

Environmental Education Volunteer Information Packet ASSATEAGUE STATE PARK



Assateague State Park Environmental Education Volunteer Program - Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities

Welcome to the Environmental Education (EE) Volunteer Program at Assateague State Park! EE volunteers play an important role in the development, presentation, and evaluation of Assateague State Park's environmental education programs.

Assateague State Park offers programs throughout the year, with most efforts focused from April through September. During this time, the park serves around 30,000 visitors through field trips and camper programs. Our field trips are held mainly in the spring (end of April through mid June) and reach students from the tri-county area. This is what we call our "Spring session" for our volunteers. Our main focus is Pre-K to 3rd grade but we are able and willing to adapt programs to all ages. We run these programs Monday-Friday, typically between 9am and 3pm. Most schools that come to the park run 3-4 rotating stations during their visit. If scheduled for a field trip, you will be responsible to run an assigned station for the day. This means you will need to arrive early to set up the station, present the programs for all rotations, and stay after to clean-up. Additionally, you may be asked to staff the Nature Center on the weekends.

Our programming for campers and visitors begins in mid-June and runs through Labor Day (around the first week of September). This section of time and programming has been divided into two "sessions" for volunteering. Summer session 1 runs from mid June through July 31. Summer session 2 runs from August 1 through the weekend following Labor Day. Summer programs are offered 7 days a week and are more recreation-based. Some programs include (but not limited to) yoga, clamming, crabbing, paddle boarding, kayaking, and surf fishing. During this time, you may be asked to also help staff the Nature Center, Nature Nook, and/or the Discovery Station. The program schedule varies day by day, with most assignments from 8am-4pm but some night programs may be assigned as needed, running as late as 10pm. Some examples of the night programs are Tie-Dye Tuesday, Paint Night, and Movie Night.

The park also hosts yearly events, primarily during the summer sessions, including our Youth Fishing Derby, 4th of July Festival, and Healthy Parks Healthy People Festival. EE volunteers may be asked to assist with these events as staffing needs vary.

Assateague State Park EE Volunteers are required to perform a minimum of 28 hours per week per registered volunteer. Hours are recorded on logs and turned into the volunteer coordinator every week. Tasks are listed and are recorded in increments of 30 minutes or more.

Assateague offers an "on-site" option for EE Volunteers who may not be local. On-site EE Volunteers are provided with a campsite that includes a 30 amp electric hookup. Sites do not have water or sewer hookups. Sites in Loops G, H, and I are pet friendly but due to the park rules and the requirements of this position we do not encourage pets to accompany you for this position unless they are self sufficient. Service animals are permitted but you should provide notification prior to arrival.

Below are the basic roles and responsibilities for Assateague EE Volunteers; please read through these carefully. Any questions can be directed to the Program Ranger Supervisor.

1. Set up and break down of program materials, buildings, displays.
2. Present programs based on approved program outline for the age/grade level it is intended for.
3. Assist with animal care as time and training permits.
4. Staff Nature Center and Nature Nook presenting to campers and day use park visitors.
5. Abide by all programming rules and regulations.
6. Collect service charges according to appropriate cash handling procedures.
7. Assist with special events as needed.
8. EE Volunteers must be able to lift at least 20 lbs. Work can be physical in nature, requiring the ability to walk and stand for long periods of time on asphalt and in sand, lift and carry heavy objects such as program totes, kayaks, and fishing gear, do repetitive bending and stooping when cleaning, do shoveling and sweeping, and assisting with trailering. The EE Volunteer works primarily outside which can include hot/inclement weather and exposure to insects.
9. EE Volunteers must provide their own transportation to and from program locations on park grounds to include but are not limited to the Nature Center, G-loop overflow lot, the National Park Visitor Center, state park marina, and state park headquarters.
10. On-site EE Volunteers' duties include educating campers and visitors about park policies but does not include enforcement action. In the situation of non-compliance, repeated offenses, or potentially dangerous interactions, EE Volunteers should contact the Ranger Station for Ranger response or potential law enforcement contact.
11. EE Volunteers should call 911 to report any medical emergency, beach emergency, criminal activity, etc. and should immediately then call the Ranger Station if during open hours.
12. EE Volunteers should familiarize themselves with the information provided in the program binders; this includes detailed information to assist in answering questions and providing them with up to date park rules and regulations. Some research may need to be done by the volunteer depending on comfort level.
13. EE Volunteers will clean the programming area after guests have vacated. Tasks include:
 - Picking up trash, items left behind, etc.
 - Checking playground equipment for damage or hazards
 - Organizing and properly storing program materials
 - Wiping down tables and equipment used as necessary
 - Sweeping and vacuuming the Nature Center daily
 - Securing doors on pavilions and Nature Center
14. Pony excrement should be shoveled off the programming areas, roadways, play areas and bike path and may need to be done multiple times per day; this can be raked apart and thrown into the bushes or grassy areas.
15. Bathhouses are generally cleaned once per day by the contracted cleaning crew. EE Volunteers are asked to check the Nature Center bathhouse (#4) throughout the day, particularly during field trip season. Some light cleaning may be needed such as picking up trash inside and outside, wiping off countertops/surfaces, cleaning up spills, flushing toilets, keeping doors closed, restocking toilet paper and soap as needed and notifying the Ranger Supervisor of any maintenance issues.
16. EE Volunteers should educate program attendees and campers as needed on proper food storage and safe wildlife interactions including in and around the wild horses. EE Volunteers should use only park approved techniques for horse management and those that they are trained to use.

