

Volunteer Recognition Initiatives



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District Interpretive Manager

State Park Interpreter III

Sierra District

Energizing and appreciating our
volunteers builds healthy and
productive Park communities.

Presentation Agenda

Research about volunteering
Volunteer values
Enjoyment
Professionalism
Recognition
Education
Community



Goals for this presentation

- Identify the recipe for retaining volunteers
- Identify and develop meaningful formal and informal recognition plans for volunteers
- Energize the Volunteer Coordinator!

[Teamwork Example \(video, 5 minutes\)](#)

Literature Review on Volunteer Impact



- Social Impacts
- Environmental Impacts
- Economic Impacts

*I am about to summarize what academia has to say about volunteers



Social Impacts of Volunteer Programs

1. Volunteers gain professional and technical skills
(Hackl et al., 2007; Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Orey, 2017)
2. Volunteers may experience increased psychological and physical health (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Hartig, 2007; Manetti et al., 2015)
3. Volunteers may be more likely to be involved in civic matters and discussion (Donald, 1997; Evans et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2018)
4. Positive Social Returns on Investment (SROI) in volunteer programs (Handy & Mook, 2011; Orey, 2017; Pace & Basso, 2009)



Environmental Impacts of Volunteer Programs

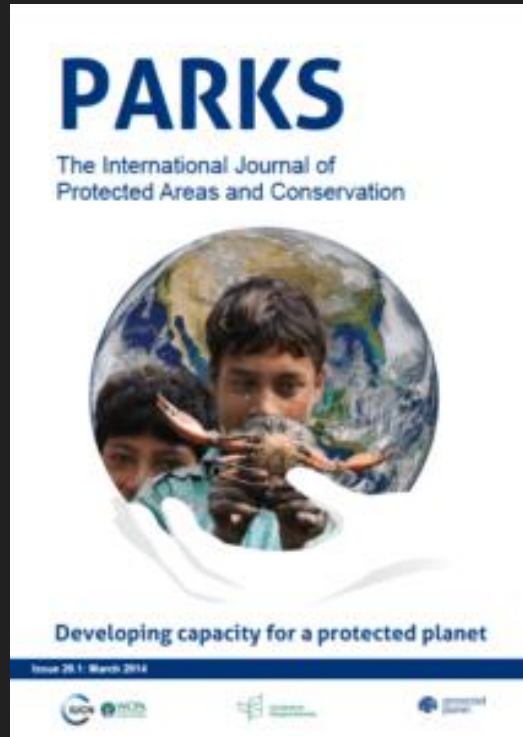
1. Volunteer efforts have proven successful in habitat restoration (Ganzevoort, et al., 2017; Ryan & Grese, 2005; Stroganoff, 2014)
2. Volunteer contribute to citizen science which is used to inform park management decisions (Andow et al., 2016; Jordan et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2001)
3. Volunteers contribute to environmental policy and lobbying efforts (CNPS, 2018; Ventana Wilderness Alliance, 2018; The Nature Conservancy, 2018; Weber, 2000)



Economic Impacts of Volunteer Programs

1. Volunteer programs may offset operational costs of public agencies (Jordan et al., 2012; Langenfield, 2009; Manetti, 2015)
2. Volunteer programs may generate profit by providing pay services (Follman, 2016; Sajardo & Serra, 2011; Salamon, 2011)
3. Volunteers may provide direct fundraising to pay for improvement projects (FOSCSP; 2018; Reidy et al., 2005; PCRf, 2017; Ventana Wilderness Alliance, 2018; WCA, 2018)

Thesis Research: Evaluating the Impact of Volunteers Serving Public Lands



Jeremy Lin
Master's Thesis
Environmental Studies
Prescott College

What do volunteers value?

