



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

### **VOLUNTEER / HOST POLICY MANUAL (FOR VOLUNTEERS)**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Volunteers in the Georgia State Park System help visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, ecological features, and recreational resources our state parks offer. Volunteers help our department respond to, contribute to, and support the Parks mission to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment, and to provide environmental education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

## **THE PURPOSE OF OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

To provide state parks and historic sites with knowledgeable and responsible volunteers to assist in providing visitor services, clerical assistance, interpretive skills, or educational leadership, and to enhance the recreational experience of others by maintaining or improving the grounds and facilities that they use.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY AND INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PARKS**

Specific duties and responsibilities for volunteers at each park will vary to meet the needs of that particular site and to match the interests and talents of the persons who apply. The site manager is responsible for developing the Volunteer Program for the individual site, and for interviewing and selecting the volunteers to work with that program. Below are some examples of areas where we use volunteers:

- **Orientation and Information**-Volunteers may provide information to park and historic site visitors, update bulletin boards, lead interpretive tours, or explain rules and procedures to park and historic site visitors. They may offer information on upcoming programs, relate the history of the park or historic site, or explain how the visitor can best use and protect the site's resources.
- **Light Maintenance**-Volunteers may assist with litter pick-up around a park, help clean up a shoreline, construct a trail, re-stain picnic tables, repair bicycles, apply protective coating to artifacts, cut grass, and prepare wildflower beds or any number of other maintenance tasks waiting to be done. Light maintenance jobs are limited only by lack of imagination.
- **Park Programming**-Volunteer possessing special knowledge of history or natural science may be asked to assist with interpretive programming. Special organizational and promotional talents may be needed for special events, and persons experienced in working with children may be asked to help with Junior Ranger or other youth programs.
- **Collection of Fees and Sales**-Volunteers may be assigned to register participants and collect fees, assist with implementation of the Georgia ParkPass program, or sell tickets and merchandise.

## **DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE:**

- **Campground, Golf Course and Train Hosting:**  
These volunteers live onsite from 2-6 months and help with the overall day-to-day operations on our parks, golf courses and train.
- **Community Volunteer:**  
Many parks and sites need volunteers on a daily, weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly basis. This includes golf, conservation or train volunteers! These volunteers get an opportunity to be involved for whatever time they have to give.
- **Corporate, University, Scout and other Group Volunteers:**

Find a tailor-made project for your organization to make a difference in Georgia State Parks. Utilize the time and experience to build your team, increase morale while providing a valuable service to Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites.

○ **School/University Community Service:**

If you have been asked to perform community service for school/university or other credit, please apply using the Community Volunteer registration form online and indicate this is for credit with your school.

○ **Court-Ordered Community Service:**

If you are trying to serve Court-Ordered Community Service or reducing points for a traffic violation. Call the park closest to you and ask if they can have you assist their maintenance staff for court-ordered community service. You can find the list of park phone numbers and locations here: [www.gastateparks.org/parks/](http://www.gastateparks.org/parks/)

## **ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE**

You will notice when you log onto your account and click on the dates of your most recent assignment request that you are prompted to pay a mandatory annual registration fee of \$15 per person. This fee covers the cost of processing your application, the fee associated with the excess accident medical insurance and excess personal liability insurance for you and processing the criminal background check. You will only need to pay this fee once per person annually. It covers volunteering with any branch of Georgia Department of Natural Resources/Georgia State Parks, Historic Sites and Golf Courses as well as SAM Shortline Excursion Train. Excess insurance provides protection in excess of any other personal collectible insurance and is a requirement of volunteers. Upon receipt of your annual registration and a clear criminal history, your application will be forwarded to the park manager(s) for review.

**\*Exception: If you are volunteering for less than 40 hours annually (or less than once per month) and will be supervised directly by park staff**, you can just purchase the excess accident and liability insurance (unless you will be working directly with children or handling money). Insurance is required and is available through Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites division at the fee of \$5.00 per volunteer and can be paid onsite at the Park where you are volunteering. The Park Manager will be the one to determine if you fall within the appropriate guidelines for this option.

## **BENEFITS: What do volunteers/hosts get?**

- From the park:
  - Volunteers/Hosts receive free or reduced usage fees, including boating, swimming, and rentals, in certain parks determined by park manager
  - Volunteer uniform (\*as needed). (If a volunteer/host has uniform items that are still in great condition, they don't necessarily need a whole new set. Let the park manager know what you **do** need and place the order. This helps us to save money for Parks.)
  - Hosts receive free RV Campsite and if available water, sewer, electricity hook-up in exchange for 24-40 hours served weekly per agreement and assignment
  - A beautiful park setting to live, work and thrive for 2-6 months per year.
- From HQ:
  - The volunteer coordinator will send out the 5-night camping pass to hosts when they renew their registration. This pass is only provided one time per year. If a couple hosts together, one pass is provided to a couple. If only 1 person hosts, that one person receives the pass.
  - The 5-night camping pass – only 1 can be used per stay. It doesn't have to be used in its entirety, list dates of use on the back an remaining available days. Be sure that the volunteer's name is on back. Only the volunteer may use the pass.

## RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES

- Volunteers self-report their hours at [www.gastateparks.org/volunteer/hours](http://www.gastateparks.org/volunteer/hours) (also linked on every volunteer webpage)
- Once ANY volunteer/host has achieved 500 hours of logged time in the system they will be mailed a ParkPass. All hours must be documented for additional incentives to be reached. Incentive levels indicated on reporting page.

## **RECRUITMENT**

Volunteers/Hosts are recruited through the Georgia State Parks volunteer website and by word of mouth. Volunteers/Hosts are encouraged to spread the word to friends, family and park guests who might be interested in service.

## **REGISTERING TO VOLUNTEER / HOST**

Make sure that you are registered in the volunteer database and that all of your information is correct and complete. You are entered automatically in the database if you filled out your volunteer application online. The registration fee of \$15 per person is an annual fee. The criminal history check is processed every 3 years. To determine when you will need to submit the consent form for the criminal background check again, you can see the expiration date on any pending or approved application links from your account page.

