



**JACKSON
COUNTY**
Parks

Camp Host Program Overview

Jackson County Parks Camp Host Program History

Organized in the late 1990's, the Camp Host program provides valuable volunteer assistance in maintaining and operating our park facilities. Hosts perform a variety of duties, ranging from visitor contacts to minor maintenance. Annually, hosts contribute hundreds of hours of service in a network of over 20 parks in the Rogue Valley. Since its beginning, the program has become extremely popular and participation has grown exponentially.

Application Process

Although we do accept host applications throughout the year, scheduling for the following year's host assignments officially begins each September after the busy summer season. Generally speaking, Park staff will begin making contacts for the following year's host assignments in October. Although staff may place hosts year-round as positions come open, the heaviest placement period is throughout the winter season.

When you apply, remember to select those parks that are the best fit for your geographic preference, skills, interests and abilities. Both returning and new hosts must fill out and return an application each year. Please supply all the information requested on the application. You may obtain a host packet of information by contacting the Jackson County Parks office at 541-774-8183 during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m, Monday – Friday, or online at www.jacksoncountyparks.com.

Once we receive your completed host application, your contact information, skills and interests and camping equipment info are reviewed by park managers. Being flexible in your requested locations and duty choices will help find a suitable placement that meets your requests and the needs of the Parks Program. If your skills, interests and times of availability are a good match with park needs, Jackson County Park staff will contact you either by phone, e-mail or traditional mail. This person will explain the specific duties and responsibilities of the host positions he or she is attempting to fill and may ask you specific questions regarding your skills, abilities, interests and experience. Consider this a formal interview and understand that staff is trying to assess if you will be a good fit for the position(s) they have in mind. Feel free to ask all the questions you want to get a better sense of what you may be getting into! This arrangement needs to work just as well for you too!

After this initial conversation, you can expect that the references you have provided will be checked. If an agreement on terms, duties and location is reached, you will be penciled into the host schedule at that park. You may consider this a tentative host assignment. Information will then be sent to you regarding your duties and the physical performance level that is anticipated.

You will have time to further discuss any concerns with park staff. It's up to you to communicate what type of physical limitations you may have. Every attempt will be made to make reasonable accommodation to modify the duties as described whenever possible.

Your final placement is contingent upon the results of a criminal history check. A form will be sent to you to request details about your background and driving record. We need your approval in order to conduct this check and it is the only time we will request your birth date, social security number and driver's license number. Once the check has been approved, you will be contacted via phone or email, outlining more details about your arrival. When you arrive on site for your assignment, further orientation and training will occur.

Once you are offered a position, please be sure to ask enough questions to thoroughly understand the scope and details of your new hosting duties. If your assignment duties and responsibilities are not adequately explained prior to your arrival or if they change significantly once you arrive at the park, you have the right to negotiate new terms and/or refuse the assignment without penalty. If for some reason you are unable to make it to your confirmed host assignment(s), please be sure to contact the Jackson County Parks office.

Park Host Definitions and Duties

Each hosting situation varies according to park location, the number of visitors and other hosts at any given time of year, availability of accommodations and other park resources, and if staff are on-site. The best way to fully understand all duties that are expected in any given job is to talk directly to Park staff. But in general, all hosts will:

- Receive a parking space for their RV, close to their work site. Full hook-ups are provided whenever possible, but check at each location for details. Please note that all living accommodations are expected to be either self-propelled or able to be towed by a vehicle that you drive in. In cases of emergency and/or natural hazard, an immediate evacuation may be necessary, so we cannot allow living accommodations that are not able to be driven or towed away on demand.
- Work a minimum of one month in any one location. Multiple month positions are available and may be arranged with park staff in advance. Longer-term assignments are available primarily during the winter and shoulder seasons and will be pre-arranged according to specific park needs.
- Receive orientation, training, a volunteer uniform and recognition
- Understand and explain rules that apply to park users. This is in an advisory role only and does not include enforcement of park rules.
- Be expected to personally follow park regulations and abide by the Jackson County Parks Volunteer Code of Conduct.

General Hosting Categories

The hosting categories below are not exclusive; in other words, overlapping duties are common. Your patience and flexibility is requested with the inevitable changes as they occur, but you will always be asked in advance before new job tasks are assigned.