Enjoyment

Professionalism

Education

Recognition

Community



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VOLUNTEER ENJOYMENT



Connect with your Volunteers

Schmooze with your volunteers

Ask questions and get to know them, build relationships

Connect your volunteers with each other

Open office hours



Provide Volunteers Perks

Get access to “special areas” within the park

Confide in them with “privileged information” that makes them feel special

Hook them up with free camping (if possible)



Volunteer Enrichment Opportunities

- Field trips to other parks
- Guest or expert lecture offered to volunteers only
- Forward scholarly articles to interested volunteers



PROFESSIONALISM



Organize Your Program

*Disorganization is a turn off



Volunteer Website Example



[Donner Docents website](#)

Volunteer Website Example



WildernessPatrol.org

Volunteer Duty Statements

- Specific duty statements provide clear expectations
- Vague duty statements confuse and disappoint everyone
- “Weed-out” non serious applicants



Wilderness Patrol Volunteer Duty Statement

Purpose
Volunteers patrol the backcountry to interpret natural resources, assess trail conditions and provide information to park visitors.

Duties

- Volunteers work a minimum of 5 hours/month for one year. Saturdays, Sundays & holidays prioritized for shift coverage.
- Educate, assist and inform park visitors about trail conditions and park regulations.
- Interpret natural and cultural resources of State Parks.
- Report trail hazards and obstacles.
- Accurately complete written and online trail reports, log-sheets and incident reports.
- Assist park staff with park/visitor emergencies.
- Maintain cleanliness of facilities & Wilderness Patrol equipment.
- Sales of trail maps, field guides and other merchandise (depending on site).
- Report to State Park Supervising Ranger and/or Volunteer Coordinator.

Skills/Qualifications

- Wilderness Patrol Volunteers are over 18 years old, must be physically fit and capable of hiking at least 3-miles in a day over varied terrain.
- Friendly, courteous and possess good communication skills.
- Positive attitude and willingness to work as a team member with Park staff and visitors.
- Satisfy California State Parks training requirements including: Live Scan fingerprinting, communication skills, equipment/trail maintenance, interagency relations, orienteering and basic computer literacy.

Training
Attend training days as well as enrichment opportunities.

Uniforms
Wilderness Patrol Volunteers will purchase and wear a distinctive park volunteer uniform which will display State Park volunteer emblem at all times.

Signature _____ Date _____

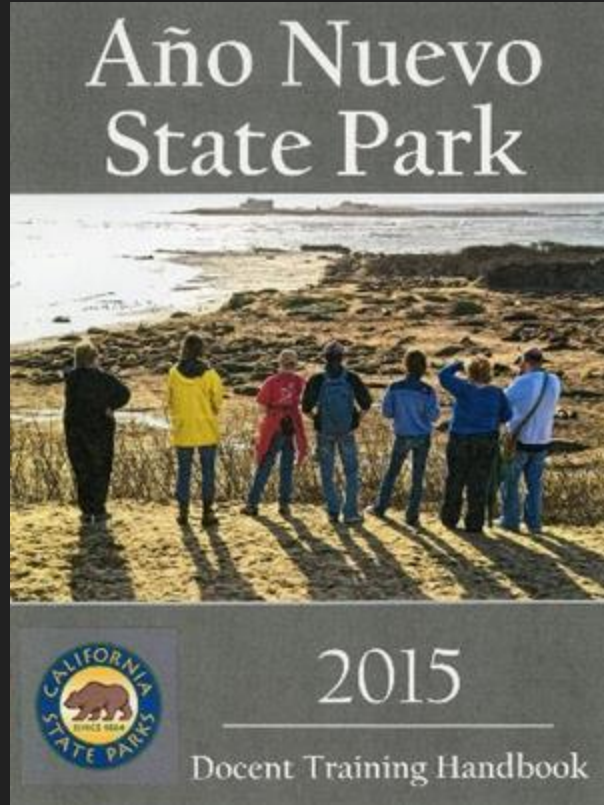
Phone _____ Email _____

State Parks Interested in Volunteering _____

Please write in order of preference (Big Basin Redwoods, Castle Rock, Henry Cowell, Nieme Marka, Portola Redwoods, Rancho del Oso, Wilder Ranch, other)

