



Volunteer at Rocky Mountain National Park



A Bighorn Brigade Volunteer monitors traffic and protects the Bighorn Sheep at Sheep Lakes in the Horseshoe Park area.

In Brief

Approximately three million people enjoy Rocky Mountain National Park each year. This large number of visitors, in a park only 416 square miles in size presents a challenge, a lot of work and not enough park staff. Rocky's volunteer program is one of the largest volunteer programs in the National Park Service (NPS). Approximately 1,500 volunteers annually contribute more than 100,000 hours of service, valued at nearly two million dollars. Volunteers are involved in every aspect of park operations and are essential to fulfilling Rocky's mission. Volunteers work varied schedules, some may work a few hours on a special project, others one day each week, and many work full-time during the summer season.

Our Mission

To promote, create and maintain long-term stewardship and support for the park resources by:

- Fortifying park programs through the use of volunteers in a manner which complements basic park resources to better accomplish the park mission.*
- Providing an enriching and diverse work experience for participating volunteers.*

The NPS Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program was authorized (by Public

Law 91-357) in 1970. The primary purpose of the VIP program is to provide a vehicle through which the National Park Service can accept and utilize voluntary help and services from the public.

The major objective of the program is to utilize this voluntary help in such a way that is mutually beneficial to the park and the volunteer. Volunteers are accepted without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

About Our Volunteers

Volunteering is an American tradition and today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals of all ages who possess the skills, desire, patience, and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks.

Park volunteers come from every state and around the world to help

preserve and protect America's natural and cultural heritage. Volunteers give of their time and expertise to assist park staff in achieving our important mission.

Each year more than 120,000 volunteers donate over 4,000,000 hours of service to U.S. national parks.

How to Apply

To download a printable application go to nps.gov/romo and click on the "Volunteer" link.

Many positions descriptions and job openings are available at nps.gov/romo/supportyourpark/volunteer.

Volunteer Postitions

Job Title: Interpretation

Volunteers in the Division of Interpretation serve in park visitor centers and the Information Office. Some volunteers work with school children in environmental education. Holzwarth Historic Site volunteers provide historical information and guided tours. The park library, archives, museum collection and audio-visual library use volunteers to assist with maintaining park documents and historic items. Volunteers also play a unique role in the park's wildlife education programs. In spring and summer, the *Bighorn Brigade* educates the public about Bighorn sheep ecology and management. The *Elk Bugle Corps* work in the fall during elk mating season to answer questions and keep people from approaching elk. *Chowbusters* rove park roads and educate visitors about wildlife health, nutrition, and safety. Interpretation volunteers protect park wildlife while enhancing visitor enjoyment and understanding of RMNP.

Job Title: Facility Management

Visitors often comment on the excellent condition of the more than 350 miles of maintained hiking trails in RMNP. To keep these trails in great condition, volunteers are needed to do trail building, relocation, and maintenance. These volunteers perform some of the most physically challenging work in the park. The *Road Hogs* work every Monday, year round, on road projects, constructing buck and rail fences and a myriad of other challenging tasks. Volunteers are critical to the park maintenance program and assist with everything from painting buildings to picking up trash and gathering recyclables. Volunteers may also help the Facility Management Division with special projects such as preserving historic buildings, features and landscapes.

Job Title: Resource Stewardship, Science & Research

Volunteers in the Division of Resource Stewardship help manage the natural and cultural resources at RMNP. Work ranges from assisting with elk and sheep censuses, to working in the fire information office, to conducting fisheries research in connection with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Volunteers staff the greenhouse and nursery and help protect the genetic diversity of park plant species by collecting seeds for propagation, revegetating disturbed areas, and controlling exotic plant species. Volunteers with a passion for science and research enjoy assisting park scientists. Projects include researching park plants and animals (including frogs, bighorn sheep, butterflies, elk, bear, mountain lions and deer), studying glaciers, architectural history and working at the Continental Divide Research Center. Science and Research Volunteers have also conducted social science surveys to assess visitor impressions of park programs and resources.

Job Title: Visitor & Resource Protection

Volunteers in the Division of Visitor & Resource Protection must be very familiar with RMNP, enjoy interacting with people and be ready for any situation that may occur. Volunteers work in the Backcountry Office, preparing backcountry campers for a safe and enjoyable trip. The *Trailmasters* and *Wild Bunch* staff the trailheads at Bear Lake and Wild Basin, they educate and instruct visitors about resource protection and park regulations in addition to helping visitors find their perfect trail and hiking experience. *Sled Dawgs* work at Hidden Valley in the winter months monitoring the snow play area and encouraging winter fun safety.

Volunteers in this division also serve as campground hosts, they are ambassadors for the park and live in a campground for the summer season. Their primary duty is to assist campers and provide information about RMNP. They may also help with campground maintenance and assist rangers with explaining park rules. Campground hosts are often the first on the scene when there is an accident or a visitor needs medical attention, and may even be called on after hours when visitors need help.

Job Title: Volunteer Groups

Group projects attract large numbers of volunteers from throughout the country to participate in projects lasting anywhere from a day to several weeks. Volunteer groups at RMNP include schools, environmental organizations, churches, scout troops, and businesses. Groups work on a variety of projects including trails, campground cleanup and rehabilitation, exotic plant control and various backcountry projects.

This volunteer list is not all-inclusive. If you have a talent or skill not listed above, but feel it would be a valuable service to the park visitor, please let us know. Call the Volunteer Office at 970-586-1330, during regular business hours or e-mail romo_volunteers_in_parks@nps.gov.

Environmental Considerations

Volunteers should expect physically demanding working conditions at RMNP. This mountain park is characterized by high elevations (from about 8,000 to more than 14,000 feet above sea level), a dry climate, variable weather conditions, and a variety

of native and exotic plant species. These conditions may cause altitude sickness and may aggravate existing medical conditions, particularly respiratory or cardiac problems. The environment at RMNP is challenging—but rewarding.