



Visitor Information Volunteer Program

Thank you for your interest in volunteering in Yosemite. Participation in this program is one of the many benefits of being a current donor. A current donor is someone who donates to the Conservancy this year prior to registering online for this program. The minimum donation required to apply is \$25. Your donation helps support Yosemite Conservancy's extensive work in the park and enables you to receive other great benefits.

As a Visitor Information volunteer you will be living and working alongside other volunteers. You will be part of a dedicated team committed to providing park information to the many guests visiting the park. Volunteers are assigned to a variety of work stations strategically positioned in Yosemite Valley, Wawona or Tuolumne Meadows. As a Visitor Information volunteer you will be expected to work approximately 20 days during the month while having the opportunity to experience the many facets of the park on your days off.

1. How do I make a donation?

Visit [Friends of Yosemite | Yosemite Conservancy](#) to choose the amount you would like to give. To make the \$25 minimum donation, click on *Other Amount* and type \$25.00 in the box. Follow the prompts to complete your donation.

You can also call 800 4MYPARK (469-7275) or 415 434-8446 to donate with your credit card.

If you would like to send a check, mail it to Yosemite Conservancy, 101 Montgomery Street, Suite 1700, San Francisco, CA 94101.

2. How do I apply? Is there a fee?

Visit [Visitor Information Program Registration](#) to register online. There is no registration fee. The program is limited to current donors. If you have already made a donation of a minimum of \$25 this year, the next step is to register online. If you have not yet donated, please make your donation prior to registering online.

3. When may I apply?

Online registration opens when the 2012 dates and locations for the Visitor Information Program are posted on this website. Online registration remains open until all positions are filled.

4. What will happen after I register online as a previous/returning volunteer?

Your early placement period ends on March 15, 2012. You will be processed in the order of the time stamp of your registration. You will be notified of your placement status via email.

5. What will happen after I register online as a new applicant?

Placement of new applicants begins March 16, 2012 and occurs until all positions are filled. You will be processed in the order of the time stamp of your online registration.

This is a very popular and rewarding program and we regularly receive more applicants than can be accommodated. You will be notified by email if we do not have a placement available for you.

If placement is available, a spot will be reserved, you will be notified by email, and a phone interview will be arranged. You must respond promptly to the email and either accept or decline the placement. If after the phone interview, you and the Conservancy determine that you would be a good fit as a volunteer, a reference check is required.

If your references are favorable, a background check is required. At this point you are conditionally accepted into the program, based on the outcome of the background check. Passing the background check ensures acceptance into the Visitor Information Program. Once accepted, you will receive emails at later dates with all the information you need to volunteer.

6. When does registration close?

Registration will remain open until all positions are filled.

7. Are there waiting lists?

Yes. You can ask to be placed on a waiting list if none of your choices are available. Applicants who are on waiting lists are notified when a space opens up.

8. Can I volunteer for more than one month?

Because the program is so popular, a new volunteer is assigned to work for one month only, in order to provide opportunities for others.

9. Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to participate?

Yes. We require U.S. citizenship or possession of a green card.

10. Who makes great Conservancy volunteers?

Serving as a volunteer in Yosemite National Park, a world heritage site, is an honor and a privilege. Our volunteers recognize this and take pride in representing the park, the National Park Service, and Yosemite Conservancy. They enjoy working with people and serving the public. They have excellent communication skills, a solid knowledge of and experience with Yosemite, and a strong desire to support the missions of the Conservancy and the National Park Service. They abide by the rules and regulations of both agencies and put the needs of others above the needs of themselves.

Our volunteers are passionate about the park, work as part of a team, and are flexible. They have both good health and stamina. Whether camping, working, walking, and hiking, they are committed to helping visitors get the most out of their visit to Yosemite.

11. What are the differences between the volunteer locations in the park?

Each area in the park is unique. Some areas can be very busy in the summer, while others tend to be more quiet.

Yosemite Valley: (Elevation: 4,000 feet) Sixteen to twenty volunteers work in this location. In May, early June and after Labor Day the park is not as crowded as mid-June through Labor Day. Some work stations can be very busy. Volunteers work split shifts, working at one station in the morning and another nearby station in the afternoon. Besides supplying information at fixed work stations, our volunteers also spend time interacting with visitors as they walk along the village mall. There they help people get oriented and advise on which buses to take to desired destinations. Volunteers camp together in Lower Pines Campground, sharing campsites in the group area. They receive discounts at Curry Pavilion and the Yosemite Lodge Food Court. Free shuttle and bicycles are the preferred mode of transportation. There is a grocery store in the Valley.