Campground Hosts:

- Work and live in the campground loops near campers.
- Have a sign identifying them as park hosts at their site
- Perform routine visitor services such as:
 1. Greet visitors and make them feel welcome.
 2. Distribute park literature, answer questions, receive comments and be readily accessible to the public.
 3. Represent Jackson County Parks, serving as a contact point for campers and travelers.
 4. Pick up litter and clean fire pits.
 5. Check and stock restrooms.
 6. Notify park staff or law enforcement when emergencies arise or activities within the park area warrant this.
 7. Maintain a tidy host site.
 8. May sell firewood and ice.
 9. May assist with registration and cleaning of yurts, cabins and other special facilities.
 10. May include other specific duties as agreed upon with park staff.
- Perform various maintenance duties such as:
 1. Work on maintenance or service projects.
 2. Mow, weed, do landscaping or gardening.
 3. Operate and maintain a variety of equipment.
 4. Paint, build, or work on construction projects.
 5. Provide small engine repair.
 6. Route and paint signs.
 7. Move irrigation equipment.
 8. Other specific duties as agreed upon with park staff.

Extended-Stay or Special Project Hosts:

- Usually do, but may not live in the park.
- May or may not have a sign identifying them as park hosts at their site.
- May work at fairly remote locations where there may be no permanent park staff on-site.
- Work fairly independently, either having responsibility for:
 1. Most maintenance tasks and/or operations at a specific campground or day-use site.
 2. An agreed-upon assignment or specialized tasks which fall outside the typical realm of other hosting duties as described above.
- By design, are not typically first time volunteers, but are hosts who have volunteered over a period of years at Jackson County and have moved into jobs with increasingly responsible duties.
- Perform duties such as:
 1. Work on special programs or longer-term projects that have been designated by park staff.
 2. Utilize unique vocational skills, licensures or certification to contribute to special projects as defined by park staff.
 3. Coordinate schedules, train or oversee work of other hosts on occasion.
 4. Greet visitors and make them feel welcome.
 5. Represent Jackson County Parks, serving as a contact point for campers and travelers.
 6. Open and close gates.

7. Pick-up litter.
8. Mow, weed, do landscaping or irrigation.
9. Maintain and sometimes clean restrooms.
10. Notify park staff or law enforcement when emergencies arise or activities within the park area warrant this action.
11. Maintain a tidy host site.
12. Provide an on-site security presence for parks which don't always have regular staff working at them.
13. Provide other general maintenance or project work, with duties as agreed upon.

Vehicle Requirements

Due to varying individual park facilities and the 30-day minimum host assignment, it is highly recommended that volunteers who participate in the Park Host Program have a self-contained recreational vehicle (RV). This includes motor homes, fifth wheels or trailers with kitchen and bathroom facilities. Pickups with campers and camper van conversions will be considered as long as you obtain a host assignment where there are shower and restroom facilities. Tents, cars or pickups without campers are discouraged, however may be considered on a case-by-case basis only with approval of the park manager.

General Work Expectations

- All hosts are expected to be “model campers” and must maintain clean, orderly campsites.
- Hosts may sell only Jackson County Parks approved items in the parks.
- You must check with the manager before adding any additional structures or storage containers at your site. All plants and/or gardens must be grown in portable containers unless explicitly approved by park management.
- Do not perform vehicle maintenance at your site. If you have questions, consult with your park manager.
- County equipment shall not be used for personal benefit.
- Only camping and recreational equipment may be in public view. All other equipment must be stored out of viewing sight.
- It is not appropriate to consume alcohol or use tobacco while on active duty. Please confine use of either to your site area and during off duty times only.
- Hosts are considered official ‘agents’ of Jackson County, therefore:
 - Please dress appropriately.
 - Avoid offensive conduct and the use of offensive language.
 - Avoid displaying signs, decals, bumper stickers, and posters that express political or religious viewpoints. Check with your supervisor for guidelines.

Orientation, Training, and Safety Concerns

Prior to your first park orientation, you will be required to take a series of safety training modules. Orientation and safety training is required before you assume active duty at Jackson

County Parks. As a host representing Jackson County and just like paid staff, you are expected to follow specific safety standards and practices at all times.

