

DEFINITION OF A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers in Parks Program Description

The Volunteers-in-Parks Program (VIPPP) provides an organized, efficient, cost-effective, and legally-based approach to managing volunteer programs in California State Parks.

Legal Authority

In 1978, with the passage of the California State Government Volunteers Act, the Governor and the Legislature recognized the value of volunteerism to state government and all of California. The department developed the Volunteers in Parks Program (VIPPP) in compliance with this Act.

Definition of a Volunteer

A California State Park volunteer is an adult individual under the direction of department personnel who, of his or her own free will and without compensation or financial gain, contributes goods or services to assist California State Parks in the accomplishment of its mission. Volunteers are not considered employees within the legal meaning of the term and do not have the same rights as employees.

Department Recruitment Policy

Volunteers are recruited without regard to race, religion, color, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability. Each volunteer must be given a specific, identified task and be able to perform safely and adequately the work that he or she is assigned. The relationship between a volunteer and the department must be one of mutual benefit. The department is not obligated to accept or retain any person who volunteers his or her services.

Active Volunteer

Each park district shall establish standards for the minimum number of hours for volunteers to work to qualify for active status. These standards shall be based upon ongoing assessments of individual district and park program needs.

Inactive Volunteer

An inactive volunteer is defined as a volunteer who has not met the minimum requirements for active status, as established by the district. They do not enjoy privileges or benefits beyond those of ordinary State Parks visitors. The Volunteer Coordinator may place a volunteer on inactive status for a predetermined length of time if the volunteer fails to meet the established time requirement. Inactive status may also be granted for other reasons, such as for not completing initial or ongoing training, or upon written application by the volunteer stating that he or she will not be able to fulfill the required time obligation.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION & OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are distinguished from paid State Park staff by their uniform. However, while in uniform, volunteers may be perceived by the general public in the same manner as Rangers and Park Aides. Thus, it is important to act and behave in a manner that leaves a positive impression on visitors.

Volunteers are expected to volunteer at least *eight hours per month*.

Visitor Center & Ranger Station

Volunteers are needed to operate the Visitor Center daily throughout the year. New volunteers will have hands-on Visitor Center training given by a veteran volunteer and/or the Volunteer Coordinator. This does not only include the dissemination of park information and maps, but of the NHA bookstore operation like selling merchandise using a cash register and credit card machine.

Once approved by the Volunteer Coordinator, volunteers may choose to work behind the desk at the Long Valley Ranger Station to fulfill their visitor services duties. Staffing the Ranger Station requires additional training in the dissemination of State Wilderness rules/regulations, trail conditions, hazards, etc. New Ranger Station volunteers will have hands-on training given by a veteran Ranger Station volunteer and/or staff.

Guided Nature Walks in Long Valley

Nature walks are usually conducted from *late May through early September*. They are conducted on *Saturdays and Sundays* with additional walks scheduled for long, holiday weekends. Weekends tend to be the busiest; however, volunteers are encouraged to initiate nature walks at any time. Training will be provided in the spring for the volunteers interested in conducting these walks.

Roving Interpreters / Naturalists

Roving interpretation refers to stationing interpreters in high-use areas for informal contacts with visitors. Rovers may move about the site interpreting features first-hand, spontaneously, to individuals or a small group. This type of activity requires knowledge and flexibility. Rovers can also provide visitors with current information about hazards such as inclement weather or inappropriate behavior. *Roving on the Wilderness trails requires special training and approval from the Ranger Station.*

School / Youth Programs

Volunteers interested in assisting school/youth programs are under the direction of the Park Interpreter. Programs may be on-site (at the park) or outreach (at a school or other facility). School programs usually land on weekdays and are conducted in Long Valley as the weather permits.

Litter Patrol

Volunteers interested in performing litter patrols may do so around the Mountain Station, down the ramp, and in Long Valley. Garbage bags, gloves, and trash pickers are available in the Visitor Center.

Wilderness Patrol

Volunteers may choose to work towards achieving *Wilderness Patroller* status. Wilderness Patrollers conduct backcountry foot patrols, check wilderness permits, report issues by radio, assist staff with medicals or rescues, help with trail maintenance, and staff the Long Valley Ranger Station. *Wilderness Patrol volunteers must attend rescue and medical trainings and must demonstrate competency in those skills.* Ranger Station staff must approve and sign-off on each required training. Trainings are held on a regular basis on Saturday afternoons.

Trail Maintenance

Volunteers may do *light* trail maintenance, aligning logs and rocks along the trail. No strenuous work should be involved. On rare occasions, one may volunteer to help with major trail maintenance projects organized by staff.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Volunteer Scheduling

If possible, volunteers are asked to sign up for the Visitor Center (VC) and Nature Walks (NW) prior to reporting that day. You are expected to **volunteer 8 hours a month to retain your active status**, but more is appreciated and encouraged. The volunteer tram pass is a privilege and may be revoked at any time if volunteer duties and expectations are not upheld.

Recording Volunteer Hours

The logbooks to record your volunteer hours are located at the Visitor Center desk or the Ranger Station counter, respectively. Please record your hours as you perform them.