Registration links:

Hosts - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/hosts>

Community Volunteer - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/community>

Group Volunteer - <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/group>

## **SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING**

When the Volunteer Coordinator receives your application, she/he will verify that all parts are complete including payment and cleared background check. Once complete, the Vol. Coord. will forward the application to the park manager(s) for their review and will send notice of clearance of the application to the applicant. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with the Park Managers if they have not heard from the site within 2 weeks. The number for the park is located on each parks' website at [www.gastateparks.org](http://www.gastateparks.org)

## **CONFIRMING YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

Please review your confirmation email and park calendar and make sure the acceptance dates are the dates that you can report to duty. When you confirm you are accepting that assignment and the policies within this packet as well as that within the "Volunteer Structure, Policies, and Administration" section. If there is a conflict, please contact the volunteer coordinator immediately. If, during your time of duty, you must take leave of absence or you must shorten your duty due to an emergency, immediately contact the park management and then the volunteer coordinator. If you have signed up for a hosting slot and you cannot make the arrangement, please contact the volunteer coordinator immediately for cancellation.

## **HOST TENURE / LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT**

See section 5.6 below.

## **APPLY FOR FUTURE HOST ASSIGNMENTS**

To apply for future hosting positions, *regardless of how long you've been in the program*, a host must go online and complete a request/application at <http://gastateparks.org/volunteer/hosts>. If you don't have easy access to the internet, work with the park staff to put in the request you may call the volunteer coordinator to put in your request.

## **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

To be effective, hosts and volunteers must be familiar with all the park facilities and services. The supervisor takes the volunteer/host on a tour of the park and notes any special information that affects campers or visitors. Volunteers/hosts should read all the materials provided about the park, tour the park again on his/her own, and ask questions to be well-informed about the site.

The supervisor introduces the volunteer/host to the other park staff and volunteers, explaining responsibilities and who can help the host with what topics. Volunteers/Hosts should be provided a list of staff and contact information.

Volunteers/Hosts should also be familiar with the community around the park, the region, and to some extent the state. Volunteers/Hosts should drive around the community to see where tourist attractions, grocery stores, laundry facilities, and shopping areas are located. Visiting the local chamber of commerce and tourism/welcome center is also a good idea.

The following materials should be included in the Orientation Packet for volunteer/host:

- General Park Map and brochure
- Overview of Park resources
- List of park staff and phone numbers of buildings/locations at the park
- Park specific brochures- trails, interpretive program schedule, museums-anything to inform visitors of the park's features and programs.
- Current fee schedule
- Camping and cabin rental information
- Georgia State Parks current Park Guide booklet

### **Job Training**

Volunteers/Hosts are trained by supervisors or designees regarding the specific of their job duties. Experienced volunteers/hosts probably have done similar tasks at other locations, but still need clear expectations for this particular park.

Training may include, but is not limited to:

- Cleaning procedures
- Identification of dangerous plants/animals, blood-borne pathogens
- Use of mowers, weed eaters, other grounds equipment as applicable
- Use of park radio or cell phone, if applicable
- Cash handling procedures
- Use of office equipment
- Operation of Visitor Center
- Safety training
- Emergency Management Plans
- Hazardous Materials training
- Basic first aid

\*Volunteers/Hosts are not eligible for Workers Compensation On-the-job injuries must be handled by their own insurance providers and the volunteer excess liability insurance.

# STRUCTURE, POLICIES, AND ADMINISTRATION

Revised June 1, 2015

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation would like to express appreciation to the Office of Volunteer Services, Department of Human Resources; the National Forests in Georgia; and the National Park Service for their contributions to the development of this program. Portions of these guidelines were adapted from the National Park Service's Volunteers in Parks Guidelines and North Carolina Department of Natural Resources Volunteers In Parks Guideline.

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## SECTION I

*\*Staff please note that Section 1 is shared with the volunteers along with their Welcome Packet\**

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## **1.0 DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Throughout the history of the Georgia state park system, citizens have played an important role in the growth and development of our state parks system. As the system continues to expand, we continue to strive to deliver the highest standard of public service available from any division in state government. But this growth, coupled with budgetary constraints, means we cannot alone accomplish all of our goals in terms of visitor service, environmental education and natural resource protection.

Citizen input and participation are more important than ever before in the history of the division. With the support of concerned and dedicated volunteers, we can provide the standard of service that the public has a right to expect from the Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation. Through the use of the many special skills of volunteers we will not only make the best use of our resources, but will also form valuable partnerships that will increase our base of public support and allow the public to become more fully vested in our state parks.

Volunteers have established a proud tradition in parks across our nation. Many parks and the services being provided, owe their very existence to the efforts of volunteers. Through the establishment of the Volunteer Program in the Georgia state parks system, we uphold this tradition, which is vital to our effectiveness, efficiency, and which is so much a part of our national and state heritage.

~Becky Kelly, Director Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites

## **2.0 MISSION STATEMENT**

Volunteers in the Georgia State Park System help visitors to enjoy the natural beauty, ecological features, and recreational resources our state parks offer. Volunteers help our department respond to, contribute to, and support the Parks mission to provide outdoor recreational opportunities in a safe and healthy environment, and to provide environmental education opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural heritage.

# **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

## **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Georgia Division of Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program was created to provide better services to the public, increase opportunities for citizen involvement, and allow for better stewardship of our natural resources.

Volunteers are a crucial component to our workforce. The major objective of the program is to utilize voluntary help in such a way that it is mutually beneficial to both the state parks and the participants.

Volunteers are accepted without regard to race, creed, religion, age, color, national origin, or handicap.

Volunteers are selected to participate in the program because they can fill an identified need. They are usually individuals or members of groups with specific skills and/or interests who will perform a specific function or type of work.

The implementation of the Volunteer Program will occur in each park. Using the following guidelines as a basis, the Site Manager or designated employee(s) develops and operates a volunteer program that fits the conditions and needs of that particular park. Each park program is a local operation. Recruiting, selection, training, recognition, and the many other aspects of a volunteer program are handled on-site.

