



Maryland Park Service
Volunteer Ranger
Mounted Patrol
&
Volunteer Bike Patrol
Guidelines
Revised

04/22/2014

Maryland Park Service Mission

To manage the natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources to provide the best use for the benefit of people.

General Information

The Volunteer Ranger Program started in 1992. It was comprised of dedicated volunteers committed to the mission of the Maryland Park Service and to teaching citizens about natural resources protection, assisting with activities, maintenance, and events at state forests and parks.

In 1997, a special category was established at Gunpowder Falls State Park that included Volunteer Rangers that performed their duties on horseback. This group of volunteers is known as the Volunteer Mounted Patrol (VMP). It was supported at that time by the non-profit organization “Volunteer Mounted Patrol, Inc.”

In 1997, a special category was established at Patapsco Valley State Park that included Volunteer Rangers that performed their duties on bicycles. This group of volunteers was known as the Volunteer Bike Patrol (VBP). It was supported by the bike organizations of MAMBO, MORE, and IMBA. Both the equestrians and the bicyclists were able to utilize their expertise and training to assist other forest and park users, expose their sport to others, and help educate all users about the wise use of Maryland’s natural resources.

The Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol are now included in the Volunteer Ranger Program and have expanded to several other parks throughout the state. To encourage greater involvement in the Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol, a three tier program was developed in 2012 to allow for VMPs/VBPs to participate in the program without meeting the 100 hour annual requirement.

Volunteer Ranger Requirements

- Minimum age of 18 years.
- No criminal record (felony convictions). Must agree to a criminal background check, disclosure statement, and fingerprinting. All background requirements to be conducted by the sponsoring state park.
- Must have valid driver's license and a good driving record (maximum: 6 points) to drive any state owned vehicle. Must agree to a driving record check. All driving record checks will be conducted by the sponsoring state park.
- Must have registered through the Maryland Parks Service volunteer web site, at the state park for minimum of 40 hours before being eligible for Volunteer Ranger Orientation training. Field training with park staff is strongly encouraged during this probation period. The VMP may substitute the required hours by attending the mandatory 40 hours of VMP training described below.
- Must be able to work weekends and holidays.
- Must attend the Volunteer Ranger Orientation training and other training as required.
- Must work a minimum time commitment of 100 volunteer hours per year after they receive the Orientation training.
- The policy of the department, with regard to non-discrimination, must be complied with.

In addition to the general requirements, Volunteer Mounted Patrol members must be in good physical condition and have adequate riding skills to pass horse/rider assessment. The assessment team approved by the MPS Volunteer Ranger Committee will conduct the horse/rider assessment. Volunteer must provide own mount, which must pass minimum standards and be in good health and physical condition.

Volunteer Mounted Patrol in Training

This level is for those volunteers wishing to participate in the program, but are awaiting horse assessment, and required trainings. This level allows for the VMP to learn the park, gain operational knowledge, and build volunteer hours in their area of interest. A VMP in training must ride with a Level 1 or 2 VMP member. They are observers only and will have no interaction with the public.

Volunteer Mounted Patrol – Level 1

This Volunteer Mounted Patrol member has completed all horse assessment and all required training. This level VMP is not required to complete the 100 hour annual service requirement, and therefore are not considered Volunteer Rangers. This level of VMP would not participate in State-wide events, but would patrol only in their home park. This level can move to a VMP Level 2 (Volunteer Ranger) once they have completed 100 hours of Service and wish to maintain the 100 hours of service annual requirement. A VMP can elect to remain at a Level 1 status, which would have no annual hour requirement. A VMP posting no hours in a given calendar year will be reviewed by the Park Manager for continued participation in the program.

Volunteer Mounted Patrol – Level 2

This Volunteer Mounted Patrol member has completed all horse assessments, required training and maintains the 100 hour annual requirement, affording them the title of Volunteer Ranger. This level of VMP is eligible to participate in statewide events, and patrol in multiple parks (with site Manager approval).

In addition to the general requirements, Volunteer Bike Patrol members must be in good physical condition and have adequate bike riding skills to pass bike/rider assessment. The assessment team approved by the MPS Volunteer Ranger Committee will conduct the bike/rider assessment. Volunteer

must provide their own bike and have the ability to transport the bike to patrol areas. (Those bike patrol volunteers who aren't ready to commit to the 100 hour volunteer ranger requirement have the option to participate in the 3 tier approach as stated in the volunteer mounted patrol requirements.

Training

- After meeting volunteer service standards, a person is eligible to attend the required Volunteer Ranger Orientation training. Volunteers are to refer to the Maryland Park Service Training web site for the training opportunity.
- The Mounted Patrol Level 1 and Level 2 must attend the required training and assessments. This training will consist of 40 hours including the Volunteer Ranger Orientation Training, Horse Assessments, Operations Training, CPR & Blood borne Pathogens, Park Orientation and a Ride Along with a veteran VMP. This training will be scheduled annually on a regional or local state park basis.
- The Bike Patrol Level 1 and Level 2 must attend the required training and assessments. This training will be scheduled on a regional or local state park basis.
- Volunteer Rangers, Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol members may be eligible to attend available in-service training offered by the Maryland Park Service Training Division on a space available basis. Training possibilities are listed on the Maryland Park Service Training website. The training must be approved by the project manager. This training must not be specific to law enforcement.
- Volunteer Rangers, Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol members are required to maintain CPR certification, and attend blood borne pathogen training – annually.
- A checklist of skills will be given to each Volunteer Ranger, Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol member after the Orientation training. This form will serve as a personal record and will assist in the evaluation process.