Tuolumne Meadows: (Elevation: 8,000 feet) At the most, eight volunteers a month work in Tuolumne Meadows. This is a popular place for hikers and knowledge and experience with the area's trails is very important. Volunteers working in this area enjoy hiking over a mile round trip from the campground to Parsons Lodge on the other side of Tuolumne Meadows. They camp in and manage the D-Loop of the Tuolumne Meadows campground. This terrain is more woodsy than the Yosemite Valley and Wawona campgrounds, and offers a tranquil experience plus your own campsite. There is a small grocery store and a bus runs once a day to Yosemite Valley and back for a fee.

Wawona: (Elevation: 4,000 feet) At the most, four or five volunteers a month work in this area. It is not as busy as Yosemite Valley, offering a more tranquil experience. Volunteers usually work in one location throughout the day. Some volunteers choose to arrange their own accommodations outside of Wawona and drive into the park daily. Even though camping among visitors in the Wawona campground, it can be lonely if you are by yourself. Wawona offers the opportunity for a more tranquil stay. Evening activities are limited. The campground, Visitor Center and Mariposa Grove are not within walking distance from each other. Yosemite Valley is 36 miles away and takes about 45 minutes each way. Many volunteers visit the Valley on their day off by taking a morning bus to Yosemite Valley and returning to Wawona in the late afternoon. There are two small grocery stores in the area. There are larger grocery stores in Oakhurst, which is located 15 miles (30 minutes) away.

12. What is the weather like in the different locations in the park?

Yosemite Valley: The weather can shift suddenly. For example, in May days can be warm and sunny one day, and cold, wet, and stormy the next. May temperatures range in the 70s. June temperatures are in the 80s. July and August are in the 90s and occasionally reach 100°. In September the temperature returns to the 70s to 80s.

Tuolumne Meadows: Temperatures in mid-summer are usually in the 70s in the daytime and in the 30s at night. Though skies are usually clear, thunderstorms can be a daily occurrence during summer afternoons. Usually forming at higher elevations, thunderstorms arrive suddenly and can provide intense but brief downpours, lightning, thunder, hail, and gusty winds. Typically, by nightfall skies are clear once again. Volunteers in September can wake up with their water bottles frozen.

Wawona: In May the high temperatures are in the 60s. In June and September they are in the low 70s. In July and August they are in the high 70s.

13. Will I receive any compensation for volunteering?

Participants in the program not only gain work experience in one of the world's most beautiful places, they also receive additional benefits. These include free participation in one educational Yosemite Outdoor Adventure tuition-free within a year after volunteer service, a free park entrance pass, campsite, shower pass, uniform shirts, and nametag. In addition they receive a transportation stipend of \$10/day worked, paid after the month of service. Discounts at Yosemite Conservancy retail locations and select Delaware North Company (DNC) concessions are also provided in Yosemite Valley.

14. Will I receive training?

It is important that our volunteers have the resources needed to perform their work well. Therefore all applicants complete a comprehensive orientation and training program. Online training prior to arrival followed by training and orientation after arrival is provided by the Conservancy and the National Park Service. A detailed orientation manual is also available as well as ongoing assistance as needed. Mentors are assigned to new volunteers to make the transition into the program as smooth as possible.

Becoming a volunteer means joining a team of dedicated, hearty individuals who have a passion for providing accurate assistance to visitors in the park.

15. What kind of work will I do?

In Yosemite Valley: Volunteers provide visitors with park information and assistance in various stations in the Valley. These stations include a yurt in the visitor parking area, an information booth adjacent to the Wilderness Center, the Visitor Center, and key bus stops in the village. They work as docents in the Museum Gallery and assistants to the employees and art teachers in the Art and Education Center. They also work at the Happy Isles Nature Center as well as an information booth in that area. In addition to providing information for a wonderful visit, they educate visitors about Yosemite Conservancy's work in the park and encourage donations to our organization.

