



ADOPT A SPOT GUIDELINES

Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Adopt a Spot program is designed to be a fun and enjoyable way for individuals or small groups to volunteer as stewards that help provide safe, clean, recreational opportunities in Santa Clara County Parks. Desired commitment is a minimum of one year. Interested individuals or small groups may participate by helping to manage and maintain various park features in Santa Clara County Parks on an ongoing basis. Features that may be adopted include:

- Trails or trail sections
- Park natural-edge benches
- Park trailhead signs
- Interpretive trailside signs
- Trees and planted areas
- Horse water troughs
- Off-leash dog parks
- Other landscaped or managed park areas as approved by department staff

Interested volunteers or group representatives that sign up will be referred to the volunteer program office for follow up. Volunteers may also be referred to the program by park staff who have already matched a volunteer's interests with an identified ongoing project or task. Volunteer program staff will contact the volunteer to discuss their interests, identify a project, and provide additional follow up on next steps for any necessary training and/or materials needed to complete their responsibilities.

Adopt a Spot is based on the following basic guidelines:

- An Adopt a Spot individual or group consists of a minimum of one volunteer up to a maximum of 5 volunteers per group. Each group must designate a Group Liaison to be the primary point of contact for the group activities.
- Each individual or group representative is responsible to periodically inspect their chosen spot, trail, feature, or area of the park and perform the necessary tasks associated with caring for that spot. This may include cleaning, pruning, weeding, basic maintenance, removing litter and debris, etc., as well as reporting any problems or unsafe conditions to their designated park liaison or to the volunteer program office.
- Each individual or group representative shall coordinate with park staff to define and implement a work plan for the care and maintenance of their adopted spot, which will include scheduling workdays, frequency of workdays, training and equipment needs, access needs, and any other logistical items that may be involved in the care of their adopted spot.
- A group shall only work to its level of training and only on the specified area of adoption. This is intended to ensure appropriate coverage of adopted area and to make sure volunteers remain safe and have the necessary tools and equipment to carry out their activities.

WORK REQUIREMENTS

A group must fulfill an annual 10-hour minimum service requirement to remain active and in good standing. Work hours must be pre-approved and scheduled on a recurring basis with the designated project manager and occur during regular park hours (8:00 AM – Sunset). For non-scheduled work, adopters must contact their park project manager a minimum of 24 hours in advance to notify and seek approval. Work tasks are limited to the scope as defined by the Santa Clara County Parks Department. Additional projects that fall outside the defined scope of the Adopt a Spot program must go through a separate review process.

The minimum age requirement for Adopt a Spot volunteers is 11 years of age. Volunteers under age 16 (minors) must have adult supervision when working, with a ratio of one adult supervising no more than four youth. Volunteers under age 18 must have parental consent. The Group Liaison is responsible for ensuring all departmental documentation and work requirements are met.

AGREEMENT RENEWAL AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Adopt a Spot projects will be reviewed by Parks Staff annually. As long as the individual or group remains in good standing and in regular compliance with these guidelines, the project agreement can be renewed indefinitely.

The individual or group liaison is responsible for reporting the type of work activity and the hours worked for each workday to the volunteer program office through the online volunteer management software system. The group will ensure all volunteers have either registered in the software system or completed waiver and release forms prior to performing volunteer service. All volunteer service hours shall be tracked in the system either as individual hours or as group hours.

TOOLS

All Adopt a Spot participants should provide their own gloves, and safety goggles/glasses (as applicable). However, the department may issue or loan gloves and safety glasses, if available. The Department will provide all other needed tools for each work project. Adopt a Spot groups are responsible for providing their own refreshments, including water.

INCENTIVES

- (1) Receive one volunteer vest and ballcap per primary and/or alternate group representative to wear while performing volunteer service.
- (2) Receive a free park entrance pass to use in their assigned park while performing volunteer service
- (3) Be automatically added to the Santa Clara County Parks monthly eblast email list.
- (4) Receive invitations to Department volunteer recognitions, enrichments, trainings, and social activities.
- (5) Be eligible to earn an annual Parks Venture Pass, upon completing a minimum of 75 hours of cumulative volunteer service for Santa Clara County Parks within one calendar year, which enables the volunteer to gain free vehicle entry into any County Park for any reason for one full year. (Available to those that track hours as an individual, rather than as a group.)
- (6) Accrue lifetime volunteer service benchmark awards and recognitions. (Available to those that track hours as an individual, rather than as a group.)