## **4.0 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

### **4.1 Director**

The Director, through the Chief of Operations, sets program policy and standards.

## **4.2 Chief of Operations**

The Chief of Operations administers the program and ensures compliance with guidelines.

## **4.3 Assistant Chief of Operations**

The Assistant Chief of Operations oversees the Volunteer Program, Natural and Cultural Resource Management within the State, ensures compliance with guidelines and makes recommendations to Chief of Operations regarding program changes.

## **4.4 GSPHS Volunteer Coordinator**

- Develops guidelines and policies
- Provides technical assistance to the field
- Monitors the database to ensure compliance by parks
- Assists parks in recruiting volunteers and coordinating volunteer activities when needed
- Works with Site Managers to resolve problems
- Monitors the program for training needs and compliance with guidelines
- Answers public inquiries about program and directs interested volunteers to parks in their area of interest
- Makes budget recommendations with regard to the Volunteer Program
- Evaluates the program and makes recommendations to Division Management for changes needed
- Makes recommendations for General Management Plans as needed
- Updates guidelines as needed
- Maintains contacts with outside organizations in the field of volunteerism
- Processes volunteer applications, mail 5 day camping pass to cleared volunteers
- Run background checks on volunteers for every 3 years volunteer is in the system
- File insurance claims as necessary

## **4.5 Site Manager**

The Site Manager administers the program within the park, ensures compliance with guidelines, evaluates the program and volunteer, and makes recommendations to the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **4.6 Site Level Volunteer Manager**

- Each park will have a collateral duty Volunteer Manager. The Site Manager may delegate the responsibility to a member of the staff. In the case of a small park or an inexperienced staff, the Site Manager may choose to serve as the Volunteer Manager.
- Responsibility for the Volunteer Program will be in addition to other job responsibilities. Duties of the Volunteer Manager will be specified in that individual's Work Plan like other job responsibilities.
- The percentage of time to be spent on duties of the Volunteer Manager will be determined by the Site Manager based on employee's other job responsibilities and the needs of the Volunteer Program in that park.
- The Volunteer Manager is responsible for the efficient operation of the program. The Volunteer Manager ensures that the program meets the needs of the park as well as those of the volunteer. The duties of the Volunteer Manager are listed below.
  - Assist the staff in assessing needs and identifying work that can be accomplished by volunteers
  - Prepare job descriptions
  - Train staff members in proper management of volunteers
  - Recruit volunteers
  - Interview and assign dates to pending volunteer applicants submitted through system website
  - Maintain and update the volunteer time line of hosting opportunities
  - Coordinate volunteer orientation and training



- Maintain contact with Site Manager and Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that program procedures are followed
- Handle correspondence relating to the program
- Submit reports as necessary to the Volunteer Coordinator. Keep staff current on ideas and procedures for utilizing volunteers

#### **4.7 Supervisor**

- Every volunteer must have a designated supervisor. Although the Volunteer Manager is responsible for the overall coordination of the park's Volunteer Program, he or she usually does not directly supervise all the volunteers. Volunteers are generally supervised by the staff member responsible for the work the volunteers are performing. Where appropriate, a volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers, provided that the supervisory volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member. The staff member who directly supervises a volunteer is responsible for the following:
  - Training and orientation
  - Supervision
  - Monitoring and evaluating the volunteer's performance
  - Maintaining close contact with the Volunteer Manager to ensure that the work is in accord with overall objectives

### **5.0 VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Who May Volunteer?**

Almost anyone may participate in the Volunteer Program. A volunteer is anyone who performs work for the Division of Parks and Recreation for which he or she receives no pay from the Division. The volunteer may receive pay, work credit, academic credit, or other compensation from sources outside the Division of Parks and Recreation. \**Off-duty Division employees* (see 5.2) and their family members may be volunteers. Students doing required course work, and individuals from the private sector whose employer is donating their services to the Division while still keeping them on their payroll (i.e., personnel from the local camera shop giving evening programs on photography) are also considered volunteers. Volunteers are recruited and accepted from the public without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, color, or national origin.

- Community Volunteers- Help on a day-to-day basis at a Park as they are available. Our community volunteers help with leading hikes, helping with maintenance, assisting with the visitor or retail center, guide new visitors to park activities and locations.
- Campground Hosts- Stay in their personal RV at designated free Host Site for 2-6 months in exchange for a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer work. See 5.6 for further details. Same guidelines apply for all Maintenance, Train and Golf Hosts.
- Group Volunteers-Civic, church, scouting, universities and other groups that come out for a day or a collection of days to work together collectively to accomplish a project for the Parks.

#### **5.2 Employees and Family Members as Volunteers**

Off-Duty Division employees may serve as a volunteer with the Division as long as the duties he or she performs as a volunteer are not the same type of duties for which he or she is paid. For example, an administrative assistant in the Site Manager's office may volunteer to give an interpretive program in the park on her own time as a volunteer, but may not volunteer to do administrative/clerical work for the Park Manager. Nor can Park Managers suggest employees do programs on a voluntary basis at their park. The employee must make the decision without coercion and volunteered time falls outside of their regular working hours.

Off-Duty Park Staff may volunteer at another park if they are so inclined. Off-Duty Atlanta office and regional staff may volunteer in the parks. Family members and relatives of Division employees may serve as volunteers as long as the Division representative signing the Agreement for Voluntary Services is not an immediate family member.

### 5.3 What Can Volunteers Do?

Volunteers may be utilized in any and all parts of the park management system with the exception of law enforcement. All levels and types of skills may be utilized. Any type of work may be performed as long as it is work that:

Would not otherwise be completed during a particular fiscal year because of funding or personnel limitations.

OR

Allows paid employees to accomplish work that would not otherwise be completed during a particular fiscal year because of funding or personnel limitations.