In Tuolumne Meadows: Volunteers help visitors at the Visitor Center, act as docents at Parsons Lodge, and assist with cultural events such as storytelling and the poetry festival. They also greet and orient participants in the Outdoor Adventure Program, provide information to visitors at Olmsted Point, and manage the D-Loop of Tuolumne Meadows campground, including assisting with bear patrol.

In Wawona: Volunteers provide information and assistance in the Mariposa Grove of giant Sequoias and act as docents in the Mariposa Grove Museum. They too share information about Yosemite Conservancy's work and encourage donations to the organization.

16. Is there a job description for this position?

For a description of this position visit: [Visitor Information Job Description](#).

17. What is the work routine?

A work day begins at 10:00am and ends at 4:00pm, with breaks and lunch scheduled throughout the day. Volunteers typically work a 30 hour week. In Yosemite Valley, they work split shifts, working in one station in the morning and another nearby station in the afternoon. Wawona and Tuolumne Meadows do not have split shifts. Shifts may include sitting, standing and walking around both in and out of doors. Some positions require short roundtrip daily hikes to work stations.

18. Will I determine my own work schedule?

The work schedule is created by program management to ensure that all participants have a balanced experience. However, volunteers are welcome to exchange days off with each other by following a set procedure.

19. Can I work less than a month?

Volunteers in this program are required to work a month.

20. What kind of lodging will I have?

Participants must provide for their own lodging. Most volunteers camp in tents. They provide their own tents, camping gear, and food as well as do their own cooking with food and scented items stored in shared bear lockers. RV spaces are limited in Yosemite Valley and Wawona and not available in the D-Loop of Tuolumne Meadows Campground. There are no hookups or showers in any of the campgrounds. Campground restrooms have cold water only. Showers are available nearby. Previous camping experience is strongly recommended and pets are not allowed.

21. Can I arrive early or extend my stay in the park?

Yes, but you must make your own camping/lodging arrangements.

22. Can my children participate with me? Can my spouse stay with me but not volunteer?

The Visitor Information Program is not suitable for children to accompany volunteers. Spouses who do not volunteer are welcome to visit occasionally rather than stay in the volunteer campsite full time.

23. Can I have visitors stay with me?

Visits by family and friends add additional impact such as crowding, additional vehicles, and noise to our limited number of volunteer campsites. Compliance with NPS campground regulations of six people (volunteers and their visitors, including children) per campsite is enforced by both the Conservancy and the Park Service.

The Conservancy views an occasional visit by family and friends, including those who help volunteers with setting up and taking down camping equipment, as appropriate. Excessive visits are inappropriate. "Excessive" refers to the number of visits, length of stay, and number of visitors. Visitors are required to share the accommodations of the volunteer whom they are visiting or set up a small tent adjacent to the volunteer. All food is to be stored in the volunteer's bear locker storage area only. Visitors are required to park their vehicles in nearby parking lots.

Visits by friends or family are reserved by each volunteer with the program's management prior to the month of service. Unapproved visits are not allowed and will affect future registration privileges. Volunteering is not a means for securing a campground space for friends and family to vacation.

24. Can I bring my pet or have my pet visit me?

Pets are not allowed.

25. What do I do about camping gear if I am traveling by air?

You may ship your camping gear to Yosemite Conservancy's El Portal Office. Arrangements will be made to bring the gear to your campsite. If shipping is required for volunteering in Wawona or Tuolumne Meadows, please be sure your gear arrives two weeks prior to your arrival, in order for delivery from the El Portal office to your campground to occur in a timely manner. The shipping address is Yosemite Conservancy, 5020 El Portal Road, El Portal, CA, 95318

26. What transportation is available in the park?

In Yosemite Valley volunteers walk, ride a bike or take the free shuttle. In Wawona, where the distances between locations are greater, they drive a car and use the shuttle and tram. In Tuolumne Meadows they walk and use the shuttle. Buses also connect Yosemite Valley, Wawona and Tuolumne Meadows for a fee.

27. What are the meal arrangements?

Volunteers are responsible for their own meals. They provide their own food which is stored in shared bear lockers. Ice chests must fit in these lockers which are 47" wide by 22" high x 38" deep. Volunteers purchase ice regularly to keep ice chests cold. They enjoy occasional potlucks with each other. Delaware North Parks and Resorts (DNC) provides discounts at grocery stores in the park and some eateries in Yosemite Valley. Alcoholic beverages are allowed for volunteers 21 years of age or older. Responsible, polite behavior is expected of everyone when alcohol is consumed.

