – must be accompanied by OF 301A completed by Group Leader
- [Volunteer Service Description](#) (formerly called a position description, or PD) template
- [Workplace Harassment Prevention & Response](#)
- MORA Volunteers JHA and Position Description/Service Description Library: [InsideMORA - Volunteers - VIP Forms - Position Descriptions - All Documents](#)
- JHAs organized by division – MORA Safety Program: : [Safety & Wellness - Completed Forms - All Documents](#)
- MORA Volunteers tab on InsideMORA: [Home - InsideMORA - Volunteers](#)