For example, a park might recruit volunteers to construct a trail, organize and catalog the photo file, conduct research on an endangered species, repair picnic tables, or paint and install signs in the campground--all work that needs to be accomplished but has been cut out by reduced funding and personnel limitations. Parks might recruit volunteers to help translate park documents, materials and signs, and provide translation services to help parks communicate with non-English speaking visitors. Another example might be a park that recruits a retired couple with an RV to temporarily (minimum 2 months, maximum 6 months) live and work in the campground as campground hosts; registering campers, giving out information, checking the campground and bathhouses, and doing minor maintenance. This would free a ranger to perform other necessary duties that otherwise might not be completed.

Parks should consider utilizing volunteer assistance as one means of accomplishing park management goals, but should also recognize that volunteers are not always free. They should only be utilized in situations where their participation is cost-effective.

There are a few constraints which must be considered when assigning volunteers to work projects.

No volunteer should be required to perform any type of work that he or she does not feel comfortable doing or does not willingly agree to do. Nor can volunteers work in the role of law enforcement for the park.

Volunteers who are assigned to operate machinery or equipment (such as chainsaws, power tools, specialized equipment, etc.) must receive training and demonstrate their proficiency in the operation of that equipment to the satisfaction of the responsible supervisor. All applicable age restrictions relating to the operation of machinery or equipment must be observed. Volunteers must observe the same safety precautions and use the same safety equipment as park staff.

Volunteers may assist in the visitor protection functions of the park such as acting as park radio dispatcher on weekends and at other times when the office assistant or other staff are not available; acting as campground host providing a deterrent to vandalism and theft in the campground by their presence; or assisting in search and rescue efforts. Volunteers must not be assigned duties that would place them in a life-threatening situation, even as an observer (i.e. serving as backup on patrol). Volunteers do not issue citations or perform arrests.

Volunteers should not be assigned to hazardous work. When the task or equipment to be used indicates the need for operational and/or safety training, the volunteer will not be allowed to perform the job until all training is completed, the supervisor knows the volunteer's work capability, and the volunteer understands the job and its hazards. Consult the Volunteer Coordinator or Assistant Chief of Operations with any questions about whether a volunteer should be assigned a specific duty. It is illegal for persons under the age of 18 to perform certain jobs. If further assistance is needed in determining appropriate activities for minors, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

The staff member that oversees volunteer projects at the park level, Volunteer Manager, shall be responsible for ensuring that youth groups are not assigned jobs that are hazardous or equipment that is illegal for youths to operate. The Volunteer Manager of the site and/or the Volunteer Coordinator shall also ensure that youth groups are supervised by an adequate number of adults.

## **5.4 Use of State-Owned Vehicles**

Volunteers who have a valid driver's license (and have signed the appropriate forms) may operate Division-owned vehicles when it is a part of their assigned work and is so stated in their job description provided they have successfully completed all agency requirements, i.e., defensive driver training. If the volunteer has an out-of-state driver's license, a recent drivers history report in addition to signed SOP forms will have to be turned in before approved.

### **State Vehicle Liability Insurance**

Volunteers may be authorized to drive state vehicles as a part of their assigned duties. Property damage or personal injury liability claims from a third party arising out of a vehicle insurance program at no cost to the volunteer if the driver is authorized to drive the state vehicle and the accident occurred during the performance of assigned duties.

## **5.5 Volunteers Handling State Funds**

Volunteers may collect fees only in strict compliance with procedures authorized by the State Auditor's Office for collection of fees and only upon the specific approval of such duties by the Site Manager.

## **5.6 Definitions and Duties**

### **a) Hosts**

The Campground Host program utilizes volunteers who can furnish their own lodging (camper, RV, or motor home). The volunteer(s) must commit to a specific amount of time to serve as resident Campground Hosts in State Parks and Recreation Area campgrounds.

#### **Length of Assignment**

The minimum required time is 2 months; the maximum assignment is 6 months, consecutively, at one site. Though a host may have reached the limitation of 6 months at one site, they are still able to host at other Georgia State Park(s) keeping within the 2-6 month requirement. After an assignment at a park, hosts may not return to previous assigned parks before 3 months' time, though they are free to host at other parks/Georgia State Parks during this 3-month window. \*Park Manager – An extension can be approved by the Region Manager based on the business plan and process of the site depicting the valid need for an extended assignment.

#### **Returning Hosts Window of Assignment**

Returning hosts may return during a specific window of time up to 3 years in a row. After that time that host must leave the park for 1 full year. This policy is in effect as of March 2014 providing all current applicants with clean slates. The first year of the 3-year maximum is 2014. \*Park Manager -An extension of this 3 year maximum can be approved by the Region Manager up to 2 times, one year at a time, for a maximum of 5 years at a Park. At which point, the host must not host at that property for 1 full year before returning. They are, however, welcome to host at any other Georgia State Park property.

Hosts are generally provided a free campsite near the main entryway to the campground or other central location so that they may be easily identified and available to visitors. The normal camping time limit is waived, the host minimum time commitment is 2 months and the maximum at one Park is 6 months. If available, utility hookups may be furnished at no cost. Hosts work under a specific agreement and job description just like any other volunteer or staff. They must receive sufficient orientation and training to enable them to adequately perform their job. Hosts should work under the supervision of the employee who has direct responsibility for the site in which they are located. This position requires working weekends, holidays and evening hours.

### **b) Community Volunteers**

Community Volunteers help on a day-to-day basis at a Park as they are available. Some community volunteers elect to come in once a week, some choose once a month and some choose once a year. They

work with the park staff to determine the need and coordinate their involvement. Some of the programs our community volunteers help with include leading hikes, helping with maintenance, assisting with the visitor or retail center, guide new visitors to park activities and locations and the list goes on. If you have a particular talent that you want to share with the park, be sure to include it on your application and let the staff know. If appropriate, we will find a way to utilize volunteer talents to increase program opportunities for the public. Long-term volunteers serve over 100 hours annually.

