

# MASON COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS DEPARTMENT

## PARK HOST DUTIES AND INFORMATION

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 of Hosts**

Hosts are expected to maintain clean, orderly RV site.

Hosts must 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.

All County Parks are no smoking facilities.

Hosts must have cell phone or means to contact County staff and emergency response.

Hosts are official representatives of the Mason County Parks and Trails Department therefore:

- Dress appropriately
- Avoid offensive language or conduct.
- Avoid displaying signs, decals, bumper stickers, posters that express political or Religious viewpoints. Please check with your Mason County Parks staff.

All dogs must have current rabies certificates. Scoop and leash laws apply at all times. Pets must never be left unattended.

### **Tips for Hosts**

Read the Mason County Personnel Policies and Procedures.

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.

### **Application, Agreement, and Timesheet**

County Volunteer Program packets are available at the Parks Department office. You may pick one up in person or by contacting the Parks and Trails Department by mail, telephone or E-mail.

After your application is received, a member of the park staff will contact you either by phone or mail if host openings are still available. You will receive an explanation of your specific duties and responsibilities, and may be interviewed over the phone. County Park staff will work with you to make arrangements regarding required duties and dates. 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. Remember that you are always welcome to make contact with the parks to inquire about their host status.

Before you begin your volunteer service, you will be asked to fill out and sign a number of forms including the Agreement for Volunteer Services. 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.

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.

### **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
- County Parks staff shirts
- Water, septic, and power
- Space size is large enough for a RV up to 50'

### **Insurance Coverage**

**Medical:** Mason County provides medical industrial insurance for volunteers through the Department of Labor and Industries. By submitting your timesheet, you will receive the cost of medical treatment needed for a service-related injury or illness. You are NOT covered for loss of employment time due to the injury or illness, nor for a lasting disability or death. If you suffer an on-the-job injury, your supervisor will assist you in obtaining and completing the proper forms to submit for processing.

**Tort Liability:** As a volunteer host, you are acting as an agent of the Mason County. Therefore, when you are acting within *the accepted limits and scope of your assigned job responsibilities*, Mason County can choose to assume responsibility for tort liability claims on your behalf. All situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Of

course, any tort claim resulting from criminal activity on a volunteer's part will not be covered by the County.

**Personal Property:** A volunteer's personal belongings are not covered by Mason County. It is advisable that you carry your own insurance to cover damage to personal belongings which may occur as a result of natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, ice, fire, flooding, high winds, etc.

**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.

### **Appearance/Identification**

As a Volunteer Host, you will be asked to wear a County Parks and Trails Department staff shirt that will identify you as a Volunteer Host to park visitors. Please wear your staff shirt while you are on duty. If you wear your staff shirt when you are not on duty, please use your discretion where you wear it since people will recognize you as a representative of Mason County Parks. Personal appearance and the appearance of your RV site are a reflection upon the County.

### **Background Checks**

As a volunteer, you will be acting as an agent of the Mason County. For certain volunteer positions, you may be required to undergo a conviction or background record check. The expense of such check will be borne by the Mason County.

For your protection, you should never accept responsibility for supervising park visitor's children. Babysitting is not one of your volunteer job duties.

### **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. But 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. The Parks staff can provide current information about picnic shelter availability, special permits, and other related information.

### **Business Enterprises**

Conducting business, such as selling items/products or performing services for pay, within the park is not allowed except by separate contract with Mason County.

### **Evaluating Your Host Experience**

As a volunteer host with the Mason County, you will be asked to evaluate your hosting experience, park staff and the facilities, plus comment on additional training or information needed to assist you in the performance of your duties. We appreciate your honest assessment of your experience as a way to help us identify needed improvements such as providing additional information or training. The Parks Department staff will complete the bottom section of the evaluation form.

### **Host Duties**

Your application packet includes your Volunteer Duties and Job Description, which you will complete with the Parks staff. 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 the

Parks 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 enforcing 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.

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.

Examples of Park Host tasks:

- 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

Examples of some possible minor tasks:

- 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

### **Camper Registration Duties**

As Host, you may be asked to help with monitoring groups camping at the park who have been issued a Special Use Camping Permit.