Uniform

Volunteers are expected to purchase and wear a khaki-colored button-up shirt that is wrinkle-free, clean, and in good condition. "Dickies" brand work shirts are an affordable option that can be purchased at retail stores like Walmart. The "California State Parks Volunteer" patch is to be worn on the **left** sleeve about 3/4-inch from the shoulder seam and vertically centered. The "Mount San Jacinto State Wilderness" patch is to be worn on the **right** sleeve about 3/4-inch from the shoulder seam and vertically centered. Please ask the Volunteer Coordinator for more patches if needed. The name badge is worn over the right pocket of your shirt. Volunteer Hours pins may be worn on the **left** above the pocket. **Shirt must be tucked in and buttoned to the second-from-top button as seen in the image above.**



Summer Attire:

Shorts are acceptable for warmer conditions. Pants and shorts must be of appropriate and professional length and must be khaki/tan in color. Quick-dry hiking pants are acceptable as long as they do not have stains or tears. **Mid-calf pants like capris, cropped pants, jodhpurs, etc. are NOT acceptable.**

Winter Attire:

You may wear a neutral color (black, brown, gray, navy) turtleneck underneath your uniform shirt. **Unusual colors, patterns, or even holiday-themed turtlenecks are NOT acceptable.** You may wear **black snow pants** only if you are outside roving in snowy conditions. When back indoors, you must remove your snow pants and wear the required khaki/tan pants.

Footwear:

Hiking boots or athletic shoes are appropriate footwear, but please avoid open-toed shoes like sandals if you intend to staff beyond the Visitor Center.

Appearance / Behavior

A volunteer's overall appearance and behavior should be neat and professional. Volunteers are expected to abide by all Tram and State Park rules and regulations. *Volunteers who do not comply will have their tram pass revoked and they will be dropped from the volunteer program.*

Alcohol / Drugs

Use of alcohol and/or drugs immediately prior to or during volunteer duty or any other time when you are in uniform at the Tram, State Park, or in other "on duty" situations *will not be tolerated*. If obviously impaired, you will be sent home immediately and you will incur a discipline review or even expulsion from the volunteer program.

PLEASE NOTE: If a legal prescription you are taking has significant side effects, please make an educated decision on whether or not to volunteer. High elevation can significantly alter the effects of a drug and could even make you feel worse. Do not put yourself in harm's way just to volunteer.

Cooperation / Reporting Problems

As a volunteer you represent the State Park and your behavior reflects upon the State Park. Volunteers are expected to work together in a professional manner because we are all here to help one another, serve the public, and enjoy the mountain. If serious problems arise with another volunteer's behavior, please contact the Supervising Ranger or the Volunteer Coordinator immediately. If you observe another volunteer not adhering to volunteer standards, first report your concern to the Volunteer Coordinator, but if not available, report your concern to the Supervising Ranger or Ranger on duty.

TRAM PROCEDURES & COURTESIES

Tram Rides

The complimentary tram ride is a *privilege* not to be abused. At this time, the Aerial Tramway's policy does not require volunteers be in uniform to use their volunteer tram pass, meaning that you may use it for personal recreation use. However, this privilege can be taken away at **any time** if it is interpreted as being abused, and could potentially be taken away from ALL VOLUNTEERS if it comes to that. Do not wear your uniform and then take it off once at the top because it looks suspicious even though you are not breaking the rules technically - it is all about optics. It is best to either wear your uniform if going on duty or to simply come in your regular clothing if enjoying the mountain on your own time.

To prevent the abuse of a volunteer tram pass, the Volunteer Coordinator will keep a close watch on volunteer hour requirements. *If it is determined that you have used your volunteer tram pass for personal use without serving the minimum requirement of 8 hours per month, you will face disciplinary action which could lead to removal from the volunteer program.*

Driving the Tramway Road & Parking

Drive at a safe speed. Walkers, bikers, etc. utilize the road at all times of the day.

Turn off AC to prevent overheating driving uphill. Use low gear going down to avoid riding and potentially burning your brakes.

Slow to a stop at the entry gate so that the parking attendant can wave you on. If they are busy with another car, slowly pass through the other lane, make eye contact, and give them a wave.

Park in Lot C or D, or if applicable, Lot B for handicap spaces.

Do not park in the "Employee Only" lot.

Valley Station

- * On busy days with boarding delays, please be courteous to Tram staff.
- * Must go through the turnstile - no other entry is permissible unless directed by tram staff.
Employee tram leaves at 9:30 A.M. Monday-Friday and 7:30 A.M. on Saturday-Sunday.
- * Wait until tram staff indicates it is okay to enter the tramcar.

Riding the Tramcar

Allow paying customers to have window locations and seats.

- * Do not stand on Tram console platform unless asked to do so by the tram operator.
- * Converse quietly so you do not disturb visitors.

Mountain Station

If there is a line of customers waiting to ride the Tram down to the Valley Station, check with tram staff at the turnstile and let them determine whether you can get on an earlier car.

Tram Discounts

20% off Tram tickets up to 6 tickets.

50% off at Tram restaurants; inquire about discount at gift shops.

MOUNT SAN JACINTO NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

The Volunteers-In-Parks Program (VIPP) and Natural History Association (NHA) are two separate groups with the same goal:

To support Mount San Jacinto State Park!

The VIPP provides *operational support* of the Park while the NHA provides *financial support*. The NHA is responsible for a variety of money-raising efforts including the sale of State Park merchandise in the Visitor Center bookstore. This funding helps support the Park's search and rescue program, interpretive program, and volunteer program in purchasing equipment and supplies.

The NHA also actively seeks monetary grants to support the education program. Currently, the NHA can pay for some, if not all, of a local school's field trip costs to visit the Park. Through the education fund, the NHA pays for the students and chaperones tram tickets and can also pay for their transportation.

Natural History Association Membership

Volunteers are welcome to join the Natural History Association, but it is not a requirement in order to volunteer for the State Park. Your membership assists the Natural History Association (NHA) in its continued support of the State Park and its various programs.