### **c) Group Volunteers**

Group Volunteers can include Civic, church, scouting, universities and other groups that come out for a day or a collection of days to work together collectively to accomplish a project for the Parks. Group volunteer work days can increase team morale and spirit of servitude. Groups can volunteer together for a pre-arranged volunteer work day at one of our parks or a tailor made project can be created for you depending upon your group's schedule and availability. The Volunteer Coordinator in Atlanta would be happy to assist with this option.

## **6.0 PROTECTION**

*Volunteers who are involved in the host programs or who work at the site on a regular basis and without direct supervision by Park staff must be currently registered in the DNR system.*

\*When determining if a volunteer should be registered in the DNR system with a background check, use this checklist to help make that determination.

- ✓ Does this person volunteer at the park at least once per month or 40 hours a year?
- ✓ Does this person interact with the public/visitors/customers without *direct* supervision by Park Staff?
- ✓ Are there opportunities that this person would be alone with a visitor/customer while performing role as volunteer?

If **any** of the answers are "yes", then the volunteer *must be* registered online. If the **all** answers are "no" the volunteer can pay the excess liability coverage (good for 1 year) at the site and commence to volunteer for the day/period.

### **6.1 Background Check**

As required by the state of Georgia beginning June 2011, on a regular basis we will be running a criminal background check on our registered volunteers. We at the Department of Natural Resources and Georgia State Park and Historic Sites value the safety and experience of everyone that visits our parks and sites. The patrons and visitors that come to our park expect to be served in a safe environment. To help to ensure their safety, and the safety of our volunteers and staff, we now run criminal background checks on all staff and volunteers. Thank you for your understanding!

### **6.2 Excess Liability Coverage**

Excess insurance provides the following coverage:

**a. Excess Accident Medical Insurance:**

Pays up to \$50,000 for medical treatment of the Volunteer, hospitalization and licensed nursing care required as a result of a Volunteer-related accident. Accidental death and dismemberment coverage is included. Certain limitations apply.

**b. Excess Personal Liability Insurance:**

Protects the Volunteer from personal injury or property damage claims arising out of the performance of the Volunteer's duties.

Excluded from the coverage are claims arising from 1) use of a vehicle, 2) rendering or failure to render medical services, and 3) any claim arising out of either sexual abuse or a licentious, immoral or sexual act.

In order for volunteers to receive this protection, it is imperative that they be properly enrolled and operating under written job descriptions containing specific information on the type of work they are assigned to do. This is necessary in case questions arise on whether a volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her assigned duties.

### **No Workers' Compensation Provided**

Volunteers are not employees of DNR or the State of Georgia. Their volunteered services are accepted by DNR as a donation or gift to the State of Georgia. The structuring of the Volunteer Program is to make the acceptance of donated services as beneficial to the users of the State's facilities as possible, and to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience. Similarly, the assignment of hours of service and of duties is to allocate opportunities among the Volunteer corps and is not meant to exercise control or direction over the Volunteers. Injuries a Volunteer may suffer, including death or dismemberment, while participating in the Volunteer Program are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

### **State Vehicle Liability Insurance**

Volunteers may be authorized to drive state vehicles as a part of their assigned duties. Property damage or personal injury liability claims from a third party arising out of a vehicle insurance program at no cost to the volunteer if the driver is authorized to drive the state vehicle and the accident occurred during the performance of assigned duties.

### **Torte Claims**

With regard to the potential liability of volunteers, The Georgia Tort Claims Act specifically includes within the definition of "state officer or employee" a volunteer in a "structured volunteer program organized, controlled, and directed by a state government entity." O.C.G.A. § 50-21-22(7). Such volunteers in structured programs are not subject to lawsuits or liability for torts (for example, a negligent act that injures someone else) they commit while acting within the scope of their official duties as volunteers. O.C.G.A. § 50-22-25(a). They would, however, be liable for any acts that were not within the scope of official duties.

## **6.3 Use of Volunteer's Personal Equipment**

We highly encourage volunteers to use state-owned equipment and property in their work, rather than their own personal property. There are no provisions to reimburse volunteers for personal equipment or property that is lost, damaged or destroyed. With regard to personal clothing and equipment used by reenactment groups, Site Managers may, at their discretion, grant permission for their use. The State, however, assumes no liability for the damage or loss of these items.

## **6.4 Safety**

It is the responsibility of Georgia State Parks to ensure a safe working environment. The park provides training and safety guidelines for use of park equipment. Shop rules are to be followed. All equipment must be cared for and maintained. Follow park rules and regulations pertaining to equipment. If you are unfamiliar with the equipment or methods of use, ask for instructions.

The Park Service recognizes that volunteers are sometimes assigned duties that expose the volunteer to blood borne pathogens (bodily fluids) and other potentially infectious materials. Accordingly, the park will assist in reducing the risks and exposure for the volunteer who is performing such duties with potential exposure. For instance, if the volunteer is responsible for cleaning the comfort station, be sure to wear gloves and use the

appropriate cleaning agents to sanitize the area. Become oriented with these procedures and policies by speaking to the volunteer supervisor.

Volunteers performing resource management duties are to wear appropriate personal protection for duties assigned. An example includes hand and eye protection if the volunteer is doing exotic removal. It is also a good idea to have insect repellent, sunscreen and water available as you are working in Georgia. Park staff will provide information on emergency procedures, emergency phone numbers and first aid. Volunteers are not expected to perform any duty or job they do not feel capable of performing.

## **6.5 Volunteer injuries/accidents**

- Use the following guidelines when dealing with a volunteer injury or accident
- Administer first-aid treatment, call 911, if necessary
- Complete an immediate assessment of why the accident/injury occurred and take action to insure there is no reoccurrence.
- Fill out an accident/incident report form
- Gather information needed for report form Volunteer Universal Claims Form
- All injuries must be reported to your immediate supervisor (within 48 hours), even if the volunteer did not want to receive medical treatment.
- Send a copy of the accident/incident form and Universal Claims Form to Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer Coordinator should forward a copy to the Assistant Chief of Operations. If necessary, further investigation may take place.

