



## Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

# Volunteer Program

Annual Update for 2011

### ***Federal criminal background check a success in its first year***

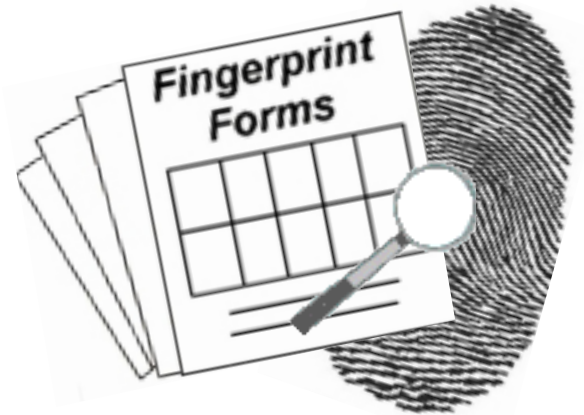
We have almost wrapped up our first year of performing criminal background checks on our volunteers. It was quite hectic in the beginning as we learned the process for submitting fingerprints to the Washington State Patrol and FBI while learning how to roll fingerprints when volunteers showed up at our headquarters office. In a year's time we have processed over 800 background checks. Very quickly, we went from rookies to pros in the subject of fingerprints! A very big THANK YOU to everyone for their cooperation and patience as we implemented this requirement. The good news to all of you who went through this: you will not have to submit prints again! Agency policy requires that we perform a background check every three years, so your information is securely stored and we will be able to use it for future checks.

**Background:** In 2005, the Legislature passed a law providing the agency authority to expand its criminal background check-

ing procedures to include federal criminal records (RCW 79A.05.030(10)). Our agency has conducted Washington State background checks on volunteers for many years; however, the state check only provides results for Washington state residents. This leaves us with no background report for volunteers who either live in other states or have recently moved to Washington from other parts of the country. The Federal background check allows us to get a report on all our volunteers.

We believe criminal background screening benefits everyone. Host positions often have access to money or unsupervised access to children under sixteen years of age, developmentally disabled persons, or vulnerable adults. The screening ensures we are hiring the best volunteers to help us provide safe and quality service to all our visitors and staff.

Whether you are a new or returning volunteer, Washington State Parks must have your updated Volunteer Application AND your background check results on file before your volunteer assignment starts. If you have any questions regarding the process or your results, please give us a call.



### ***Calendar of Volunteer Events 2011***

April 1-30	Community Partnership Month
April 22	Earth Day
April 23	Washington Coast Clean-up
Sept 17-18	Operation Shore Patrol

Also, visit our booth at these RV shows:

Jan 20 - 23	Spokane RV Show
Feb 10 - 13	Seattle RV Show
Apr 28-May 1	Puyallup RV Show



### ***Federal Form I-9 and proof of U.S. residency***

In 2008, the Department of Homeland Security began requiring all volunteers to complete Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification). This form will be available at all parks and given to volunteers at the start of service. Volunteers will be asked to show documents that establish both identity and employment eligibility. Please visit the website [www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf) and note documents needed for proof of citizenship on Page 5 of Form I-9. A U.S. Passport satisfies both citizenship and employment eligibility requirements.

**NOTE:** A driver's license alone does not satisfy the requirement. If you are using a driver's license or state I.D. as proof, you must also show a second form of identification such as a Social Security card or birth certificate. For your identification safety, we recommend not carrying your Social Security card with you and to show a birth certificate instead. A valid U.S. Passport satisfies both citizenship and employment eligibility requirements.

## How to Get the Park You Want

"I've turned in my application, now what?" This is a very common question from volunteers, especially those that are new to volunteering with Washington State Parks. Below is the process your application goes through along with helpful tips to get into the park you want.

Once your application and fingerprint cards are received at headquarters, we will run a background check through both the Washington State Patrol and the FBI through AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System). Please allow up to 4 weeks for the fingerprint process. After your results are received, your application will be sent out to the parks or areas of your choice. Park staff then contact you to explain your specific duties, responsibilities, location, dates, and work schedule.

If you want to get your calendar lined up and haven't heard from anyone, you are welcome to CALL THE PARK to inquire.

All parks differ when it comes to lining up their park hosts. Some staff begin making contacts for the next season's hosts in the fall and some will wait until late winter or even early spring.

Even if the park you want is full for the season, it's a good idea to make contact with staff and talk to them about your interest in the park. Cancellations and "no-shows" unfortunately do happen and if you are on their radar, you may be the lucky one to get the call!

Phone numbers for all the parks can be found in the Volunteer Opportunities brochure. We also try to keep an updated list of openings on our website (updated weekly). This list can change frequently and sometimes parks may forget to call us to let us know of an opening, so if you don't see the park you are interested in, please call the park directly or our Volunteer Programs office.

## State Parks Volunteers Recognized

Every year, Washington State Parks staff recognizes outstanding individuals and groups who have contributed their time and talents in your wonderful parks. In early 2010, we recognized 10 individuals and four groups. For detailed information on our winners, please see our agency Web site, [www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov)

Volunteer of the Year - Fern Mettler, nominated by Olmstead Place State Park

Host of the Year - Joel and Shari Blackwood, nominated by Rasar State Park

Outstanding Contribution by an Individual - Mike Dougherty, nominated by Wenatchee Confluence

Significant Volunteer Achievement - AJ Proutt, nominated by Fort Worden State Park

Special Mention - Dennis and Sandy Haven, nominated by Fort Worden and Fort Flagler State Parks

Significant Volunteer Achievement - Youth - London Bunn, nominated by Yakima Sportsman State Park

Interpretive Award - Liz Merriman, nominated by Deception Pass State Park

Lifetime Achievement - Lloyd "Wimpy" Clark, nominated by Mt. St. Helens Visitor Center

Lifesaving Award - Don and Rose Myers, nominated by Twanoh State Park

Group of the Year - Friends of Fort Townsend, nominated by Fort Townsend State Park

Significant Volunteer Achievement - Group - Centrum Gala Volunteer Committee, nominated by Fort Worden State Park

Special Mention - Group - East Benton County Museum, nominated by Sacajawea State Park

Outstanding Contribution - Group - Northwestern Boating Council, nominated by Blake Island State Park

Way to go Volunteers!!

## Can't make it? Please call us!

If an illness or an emergency finds you unable to fulfill your hosting commitments, please contact the park or our office at (360) 902-8583 as soon as possible. The parks really appreciate as early a notification as possible so they can try to find another host to fill in. Your consideration is *very* much appreciated.

## Emergency and Seasonal Hosting

If you are interested in hosting only a week or two at a time, or if you could be available on short notice to host at a park near your home, consider being an emergency host.

Typically, hosts stay at a park for a month at a time. Sometimes, however, things beyond your control may force you to cancel before your hosting starts or in the middle of your hosting period.

Volunteers often help parks deal with storm damage or fill in when a park unexpectedly is without a host. If you are interested in hosting on an emergency basis, please indicate that on your application by writing in "emergency host" under "Types of Service."

Many parks need volunteers and hosts from October through March for a variety of reasons including a presence in the park, minor maintenance, and possible weekend campground and interpretive hosting.

## Help save a Tree!

If you do not wish to receive future information from us or are no longer hosting, please let us know by either calling us at (360) 902-8583 or e-mail at [volunteers@parks.wa.gov](mailto:volunteers@parks.wa.gov). Be sure to include your name (and spouse if applicable) in the e-mail so that we can find you in our database of names. Thank you!