17. EE Volunteers are expected to set an example for other park users by abiding by all park rules and regulations. If an on-site volunteer, making sure to keep their site tidy and use appropriate food storage. On-site EE Volunteers are also responsible for any guests to their site to ensure that all rules are followed including those related to number of vehicles, pets, camping equipment, etc.

Driving Record: All EE Volunteers will be required to have a driving record check and may not have more than 6 points on a driving record in order to operate any park vehicles including UTV's. Volunteers residing in MD will have their record checked through Park Service Headquarters; volunteers residing in states other than Maryland are required to provide an official copy of their Driving Record before or on their date of arrival.

Background Checks: All EE Volunteers are required to have background checks completed at the start of their term of service. Park staff will provide guidance and assist in scheduling this at a local facility. EE Volunteers must provide a driver's license or official state ID card. Results will be provided to the Maryland Park Service Headquarters.

EE Volunteers Who Also Act as Camp Hosts

Many of our EE volunteers previously or are currently serving as a camp host for Assateague State Park. We encourage all volunteers to match their interests and abilities with their favorite part of Assateague to work to improve the overall visitor experience for themselves and our campers. If you would like to serve as a Camp Host AND an EE volunteer, we ask that you complete your Camp Host assigned month **FIRST**, before completing your volunteer session as an EE volunteer. This allows both volunteer programs to run efficiently, provide much needed park support, and grow/improve each year. Volunteering as a Camp Host is not required to be an EE volunteer.

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Assateague State Park Environmental Education Volunteer Program - General Information

1. The EE Volunteer should report to the assigned Ranger Supervisor.
2. If training is offered during your stay, attendance is mandatory. If you have already received this training the previous year, you must attend as a refresher.
3. Each EE Volunteer is required to perform a minimum of 28 hours of service per week. Any hours performed by children, spouse, or other persons not assigned as an EE Volunteer do not count towards the 28 hours. Hours will be recorded on a Time Log and submitted each week.
4. All EE Volunteers will receive general and one-on-one training and refresher training by the Ranger Supervisor and/or other park staff.
5. EE Volunteers are considered to be “in-kind” employees of the park. As such, they are required to follow the same policies and procedures as any other park employee or park visitor.
6. Proper dress - assigned educator shirt, length and type of work appropriate pants/shorts, and footwear (no bathing suits). Hats are optional but if worn should be the “Educator” assigned hat or a plain one with no logo.
7. EE Volunteers may be asked to assist with other park operations including: bathhouses, naturalist programs, horse management, or maintenance projects. No one will be expected to do a job or task without being trained and/or shown how to do the task.
8. A written evaluation for each EE Volunteer’s performance will be completed at the end of the camping season. This evaluation is used along with other factors for consideration of future EE Volunteer assignments.
9. EE Volunteers will be given the opportunity to complete a survey providing feedback about their experience at the end of their term of service.
10. Per State of Maryland regulations, the consumption or possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage is prohibited in all State Park areas including the campgrounds with the exception of the interior of an RV.
11. Guests to your On-site EE Volunteer site are permitted, however, all park rules and regulations still apply. Visitors may receive a campground pass for a maximum of 14 nights as per park policy (passes may be renewed if applicable).
12. On-site EE Volunteers bringing their pet must ensure that the pet is well-behaved. EE Volunteers should consider that pets cannot go with them to the Nature Center, Nature Nook, or on any programs. Pets that are found to be aggressive, barking excessively, or otherwise poorly behaved may be asked to leave the site.
13. Service animals are permitted and policy follows federal ADA laws and regulations. EE Volunteers should notify the Ranger Supervisor ahead of their term of service if they will have a service animal accompany them.
14. Prior to the date of arrival for your term of service, EE Volunteers should contact the Ranger Supervisor to alert them to any changes expected such as pets, date of arrival or departure, time off needed, etc.

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Assateague State Park Environmental Education Volunteer Program - Acceptance and Site Assignments

All EE Volunteers:

- EE Volunteer applications are accepted year-round.
- If selected, the Ranger Supervisor will email with an acceptance/agreement form that requires a live signature. This can either be returned digitally or brought on your first day.
- New volunteers are encouraged to apply and are selected for each season in order to keep the program strong and thriving.
- New EE Volunteers are required to volunteer for a month with the park. Returning EE Volunteers, who have Assateague State Park Environmental Education programming experience, will be selected to volunteer between 2-6 weeks based on the park's need and the volunteer's availability.
- Volunteer applicants should expect they may be selected for various time frames each season. Additionally, returning volunteers may not be guaranteed selection every year due to the number of overall applicants and should submit an application each year they are interested in participating.

On-Site EE Volunteers:

- Site assignments are made by the Ranger Program Supervisor, generally in the late fall prior to the end of the calendar year.
- Site assignments are determined based on multiple factors with an emphasis on fairness. The park typically gets an excess of applications and cannot guarantee any particular time frame or campsite to any applicant.
- Volunteer applicants should expect they may be assigned to different sites each season.
- Site assignments will be based on the availability of sites at the time of arrival. Please note that site assignment is subject to change based on park needs.
- You will be guaranteed a site with 30 amp service.