*Email signed Duty Statement to: jeremy.ln@parks.ca.gov

Volunteer Program Manual



- Your Manual is your Program
- Set a style guide for text and font
- Limit copying other material
- Use current photos
- Review each year
- Use DARC

Better Impact

The screenshot displays the 'Better Impact' web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with options: Main, People, Communicate, Activities, Assign, Reports, and Configuration. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Status Update:** This section is split into 'Volunteers' and 'Administrators'. Under 'Volunteers', it shows: Applicant (17), In Process (0), Accepted (621), and Inactive (10). Under 'Administrators', it shows: Archived (52). Below these are buttons for 'Anniversaries' (3), 'Birthdays' (2), 'Qualification Approvals', 'Expiring Qualifications', 'Expired Qualifications', 'Hours Approvals' (10), 'Volunteers on the Clock', 'Pending Signups' (1), and 'Custom Field Approvals'.
- System Message:** A message titled 'Volunteer Calendar View - Launching in April 2019' with a thumbnail image.
- Santa Cruz District News:** A section with an 'Edit' button.
- Pinned Searches:** A list of search items including 'Anc PA Concerts', 'Anc Nuevo Concert List', 'Anc Traditions', 'Anc Nuevo Concert List List', 'District Volunteers', and 'Mentor List'.

At the bottom right, there are two circular icons: a question mark and a speech bubble.

Birthday and anniversary alerts

Volunteer Uniform Standards



Wilderness Patrol Uniforms

California State Parks, Santa Cruz District

Wilderness Patrol Volunteer Uniform options below adhere to [Volunteers in Parks Program \(VIP\) Guidelines](#). You will be sent a link to the online uniform order form during training. See below for item details.



Port Authority Soft Shell Jacket
\$41



Port Authority Fleece Vest
\$31



Khaki Vest
\$46
(only sizes M, L, XL)



Lightweight Sturdy
Canvas Vest



State Parks Cap
\$12



T-shirt
\$13

Volunteer Uniform Standards



Volunteer Training

- Solid training materials
- Start and finish on time
- Training space
- Refreshments
- Tables
- Graduation
- Mentoring/Shadowing*



Ask for Feedback



Wilderness Patrol Volunteer Training 2017 Evaluation

Please submit feedback regarding Wilderness Patrol Volunteer Training 2017 Santa Cruz District, including feedback on course structure, content, and instructors (Interpreter Jeremy Lin, Ranger Ziad Bawarshi, Interpreter Rose Nelson, Roads & Trails Supervisor Chris Pereira, Ranger Gabe Mckenna, etc.)

What did you enjoy most about this training? *

Long answer text

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION



Volunteer Recognition

- Statewide Programs
- District Programs
- Park Specific Programs

- Free programs and cost programs



Statewide – Volunteer Park Passes

- ❖ Grants volunteers entry into California State Parks.
- ❖ Does not work for camping or special events.
- ❖ Co-op volunteers can now earn park passes.
- ❖ 200 hours for State Pass



District Pass = 50 hours
(may differ in each district)



