

Golden Gate National Parks Volunteer Work Description & Field Safety



General Work Description for Parkwide Volunteer Programs

Support habitat restoration, nursery activities, trail maintenance, building and grounds maintenance, and/or landscaping projects by performing any number of related tasks. The work may include, but is not limited to: outplanting vegetation, removing weeds and invasive vegetation, collecting native seed, transplanting seedlings, working in and around compost, pruning vegetation, clearing trails, repairing trail tread, rerouting trails, clearing drainage systems, repairing and installing fencing/boardwalks/steps/benches/signage, removing graffiti, collecting trash, working around poison oak, loading/unloading tools and materials, and performing basic construction work. These tasks may incorporate the use of tools including, but not limited to: wheelbarrows, brooms, trowels, shovels, rakes, pruning shears, gardening hand tools, hand picks, pitch forks, hand saws, pickaxes, McLeods, hoes, and hand tools (manual).

Photos of volunteer activities may be taken during the program and used for park publications. If you require restricted use of your photo, please alert the park volunteer manager.

Work is to be accomplished over a minimum period of 2 hours and maximum of 8 hours on any given day, not to exceed 40 hours in a week, depending on the volunteer position.

Field Safety

Park staff will provide you with a safe work environment and will identify any potential hazards in the working area. While we strive to create the safest environment possible, it is impossible to eliminate all potential hazards when working outside in nature. Feel free to ask a park volunteer manager for more information on these or other topics.

- **Be Prepared! Dress Appropriately!** Wear clothes that can get dirty, long pants, closed-toe shoes (no flip-flops or sandals), layers for changing weather, and rain gear if necessary. Bring a personal water bottle and sunscreen.
- **Ticks:** Ticks are common carriers of Lyme disease. Though you are unlikely to come in contact with them in San Francisco, they are common in Marin and San Mateo counties. Check your clothes and body after working/playing outdoors.
- **Yellow Jackets:** Yellow jacket nests are commonly found in trees and on the ground in natural areas. Yellow jackets are often difficult to spot, but if you see one, try to follow it back to a nest and clear the area. If you see multiple yellow jackets flying around an area, warn others about them. They are very protective of their homes and sting repeatedly if aggravated. If you disturb a yellow jacket nest, run away quickly in a zigzag pattern. If you know you are allergic, please take precautions for your safety.
- **Poison Oak:** The oil in poison oak can cause a severe rash, especially if you are highly allergic to it. Everyone should learn to recognize poison oak and avoid it. To identify poison oak, look for three lobed leaflets, which come in a variety of colors (from green to red) and are sometimes shiny or glossy in appearance. If any part of the plant touches your skin, clothing, or tool, talk to the park volunteer manager for further instructions on decontamination.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Drink plenty of water while working! If you feel tired or lightheaded, sit down and rest in the shade.
- **Sun Exposure:** You can get sunburn on a cloudy day. Wear sunscreen and a hat for protection.
- **Tool / Back Safety:** Be aware of the tools you are using. Make sure you know the correct way to use and transport them. Keep space between you and other volunteers. To avoid repetitive motion stress, take regular stretch breaks. Use your legs when lifting or pulling heavy objects, and always try to avoid twisting when carrying or loading.
- **Things You Might Find:** The Golden Gate National Parks are urban parks with a military history. Be observant and avoid things like broken glass, rusty metal, hypodermic syringes, unexploded ordnance, and pet feces. Glass, metal, and other trash can be picked up (wear gloves!). Alert the park volunteer manager if you find a needle or something you do not recognize—do not pick it up!

The Golden Gate National Parks Volunteer Program is a cooperative parkwide effort of the [Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#), the [National Park Service](#), and the [Presidio Trust](#).