## **7.0 UNIFORMS**

### **7.1 Identification**

There should be a clear and visible distinction between paid employees and volunteers, and volunteers must not be dressed in a manner that may duplicate the appearance of the State Park uniform. Volunteers should be easily recognized as State Park volunteers by the visiting public for several reasons. Park visitors should be aware that the volunteers are not State Park employees, nor are they community service workers. The presence of volunteers may also draw the interest of park visitors to inquire about other volunteer opportunities.

The method for identifying non-regular community volunteers to the public for non-regular volunteers will be a stick-on pre-printed label that reads —"Volunteer" and has the GA State Parks logo on it. Long-term volunteers should have a volunteer pin/name tag worn on the right front chest of their shirt.

The Division will attempt to obtain shirts from outdoor clothing and gear companies to be provided to volunteers who meet certain criteria. The shirts will have —Volunteer and the GA State Parks logo on it. Volunteers may wear these t-shirts as well as their name tag once they have received one by meeting the required criteria.

### **7.2 Clothing (street or outdoor type)**

The volunteer may elect to wear either volunteer shirt or hat/visor with regular street clothes. Regardless, the volunteer nametag should always be worn. Some parks may require certain clothing for safety reasons, such as closed-toe shoes or long pants when working outdoors. Gloves may be provided or required for certain jobs.

### **7.3 Historical Period Clothing**

Volunteers involved in historic reenactment programs are not required to wear the stick-on volunteer label; however, an effort should be made to let the public know that volunteers are involved in that particular activity.

## 7.4 Sources of Supply

The stick-on and pin volunteer nametag or label is available from the Volunteer Coordinator. If the Division is able to obtain shirts from outdoor clothing and gear companies, those will also be available from the Volunteer Coordinator. Supply request can be found on Staff Resources: Volunteer Forms. Volunteers may also wear other items which can be approved by the Site Manager.



## 8.0 HOUSING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers may be lodged in State Park facilities and will not, as a matter of policy, be charged rent. Site Managers should use prudence in assigning rent-free quarters to volunteers to assure fairness to state employees who are required to pay rental rates. Criteria for such assignments should be as follows: It must be clearly understood that the unit being considered for volunteer occupancy is not needed at the time for employee housing or other park needs. The volunteer assigned to the quarters must contribute sufficient hours or make a significant contribution to the park to justify free housing in the park.

Listed below are some examples of lodging volunteers in State Park facilities.

- Parks might allow volunteers groups such as scouts or another organized group to camp for a free night or weekend if they were working on a significant project while they camped.
- Ft. McAllister offers housing for students who are volunteering for an internship for the summer. They work alongside and have the same duties as other hired seasonal in addition to any projects required by their school.
- Watson Mill Bridge State Park has an equestrian campground site for a campground host. The hookups and site are free to the host in exchange for hosting a minimum of 24 hours per week.
- Site Managers are encouraged to utilize otherwise unoccupied, decent, safe, and sanitary quarters to house volunteers whenever appropriate. In doing so, parks will be able to utilize volunteers from outside the local commuting area. This should result in an increase in the number of highly skilled volunteers parks are able to attract and an increase in the amount of high priority work accomplished.
- Rental Agreements as determined necessary on a case-by-case basis

## 9.0 RECOGNITION EVENTS

As part of their budget and/or in conjunction with Friends partnership and support Parks host recognition events for the volunteers in the park. Another option to reduce costs but increase participation, motivation and morale of staff and volunteer is to host pot-luck events at the site. Park staff are encouraged to seek the participation of support groups, local merchants, or other private sources for additional goods or services to carry out these events. Each park may want to have an annual recognition event for volunteers. Cookouts and other informal gatherings are nice ways to get staff, volunteers, and their families together for recognition. Local merchants, community leaders, and support groups may be invited to participate. This is a good way to interest potential volunteers and get the community involved.

*\*Staff See Section II: 13.19 for more suggestions on retaining and recognizing volunteers.*

## 10.0 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

### Orientation

Orientation to the Volunteer Program for new volunteers will begin once the volunteer completes a Volunteer Application and the Volunteer Agreement Confirmation. Orientation to the Park includes basic training, policy discussion and position description. The scheduling and frequency of orientation will vary from park to park, in

general it takes place within the first week of assignment. Supervision can range from park management to a ranger to a volunteer supervisor. The Park Manager or Volunteer Manager of the site will communicate the volunteer work hours, duties and responsibilities. The Park Manager is ultimately responsible for that park's program.

## **Training**

Volunteer training is ongoing. As a volunteer spends more time at a park, his/her duties can change or the volunteer will take on more responsibility. Park management provides ongoing training for general interests and specific duties. Park management will communicate training schedules. Express to park management your interest in areas that you would like additional training.

## **Park Management**

The Park service is dedicated to its volunteers. The agency encourages teamwork between employees and volunteers. Park management is ultimately responsible for the park's volunteer program. The Park Manager's responsibility includes the program's compliance with the Division of Recreation and Parks philosophy and policy.

## **Harassment**

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources does not tolerate the harassment of agency employees, customers, vendors, volunteers/hosts or applicants. Harassment relating to an individual's race, color, sex/gender (including same sex), religion, age, national origin, disability or citizenship status is a violation of this procedure. All employees and volunteers (including supervisors and managers) are expressly prohibited from engaging in any form of harassment or sexual harassment. Violations will subject an employee, volunteer or host to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Definitions:**

Harassment (Other Than Sexual Harassment): Verbal or physical conduct that disparages or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of that person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability constitutes harassment when:

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

Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

For purposes of this procedure, examples of potentially harassing conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive remarks, jokes, slurs, pictures, drawings, photographs or written materials, including e-mail, pertaining to an individual's race, color sex/gender, religion, age, national origin, disability or citizenship status;
- Offensive sexual remarks, sexual gestures, sexual advances or requests for sexual favors regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;
- Offensive or unwelcome physical conduct/contact, including gestures, touching, leering, patting, pinching, and brushing against someone's body, regardless of the gender of the individuals involved;
- Foul or obscene language;
- Threatening a reprisal or retaliating against an employee for refusing to respond to a sexual advance or a request for a sexual favor, or for reporting a violation of this policy.