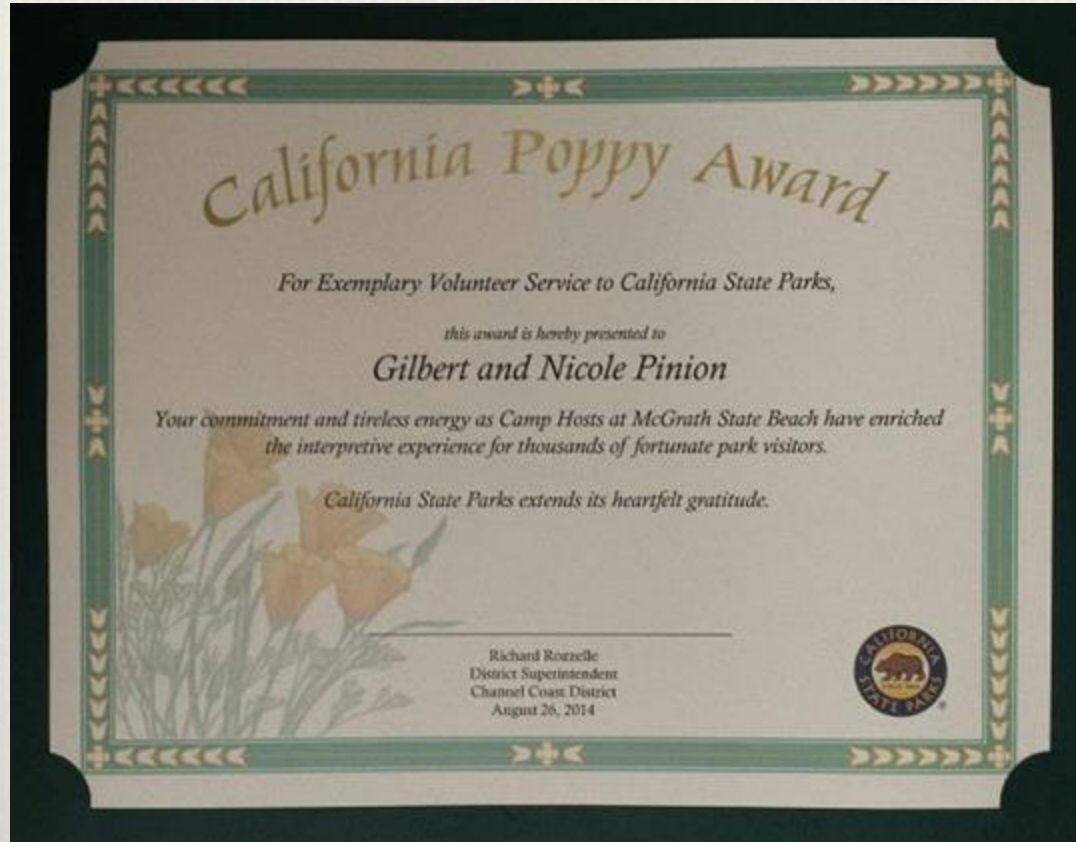
State Pass = 200 hours

Statewide - Poppy Award

- ❖ **Eligibility** – State Park Volunteer
- ❖ **Nomination** – Any Park Employee
- ❖ **Criteria** – “Volunteer who contributes significantly to the betterment of California State Parks.”
- ❖ **Selection** – Fill out form DPR 208J. Needs approval of your District Volunteer Coordinator > Superintendent > Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
- ❖ **Presentation** – Framed and matted or Presentation Folder. Award as park special event.
- ❖ **Timing** – 2 weeks to 1 month
- ❖ **Use Often**



Statewide - Poppy Award



Statewide – Medallion Award

- ❖ **Eligibility** – State Park Volunteers or Teams of Volunteers
- ❖ **Nomination** – Any Park Employee or Volunteer
- ❖ **Criteria** – “Significant contribution toward the mission and goals of the Department and worthy of recognition by the California State Parks Director.”
 - ❖ Recognize at district level first or with Poppy Award
- ❖ **Selection** – Fill out form DPR 208I. Needs approval of your District Volunteer Coordinator > Superintendent > Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
- ❖ **Presentation** – Framed. Presented by the Deputy Director for Park Operations or other.
- ❖ **Timing** – 3 weeks to 1 month



Statewide - Medallion Award



Statewide – Other Awards

Above Medallion Award



- ❖ Directors Recognition Awards
- ❖ Directors Special Commendation
- ❖ Universal Access Award – Achievements which benefit people with disabilities.

