



Shenandoah National Park Trust Volunteer Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the Shenandoah National Park Trust's Volunteer Program — we're really glad you're here.

The Shenandoah National Park Trust (SNPT) is the official philanthropic partner of Shenandoah National Park. Our mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance Shenandoah for this and future generations. We fund programs and projects across the park — from trail and overlook maintenance to educational programs, invasive species removal, historic preservation, and more. In 2026, we committed \$1.4 million to the park, raised through specialty license plate sales, special events, grants, and donations.

SNPT was established in 2004, when we launched as a project of the National Park Foundation. Bequests from two individuals, earmarked specifically for Shenandoah, provided our seed funding. In 2007, we became an independent nonprofit, and that original \$2 million endowment has grown into something we're proud of — SNPT has now raised over \$6 million for our beloved Park.

None of that happens without people like you. Whether you're helping at an event, working inside the park, tabling at a community fair, or assisting with office tasks, your time moves our mission forward in ways that genuinely matter.

This handbook covers what you can expect as a volunteer, what we ask of you, and how to make the most of your time with us. Read through it, keep it handy, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions. We're happy you're part of the team.

Programs and Initiatives

At the Trust, we offer a range of volunteer opportunities designed to fit different interests, schedules, and skill sets. Some of our volunteers spend their weekends inside the park installing bear boxes or maintaining overlooks. Others prefer to represent us at community events, help in the office, or share their love of Shenandoah through photography. There's something for everyone.

Our core volunteer opportunities include working at special events, serving as an SNPT Ambassador in your community, supporting staff with administrative tasks, and working directly inside the park on stewardship projects. Throughout the year, special one-time



opportunities come up as well — these get announced through our monthly volunteer e-newsletter, so keep an eye on your inbox.

Roles and Responsibilities

SNPT Ambassadors represent SNPT at community events throughout our service region in Virginia. This role is all about connection — starting conversations, sharing our mission, and making sure people know what SNPT does and why it matters. If you're someone who enjoys meeting new people and talking about a place you love, this might be your spot.

Tabling involves bringing Trust materials and gear to a community event and setting up a display for visitors to browse and engage with. Events take place across our service region, from Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley and beyond. We also have digital outreach opportunities for those who prefer to tell our stories online — think blog posts and social media content that highlights the park and SNPT's work. All SNPT Ambassadors complete training hosted annually by SNPT before heading out into the field.

Special Events Volunteers help make our fundraising and donor cultivation events run smoothly. Our fundraising events raise critical dollars for the park while bringing supporters — new and longtime — together around a shared love of Shenandoah. Our donor cultivation events focus on showing contributors the real-world impact of their generosity. Both types of events rely heavily on volunteers to create a welcoming, well-organized experience for everyone who attends.

Volunteer roles at events vary depending on what's needed and can include things like setting up and breaking down, directing guests, or helping with logistics.

Office and Administrative Volunteers support our small staff with tasks that might otherwise pull time and energy away from our mission-driven work. These opportunities range from one-time projects to ongoing assistance, and tasks can include anything from stuffing envelopes to updating spreadsheets. Specific needs are determined by staff and communicated through the volunteer newsletter.

Bear Box Volunteers help SNP Facilities Staff install food storage lockers in campsites throughout the park. Not every campsite currently has a bear box, and this crew works through spring, summer, and fall to help the park reach its goal of 100% coverage. Volunteers use hand tools and work closely with park staff to make sure each box is



properly aligned and secured for long-term use. This opportunity runs on Fridays and Saturdays and can be a one-time experience or an ongoing commitment.

Adopt-an-Overlook Volunteers commit to maintaining an assigned overlook several times throughout the year — ideally once in early spring before mowing operations begin, once in mid-summer, and again in late October after peak fall visitation. This program is in its pilot year and spots are limited. Volunteers complete specific training before working independently in the park. Adopt-an-Overlook is a co-managed program with Shenandoah National Park.

Park Photographers document the park's seasonal beauty — landscapes, wildlife, and plant life — throughout the year. Photos are submitted to Shenandoah National Park for use on social media, the park website, and in publications. This is a co-managed program with Shenandoah National Park.

