

OF 301a Volunteer Service Agreement - Natural & Cultural Resources INSTRUCTIONS

HOW AND WHEN TO USE THE OF301A:

- OF301a is used for both individual and group agreements
- Group contacts/ liaisons can fill out this form on behalf of volunteers and are required to ensure all paperwork is completed for their group and all minors have parental consent.
- Parent or guardian consent is required for minors. If an organized volunteer group does not have records of guardian permissions, each minor must be engaged through the OF301a. Same requirements for guardian permissions apply for walk-in one day events, like National Public Lands Day.
- A Job Hazard Analysis is a **required** attachment to the OF301a for all tasks of the project. The JHA clearly defines practices and procedures including required safety equipment and is designed to promote the safety and well-being of volunteers. [Example JHAs](http://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/safetyhealth/jha/o/) <http://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/safetyhealth/jha/o/>
- Agreement numbers are used in Person Model and for reimbursement processing by Albuquerque Service Center. Volunteer Agreements are legally binding documents and must be retained on file for three years beyond the date of termination at which time they should be shredded.
- Blank fields expand as you type for .docx version (not the .pdf version). For .docx versions double-click on checkboxes to check/uncheck.
- The .pdf version can be electronically signed.
- Additional pages may be attached as needed: description of duties, details about reimbursements, etc.
- Review agreements annually and amend or rewrite for accuracy as projects, requirements, reimbursements, and other elements of a volunteer's service may change. Without a signed agreement, individuals or groups cannot volunteer or travel.
- Provide a copy of the completed agreement to your unit volunteer coordinator and one to the volunteer or volunteer group leader. The volunteer supervisor should keep the original in a secured area or in an electronic folder on the O drive.

A signed Volunteer Agreement Form OF 301a authorizes the individual or group to volunteer and specifies service expectations, requirements and any reimbursements. A well-written agreement provides for the safety of the volunteer while clearly describing the service project, requirements, locations, schedules, and other information pertinent to the volunteer service.

Instructions

Page 1:

- 1- 2. **Individual or Group checkboxes:** Check whichever box applies; a group is 2 or more people.
3. **Agency:** Forest Service unit name
4. **Agreement Number:** Assign and record a unique agreement number for each volunteer agreement. Agreement numbers should remain the same when renewing or amending agreements. New individual volunteers/groups will get a new agreement number and that number will remain over time. Volunteer Agreement numbering follows a national protocol that uses 16 digits as follows and as per the example:
 - i. 15-VI-11083100-0001 The first two numbers designate the fiscal year.
 - ii. The next two characters designate the agreement type. Use "VI" for individual volunteer agreement and "VS" for group volunteer agreement.

- iii. The next eight numbers identify the specific Forest Service issuing unit. The first two digits are always 11 which indicate the Forest Service as the sub-agency of USDA. The next two numbers are the Region or Station. The third set of numbers represents the Forest/Lab/Program Area. The fourth set of numbers indicates the District or Research Program Area. This is the standard office identification numbering sequence used on all grants and agreements.
- iv. The final four digits are sequential numbers for each agreement on a unit, for each year, beginning with 0001.

You can type the 16-digit Agreement Number here, then copy and paste into the Agreement number block on the form:

5. Name of Volunteer: Name of individual volunteer. For a volunteer group also use form OF301b.

6. Citizenship: Mark “Yes” or “No” based on criteria. If “No”, list their visa type. If any group members are internationals, check No and insure that the organization is operating in compliance with State Department guidance; contact [WO International Programs](#).

Visa Type: Enter type of visa under which the volunteer is in the United States. Only certain visa types allow non-citizens to volunteer for the Forest Service: J-1, sometimes B-1 or F-1, but must be approved in advance by WO International Programs Office.

7. Name of Group: Complete only if an organization is the official sponsor of the volunteers. Enter the official name of organization. Example: “*Back Country Horsemen White River Chapter.*” Use OF-301b to list the names of all volunteers participating on each project. Group liaisons are responsible for obtaining parental consent for volunteers under age 18, assuring visa requirements are met for non-citizens, and gathering medical condition information. The FS unit needs not collect or retain this information for groups.