Appreciation Award Templates

[Google Drive Shared Folder](#)



(INSERT TYPE OF AWARD)

This is awarded to (This can be personalized)

(INSERT NAME OF RECIPIENT)

(Insert description of award)

(INSERT NAME OF PERSON SIGNING AWARD)

(Insert job title)



(INSERT NAME OF PERSON SIGNING AWARD)

(Insert job title)

(INSERT TYPE OF AWARD)

IS PRESENTED TO (THIS CAN BE PERSONALIZED)

(INSERT VOLUNTEER)

(Insert description of award)

(INSERT NAME OF PERSON SIGNING AWARD)
(INSERT JOB TITLE)



(INSERT NAME OF PERSON SIGNING AWARD)
(INSERT JOB TITLE)



District - Quail Pin

- ❖ Quail Pins \$4.75
- ❖ Hour Bars \$3.50



District – Volunteer Celebration



District – Volunteer Celebration

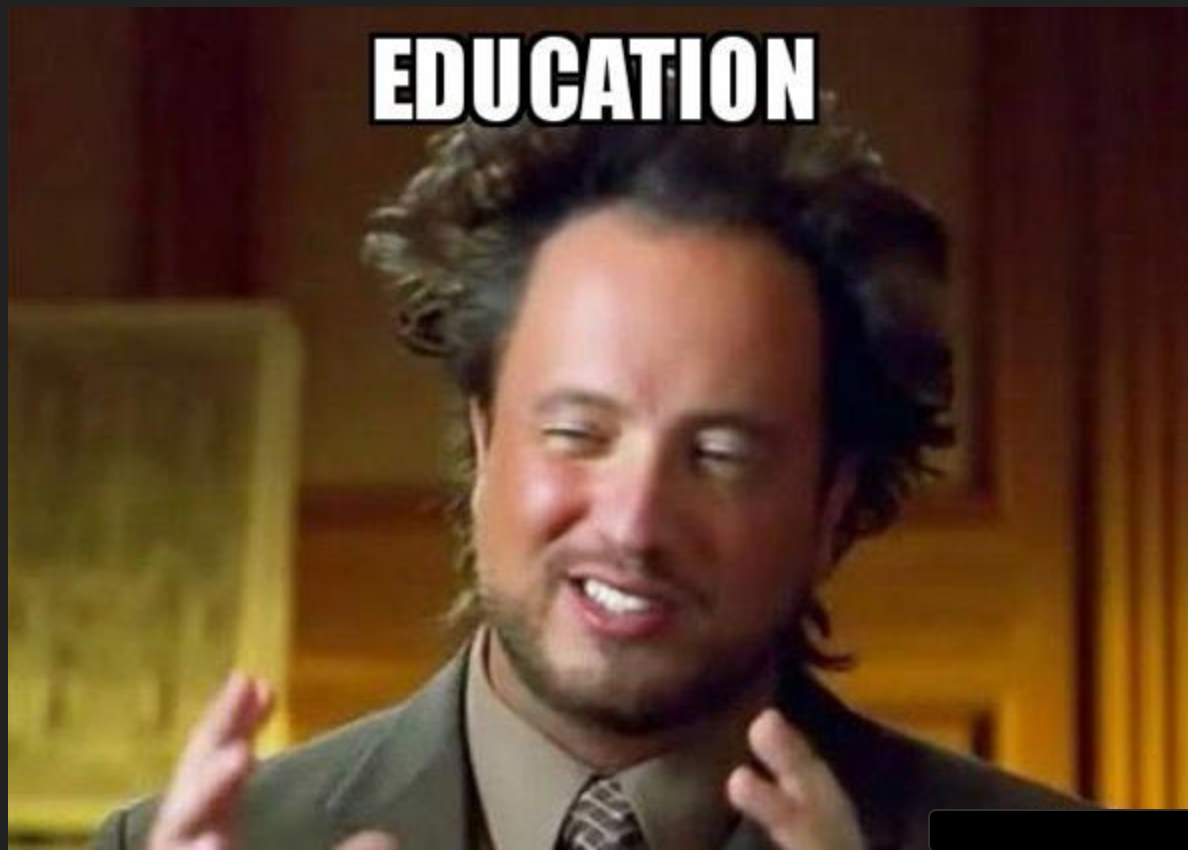
- ❖ Volunteers of all classifications
- ❖ Special Walks
- ❖ Socializing
 - ❖ Check-In Booth
 - ❖ Games and Activities
 - ❖ Mingle with volunteers
 - ❖ Photo Booth
 - ❖ Staff Schmoozing
- ❖ Catered Meal
- ❖ Volunteer Skit!