Uniforms

- Uniforms of Volunteer Rangers must comply with the current Agency (Maryland Park Service) Policy 12-09 on uniforms.
- The initial uniform for a new Volunteer Ranger will be charged to Head Quarters. The new Volunteer Ranger shall obtain from their park volunteer coordinator an order form to be filled out and submitted to the MPS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator.
- Uniform parts for existing Volunteer Rangers will be purchased, using the current Seasonal Employee Uniform Order Form, which is available through the park volunteer coordinators. All purchases must be pre-approved by the project manager.
- Volunteer Ranger Hats are to be ordered directly from the MPS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteer Ranger Rockers are ordered on the Uniform Order form. The Ranger Rocker will be placed directly below and touching the MPS Patch on the right shoulder. No Rockers shall be worn under the DNR Patch.
- Veteran Volunteer Rangers may continue to wear the original uniform issued (tan shirt / tan pants, / green outerwear) until replacement is needed. No mixing of old and new uniform parts is permitted.
- The following uniform parts will be purchased by HQ for a new Volunteer Ranger:
 - Hat - Black cap w/ gold Volunteer Ranger lettering (solid, mesh) (wearing is optional)
 - Shirts - Tan military style w/ MPS patch / Volunteer Ranger rocker (1) Long sleeve, (1) Short sleeve
 - Pants - Green cargo pants.
- All additional uniform parts (including replacement parts) can be purchased by the Volunteer Ranger or the sponsoring state park (w/ manager approval).
- Special uniforms will be worn when participating with the Volunteer Mounted Patrol and the Volunteer Bike Patrol.

Uniform guidelines are:

Mounted Patrol:

In-Training

Vest	Safety Orange w/Volunteer in Training on the back (Provided)
Hat*	Equestrian Helmet (approved ASTM/SEL)

Level 1

Shirt	Tan Polo shirt with MPS logo embroidered on left breast and Park Name + Volunteer embroidered on right breast. (Provided)
Pants	Black Riding Pants or Jeans (No Cargo Pants)
Belt	Black w/plain brass buckle
Footwear	Plain Black boots. Black gaiters/chaps allowed
Hat*	White Equestrian Helmet (approved by ASTM/SEL)
Gloves	Black
Jacket	Brown Carhartt coat w/MPS patch/ Volunteer Ranger Rocker
Raincoat	Black or clear

Level 2

Shirt	Tan military style w/MPS patch/Volunteer Ranger rocker (provided)
Pants	Black riding pants or jeans (no cargo pants)
Belt	Black with plain brass buckle
Footwear	Plain black boots. Black gaiters and chaps allowed
Hat*	White equestrian helmet (approved by ASTM/SEL) Black cap w/gold Volunteer Ranger lettering (provided)
Gloves	Black
Jacket	Brown Carhartt coat with MPS patch/Volunteer Ranger rocker
Raincoat	Black or Clear

***The VMP will never be on their horse without wearing a helmet.**

Bike Patrol:

In Training

Vest	Safety Orange w/Volunteer in Training on the back (Provided)
Hat*	Bike Helmet (approved by ASTM)

Level 1

Shirt	Tan/Yellow Cool-max style polo shirt w/MPS logo (Provided)
Pants	Black shorts or Black long riding pants
Footwear	Black
Socks	White
Hat*	White Bike Helmet (approved by ASTM)
Jacket	Brown coat with MPS patch/ Volunteer Ranger Rocker
Raincoat	Black or clear

Level 2

Shirt	Tan/Yellow Cool-max style polo with MPS logo and appropriate patches and Volunteer Ranger Silk Screen or Volunteer Ranger Uniform with appropriate patches.
Pants	Black shorts or Black long riding pants (No cargo shorts)
Socks	White
Footwear	Black
Jacket	Brown jacket/winter coat w/MPS patch / Volunteer Ranger Rocker
Hat*	White Bike Helmet (approved by ASTM)
Raincoat	Black or clear

