



# Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

## Host Recruitment Process

Updated 1/2012

Host Recruitment *officially* begins in Sept each year, although parks are always looking for good, qualified applicants. OPRD accepts applications at any time of year, but parks often don't begin doing their heavy scheduling until fall for positions which start the following year.

*Send applications to the Oregon State Parks Info Center at the address listed below:*

**OPRD – Attn: Host Program., 2501 SW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, Ste. 100, Portland, OR 97201**  
*Applications should NOT be sent directly to the parks!*

### TIMELINE

The actual amount of time it takes to be placed in a hosting position varies considerably, depending upon your willingness to be flexible with regards to park location and time of availability. In general, if you are new to hosting, it's advisable not to expect to be placed at a coastal park during the summer season. These parks are extremely busy and have many positions, but the competition for assignments is high. It can and does happen, and you may be surprised when cancellations occur and positions open up. We do our best to find the best fit for those with a desire to volunteer!

### APPLICATION PROCESSING

- begins as soon as we receive your application in the mail. We request one completed annual application for each individual or couple desiring to host. Your contact information, skills and interests and camping equipment info are entered into the Hub, a statewide volunteer database.
- Your annual host application will be scanned directly into the Hub, so park staff with the correct clearance will have access to it when they are ready to interview.
- Park staff may do a search in the Hub whenever they like. They can search by applicant name or Hub ID #, skills and interests, park preferences and your time of availability. Once they narrow down their search to potential hosts, they can find out how to best contact you.

### BACKGROUND & DMV CHECKS

- Hosts are required to stay on-site overnight in a park campground or day-use area. In all cases, a thorough criminal history check will be performed as part of our regular course of business. In our experience, there is rarely cause for concern, but we will NOT place individuals with questionable histories or criminal records into positions that may put our employees, other volunteers and visitors at risk.
- Some hosts will be required to drive as part of their park assignments. A DMV check will be conducted as part of the criminal history check. If we cannot obtain access to your state's driving records, you MAY be asked to submit a recent DMV report of your driving history covering the past 3-5 years.

### RECRUITMENT & PLACEMENT

- happens year-round. However, it is most typical that the park host coordinators start scheduling for the following year after volunteer recognition at the end of the busy summer season. You may apply at any time to the Info Center in Portland, although please not more than 18 months in advance of the current date.
- of appropriate individuals for the best job fit is always a high priority. Please be aware that certain parks may be looking for certain types of people with a specific skill set. The intention is to satisfy park needs first, although your preferences, interests and travel schedules are always considered.

## ASSIGNMENT

- ❑ of your camp site location is usually determined by many factors in park operations. Park staff determines and assigns camp sites based on park needs and specific hosting duties. In some cases, it may be possible to exchange a campsite with another. In others, it is not. Full hook-ups will be offered at every opportunity, as available.

## INTERVIEWS

- ❑ between you and park rangers happen routinely over the phone and infrequently. Although the statewide Volunteer Services Specialist in Salem screens your initial application and often makes recommendations, she does not hold interviews nor make placements. Park staff is in the best position to match your skills and interests to specific host assignments, define and communicate position responsibilities and explain the daily park routine.
- ❑ Do not expect to be offered a host position if you can't be reached by phone. We can't get an adequate sense of who you are through e-mail only.
- ❑ If possible, do try to arrange for an in-person interview if you're local to a park or if you're going to be in the area.

## ORIENTATION & TRAINING

- ❑ A gathering called the "New Host Orientation" is typically held in late April every year. Your attendance at this special event assures you an overview of our state park system, our mission and how you, as a host volunteer fit into helping us achieve it. Special training topics (along with celebrations and recognition for outstanding continuing hosts) also take place here.
- ❑ Further orientation and on-the-job training takes place at your assigned park locations.

## SAFETY

- ❑ **is taken extremely seriously.** Please accept and practice all safety guidelines and rules and ask for appropriate safety module training should you ever be placed in a position where you are performing new tasks or operating new and unfamiliar equipment. Together all staff and volunteers practice and encourage compliance with the *Tough Caring Contract*.
- ❑ training modules are available now on the iLearn system. Ask park staff, your statewide host coordinator or OPRD's training coordinator for more details.

## RECOGNITION

- ❑ for your time, talent and efforts most often happens within the individual park setting through regular planned events. Awards are also offered statewide through earned pins and hour-bars along with other token annual recognition items. We strive to provide ongoing recognition for your valuable volunteer contribution.
- ❑ Special awards for outstanding hosting service are offered through a statewide nomination process on an annual basis.

## QUICK TIPS (or how to land a job!)

- Please apply early in fall for the best consideration and choice of park location for the following year.
- Be open to hosting assignments in many different parks in all areas of the state.
- Consider volunteering as a host in the "shoulder" seasons... (i.e. Spring – Mar/April & Fall – Sept/Oct).
- Consider a longer term winter assignment (November – February).
- Do remember that first impressions happen all the time, from the time you request information and talk to someone on the phone to when you are offered a position. Make sure you have a positive, can-do attitude.
- If you haven't heard anything about your application within a month or two, check in with the statewide volunteer services host coordinator in Salem to ask about new positions or cancellations – 877/225-9803.
- Call the park and establish a relationship (at least by name recognition) with the Host Coordinators in those parks at which you *really* would like to work. Let them get to know a little about you. Tell them why you are interested in volunteering, what work you would prefer to perform, and any special skills you can offer.
- Be sure park and state contacts know how to reach you with day and night phone numbers, e-mails, and message phones. Be sure you inform the Salem office when you have a change of address or phone.
- If you must leave a message on any OPRD voice mail, be sure to let us know a good time to return your call.