Photos for Volunteers



EDUCATION



Enrichment Trainings

- Delve into local natural and cultural topics
- Field trips within the parks (special access areas)
- Field trips to other parks, museums, and programs



COMMUNITY



Everyone Helps Out

Connect volunteers to all park staff

Research Results

Longer volunteer tenure was significantly correlated with parks that employ more than one Vol Coordinator.

**Pearson's $r = 0.546$,
 $p = 1.84e-11$, $n = 174$**



Community Events

- Regular Meetings
- Social gatherings and hikes with volunteers
- Holiday parties and potlucks



Online Community

- Email group
- Volunteer Resources
Webpage
- Facebook/Instagram
Page



Volunteer Leadership

- Mentor Program
- Docent Manual Team
- Program Development
- Other Parks Projects



VOLUNTEER BREAK ROOMS



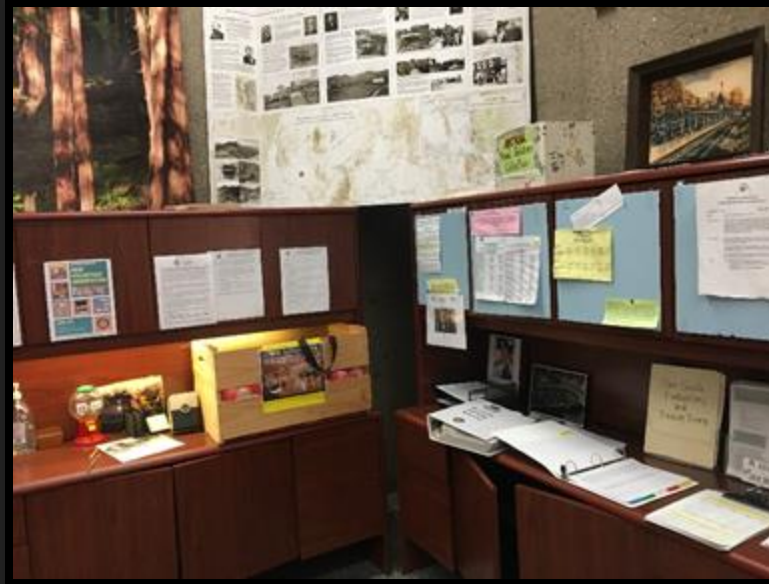
Why Have Volunteer Break Rooms?

- Meet basic needs: water, shelter, and rest
- Safe space to store personal items
- Safe space to take breaks
- Affirms their importance to your park



Basics

- Doesn't need to be fancy, but should be clean.
- Place to relax, stow items, have a snack and socialize.



Extra touches

- Private restroom
- Bulletin board: resources, announcements, achievements
- Post birthdays, upcoming events flyers, thank you notes, etc.



Extra touches (cont.)

- Snacks: drinking water, coffee and tea, granola bars
- Refrigerator and microwave
- Resource library
- Computer to log hours
- Gear for emergencies: rain slickers, flashlights, etc.



Why Provide Volunteer Break Rooms and other Amenities?

- Happy and comfortable volunteers are more productive and tend to stick around!
- Shows you care about your volunteers, themselves – not just for their work.



Discussion:

- What volunteer break rooms and spaces do you provide at your park?

