

# Volunteers are the backbone of the nation's state parks

*There are always volunteer opportunities year-round,*

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, USA, March 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The nation's state parks are among the best in the world, but they would not be able to operate as they do without millions of dedicated volunteers, the National Association of State Parks Foundations said today.



So, if you love your state parks and want to make a difference in your state, now is the time to step up and volunteer."

*Marci Mowery, Chair, NASPF*

"Volunteering is a great way of supporting state parks and there are always volunteer opportunities year-round," said National Association Chair Marci Mowery.

"So, if you love your state parks and want to make a difference in your state, now is the time to step up and

volunteer," she said.

While much of the nation was shut down for months due to COVID 19, state parks and forests provided a haven for hundreds of millions of people, many who had not visited a state park before. As a result, state parks have never been more popular, and many are experiencing record visitation.

State parks get more than 809 million visitors a year, which includes over 61.6 million overnight users, and state parks generate over \$100 billion for local and state economies.

However, as more visitors use the parks and facilities, there is more wear and tear and park staff assisted by an army of volunteers work to keep everything running smoothly. Apart from maintenance and repairs, there are scores of other volunteer opportunities and these are listed on the websites of state park systems so volunteering is easy.

Nationwide there are over 8,950 state parks and managed areas covering 19.29 million acres. This includes state parks, recreation areas, natural areas, historic areas, environmental education areas, scientific areas forests, fish and wildlife areas, and other miscellaneous areas. There are more than 10,230 trails stretching 46,500 miles. There are 226,530 campsites, 8,730 cabins, 1,122 group facilities and 1,112 lodges with 5,769 rooms.

It costs \$3.13 billion to run the nation's state parks with about 49,000 full-time, part-time, and

seasonal staff. It is also acknowledged that state parks could not operate as they do without the 1.6 million volunteers who contribute about 38 million hours of service annually.

The National Association supports statewide volunteer organizations and provides a national voice as advocate for all state parks.

Marci Mowery

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