Always take care to perform your duties carefully and safely, and report any unsafe conditions you encounter. Please perform ONLY the duties/activities listed on your Conditions of Voluntary Service Host Agreement. Please do not attempt to perform any activities for which you have not been trained!

If your duties change during the course of your hosting assignment, please be proactive and ask for proper training relating to your new job requirements or in using new, unfamiliar equipment and ask to have your position description updated. Ongoing training will be provided as the need arises and as you move from park to park.

Insurance Coverages

Workers' Compensation

Jackson County does not provide worker's compensation coverage for volunteers. Therefore, you are required to sign the attached "Release of Liability and Claims Form" prior to the start of service.

Tort Liability

All volunteers are covered by Jackson County for civil liability. This protects volunteers from being liable for negligence or injury to others, under these conditions: 1) you are working on a task assigned by an authorized supervisor; 2) you limit your actions to the scope of duties explicitly prescribed within your volunteer assignment, and 3) you perform your duties in good faith and do not act in a reckless manner or with the intent to inflict harm on others.

Personal Property Insurance

It is strongly recommended that you have all personal property covered by your own insurance. Jackson County will not and cannot replace any lost, stolen or damaged property.

County Vehicle Insurance

If your host duties require you to drive park vehicles, you will be covered by Jackson County's vehicle liability and collision insurance while operating a county owned vehicle only. You will be asked to show proof of a valid driver's license and an acceptable, current driving record.

Private Vehicle Insurance

You may also be asked to show proof of vehicle insurance if you use your own vehicle while performing volunteer duties.

Timecards and "On-Call" Hours

You will be required to turn in a "timecard" at the end of each month, tracking the time you've spent performing host duties at each park. While you may be hosting in a park where you are the only hosts on duty and the hours seem like they're "around the clock", you are indeed entitled to a fair schedule and time off. Discuss the "on-call" hour situation with your supervisor.

Host Uniform and Supplies

Jackson County Parks purchases caps, vests and nametags for all host volunteers. Occasionally, supplies run short so please be patient if your park is out of them. Every attempt is made to secure you with all appropriate supplies before your arrival. If your hosting assignment requires significant public contact with park visitors, you will also be provided with name signs to indicate where your campsite is so they can easily find you.

Practical Tips for Campground Hosts

1. If you can, plan to arrive a day before the previous hosts leave. They can be knowledgeable resources for you, and can offer tips on performing your duties and answering frequently asked questions. Be sure to check with the park manager ahead of time if you'd like to do this — especially during the busy summer months.
2. Spend some time getting oriented to the general area where your park is located. Stop by the local Chamber of Commerce for flyers. Be sure to review all the host orientation materials provided for you.
3. During your orientation session with park staff, don't hesitate to ask questions, clarify responsibilities, or bring up concerns. It is fully expected that you may be a bit anxious about your new assignment, especially if you're new to hosting at Jackson County sites. Your questions will not come as a surprise and they'll be glad you're showing such interest and enthusiasm in performing your job correctly.
4. **Remember safety is always first!** Be aware of your physical limitations and discuss any specific medical problems, i.e., allergies, surgeries, diabetes, etc, with your supervisor. Follow all training guidelines and protocols within each park unit, making sure to ask questions if you are unfamiliar with any piece of equipment or unaware of how to proceed.
5. While you will not be placed in the position of being the primary responder in emergency situations, if you're hosting in remote locations, it may be beneficial for you personally to keep up your training and certification in general first aid and CPR.
6. Ask for constructive feedback on your performance.
7. **THINK CUSTOMER SERVICE!!!** When dealing with the public, and you don't know the answer to a question, please don't respond with a mere "I don't know". If you don't know, it's okay. It takes time to learn the park system and each park you're hosting at. Tell those inquiring that you'll find the answer as soon as you can and that you'll get back to them. When asked for a recommendation on a restaurant or an activity, it's best to try finding out more about the visitor's particular tastes, so you may suggest what would most appeal to them. Always attempt to give more than one recommendation and never give a blatantly bad review. You may of course speak from your own experience, but be sensitive to the effect of your words on the image and reputation of businesses in the area.

Feel free to contact Jackson County Parks office at (541) 774-8183 with any questions!