What do volunteers value?

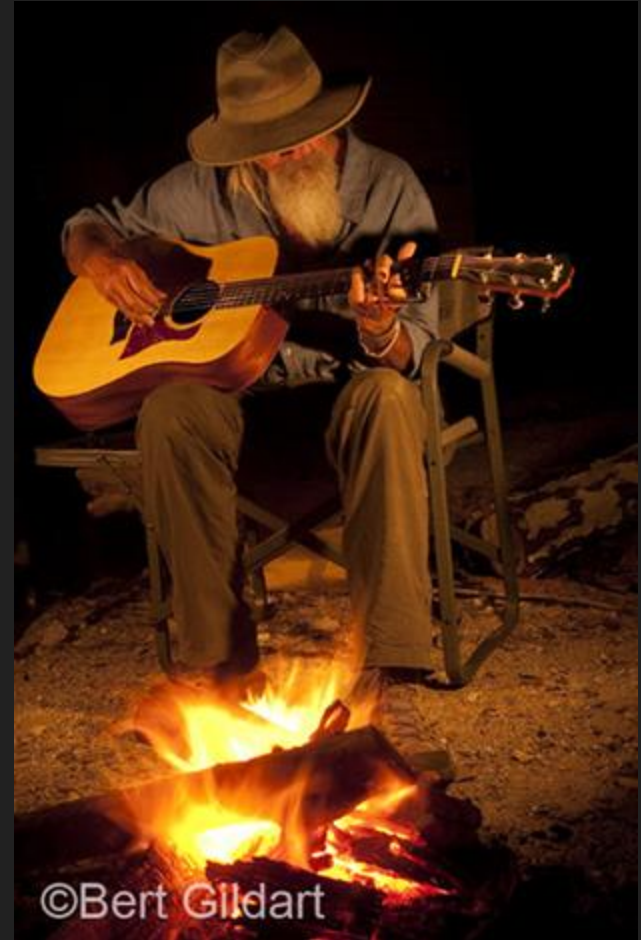
Enjoyment

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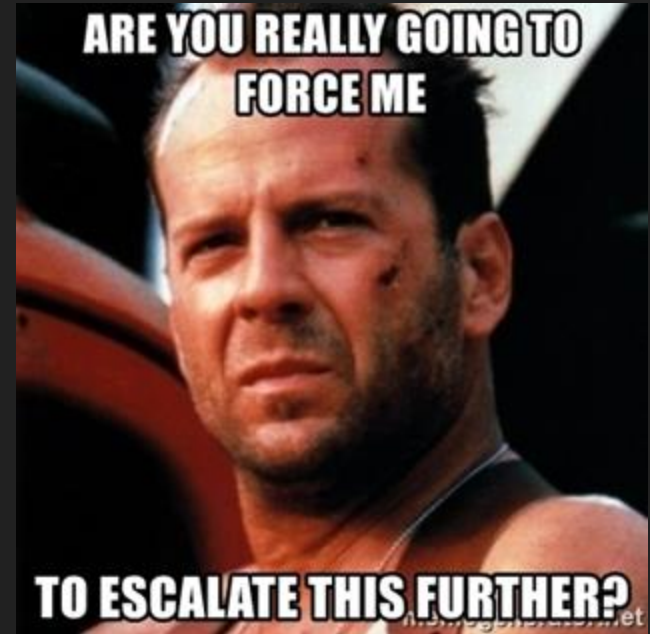
Community



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Going Further

- Build a volunteer website
- Explore what your neighbor parks are doing
- Develop district-wide programs with the support of your peers and supervisors



Energizing and appreciating our
volunteers builds healthy and
productive park communities.

Engaging, Energizing, and Recognizing Volunteers



Jeremy Lin

State Park Interpreter II
North Lake Tahoe Sector,
Sierra District

Alex Trudelle

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Castle Rock & Portola
Redwoods State Parks, Santa
Cruz District