

## **VOLUNTEER HOST PROGRAM**

### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) encourages the use of volunteer hosts in units with campgrounds and harbors. Hosts contribute their services with the goal of assuring visitors a comfortable enjoyable stay and enhance the quality of their outdoor-recreation experience.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a guide for the selection of hosts as well as outlining the expected obligations and duties.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

**Host** – ambassadors for PRD facilities who are provided free lodging on site while volunteering.

**Volunteer** – a person, group, company, or organization that provides assistance or services and normally does not receive monetary value from the DNR and is not serving in any official Department classified position (e.g., youth organization, court appointees, job banks, campground host, etc.).

### **IV. POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

- A. Volunteer hosts must comply with all State Laws, Administrative Rules, DNR Policies & Procedures and Director's Orders. [DNR Policy and Procedure 23.01-02 Volunteer Program](#) establishes the process of approval for volunteer hosts.
- B. Number of Hosts
  - 1. Each unit is strongly encouraged to have one host position at a time; however, the number of facilities may determine the need for additional host positions.
- C. Timetables
  - 1. The prime use season runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Hosts on-site during the remaining months, while beneficial, may not be necessary and should be determined by the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee.
- D. Selection and Application Process
  - 1. Host applications are accepted year-round.
    - a. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

- b. Applicants must submit a [PR4165-7 Volunteer Campground Host Application](#) and [PR0511 Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability](#), to the Unit Supervisor/Manager of the unit where the applicant wishes to serve.
  - c. Applicant interviews and selection will be conducted by the Unit Supervisor/Manager and/or his or her designee and are subject to criminal history background check.
  - d. The Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee enters the host applicant data necessary to complete the criminal history background check to the same data bank system utilized for STW hires.
    - i. If the host(s) already served a host assignment within the current calendar year, a new criminal history check does not need to be completed if the host(s) is in the database with "approval to hire" status unless the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee thinks it necessary to do one.
  - e. Once an "approval to hire" comes back from the criminal history check, the Unit Supervisor/Manager and/or his or her designee can notify the host of his/her assignment.
  - f. The Quality of Life (QOL) Human Resources office will notify the PRD Volunteer Coordinator or his/her representative, and subsequently the Unit Supervisor/Managers or his/her designee of any problem discovered during criminal history checks.
  - g. Volunteer Campground Host applications, the Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability forms must be held on file at the Unit administrative office. Electronic copies of these documents and the applicant number from the criminal history check must be forwarded to the PRD Volunteer Coordinator or his/her representative.
  - h. Hosts may not begin service until the required forms are on file and the criminal history check is conducted.
  - i. Interviewed applicants not selected must be notified by the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee.
  - j. A new application is needed for each calendar year but not for repeat terms of service at the same unit within a calendar year. If a host serves a second unit during the year, the first unit is to send a copy of their application to the second unit.
  - k. Individuals chosen to serve as hosts are not guaranteed selection for a succeeding service period.
2. PRD employees are not eligible to be hosts. Hosts who have an immediate relative (parent, sibling, child) serving as a full-time or seasonal employee assigned to a specific unit cannot serve as host at that same unit but may be eligible at a different location and will be reviewed under the same conditions as all other applicants.

#### E. Criminal History Check

- 1. Any person eighteen or older, who resides on the host site/slip for more than 3 days, shall be subject to criminal history background checks, unless the individuals have been recognized/checked prior to host assignment.
- 2. The individuals will have to vacate the host site/slip until background check is completed.
- 3. The Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee submits the data for the criminal history background check in the same process as he/she does for the host

(previously explained in the Selection and Application Process section of this Policy).

#### F. Training

1. All hosts are required to attend a Host Training Program, as offered, within the first two years of their acceptance date into the host program. Failure of hosts to attend minimum training requirements may result in termination of host assignments.
2. At the discretion of the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee, the host(s) may attend summer orientation required of all unit staff.
3. Hosts should receive the same safety training at the unit as PRD staff for any task assigned to them with appropriate documentation.

#### G. Length of Service

1. All host schedules are assigned by the Unit Host Program Liaison based on the needs of the unit.
  - a. The intent is to schedule a host for no less than four consecutive weeks at a time.
  - b. Hosts wishing to serve another season are to complete the [PR4165-7 Volunteer Campground Host Application](#) and submit it to the Unit Supervisor/Manager and/or his or her designee.
  - c. Exceptions to the minimum time period must be approved by the Volunteer Coordinator, Unit Supervisor/Manager, or his/her designee.
  - d. A host serves at the discretion of the Unit Supervisor/Manager and may be terminated as he/she sees fit. Being a host is a privilege and as such requires a level of professionalism.

