



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Grand Canyon National Park
P.O. Box 129
Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023



Astronomy Volunteer Job Description

Grand Canyon National Park—South Rim

Introduction

This job functions within the Division of Interpretation at Grand Canyon National Park. The Astronomy Volunteer operates their privately owned telescope and provides informal interpretation of what is seen in the telescope and/or what is seen with the naked eye for the benefit of park visitors attending the Grand Canyon Star Party.

Major Duties

- **Volunteers must observe all park rules and regulations while working at Grand Canyon National Park. While on duty, you must wear an Astronomy Volunteer name tag, avoid provocative clothing and offensive language, and support NPS policies and safety messages such as *not recommending that visitors hike to the river and back in a day.***
- Most volunteers will be using their own telescopes to show park visitors and residents astronomical objects. Use of personal telescope equipment during volunteer hours (day or night) is required due to lack of available government equipment. Volunteer hours include nightly setup and takedown.
- Some volunteers may also give an astronomy PowerPoint program lasting about 35-40 minutes in the theater at 8 pm (capacity 233).
- Some volunteers may also announce and give 25-minute Constellation Tours with a 5mW green laser pointer, offered nightly at 9, 9:30 & 10 pm.
- Promote the benefits of night sky preservation and light pollution reduction (astronomy, ecology, health, economics, cultural identity, etc.)
- Sign in your first day, **record your hours and the number of visitors contacted each shift worked**, and accurately interpret the day and/or night sky.
- Evening duties will mainly be performed behind the Grand Canyon Visitor Center.
- Daytime volunteers may choose to set up in front of the Grand Canyon Visitor Center or elsewhere as long as you do not block vehicle or pedestrian traffic.
- The majority of volunteers will work roughly 5 pm to midnight. No vehicles should be on the telescope lot between 7 pm and 11 pm.
- Divide time and attention between the visitors in line and the individual at the eyepiece.

- Watch out for the drop-off at the edge of the pavement, the curb between the parking lots, and visitors lying down on the pavement. If you notice any potential safety hazard, correct it or let NPS staff know. See the *Job Hazard Analysis* for additional safety precautions, especially concerning safe and appropriate use of laser pointers.
- Those who choose to leave their telescope up by day do so **AT THEIR OWN RISK**. Any such equipment **MUST** be covered by a tarpaulin, and anything valuable and easily portable must be removed.
- Protect your equipment by telescope etiquette “refreshers” **and polite, GENTLE** correction when visitors are not demonstrating good etiquette. *Think of the nicest ways to remind visitors on these rules:*
 - No Dogs on the telescope field (leashes and telescopes are a bad combination, and dogs are required to be on a leash at all times)
 - No touching the telescopes
 - No flash photography
 - No white lights on the telescope lot, only red
- Defer to green and grey uniformed park rangers for any issue of safety or unruly behavior.

Required Training or Certifications

NA

Use of Personal Equipment

Per Director’s Order 7 Volunteer-in-Parks 6.4 If an NPS unit or program accepts a volunteer’s offer to use his/her own personal property or equipment for official purposes, and that property is lost, damaged, or destroyed, the VIP may be reimbursed for the loss. A statement that the VIP offers to provide and use such equipment as part of his/her official duties must be included on Optional Form 301a. Moreover, the form must specifically identify and describe the personal property being used.

Per Director’s Order 7 Reference Manual Volunteer-in-Parks Chapter 6 Personal equipment may be recoverable if lost or damaged during use. This must be discussed verbally with volunteers and included in their service description. Federal Employee Status for Volunteers (16USC 558 (c)) provides the authority for reimbursement for personal property that was lost, damaged, or destroyed while being used for official purposes for the NPS.

Grand Canyon National Park will reimburse up to \$2,500.00 for all gear that may be damaged in one incident used in performing the duties as described in this job description.

Because the park is requiring the volunteer to use their personal telescope & tools, a description of the telescope & tools must be provided. The list can be a separate document to allow for a better description, this document must be provided to the park and a copy to the volunteer.

- Serial number
- Description of any damage
- Ensure functionality
- Photos and/or video of the equipment being used to document any existing damage

Knowledge and Skills Required

- Ability to work independently with little or no supervision and as part of a team for extended periods of time.
- Ability to maintain a positive attitude in a group setting for extended periods of time.
- Knowledge in astronomy.
- Ability to operate a telescope.
- Ability to provide informal interpretation of astronomy using interpretive tools such as analogy, metaphor, storytelling, humor, props, comparison, imagination, quotation, explanation, observation, demonstration, analysis, symbolism, simile, etc.

Physical Demands

Duties require sitting or standing for extended periods of time. They also require high amounts of visitor interaction which includes possibly hours of informal interpretive interaction.

Work Environment

The incumbent is exposed to the elements throughout their work hours with possible exposure to extreme hot or cold temperatures, rain or hail. Most of the work will be conducted between 5 pm and midnight, so bring extra layers of clothing.

Injuries

Every volunteer must sign a *Volunteer Service Agreement*. Signing the *Volunteer Service Agreement* covers the volunteer for any injuries sustained while volunteering through workers compensation. See page two of your *Volunteer Service Agreement*.

Safety Considerations

Watch out for the drop-off at the edge of the pavement, the curb between the parking lots, and visitors lying down on the pavement. If you notice any potential safety hazard, correct it or let NPS staff know. See the *Job Hazard Analysis* for additional safety precautions, especially concerning safe and appropriate use of laser pointers. Defer to grey and green uniformed park rangers any issue of safety or unruly behavior.