

MASON COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS DEPARTMENT

PARK HOST DUTIES AND INFORMATION POLICY

Welcome to Mason County Parks! We hope you enjoy your volunteer experience with the Mason County Parks and Trails Department. Mason County Park's volunteer program supports a growing number of citizens who dedicate their time to support regular staff in all aspects of Parks operations. This volunteer program provides the training and opportunity for community members to become involved in the care of Mason County's Parks. The efforts of dedicated volunteers, including individuals, families, businesses and corporations contribute to helping Mason County Parks provide quality park facilities and programs that serve our community. The volunteer program offers assistance in maintaining and operating our park facilities.

Volunteer Park Hosts assist park staff with routine visitor services such as greeting guests, answering questions, clean-up, general maintenance, and dispensing information in exchange for free use of area for self-contained recreational vehicle.

Expectations

- Maintain clean, orderly RV site.
- Check with the Mason County Parks staff before adding any additional structures or storage containers at your site. Any plants must be grown in portable containers.
- Do not perform vehicle maintenance at your site.
- County equipment cannot be used for personal use.
- Only camping and recreational equipment may be in public view; all other equipment must be stored out of sight.
- It is not appropriate to consume alcohol while on County Park property. Confine any alcohol consumption to inside your RV.
- Successfully pass a criminal history check.
- No smoking.
- Must have cell phone or means to contact County staff and emergency response
- Avoid offensive language or conduct.
- Avoid displaying signs, decals, bumper stickers, posters that express political or religious viewpoints.
- Conducting business such as selling items/products/services for pay in the park is prohibited unless allowed by separate contract with Mason County.
- All dogs must have current rabies certificates. Scoop and leash laws apply at all times. Pets must never be left unattended.
- Do not accept responsibility for supervising park visitor's children.

Duties

County budgets and the time of the year determine park staffing and current operations, but also what duties the Parks staff will be requesting you to perform. A host during one month may be asked to pick up litter and weed areas, plus greet visitors, while another host may be asked to provide surveillance, check restrooms and close gates in the evenings.

Some of the duties may include:

- Greeting and assisting visitors, informing them of Park rules, answering questions and receiving comments about the park and surrounding area.
- Distributing maps, brochures, and facility information to individuals and groups.

- Replenishing restroom and facility supplies when Park staff is not present or unable to do so. Hosts may be requested to help make sure restroom facilities have adequate toilet paper and floors are picked up or swept, or light bulbs are functioning and replaced when needed.
 - Promoting care of the Park by keeping a clean site and performing minor maintenance tasks such as picking up litter or light duties as outlined by Park staff. Clean facilities and grounds actually help prevent the spread of litter, in addition to providing a welcome sight to visitors.
 - Being a visible representative of the Park with a sufficient and comfortable knowledge of Park rules and surrounding area activities so you can explain rules plus provide information to visitors.
 - Opening and closing the park gate.
 - Being observant for activities within the Park requiring immediate attention. Contacting Parks staff and/or law enforcement when emergencies occur.
- Remember:** You are responsible for minor enforcement of park rules such as alcohol use, rowdy behavior, loud music, etc. You are not responsible for dealing with major items that would be dealt with by law enforcement.
- Picking up litter in and around the park
 - Performing grounds maintenance
 - Inspecting park grounds
 - Inspecting, cleaning, and stocking restroom
 - Raking leaves in the fall
 - Monitoring special events
 - Opening and closing entry gate
 - Clipping brush out of the way
 - Reporting any damaged tables, trees, or posts to staff
 - Turning on and off water system for park
 - Checking and moving sprinklers
 - Moving or cleaning up around garbage cans
 - Sweeping cobwebs off buildings
 - Straightening site posts
 - Keeping bulletin board information up-to-date
 - Hosing down buildings and signs
 - Pruning shrubs and trees, if qualified
 - Trimming or weeding grass
 - Minor repairs to picnic tables, buildings
 - Help with monitoring groups camping at the park who have been issued a Special Use Camping Permit.

Appearance/Identification

As a Volunteer Host, you will be asked to wear a County Parks and Trails Department identification badge that will identify you as a Volunteer Host to park visitors. Please wear your I.D. badge only while you are on duty. Personal appearance and the appearance of your RV site are a reflection upon the County.

Application, Agreement, and Timesheet

Park Host applications are available at the Parks Department office and on the County's website – www.co.masoncountywa.gov.

After your application is received, a member of the park staff will contact you if host openings are available. You will receive an explanation of specific duties and responsibilities and may be interviewed. If you are selected, County Park staff will work with you to make arrangements regarding required duties, dates and training. Once you arrive for your assignment, you will receive further training and orientation.

Park staff accepts new applications year-round and most begin making contacts for the next season's hosts in November/December, but some will wait until late winter or even early spring before making contact. You are always welcome to make contact with the Parks Department to inquire about park host status.

Before you begin your volunteer service, you will be asked to fill out and sign a number of forms including the Park Host Contract. Each of the forms has a specific purpose; such as to ensure that you understand your job duties, that you are properly trained, and that you understand the policies, rules and regulations under which you volunteer. County Park's staff will explain the purpose of each of the forms if you have any questions.

You will be required to obtain the on-boarding training required by Mason County including, but not limited to, Sexual Harassment, Safe Lifting, Slip, Trip and Fall. This training is available electronically and can be obtained off-site or at the Human Resources Office.