#### H. Scheduling

1. A host requires a major commitment of time. A minimum of 30 hours per person, per week is to be contributed by the host. The 30 hours can be done simultaneously or separately; but it must be a total of 30 hours by each assigned host unless other arrangements have been made with a Unit Host Program Liaison.
2. Host on-duty and off-duty hours should be mutually agreed upon by the host and the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee. Hosts are required to provide services based on their units' needs, including weekends and holidays. On-duty and off-duty hours should be posted in a visible location at the host site/slip.
3. Additional days off and other changes in scheduling will be subject to the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee.
4. Hosts shall not be scheduled to relieve paid employees on breaks or scheduled to perform job tasks normally assigned to paid employees.

#### I. Uniforms

1. All hosts shall be provided uniforms from the Volunteer Host uniform section

- of the current uniform contract at the expense of the unit.
2. Nametags should be wood-grain, white lettering.
    - a. Line 1: Department of Natural Resources
    - b. Line 2: Michigan Parks & Recreation Division
    - c. Line 3: Volunteer Host
  3. Nametags, and at least one other uniform part, must be worn at all times while on duty. The uniform should be clean and appropriately worn.
  4. During uncomfortably cool weather, host(s) will be allowed to wear additional appropriate personal clothing for comfort.
  5. Uniforms should not be worn outside of the assigned unit unless on official business which has been approved by the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee.
  6. All host uniforms must be returned to the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee at the end of the host's assignment.

#### J. Budget

1. Each host assignment is entitled to receive up to \$150 per month from the host program budget to purchase supplies for their host duties. This amount will be prorated if a host assignment is filled for less than a full month. The maximum \$150 allotment may not be applicable in state forest facilities.
2. Each Unit with a host program is required to track expenditure of this host budget on the [P R 3 1 4 7 Volunteer Host Expenditure and Cash Report](#). Form PR3147 must be kept with all verifying receipts at the unit, in the administrative files, in compliance with state records retention schedules (i.e., FY plus 7 years). In addition, copies of the expenditure reports must be submitted upon request to the PRD Volunteer Program Manager or his/her designee at the end of the host season.
3. The Unit has the following options for dispersing money to the hosts:
  - a. Pay the invoices via SIGMA as they are presented, using the host coding.
  - b. Give Host Funds to the host, requiring they provide receipts for expenses.
  - c. Reimburse the host from Host Funds on site as they provide receipts.
  - d. The unit makes the purchases from a list of needed supplies the host provides.
4. Whatever method is chosen by the unit, the Unit Supervisor/Manager, Unit Program Host Liaison, unit staff and hosts are responsible to comply with state purchasing procedures and to obtain approval for needed supplies prior to each purchase via the Unit Supervisor/Manager or Unit Host Program Liaison.
5. Volunteer host funds are operational dollars and must be spent in the fiscal year they are given. Any remaining dollars must be returned to the Host Fund by special deposit procedures.

## K. Campsite/Slip

1. Hosts must provide their own unit, equipment, and personal items. It is the Unit Supervisor/Manager's or his/her designee's responsibility to select the campsite/slip and facilities to be used by the host at no charge.
2. The host area is to be in a highly visible area, such as a location near the facility entrance or across from a restroom building. The host campsite/slip should not be located on a high demand campsite/slip.
3. The host area must be always kept neat and clean.
4. The Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee will provide the hosts with equipment/supplies required for identification and completion of duties as assigned. Refer to the Campground Host section of the [Friends and Volunteers](#) SharePoint page for examples of equipment and supplies provided to various host types found in PRD.

## L. Visitors to Hosts

1. Guest visits and lengths of stay must not interfere with the host's duties. The only people, who may reside on the host campsite/slip for more than 3 days, are those on the application or approved by the Unit Supervisor/Manager.

## M. Recreation Passports

1. Hosts are not exempt from the Recreation Passport requirement for their vehicles when at their assigned units. All visitors to hosts are also required to have the Recreation Passport for their vehicles in areas that require them.