## 11.0 RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

The most updated versions of forms and policies are linked to <http://gastateparks.org/Staff-Volunteer> (Staff Resources section of Georgia State Parks website).

### VOLUNTEER AND HOST RESOURCES

- ▶ [Tracking Volunteer Hours](#) - Volunteers are encouraged to track their own hours to not increase park staff time/responsibility
- ▶ [Group Volunteer Liability Waiver \(Adult\)](#)
- ▶ [Group Volunteer Liability Waiver \(Minor\)](#)
- ▶ [Insurance Claim Form](#) (for volunteers injured at your park) - SEE BELOW for more information regarding claim process

#### ▶ **DNR SOP- Drivers History Report for Out-of-State Employees and Volunteers**

*All volunteers that drive park vehicles (excludes ATVs and golf carts) must fulfill the SOP and sign the driver acknowledgement form. If volunteer has out-of-state license they must submit a request to the Volunteer Coordinator to pull their driver's history report.*

### FRIENDS OF GEORGIA STATE PARKS

- ▶ [Friends Membership Registration Requirements](#)

### INTERNSHIPS

- ▶ [Internship Information](#)

### EXCESS LIABILITY INSURANCE CLAIM FORM & INJURED VOLUNTEERS

▶ PAPER VERSION - [Volunteer Insurance Form](#) - for those serving **less than 40 hours per year** or less than 1 x / month. Send copy and receipt back to HQ. Do not send money to HQ, process in Active under 'Volunteer Insurance'.

- ▶ **If volunteer is injured, use THIS PROOF OF LOSS FORM for liability insurance -**

IMPORTANT REMINDER from our Excess Volunteer Liability Insurance Provider

If the injured volunteer has other health insurance coverage, including Medicare, the claim must be submitted to that provider at the same time as submitting the Proof of Loss Form to us. When the volunteer receives an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) Form from their primary provider, they should submit that form to Preferred Care immediately, as the claim **cannot** be processed without this information. A detailed, itemized bill from the medical provider, describing the treatment and listing treatment codes, is also required for claim processing. Please let your volunteers know that, as their claim is being processed, they may receive letter from Preferred Care, if more information is required. They may also receive an Explanation of Benefits from QBE Specialty Insurance, noting the amount that is being paid on their claim.

- ▶ Volunteer's Evaluation of Assignment

Each volunteer should be given an opportunity to evaluate the volunteer program and his or her assignment. This form should be completed by the volunteer at the end of their assignment or as they feel the need presents. The purpose of this form is to help parks improve their volunteer programs.

## APPENDIX

### **EXAMPLES OF HOST RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **CAMPGROUND HOST**

- Provide information and explain rules and regulations to visitors
  - Assist visitors with services available
  - Collection of fees from visitors (as long as it is in compliance with authorized procedures)
  - Distribute maps and brochures to visitors
  - Perform light maintenance work around the campground such as picking up litter, cleaning and stocking restroom facilities
  - Perform emergency repairs
  - Perform emergency assistance for visitors such as unlocking gate in emergency situation, and keeping first aid kit on hand for minor cuts and abrasions
  - Help reduce litter and vandalism (mainly by your presence)
  - Gather information on use of facilities
  - Keep park staff informed of any problems
  - Work in the visitors center and retail centers
  - Perform other duties as appropriate
- 

#### **MAINTENANCE HOST**

The maintenance hosts work only with the maintenance staff at the park taking on projects to keep the park looking good. These can include: mowing, trimming, leaf blowing, building new campsites, pressure washing, and electrical repairs to name a few. The maintenance staff will determine what projects meet the volunteer's skills and build the duties that way. The host doesn't interact with the public as much in this role.

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#### **YURT HOST**

The yurt host is where the host is responsible for the yurt section of the park. Going in prior to a reservation and make sure that the yurt is ready for occupancy as well as doing a final clean up afterwards. Guests bring their own linens for yurts. Generally, turn over would be wiping down all surfaces and emptying the trash. Yurts are unique to most folks in Georgia so being a Yurt Host can also mean showing the guests where things are inside as yurt and also showing them where the closest bathhouse is. It is always good customer service to know about the park amenities and local businesses/restaurants to meet their needs.

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#### **EXCURSION TRAIN HOST**

- Ability to work with people in a team environment
  - Ability to work for long hours on days scheduled
  - Knowledge of trains, electrical, construction, landscaping a plus
  - Must have a customer service and people-person driven personality
  - Must attend training and orientation regarding operations and safety of volunteering on the train
  - Must be cheerful and helpful to passengers at all times
  - And other duties as required for the smooth, successful functioning of train operations
  - Time Required: 24 hours per person/per week; may vary depending on season and train schedule
-

## GOLF COURSE HOST

*To help the staff at our golf course enhance the experience for our guests who utilize the golfing facilities.*

### Requirements:

- Ability to work with people in a team environment
- Ability to provide excellent customer service
- Some experience working in a volunteer capacity
- Good physical condition needed for course management duties, including possible lifting, maintenance, cleaning, ladder work, etc.
- Maintain committed schedule for host slot allotted
- Some experience working with groups
- Plus the requirements of all Georgia State Park and Historic Sites Volunteers

**Time Required:** 24 hours per week, per person; may vary from course to course depending on need.

**Supervision:** Required daily contact with the course assigned supervisor

**Duties:** The duties of the golf host may vary from course to course. The day usually begins around 7:00am. In an effort to fully disclose what responsibilities you may be required to perform, the following is a list of duties.