***The VBP will never be on their bike without wearing a helmet.**

Duties/Roles

- **Volunteer Rangers, Volunteer Mounted Patrol and Volunteer Bike Patrol members will follow the mission and goals of the Maryland Park Service.**
- Duties of the Volunteer Ranger may include special events, crowd control, traffic control, first aid, maintenance, interpretive programs, statewide programs, campground registration, camp hosts, visitor information, visitor safety, trail stewardship, operations, community service, concessions, volunteer coordination, nature tourism, search and rescue, etc...(Level 1 VMP/VBP will be limited to their home park for these activities).
- Volunteer Rangers and Level 1 Volunteer Mounted Patrol / Volunteer Bike Patrol members may participate in every aspect of what other park personnel do except law enforcement. Volunteer Rangers are not vested with police powers of arrest and shall not take direct action in the enforcement of the law. They shall, at no time, represent themselves as law enforcement officers. Volunteer Rangers are not authorized to carry, display or use any firearms while on duty. Upon detection of any incident or condition warranting regular law enforcement attention, the Volunteer Ranger, Volunteer Mounted Patrol, or Volunteer Bike Patrol member shall not take any direct action, but shall immediately notify the NRP Communications Center or park personnel. They will provide non-confrontational services to the public including, but not limited to, information on rules and regulations, facilities, and special features.
- Volunteer Rangers, and Level 1 Volunteer Mounted Patrol /Volunteer Bike Patrol members will render first aid, for which they are certified, and coordinate EMS when necessary.
- When Volunteer Rangers are on specific duties, MPS vehicles will be used. Private/personal vehicles will not be used for park functions. Exceptions will be the Volunteer Mounted Patrol (horse) and the Volunteer Bike Patrol (bike).
- Volunteer Rangers and Level 1 Volunteer Mounted Patrol / Volunteer Bike Patrol members may take part in special assignments that follow the Volunteer Ranger Guidelines. Any deviation from the standard should be approved from HQ.

- Projects should request Volunteer Rangers for special events of any type. This allows the opportunity to visit other state parks.
- Volunteer Rangers are encouraged to work with other volunteers. They are only a part of the entire volunteer program. Project managers should oversee the working relationships of Volunteer Rangers and all other volunteers and employees.

Awards

- All awards in the Awards Program Policy are available to Volunteer Rangers (Letters of Commendation, Valor Awards, Honorary Ranger, and the Superintendent's Commendation). Volunteer Rangers should be considered for awards based on their merit and dedication to the Maryland Park Service.
- Project / Volunteer group awards may vary. They should not interfere with statewide awards.

Rewards

- Every Volunteer Ranger will receive an annual pass when 100 hours of service has been completed within a calendar year. The pass will also serve as a Volunteer ID card and show the sponsoring park and the year that the Volunteer Ranger began volunteering. The pass is valid for one year from the date of issuance. The statewide Volunteer Coordinator will be notified at the end of the calendar year with a list of those Volunteer Rangers who have fulfilled their 100 hour commitment during the course of the calendar year. 100 hours; passes will prepared and be sent to the state park Volunteer Coordinator making the request.
- Volunteer Rangers and Volunteer Mounted Patrol/Volunteer Bike Patrol members should monitor the MPS Volunteer web pages for information concerning training, events, recognition, and fellowship. Each region is encouraged to submit quarterly updates to the web pages.
- Statewide Volunteer Ranger appreciation events may be planned during the year. They may include picnics, camping, and other volunteer activities.
- Project / Volunteer group incentives may vary. They should not interfere with statewide incentives.

Evaluation

- Volunteer coordinators / Project managers should complete and distribute a Volunteer Ranger, or Volunteer Mounted Patrol/Volunteer Bike Patrol evaluation form on an annual basis. The form should be given to the Volunteer Ranger and a copy kept at the sponsoring state park.
- If through the course of their activities, it is found that the Volunteer Ranger or Volunteer Mounted Patrol/Volunteer Bike Patrol member is either unable or unwilling to perform their duties in an acceptable manner, it may become necessary to dismiss him/her from the program.
- Some examples of improper work related performance that can result in immediate dismissal of the Volunteer Ranger are:
 1. Theft of property or funds
 2. Negligent operation of equipment or vehicles
 3. Alcohol or illegal drug use on the job
 4. Sexual harassment
 5. Serious traffic violations
 6. Serious criminal violations
- If the Volunteer Ranger, or Volunteer Mounted Patrol/Volunteer Bike Patrol member receives three or more unsatisfactory ratings in their evaluation the process will be:
 - 1st occurrence - Verbal counseling
 - 2nd occurrence - Verbal counseling and written warning
 - 3rd occurrence - Dismissal from the program
- Verbal counseling, written warnings, and dismissal can be immediate and given at any time. They do not have to be restricted to the above unsatisfactory ratings.

Liability

- Volunteer Rangers, Volunteer Mounted Patrol/Volunteer Bike Patrol members are protected, as all MPS volunteers, under Article 12-101 (3) of the Maryland Tort Claims Act.
- Before participating in any sanctioned equestrian activity, the Volunteer Mounted Patrol member must read, understand and sign the

Comprehensive Use Agreement and Release of Liability form. Each new VMP should be issued an information packet that includes the advice of counsel addressing liability issues.

Medical Insurance Coverage

A volunteer worker for a unit of State government is a covered employee under the Maryland Workers' Compensation Act; specifying that, for certain purposes, the State is the employer of a certain volunteer worker; limiting the benefits provided to a volunteer worker to medical services and treatment under Subtitle 6, Part IX for a compensable injury. Workers' Compensation claim forms must be submitted through the appropriate channels within thirty (30) days of the date of the accident/injury.