8. Name of Group Contact: First and last name of the group’s liaison to the agency. **Skip if form is for individual volunteer.**

9 - 10 Address: Physical address of volunteer’s/group’s permanent residence. Include post office box or other mailing address if different from street address. For campground hosts who live in their recreational vehicle fulltime and are therefore considered local volunteers, copy and paste the statement, to which the campground hosts respond:

For tax purposes, does the Internal Revenue Service consider your recreation vehicle (RV) to be your home?

Yes No

11. Email Address: Individual volunteer’s personal email address if available, or group liaison’s email.

12. Home Phone / Mobile Phone: Individual volunteer’s personal phone numbers, or group liaison’s phone numbers.

13. Age: Check box which best matches the individual. Group liaisons should mark only one box to report approximate ages of group volunteers. Information is used to determine if parent/guardian consent is required, compliance with child labor laws and reporting purposes.

14 a – d. Ethnicity and Race: Optional check boxes. Groups can indicate the number of each, if known, or leave blank if not known. 7 CFR Part 15d—Nondiscrimination in programs or activities conducted by the United States Department of

Agriculture includes a requirement that each agency shall, for civil rights compliance purposes, collect, maintain, and annually compile data on the race, ethnicity, and gender of all applicants and participants of programs and activities conducted by USDA.

14c. Are you a Veteran? Optional check boxes. This information allows the FS to ensure its programs are providing opportunities to veterans.

14d. Do you have a disability? Optional check boxes. This information allows the FS to ensure its programs are providing opportunities to people with disabilities.

Emergency Contact Information

15. Name of the person who can be contacted regarding the volunteer in case of an emergency. For Group agreements, the liaison is responsible for having emergency contact information on hand for all of the volunteers providing service on the project.

16 -19. Contact information of emergency contact person.

20 - 21. Agency Contact Name, Email and Phone: List this information for the staff person who is main contact for and/or supervisor of volunteers under this agreement.

22. Reimbursements: Mark “Yes” or “No.” For “Yes” specify ALL allowable reimbursements being provided for local (commuting area) or non-local volunteers (from outside commuting area). Reimbursements under Group Volunteer Agreements will be made to the organization, not to an individual. On the pdf version this field will not expand so it is best to use the .docx version of the document when reimbursements will be entered. The reimbursement block should clearly identify what out of pocket expenses the agreement will cover.

Refer to FSM 1833.5 for a detailed description of reimbursable expenses. FOR MILEAGE, ENTER “GSA COMMUTING MILEAGE RATE” and/or “GSA OFFICIAL MILEAGE RATE”. Include information on housing provided, if any. See additional information/links on <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/rhwr/yvh/volunteer-resources.shtml> and [contact ASC for questions about reimbursement.](#)

ASC Miscellaneous Payments Office processes all reimbursements (except when lodging is incurred) so, provide enough description so anyone processing the reimbursement has no doubt about the reimbursement arrangement.

Example 1 Campground Host: GSA commuting mileage rate: 14 cents/mile from their permanent home in Memphis, TN to Ranger Station at Deer River, MN. GSA official mileage rate: 56 cents/mile travelling to a neighboring campground twice a week to clean toilets. Housing provided (RV space) in Mountaintop Campground. Cost of propane for heating/cooking.

Example 2 Trail Project spike camp: Travel status 6/12/2014 – 6/18/2014. Field per diem \$23.00 per day. No lodging.

Example 3 Official Overnight Travel: Travel status 4/2/2015 – 4/4/2015. Full per diem and lodging.

