



Desolation Wilderness Volunteer Program

Wilderness Volunteer Opportunities:

Trailhead Naturalist

Backcountry Patrol

Wilderness Information (Front Desk)

Resource Monitoring

Trail Maintenance and Educational Programming opportunities arise seasonally

Desolation Wilderness volunteers provide wilderness information and promote education through visitor contacts in the backcountry; at the trailheads or while staffing ranger station information desks. **With the exception of resource monitoring positions, sharing wilderness information and education is the primary duty of the Desolation Wilderness Volunteer,** with special emphasis on wilderness ethics and “leave no trace” techniques. Although volunteers are not involved in the enforcement of regulations, they are helpful in explaining the rationale behind them. Volunteers supply information on the Recreation Fee Enhancement Act (formerly Fee Demo), offer trip planning tips and relay trail and backcountry condition reports.

Volunteers will be trained in the proper use of radios and how to deal professionally with backcountry emergencies such as wildfires and search and rescue incidents. Note: This is *not* a primary duty of the volunteer trailhead ranger/backcountry patrol; most likely you will not encounter these types of situations. All volunteers are required to wear the Forest Service volunteer uniform while on duty except for those volunteers conducting group or campsite monitoring

The Forest Service offers several wilderness volunteer positions as described in the following paragraphs. Some volunteers choose to participate in more than one role, while others may wish to specialize.

Trailhead Naturalist: This position is located at the various trailhead locations for Desolation Wilderness. This person serves as a contact for visitors before they enter the wilderness. Trailhead naturalists may contact visitors at the trailhead and/or staff a wilderness information/education table or they may walk the trail for a short distance contacting visitors along the way to offer an educational message or helpful information. This is a good position for someone with excellent communication skills who enjoys public contact, is well organized and prefers less arduous tasks. Trailhead naturalists are required to wear the Forest Service volunteer uniform while on duty.

Backcountry Patrol: This position serves as an informational public contact during day hikes or overnight backpack trips in Desolation Wilderness. In addition to making visitor contacts, volunteer patrols may carry a shovel to break down firerings at campsites and help keep the

wilderness clean and free of debris. This is a good position for someone who is in good physical shape, has excellent communication skills and has experience hiking and backpacking in remote areas. Backcountry patrollers are required to wear the Forest Service volunteer uniform while on duty.

Wilderness Information (Front Desk position): Volunteers provide assistance to Pacific Ranger Station or Taylor Creek Wilderness Permit Office front desk personnel providing wilderness information and issuing wilderness permits. Volunteers share information on current conditions, assist visitors with wilderness trip planning, provide an educational message about wilderness ethics and “leave no trace” techniques, and explain Desolation Wilderness rules and regulations. There is a particular need for volunteers for several hours on Friday and Saturday mornings, when the Pacific Ranger District and Taylor Creek Wilderness Permit Office are the busiest issuing wilderness permits. On those mornings volunteers may opt to work the full shift at the station, or to help at the desk during the rush and then head to the backcountry for the day. This is a good position for someone who has good communication skills, who enjoys public contact, is well organized and prefers less arduous tasks. This is a position of critical importance because it serves as the first line of contact for wilderness visitors and in rare occasions may be the only contact they encounter on their visit. Wilderness Information volunteers are required to wear the Forest Service volunteer uniform while on duty.

Resource Monitoring: Volunteers collect data for the wilderness resource monitoring program. Certain human activities and resource conditions are monitored in Desolation to ensure that the wilderness maintains its wild character. Number of groups encountered and campsite condition data will be collected during the summer 2008. Since the primary duty of this position is not public contact, volunteers involved in monitoring will not wear the Forest Service volunteer uniform. Volunteers will follow established protocols to collect the data. Training will be provided. This position is good for someone who is well organized, is in good physical shape and who has experience hiking and backpacking in remote areas.

Groups Encounter Monitoring: The number of groups encountered will be recorded while hiking along a predetermined section of trail. The encounter monitoring will be completed during the months of June through September. The dates to conduct this monitoring will be scheduled in advance, and will include both weekend and weekdays. The monitoring data collection proposed for 2008 will be collected on overnight visits.

Campsite Condition Inventories – Campsite condition inventories will be conducted at selected lakes. Each campsite at a destination is inventoried to assess its condition and the information is used to evaluate factors such as the resource capacity of the area and restoration opportunities. Campsite monitoring will be completed in August and September, when the potential impacts are most evident on the ground. Overnight backpack trips would be the most efficient method to collect this data. However, depending on the location of the lakes, the monitoring data may also be collected on day hikes.