### Around the Driving Range:

- Run Ball Picker to retrieve range balls. Gather all balls from areas picker cannot reach
- Wash all range balls and fill ball machine
- Move ropes to new teeing area as scheduled
- Add sand (top dressing) to teeing area. Fill all divots.
- Pick up trash and broken tees from range area
- Retrieve all baskets and stow near ball machine
- Assist with clubhouse cleaning—sweeping, dusting, mopping, vacuuming
- Assist with cleaning on bathrooms, toilets, etc
- Restock coolers and inventory as needed
- Report major concerns to appropriate staff
- Pick up limbs and debris around course
- Assist with leaf removal
- Assist with maintaining landscaped areas
- Assist with seasonal projects
- Assist with cart maintenance and cleaning
- May be asked to paint outside or inside areas
- May be asked to use some machinery, in the performance of duties, after orientation and training

### Patrol Golf Course for Trash:

- Empty trash receptacles on course and driving range
- Empty trash receptacles around clubhouse
- Check parking lot, driveways and curbs for trash

### Patrol Golf Course and Clubhouse for Routine Maintenance:

- Fill all divots with sand—tee boxes and fairways
- Check, fill if needed, sand bottles at stations or on carts
- Check greens and repair ball marks
- Fill and maintain ball washers
- Clean cart paths
- Paint hazard stakes
- Straighten Stakes and tighten ropes
- Clean and maintain bathrooms to standard defined in orientation
- Rake sand traps or bunkers if needed
- Check water stations, clean and refill with water/ice as needed
- Groom areas around hole markers/signage
- Groom areas around clubhouse i.e. shrubbery, walkways, grounds

### Customer Service:

- May serve as Marshall or Starter to assist players with daily rules of play and control of pace of play
- Caution golfers when rules broken
- Performs all courtesies of golf when performing duties around golfers
- Assists with some programming, teaching, tournaments, outings, cookouts, and other events that may be conducted at course
- May be asked to answer phones or assist with customer service in clubhouse
- May be asked to set up at Par 3 location to gather information from golfers i.e. Name, email address, etc. for marketing
- May be asked to move directional traffic control signs
- May be asked to help secure guests and course in cases of emergencies
- May be asked to help with other responsibilities on the general park if needed

## CODE OF CONDUCT AND HOST AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into between the Host and Georgia State Parks when you accept an assignment. The Host agrees to perform the tasks outlined in Volunteer Manual and the initial orientation and expectations meeting. The Host further agrees to the following:

- The Host shall maintain nightly availability at the campground for a minimum of 4 nights per week, to include many (if not most) weekends and holidays. The schedule will be determined by the Park Manager working with the Host. By the nature of the position, Hosts will often find themselves working independently of supervisory personnel, particularly during evening hours.
- Hosts will be scheduled for at least 24 hours of service time per week for a minimum of eight weeks and many not exceed 6 months per year at one site. Should the park requirements indicate as acceptable, couples may divide the 24 hours of service time per week between the two people. Golf course and train hosts are often expected to host 24 hours per week per person. Hosts work various duties per park need and schedule. As some parks are busier than others, hosts may work 24-40 hours per week.
- Hosts will hand out information pamphlets, copies of park rules and regulations, or other general information items to other visitors as they enter the area. They may assist visitors, answer questions by visitors, or issue plastic trash bags. Tact, diplomacy, and courtesy shall be exercised at all times in dealing with other visitors, staff and the public.
- Harassment, including sexual harassment, is inexcusable for staff, vendors, customers and volunteers/hosts. A copy of the Ga DNR Policy against Harassment is in the park office. Accepting your host/volunteer position acknowledges you have read or will read and become familiar with this policy and comply with it. If you believe the policy has been violated in any way, report it immediately to the manager. Understand that any violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- Hosts will report all disturbances or inappropriate conduct of park visitors to park staff. Hosts shall not attempt to discipline or apprehend any park violators. Hosts are in the role of being an educator, *not an enforcer*, of park rules.
- Hosts are encouraged and expected to keep written reports of complaints and criticism of park facilities, report situations that could affect the health and safety of visitors, and report any maintenance items that need attention. They should maintain other written records as requested by the Park Manager.
- Hosts are to wear the shirt, hat, or nametag if provided when completing assigned tasks and when acting in a public relations capacity on behalf of Georgia State Parks.
- Hosts shall not have firearms in their possession while on the park, unless they are abiding by Georgia's gun laws.
- All Hosts should conduct themselves in an orderly manner so as not to disrupt other visiting public. No alcoholic beverages shall be consumed while performing Host functions; nor shall the evidence of alcohol previously consumed be evident during the Host's scheduled service time.
- The Host shall maintain any assigned campsite in a clean and sanitary condition at all times. Outside structures and facilities will not be permitted (including portable hot tubs or "kiddie" pools). No dog pens, horse corrals, poultry cages, or similar facilities for pets or for the raising of animals will be allowed. Permission may be granted on a case by case basis by the Park Manager for house pets only. Pets shall be kept under physical restraint at all times. Upon completion of the volunteer service the Host's camping equipment must be removed and the campsite area must be left clean and in good repair.
- The Park Manager should be contacted and given advance notice of absence or illness.
- The Park Manager of each park may include special Host functions necessary to effectively operate individual campgrounds.
- Overnight visits with the Host by dependents, relatives, and friends is discouraged but may be permitted by the Park Manager on a case by case basis. An assigned campsite is specifically for use of the named Host only.
- The Park Manager or Assistant Manager has the right to terminate volunteer or host assignment at any time should they feel the assignment and/or volunteer are not functioning at the expected level.

### Georgia State Parks and the Host mutually agree as follows:

The Park Manager, or his designee, shall decide on all questions that may arise as to the quality, fitness, promptness and acceptability of service provided by the Host to the park visitor, and the State Parks Volunteer Coordinator, or his/her designee may void or cancel this agreement by giving oral notice to the Host thereby voiding or canceling the host assignment. The Volunteer Coordinator, or his/her designee's, determination and decision shall be final and conclusive. The Host may cancel this agreement and assignment at any time for any reason, giving notice to the site supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator. Hosts are volunteers. They do not receive wages or stipend. They are not eligible for benefits applicable to state employees. Hosts are not covered by Worker's Compensation. There is no insurance coverage for damage or theft of personal property.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Host / Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Site Level Supervisor / Date

\*\*Scan and email a copy of this to the Volunteer Coordinator