- 23. Volunteer Position/Group Project Title:** Title of the volunteer assignment, such as *Wilderness Steward, Information Receptionist, etc.*, or the project, such as *Big Bend Trail Maintenance, Riverside Campground Cleanup Day, etc.*
- 24. Description of service to be performed:** Follow the guidance in the block to clearly and comprehensively define the role and services requested of the volunteer with sufficient detail to answer who, what, why, when, where, and how. Attach a volunteer description if available. At a minimum, the description of service should include: Detailed description of duties, tasks and responsibilities. Do **not** use FS job descriptions.
- i. Locations of project/duties.
 - ii. Date(s) and times of service at each location/project.
 - iii. Training required/provided. *Example: All volunteers attend Training Weekend, May 5-6, 2015 at Camp Sherman; or, Volunteer is required to maintain standard FS certification to operate a snowmobile.*
 - iv. Tools, equipment and Personal Protective Equipment needed/provided if not listed in the JHA. *Example: Volunteers must wear leather work boots; FS supplies hand tools, gloves & eye protection.*
 - v. Types of supplies, materials and/or equipment that will be provided by the volunteer. *Example: Personal riding stock, pack stock, and tack used at volunteer's discretion; not covered by this Agreement.*
 - vi. Remember to attach all appropriate Job Hazard Analyses (JHA). These can be found at: [Example JHAs](#)

25. Check All that Apply:

Description of service attached - optional Check box.

List of group participants attached - required only if the groups are engaged on the volunteer project as defined in item #24.

Job Hazard Analysis – REQUIRED. It should **always** be checked as JHAs are required for all volunteer activities. <http://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/safetyhealth/jha.htm>

Valid driver's license verified - Check if applicable. Required if volunteer will be driving a government vehicle. Defensive driving training required within last 3 years. International driver licenses are not valid to drive a Forest Service vehicle on most units. International volunteers will need to check with the individual state where their service will be performed, to determine what additional licensing may be required to operate a vehicle. Each situation may be different.

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26-32. Parental Consent for Volunteer Under Age 18: Name of parent or legal guardian is required including complete contact information. For Group agreements, the Group Contact puts their information in this block and is responsible to ensure all minor volunteers have parental consent and all paperwork is completed. Parent or Guardian prints **name of youth** (printed) in box #31 and signs and dates box #32

33-34. Volunteer & Group Leader Affirmation: Ensure the volunteer reads and comprehends the information to which they are agreeing with their signature. The standard language in this block represents the legally binding basis for the agreement and includes important waiver statements, notification to the volunteer of potential background checks, a photo release, and disclaimer about volunteer service and liability.

Checkboxes for medical conditions: The volunteer should check the appropriate box for self- identification of medical conditions or physical limitations. For groups, the liaison should gather this information separately.

Checkbox for withholding photo release: Check if an individual volunteer does not consent to photographs. For groups, use checkbox on OF-301b.

Name of Federal Agency: Enter the name of the FS unit.

- 34. Signature of Volunteer or Group Leader:** Full signature of individual volunteer or group leader/liaison and date or group leader's/designated liaison's signature for group agreements.
- 35. Signature of Government Representative:** Volunteer agreements obligate the agency and therefore can only be signed by a Forest Service Line or Staff Officer or their officially designated acting. Included are WO Directors, Regional Foresters and Deputies, Research Station Directors, Regional Directors, Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, Research Lab Managers, Research Program Managers, and the National Volunteers & Service Program Manager. Official designation of another staff must be done by letter. Include the signatory's printed name and title, and date of signature. Typically this is the last signature to execute the document. One possible exception would be for "day of" events where it is uncertain who will show up for a National Public Lands Day clean-up or similar type project where the general public is invited to participate in a Forest Service planned event. In this case, the responsible government representative could sign one form in advance and volunteers sign the OF-301b at the event after reading the agreement and JHAs. The .pdf version can be electronically signed.

Termination of Agreement Block:

- 36. Agreement Terminated Date:** Enter date the project ends or the services of the volunteer end. Volunteer Agreements are legally binding documents and must be retained on file for three years beyond the date of termination at which time they should be shredded.
- Total Hours Completed:** Enter the number of hours contributed by the volunteer(s) under this agreement.
- 37. Signature of Government Representative:** Line officer signature is preferred but not required for the termination of the agreement.

Provide a copy of the completed agreement to your unit volunteer coordinator and one to the volunteer or volunteer group leader. The volunteer supervisor should keep the original in a locked cabinet or on the O drive.