Becoming a Park Host Volunteer
with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Welcome!

Formally organized in 1980, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department’s (OPRD) volunteer Park Host Program began in a few coastal parks with volunteers greeting the public and answering questions. The program was initially patterned after the U.S. Forest Service volunteer program, but it quickly grew and took on its own special shape and focus.

In 2018, 1,222 hosts provided over 380,000 hours of service. Their incredible volunteer efforts help OPRD to truly achieve its mission: to provide and protect outstanding natural, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational sites for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations.

What does a park host do?

Park host volunteers are stewards of Oregon’s 258 state parks. As representatives of OPRD, they provide support for park guests, staff and our public lands. No two parks are exactly the same; duties may vary slightly based on the location, size, and needs of the park.

OPRD is currently seeking more volunteers for these host assignments:

- Campground host
- Day-use host
- Interpretive host
- Visitor services host
- Maintenance host
- Cabin and yurt host
- Special project host

Find detailed information for each assignment available online on our volunteer website: oregonstateparks.org. Follow the links for Get Involved > Volunteers and Partners > Volunteer Openings.

Time commitment

Volunteer hosts make a minimum commitment of 30 days for a specific host assignment. The length of a host assignment can range 30 - 120 days.

Hosts should expect a schedule where they volunteer 4-5 days a week, for a minimum of four hours each day. At minimum, hosts should expect to volunteer for 20 hours each week during their service. Host assignment schedules—including number of hours per day, days per week and length of stay—can vary based on park need or preference. Specific host assignment schedule requirements will be discussed during the interview process and/or posted on the OPRD host volunteer opportunities website.
What is required?

In addition to the requirements related to each specific host assignment, all OPRD host volunteers are required to:

Be at least 18 years old
If you have any children who will be with you during your host service, they will need to be supervised at all times if they are under the age of 10 in accordance with Oregon Department of Health and Human Services. Children are not allowed to participate in or provide support for any host assignment duties, including riding in state vehicles. Some parks may have the ability to provide separate volunteer projects for children, but potential hosts needs to arrange this in advance with the park before signing up for volunteer service.

Pass an annual criminal background check
Anyone over the age of 18 who will be staying with a host, even if they will not be hosting, is required to complete a criminal background check as well.

Pass an annual driver’s records check
Hosts drive state vehicles and utility carts around the park. If you are unable to drive, there may be some host positions that can be modified to allow for non-driving duties. If this is the case, please contact a park with a host opportunity to discuss some potential accommodations for that volunteer role.

Have a self-contained recreational vehicle
Hosts are expected to maintain a model campsite by keeping their camping area clean and orderly at all times, and by following all park rules and regulations.

Other requirements
• Follow the policies and procedures of the OPRD Host Program
• Support a safe, respectful and inclusive park environment for park guests, staff and volunteers
• Honor and keep your volunteer commitments
• Pets of hosts are welcome, but must obey park pet rules. Pets must have a current rabies vaccination.
What is the process to become a park host?

The first step is to submit a park host application online at oregonstateparks.org. Follow the links for Get Involved > Volunteers and Partners > Apply.

Once your application is in the volunteer application database, there are two ways you can be recruited as a park host:

1. **Park staff will use the OPRD volunteer application database and contact potential hosts directly.**
   The broader your park preferences are, the more likely you are to be contacted by a park. Consider being open to entire regions of the state, rather than specific parks. Some of our parks are extremely popular, and if you only list interest in two parks, ex. Fort Stevens and Silver Falls, it may be a long time before you are contacted about host opportunities.

2. **Search for current openings yourself using the volunteer openings webpage.**
   Once your application has been confirmed, hosts can search the current park host assignment openings online. If you find an opportunity that appeals to you, follow the instructions on how to contact staff to express your interest.

After a host assignment has been scheduled, hosts are expected to do the following in advance of their arrival at the park:
- Complete the background and driving records check - sent to you via email by park staff.
- Complete the park host online training curriculum.
- Sign and return the Volunteer Service Agreement and Host Position Description.
- Complete and submit any additional park specific forms.

**Note:** Failure to complete any of the actions listed above in a timely manner before your scheduled host assignment may lead to the cancellation of that volunteer assignment. Complete your pre-arrival paperwork and online training by a park's requested completion date.

What are the benefits of being a park host?

To support the irreplaceable and valued service of Park Hosts across Oregon State Parks, hosts are provided with:
- Joining a supportive community of volunteers and staff who all serve the public and our public lands.
- RV site; full hook-ups are available, but can vary by park.
- Free annual state parks pass.
- Hour and awards recognition for outstanding service.

Join our community and become a steward of our state parks

We deeply value the service of our hosts, as well as the commitment of other park volunteers and groups who serve in a variety of roles outside of the host program. To learn more about these other volunteer opportunities, please visit our volunteer website: oregonstateparks.org, follow the links for Get Involved > Volunteers and Partners > Volunteer Openings.