The SNPT Young Professionals Council is composed of emerging leaders, age 24-35, who are eager to give back and learn alongside new connections. Those on the committee organize and participate in events, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities. Members commit to attending virtual meetings every other month, supporting SNPT's mission and understanding its goals, participating in event, outreach, and stewardship work, and supporting fundraising efforts.

Board of Trustees members provide strategic direction, governance, and resources in support of SNPT's mission. This volunteer leadership role requires a genuine investment in understanding the needs of Shenandoah National Park and a commitment to helping raise the financial support to meet them.

Volunteer Operations

Getting started is straightforward:

1. **Sign up.** Fill out the volunteer form on our website to be added to our volunteer list. You'll start receiving our monthly volunteer e-newsletter with upcoming opportunities.
2. **Express interest.** When something catches your eye, indicate your interest as instructed in the newsletter.
3. **Complete any required training or paperwork.** Some roles require training before you get started. The SNPT Volunteer Manager will let you know what is needed for your specific position.



4. **Dress for the role.** Your volunteer supervisor will go over appropriate attire before you begin. For some roles, like SNPT Ambassadors, branded attire is provided.

Tracking Your Hours

Your volunteer hours help us tell the full story of what this program accomplishes. By reporting your time, we're able to share the real impact of your service with the park, our donors, and the broader community. Your supervisor will let you know the best way to log hours for your specific role.

Recognition & Benefits

SNPT Volunteers play a pivotal role in supporting both the SNPT and Shenandoah National Park. We understand that there are thousands of other ways to spend your time and energy, and we are so grateful that you've chosen to spend some of that valuable time with us. We love to celebrate our volunteers through recognition in our monthly volunteer e-newsletter and other publications throughout the year, as well as celebrate our volunteers' efforts with an annual celebration.

Logistics

All volunteers must complete a volunteer service agreement and liability waiver form for each volunteer position they undertake.

Point of Contact

The Shenandoah National Park Trust Events & Volunteer Manager is your primary contact for all scheduling, inquiries, paperwork, etc.

Email: mstrauchler@snptrust.org Phone: (434) 951-0745

Please keep in mind that cell service in the park and surrounding it is unreliable.

If there is an emergency, do not call the Events & Volunteer Manager (she has no medical or emergency training!!) - call 911!

Volunteer Conduct and Code of Ethics

As a representative of the Shenandoah National Park Trust, we ask that you hold yourself to the following standards:

1. **Commit to the mission.** Uphold and support the mission, vision, and values of the Shenandoah National Park Trust and work toward our shared goals to the best of your ability.



2. **Know who you represent.** Volunteers represent the Shenandoah National Park Trust — not the National Park Service. That distinction matters, and we ask that you communicate it clearly when engaging with the public.
3. **Conduct yourself with professionalism and respect.** Treat all individuals — fellow volunteers, staff, program participants, and community members — with courtesy, integrity, and care.
4. **Maintain confidentiality.** Any sensitive information entrusted to you through your volunteer role stays with you. Please handle it accordingly.
5. **Embrace diversity.** Respect and welcome the diversity of backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, and perspectives within our organization and the communities we serve.
6. **Be accountable.** Show up when you say you will. If something comes up and you can't make it, give the appropriate person as much notice as possible.
7. **Disclose conflicts of interest.** If a conflict of interest arises at any point during your time as a volunteer, please disclose it promptly.
8. **Prioritize safety and well-being.** The safety and dignity of the people we serve — as well as your fellow volunteers and staff — comes first. Follow all safety protocols and procedures.
9. **Follow our policies.** Familiarize yourself with the guidelines established by the Shenandoah National Park Trust and act in accordance with them.
10. **Background checks.** Depending on your role, a background check may be required before you begin volunteering.
11. **Termination of volunteer status.** The Shenandoah National Park Trust reserves the right to end a volunteer relationship at any time. Reasons may include — but are not limited to — violations of this code of conduct, failure to fulfill commitments, or inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily.

Thank you for being part of the team. The park is better because you're in it.