

# America the Beautiful

## Fact Sheet

### ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER PASS

#### 1. What is the Volunteer Pass?

Congress authorized the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to issue an annual pass to a volunteer in exchange for significant volunteer services performed by the volunteer. "Significant" is defined as 500 hours by the Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism.

#### 2. Which agencies participate in the Volunteer Pass program?

Volunteer hours may be accrued at Forest Service (FS), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) sites. These sites will issue and honor the Volunteer Pass at locations where Entrance or Standard Amenity Fees are charged.

- ◇ For information on USDA FS sites visit <http://www.fs.fed.us>
- ◇ For information on BLM sites visit <http://www.blm.gov>
- ◇ For information on Reclamation sites visit <http://www.usbr.gov>
- ◇ For information on FWS sites visit <http://www.fws.gov>
- ◇ For information on NPS sites visit <http://www.nps.gov>
- ◇ For information on Federal Recreation lands visit <http://www.recreation.gov>

#### 3. Where can I find out about volunteer opportunities on Federal lands?

<http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/>

### HOW TO OBTAIN A VOLUNTEER PASS

#### 1. Who qualifies for the Volunteer Pass?

The Volunteer Pass will be issued free of charge to volunteers who accrue 500 volunteer hours. Volunteers may officially begin to accrue "Pass hours" on or after January 1, 2007.

**2. Does a volunteer have to accrue the 500 hours in one year?**

No. There is no specific time frame in which the volunteer hours must be accrued. Once the 500 hour requirement is reached and a pass is issued, the volunteer's "Pass hours" are reset to zero and the count begins again. ***Only one pass may be issued per year.***

**3. If a volunteer works "2,000" hours in one year do they get a volunteer pass for the next 4 years?**

No. When the 500 hour requirement is reached and a pass is issued the volunteer must work another 500 hours over the next year to be issued another pass when the current one expires. If a volunteer works more than the 500 hours during the year they still earn only one pass per year.

**4. How are volunteer hours going to be tracked?**

In order to be eligible for this pass, a volunteer must personally track his/her hours on the official tracking form provided by an official Volunteer Coordinator at one of the participating Federal sites. The volunteer must submit his/her form to an official Federal Volunteer Coordinator for verification of hours worked, on quarterly basis, and/or when the 500 hour mark is reached.

**5. Who will issue the Volunteer Pass?**

For the first year of this pass program (2007), the Volunteer Pass will be issued by agency-specific volunteer program coordinators once they have verified the volunteer's hours. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the Federal recreation site nearest you for further information. It is expected that beginning in early 2008, volunteers will maintain electronic time sheets for pass eligibility at <http://www.volunteer.gov/gov>.

## **VOLUNTEER PASS USE**

**1. How long is the Volunteer Pass valid?**

The Volunteer Pass is valid for 12 months from the month of issuance.

**Note:** *Photo identification may be requested to verify pass ownership.*

**2. Can a volunteer give their pass to someone else if they already have an annual or lifetime pass?**

No. Volunteer Passes are non-transferable and may not be given to someone else or traded in for cash equivalent. The Volunteer Pass is only one means of rewarding a volunteer, so if they already have a pass they should be given some other type of reward.

**3. What does the Volunteer Pass cover?**

The Volunteer Pass admits pass holder and passengers in a non-commercial vehicle at per vehicle fee areas and pass holder + 3 adults, not to exceed 4 adults, at per person fee areas. (Children under 16 always admitted free).

**4. Is the Volunteer Pass valid at unstaffed Federal recreation sites?**

Yes. A Hangtag will be provided with each Volunteer Pass providing a way to display the pass so it is visible through the windshield of a vehicle.

- *Insert your Volunteer Pass on the side of the Hangtag stating "Annual." When visiting un-staffed Federal recreation sites, place the Hangtag on your review mirror, ensuring your pass is facing towards your vehicle window.*
- *Hangtags are merely a way to display your valid pass and they are not valid for entry without a valid pass.*

**5. My family is traveling in two cars; will the Volunteer Pass let all of us into the site?**

No. Only the vehicle with the pass holder is covered. The second vehicle is subject to an entrance fee, or must use a second pass.

6. **My spouse and I are each riding our own motorcycle or scooter; will one Volunteer Pass cover both our entries?**

No. At sites with per vehicle entrance fees the Volunteer Pass will cover entrance for the pass holder on one motorcycle only.

7. **I have a school bus that has been converted into a motor home. Will the Volunteer Pass cover my entrance into a Federal recreation site?**

Yes. You may get questioned if the vehicle still looks like a school bus, but just let agency staff know that it has been converted into an RV/motor home and is privately owned (pass covers entrance for a single non-commercial vehicle).

8. **What about bicycles?**

Bicycles are handled differently within the five agencies. Please contact a local site specifically for information.

## **VOLUNTEER PASS BENEFITS**

1. **Does the Volunteer Pass include any discounts at Cooperating Association bookstores, or at gift shops that are located in the Federal Recreation sites (i.e. the Grand Canyon or Okefenokee bookstores)?**

No. The Volunteer Pass *does not* provide discounts at Cooperating Association bookstores or on-site gift shops.

2. **Does the Volunteer Pass provide any discounts on Expanded Amenity or Concessionaire (Concessioner) Fees?**

No. The Volunteer Pass *does not* cover discounts on any Expanded Amenity or Concessioner Fees such as: camping, RV hook-ups, boat launching, backcountry permits, parking at Mount Rushmore, guided cave tours at Wind Cave National Park; or parking at some historic monuments or homes.

3. **How can I tell the difference between a Standard Amenity Fee, an Expanded Amenity Fee, a Special Recreation Permit Fee, or a Concessionaire (Concessioner) Fee?**

There are thousands of Federal recreation sites and fees vary across the Federal agencies. Please inquire locally about fees, pass acceptance and discount policies.

<http://www.recreation.gov>

**4. Is a Volunteer Pass valid at State Parks or local city/county Recreation Areas?**

No. Federal Recreation sites are operated by the Federal government, whereas State Parks are operated by state governments, and local city/county recreation sites are operated by local governments.