Timesheets must be completed and submitted to your supervisor at the end of your service or at the end of each month in which you volunteer to ensure that you are covered for medical industrial insurance and liability protection during the time you are volunteering.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Mason County Parks that employees, visitors, and volunteers shall be provided an environment that is fair and provides equitable treatment, including freedom from sexual harassment and other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

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

Examples of inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature can be (but are not limited to):

- Written, graphic, or verbal communication, including demeaning or offensive comments, epithets, jokes, slurs, or negative stereotyping based on gender;
- Unwelcome requests for sexual favors or social contact;
- Non-verbal behavior which may include gestures, leering, pictures, or cartoons; or,
- Physical behavior such as unwelcome touching, standing too close, cornering, leaning over or brushing against a person's body. If you feel like you are being subject to this behavior, please notify the Operations Supervisor immediately

Criminal Background Checks

As a volunteer, you will be acting as an agent of the Mason County Parks. Volunteer positions often have access to money or unsupervised access to children under sixteen years of age, developmentally disabled persons or vulnerable adults, you will be required to undergo and pass a conviction or criminal background record check. The expense of such check will be borne by Mason County Parks.

Interacting with Visitors

The following tips will help you become an effective Volunteer Host when greeting and assisting park visitors:

DO

- ☺ Be a good listener.
- ☺ Be polite and friendly, with a desire to be helpful.
- ☺ Be positive about the park, staff, and rules.
- ☺ Be a good neighbor. Set a good example by obeying the park rules yourself.
- ☺ Be familiar with park rules and regulations so you can explain them when asked or when you see a violation. Hand out an appropriate rules and regulations if available. If the violation continues, report it to County Park staff.
- ☺ Give out accurate information. If you can't answer a question, check with park staff.
- ☺ Refer park visitors with complaints to County Park staff if you cannot address the complaint yourself.
- ☺ Wave as you walk by and SMILE!

DON'T

- Don't argue, scold or "chew out" the visitor.
- Don't be harsh, sharp, abrupt, hurried, or impatient.
- Don't act like a know-it-all or be self-righteous.
- Don't be a busybody. Respect park visitors privacy and their right to "get away" from it all.

Providing Information

The more you know, the more confident you will feel as you perform your host duties and the more helpful you can be to park visitors. Please don't think we expect you to know the answer to every question you will be asked. (Even the Parks staff gets asked questions they can't answer!) Never be embarrassed to admit to a visitor that you don't know the answer to a question. Tell them you will try to find the answer and get back to them. If the answer is not in your host packet, check with the County Parks staff.

If visitors would like additional information beyond what you can provide, you may refer them to the Mason County Parks Office (360) 427-9670, ext. 535 or to the County's website – www.masoncountywa.gov. Parks staff can provide current information about picnic shelter availability, special permits, and other related information.

Tips for Hosts

Read the Mason County Personnel Policies and Procedures – available on the Human Resources website - <https://masoncountywa.gov/human-resources/policy.php>

If possible, arrive a day before the previous hosts leave so you have an opportunity to ask them questions and discuss any special considerations.

During the orientation session with park staff, don't hesitate to ask questions, clarify responsibilities, or bring up concerns.

Remember: safety first, always. Know your physical limitations and discuss any specific medical problems – allergies, surgeries, diabetes, etc. – with County Park's staff. It is beneficial if you have a current First Aid and CPR certification.

Ask for feedback on your performance. You are entitled to receive an evaluation of your host experience by County Park's staff and in turn, you will be given the opportunity to give your feedback.

If you get asked a question by a member of the public and you don't know the answer, tell them you'll find the answer and get back to them.

What You Get In Return

With a one-month commitment of a minimum 15 hours service per week or more, you will receive:

- Free RV site and hookups
- A "Host" sign for your site
- Water, septic, and power
- Space size is large enough for a RV up to 50'

Insurance Coverage

Liability & Medical: Registered volunteers doing work that is approved by the Mason County Parks Department Head or other designee are considered part of the Mason County's self-insured liability program. All volunteer hours for registered activities must be reported to the Parks Department. The Parks Department will report volunteer hours to the Department of Labor and Industry whereby if an injury occurs while performing registered volunteer work, the volunteer may have medical only coverage. A volunteer is NOT covered for loss of employment time due to injury or illness, nor for a lasting disability or death. If you suffer an injury while performing registered volunteer activities the Department Head or other designee will help you to obtain and complete the proper forms to submit for processing.

As a volunteer host, you are acting as an agent of Mason County Parks and Trails. Therefore, when you are acting within the accepted limits and scope of your assigned job responsibilities, Mason County may assume responsibility for any liability claims that may be filed. Any claim resulting from criminal activity on a volunteer's part will not be covered by Mason County.

Personal Property: Mason County is not responsible for a volunteer's personal belongings/property. It is recommended that all volunteers carry insurance to cover damage to person belongings or property. Personal tools and equipment should not be used to perform volunteer duties. The use of the Park's power tools is strictly prohibited. In addition, Park's tools are not intended for personal use.

Vehicle Insurance: You will be asked to show proof of vehicle insurance if you use your own vehicle on the job.

If special equipment or tools are required to perform your volunteer duties, you will be issued what you need and trained in their use. County equipment is not to be used for personal use. It is not recommended that you use your personal equipment to perform your volunteer duties. If you do, the County is not responsible for damage, replacement or repair to such equipment.

For your protection, you should not offer park visitors a ride in your personal vehicle. Taxi service is not one of your volunteer job duties.