28. Will I have access to showers?

Yes, there are showers nearby for volunteers to use free of charge, but please note there are no showers in any of Yosemite's campgrounds.

29. Will I be able to do laundry?

Yes, there are coin operated laundry facilities located in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne Meadows.

30. Will I wear a uniform?

Yes, volunteers are issued complementary uniform shirts and nametags. The shirts are worn with your own long pants.

31. Will I be able to use a cell phone?

Cell service is available in and near Yosemite Village for AT&T and Verizon customers. Verizon has limited service near Wawona, Crane Flat, and Tuolumne Meadows.

32. Will I be able to charge batteries and my cell phone?

There are locations in Yosemite Valley, Wawona and Tuolumne Meadows where volunteers charge batteries and cell phones.

33. Will I have wireless Internet access?

Wireless access is available to the Conservancy's volunteers at various locations in Yosemite Valley. Limited internet access is also available at the small county libraries in Yosemite Valley and Wawona. There is no internet access in Tuolumne Meadows.

34. Will I be able to cash a check or withdraw money from my bank account?

There are ATMs in Yosemite Valley, Wawona and Tuolumne Meadows.

35. What do volunteers do on their time off?

Volunteers use their time off to relax, meet up with friends, catch-up on personal chores or make the most of park activities. These include hiking, swimming, horseback riding, playing golf and visiting locations around the park or nearby towns. Many volunteers who have the same days off do activities together.

36. What do volunteers do in the evenings?

Many volunteers simply relax and enjoy the camping experience. For example, they may spend time together around a campfire or picnic table in their campground visiting or playing cards and games. Activities are offered in each park location, such as:

Yosemite Valley: There are free evening programs in the campground amphitheaters. In addition volunteers can attend performances at the theater for free. There is a recreation center with exercise classes and equipment that volunteers can also use for free. The Curry Village lounge is a place to read and play games.

Tuolumne Meadows: There are ranger campfires in the campground, music walks, star programs, and occasional cultural events at Parsons Lodge.

Wawona: There are ranger programs in the Wawona campground amphitheater and at Glacier Point. There are star walks with a ranger that leave from the Wawona Hotel. Volunteers also enjoy evening entertainment in the lobby of the Wawona Hotel.

37. How will my family and friends be able to contact me?

All volunteers will be given emergency contact phone numbers. Depending on your location, mail can be sent to the following general delivery addresses:

Yosemite Valley:
General Delivery
Yosemite Valley, CA, 95389

Wawona:
General Delivery
Wawona, CA, 95389

Tuolumne Meadows:
General Delivery
Tuolumne Meadows, CA, 95389

FedEx and UPS do not deliver to General Delivery. These packages should be delivered to Yosemite Conservancy, 5020 El Portal Road, El Portal, CA 95318; Attn: Volunteer Program. Management will provide delivery.

38. Who are the park partners for this program?

This program is a cooperative venture of Yosemite Conservancy, Delaware North Parks & Resorts at Yosemite (DNC), and the National Park Service (NPS). Yosemite Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of Yosemite National Park through programs, projects, visitor services, and publications in partnership with

the National Park Service. DNC is the concessioner in charge of managing the park's lodging, food, and retail operations. The NPS, an agency of the United States Department of the Interior, is charged with preserving Yosemite's natural and cultural resources while providing for the enjoyment of its visitors.

Each partner plays a vital role in the Visitor Information Program. The Conservancy arranges for donors to serve as volunteers, organizes the pre-trip information, and manages campground logistics, training, and supervision. NPS provides group campsites, trains volunteers, and provides materials for visitor education. DNC provides food discounts and bicycles in Yosemite Valley, and showers in all locations in the park.

39. How can I reach Yosemite Conservancy's volunteer program?

Volunteer Program Manager: Suzy Hasty

Phone: 209 379-2317, extension 14

Fax: 209 379-2486

Email: shasty@yosemiteconservancy.org

Mail: P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318

FedEx or UPS: 5020 El Portal Road, El Portal, CA 95318