



Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT PNTA VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES

What is a volunteer work party?

Our volunteer work parties are trail maintenance and construction projects on the Pacific Northwest Trail system. Volunteer trail stewards, from beginners to experts, generously donate their time by working to keep trails open and safe under the supervision of a PNTA crew leader.

Do I need experience to volunteer?

For most trail work parties, no experience is necessary. PNTA will provide all of the tools, training and personal protective equipment needed. Please review each project description to learn if the work matches your skill level or interest.

Experienced and certified trail workers are always appreciated. Please indicate your level of experience when applying for any opportunity with PNTA and we will place you with an opportunity that matches your abilities.

What are the age requirements to volunteer?

Work parties are typically open to participants 18 and older; ages 16-17 with guardian consent; ages 10-15 accompanied by a parent or guardian. Some volunteer activities may be appropriate for families with younger children. Visit: www.pnta.org/volunteer to find an event near you.

My club or group of friends would like to do volunteer trail work on the PNT. How can we get involved together?

Check our list of current volunteer opportunities at pnta.org, fill out a [Volunteer Trail Steward Application](#), or contact us at volunteer@pnta.org with more information. In some cases, we are able to accommodate larger groups by adjusting a scheduled work party or by creating a custom volunteer opportunity just for you and your group.

What will we do?

Common trail maintenance tasks include:

- **Brush Out:** Prune back overgrown vegetation to open the trail corridor
- **Tread Work:** Maintain the surface of the trail and its drainage features
- **Log Out:** Cut and remove trees that have fallen across the trail
- **Construction:** Maintain or build rock walls, trailhead kiosks, steps and boardwalks
- **Restoration:** Revegetate damaged areas, pull invasive weeds and remove litter



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What does it cost to volunteer?

It is free to volunteer but as a nonprofit organization, donations are always appreciated. Individual contributions are so important because they help support programs to maintain and protect the 1200 mile Pacific Northwest Trail corridor.

How do I get to the project site?

Each volunteer is responsible for getting to the trailhead or rendezvous point described on the **Project Fact Sheet**. A PNTA Coordinator will facilitate communication to help crew members carpool, which may be required due to limited space at trailheads.

Some roads may require high-clearance vehicles. Check the transportation requirements on the **Project Fact Sheet** for specific information.

How difficult are the projects?

Volunteer opportunities with PNTA vary between “easy” and “difficult” based on the physical demands of the project, its location or the experience required. Please review each project description to learn if the work matches your interests and contact us with any questions you may have.

EASY

These projects can accommodate a wide range of abilities and experience levels and are most suitable for first-time volunteers. Typically, these involve light trail maintenance, such as brushing, limbing and minor tread repair, or restoring an area by packing out trash. Work sites require minimal hiking distances (1-3 miles) with moderate grade trails (<15%).

INTERMEDIATE

These projects may require longer hiking distances (3-6 miles), steeper grade trails (~15-20%), or moderate elevation gain (+/- 1,500 ft.). These projects may involve more physically strenuous work, such as: trail construction, rock work or structures.

DIFFICULT

These projects may require hiking distances (> 6 miles), steeper or more rugged trails (>20%) or backpacking to remote work sites, and are suitable to individuals with experience backpacking or working on trail crews or doing physically demanding work.



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How do I apply to join a volunteer work party?

1. Search for opportunities that match your interests and ability at www.pnta.org/volunteer.
2. Fill out a [Volunteer Trail Steward Application](#).
3. Fill out a [Volunteer Work Party Agreement](#), and be sure to tell us which events you are interested in.
4. A PNTA representative will contact you to confirm your registration for a work party.

Not ready to apply to a specific work party? Fill out a [Volunteer Trail Steward Application](#) and we'll contact you about upcoming opportunities that fit your interests.

How will I know if I have successfully registered for a work party?

You will receive a confirmation email from a PNTA representative once we have processed your volunteer application.

The PNTA has confirmed my registration for a work party. What happens next?

After receiving a confirmation email, you will receive a **Project Fact Sheet** from a regional coordinator with all of the relevant information needed to plan your trip including: crew leader contact information, rendezvous time, location and directions, maps, project description and schedule, and recommended personal gear and supplies. The coordinator will also keep you informed about rideshares, and any changes to the project, including cancellation due to wildfire or severe weather.

What if I can only participate for a part of the project?

In most cases any help is appreciated. Be sure to contact the crew leader listed on the **Project Fact Sheet** if your availability changes and you are unable to join the work party for the entire project. For some events, such as those with limited positions or parking, you may be asked to give up your position on the crew for another volunteer who can participate for the entire project.



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Do I need to bring my own food?

Unless specified otherwise, plan on bringing a lunch, snacks and water for day projects. The PNTA may provide food for overnight projects, in which case crew leaders and volunteers will share cooking and cleaning chores. Some projects may include volunteer camp hosts who pamper trail crews by preparing meals and handling camp chores.

What do I need to wear? What should I bring?

Please wear:

- Comfortable boots that support and cover your ankles; the more leather and water resistant the better. (No sneakers.)
- Long pants (No shorts or cropped pants.)
- Long-sleeve shirts are required (T-shirts and tank tops may only be worn as base layers.)

The PNTA provides personal protective equipment (PPE): hard hat, safety glasses, gloves and earplugs if needed. If you wear eyeglasses, please bring your own safety goggles or prescription safety glasses, if applicable. If you have strong preferences about work glove material, consider bringing your own pair. *For everyone's safety, wearing required clothing and PPE is non-negotiable.* If your project requires specific items, it will be noted in your Project Fact Sheet, including lists of additional items needed for overnight work parties.

Bring a daypack, including:

- One gallon of water
- Lunch and snacks
- Rain gear: top and bottom
- Warm layers if we expect cold or wet weather
- Change of clothes (Optional - these can be left in your car for the ride home)



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Can I bring my own tools? Can I bring my chainsaw?

The PNTA provides all tools and the training you'll need to use them. Volunteers may bring small folding saws, if they wish. They should not bring any tools with emotional value (like an heirloom ax or antique crosscut saw).

Volunteers should not bring chainsaws unless directed by a PNTA coordinator. Land management agencies require specific certification for sawyers; our trained staff will handle log-out and tree felling with chainsaws, if required.

Can I bring my dog?

PNTA does not allow dogs on most project worksites for safety reasons and out of concern for the pet, wildlife, and other volunteers. Check the Project Fact Sheet to see if dogs are allowed.

What is the alcohol or marijuana policy for work parties in Washington?

For safety reasons, PNTA does not permit the use of alcohol or recreational marijuana during project work hours. Occasionally, a sponsor may donate alcoholic beverages to work parties. If a volunteer chooses to bring and consume alcohol, they should do so in moderation and outside of project work hours.

Volunteers should be aware that while recreational marijuana is legal to consume in the state of Washington, it is unlawful to possess on federal lands, such as National Forests and National Parks.

Where can I learn about other trail-based organizations that work on the PNT?

Visit pnt.org to learn more about partner organizations and the volunteer opportunities they offer in Montana, Idaho and Washington.