



Project Proposal Info

Background. Wilderness Volunteers is a nonprofit that started in 1997 to organize service projects in cooperation with public land agencies (NPS, USFWS, USFS, BLM). We plan ~40 projects across the US each year putting ~450 volunteers in the field representing more than 20,000 hours of donated labor. Our participants are screened for suitability for the project, our volunteer leaders have Wilderness First Aid training, we show up self-contained with camping equipment, commissary gear, food, and stress a culture of safety on every project.

We are looking for projects that are worthwhile and that would likely go undone without volunteer effort. Our volunteers come to a project from *all over* the U.S. wanting to work and leave with a sense of pride and accomplishment about the successful completion of a meaningful project. Agencies are usually impressed with the amount of work accomplished during a project work week and we do suggest lining up backup tasks/projects if we complete our task project ahead of schedule (we see this issue with new partnering agencies who are unfamiliar with Wilderness Volunteers).

Planning and logistics. We do ask the following:

- Our projects are 7 days long with the majority starting on a Sunday and ending the following Saturday. We plan to work 4 of the days during the week (M, T, Th, F, 8 am - 4/4:30 pm) depending on the logistics, and take at least one day off (W) to rest and recreate. Work and off days are flexible as needed.
- The tools necessary to do the project are supplied by the partnering agency.
- That support (pack, OHV, boat, etc.) is secured if the project is backcountry *if possible*. We do have a small number of projects that are not supported.
- That agency supervision is present, if possible. At a minimum, this means a clear project direction, set of expectations, and safety overview at the beginning by the partnering agency.
- We cannot accept project proposals that include the use of chainsaws by volunteers.

Funding. Wilderness Volunteers is committed to keeping project fees for participants as low and accessible as possible. In order to uphold this commitment and sustain our mission to conserve and protect America's public lands, we welcome any funding support your agency may be able to provide or help facilitate. Examples of this include a food stipend, cost-share agreement, recommendations for grant opportunities or partnerships with "Friends" or other agency support groups, connections with local businesses, etc. If your agency is not in a position to offer monetary funding for this project, we still highly encourage you to submit a proposal, as we recognize the financial constraints many federal agencies are experiencing. Projects can also be supplementally-funded through business sponsorships and grant awards. We appreciate your partnership and support!

Directions. Complete this project proposal form to the best of your abilities. We realize some of the details may be unknown, however, sharing practical information with our leaders and volunteers is vital to ensure the right volunteers are on the right project.

For example, you can submit a proposal for a trail work backpacking project requiring a volunteer to be able to hike 5 miles with a 1,500' elevation gain, with daily hiking commutes of 4 miles round-trip. The exact project location can be forthcoming, but a general area is helpful. **Your project does not need to take place within designated wilderness areas.** If you have several projects in need of completion, you can submit numerous proposals or note them on a single proposal as #1, #2, #3, etc. For ___ use X.

Project proposal deadlines.

Due to the government shutdown, we're extending the 2026 project proposal due date to the end of the day, Sunday, December 7th.

Proposal submission timelines. Once a project proposal is submitted, the Program Director will review the proposal for any issues or clarification. Next, they will work to secure 2 project leaders for your project proposal. When this is accomplished, your project will be added to the 2026 schedule and will be released for volunteer sign-ups in mid-January. Agencies will be notified of their proposal's outcome by **Friday, January 30, 2026, if not sooner.**



Project Proposal Form

Project Proposal Name:

Name of Sponsoring Agency:

Agency Contact's Name:

Phone: office: _____ cell: _____

Email: _____

Address / City / State / Zip:

Your days off:

Project Description:

Are there funding or cost-sharing opportunities available for Wilderness Volunteers aligned with this project proposal? *Example: project food stipend, cost-share agreement, grant opportunities. If so, explain.*

Are there any volunteer screening requirements necessary to safely accomplish this project? *Examples include: Volunteers will need to be able to hike 5 miles daily during the project. Volunteers will need to be comfortable bushwhacking. Volunteers will need to be sure-footed and have good balance. Volunteers will need to be able to lift 20 lbs. periodically during the project.*

Agency staff supervising project: ☐ Camp w/vols ☐ Leave daily ☐ Third-party ☐ None

Range of best dates. *Please be mindful of annual events (cultural or otherwise), severe weather patterns, and insect seasons (ticks/chiggers/etc). The wider the date range, the better chance we have to make your proposal happen.*

Will the agency be able to provide safe, fully functional tools to successfully complete this project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Support provided (for backpacking or back country projects. This can include pack animal, OHV, boat, etc.): ☐ By Agency ☐ By third party ☐ None available ☐ Not Applicable

Has environmental compliance (NEPA) been completed for this project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is the group size limit for this project proposal? *Group size limitations will impact the viability of a project for consideration. Most non-Wilderness projects have a group size of 12, including project leaders.*

Formula >>> 2 project leaders + _____ volunteers = _____ **Wilderness Volunteer folks total**

How many agency personnel do you expect to be present during project work time?

Communications: *Can you provide emergency radio, satellite emergency device, etc...?*

Transportation to the trailhead: *Are there special transportation circumstances involved in getting our volunteer crew from the meeting point to the trailhead/job site/base camp? Example: volunteers for this project will need a high clearance 4WD vehicle to transport themselves to the trailhead.*

Camping Logistics:

☐ Tent camping near cars ☐ Backpack camping ☐ Bunkhouse/dormitory ☐ Other

Name of campground or basecamp for the week:

Probable water source and the distance from camp:

Trailhead Name:

Miles from TH to basecamp & elevation +/-:

Miles & elevation +/- from basecamp to general work area:

Is there parking at the trailhead? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Some projects (especially backpacking) have participants meet the night before to assure an early start in the morning. Is there a suitable place for folks to camp that night (if so please detail)?

Suggested activities to do on the day off:

Provide 5-10 quality photos to help us promote the project to our volunteers on our website, social media, newsletters, etc.

Comments:

Please submit this project proposal to our Program Director, Aidalia Swertfeger. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

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