## N. Equipment

1. The Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee may loan the host unit equipment for other guests to borrow during their stay. This equipment may include but is not limited to recreational equipment, hand tools and other items deemed necessary.
2. If a unit wishes to purchase some items for the host to loan, they may utilize host program money for such uses. Items which are not considered routine must be reviewed by the PRD Volunteer Program Manager.

## O. Duties

1. Hosts duties will supplement the unit staff by assisting and directing visitors to a campsite/slip, explaining fees, assisting with activities, supply visitors with information and similar tasks. Specific host duties will vary based on location.
2. Note that there are some differences in duties in rustic and modern campsites, as well as in harbors. Hosts should see unit staff for specific duties.
3. For examples of suggested duties, refer to the [Campground Host Duties](#) document found in the Host section of the PRD SharePoint.

#### 4. Prohibited Acts

- a. Under no circumstances will hosts be allowed to collect any fees, or other State of Michigan or concession operator's funds.
- b. Volunteers will not operate State of Michigan vehicles or equipment (trucks, gators, golf carts etc.) without Unit Supervisor/Manager's or his/her designee's approval and/or training.
- c. Hosts have no law enforcement authority. Infractions of DNR rules and policies are to be reported to unit staff and/or local law enforcement.
- d. Consistent with [MCL 324.74105](#), a host shall not carry a firearm while functioning as a volunteer (host), whether on duty or off duty.
- e. Personal gifts and gratuities will not be accepted.
- f. Motor powered contrivances must comply with [PRD Policy 7.21](#).

#### P. Activity Report

1. Hosts are required to complete a weekly [PR3280 Volunteer Campground Host Activity Report](#).
2. Unit Supervisor/Managers are to report host volunteer hours weekly from this form into the currently approved PRD reporting method.
3. The frequency of submitting rustic campground activity reports may vary based on the level of activity at the specific campground. See PRD staff for specific instructions for filling out activity reports.

#### Q. Liability

1. While a volunteer is serving in the capacity of a host, he/she has the same immunity from civil liability as a DNR employee, per [MCL 324.74105](#).

#### R. Injuries/Accidents

1. At the time of an injury/accident, volunteers must notify their Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee. Medical cases will be reviewed on an individual basis by the DNR Human Resources office. Unit Supervisors/Managers or his/her designee files these reports the same as for paid employees.

#### S. Departure

1. All equipment and specified uniform items must be returned to the unit when the volunteer assignment has ended.
2. Evaluations must be done at the completion of the agreed upon assignment by the host and the Unit Supervisor/Manager or his/her designee. Evaluations may be done more frequently as needed. Completed evaluations are to be kept at the unit and available upon request by the PRD Volunteer Program Coordinator or his/her designee.
  - a. [PR3275 Volunteer Campground Host Program Host Liaison's Exit Evaluation](#) shall be used by unit staff to evaluate the performance of the host(s).
  - b. [PR3276 Volunteer Host Program Exit Evaluation Form](#) shall be used by the host(s) to evaluate the host program.

## V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Unit Supervisor/Manager will be responsible for the selection, training, and oversight of the host.

The Unit Host Program Liaison is the unit employee responsible for overseeing the Host Program within a specific facility. This employee is designated as such by the Unit Supervisor/Manager. The Unit Host Program Liaison needs to be available to the host and knowledgeable of the services and activities to be provided by the host.

The PRD Volunteer Coordinator shall oversee the statewide Host program, shall be responsible for implementation of the program and act as liaison to the Volunteer Committee.

## VI. COMPLIANCE

Instructions should be followed as closely as possible and altered only with the approval of the Parks and Recreation Division Office. Violation of this policy by the host may result in immediate eviction.

## VII. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, STATUTES & RELATED POLICIES

[DNR Policy and Procedure 23.01-02 Volunteer Program](#)

[Friends and Volunteers](#)

[MCL 324.74105](#)

[PR0511 Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability](#)

[PR 3 1 4 7 Volunteer Host Expenditure and Cash Report](#)

[PR3275 Volunteer Campground Host Program Host Liaison's Exit Evaluation](#)

[PR3276 Volunteer Host Program Exit Evaluation Form](#)

[PR3280 Volunteer Campground Host Activity Report](#)

[PR4165-7 Volunteer Campground Host Application](#)

[Campground Host Duties](#)

[PRD Policy 7.21](#)

## VIII. APPROVAL and EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy and Procedures is approved by and effective as of the date set forth below:



Ron Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division

March 31, 2023

Date