

Get outside and volunteer

By Larry Hyslop



Volunteer positions are available in local campgrounds

Maybe it is because I am getting close to retirement, but I find myself spending more time scrolling through a great web site called volunteer.gov. A person can choose a state or an agency to see possible volunteer opportunities. These positions go far beyond being typical campground hosts.

Zion National Park needs volunteers as hiking partners. A water quality scientist takes monthly hikes into the back country to sample water at remote sites. The park does not want this person hiking by themselves and does not want to pay someone to accompany them, so what to do? Get a volunteer! Hikes range from eight miles to three miles round trip. The volunteer helps carry water sampling gear and knows how to work the radio in case of emergencies.

Zion also has a condor program, where volunteers hike up to the canyon rim at a place called Scout's Lookout. There, they use spotting scopes to keep tabs on California condors and educate hikers on condors and proper conduct near these huge birds. Since this trail continues on to Angel's Landing, a trail from which hikers occasionally fall, the volunteers also carry radios and are trained in emergency procedures.

Other examples include the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Idaho that needs a volunteer to gather monitoring data on vegetation and fire effects. The Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming needs a volunteer to assist with stream/riparian surveys, maintenance of stream gauges, and making discharge measurements. The Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona needs a librarian.

Here in Nevada, a web site called getoutdoorsnevada.org contains Nevada opportunities, although most are near Las Vegas. Lake Mead National Recreation Area has openings for workers in the cactus garden and native plant nursery, plus deckhands and field trip educators. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge wants a maintenance assistant, administrative assistant and trail ambassador. Red Rock National Conservation Area wants someone for the information desk and for landscaping work.

Closer to home, Elko County needs campground hosts. The BLM needs hosts at Wilson Reservoir and Wild Horse Campground, call Zach Pratt at 775-753-0212. The U.S. Forest Service needs hosts in the Mountain City district and the Jarbidge district. Call Nancy Taylor at 775-752-1705.

Getting outdoors is great, getting outdoors and doing volunteer work is even better.

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