

February 9, 2026

Dear Volunteer Groups,

We hope this message finds you well as we look ahead to the 2026 season. Thank you for your continued commitment to Yosemite National Park and for the time, energy, and care you bring to this special place.

In the following pages, you will find the 2026 Group Volunteer Project Guide and Catalog, which includes important information on how to request a project, descriptions of available volunteer opportunities, and our seasonal calendar.

As in past years, this opening page highlights a few updates to our Group Volunteer Program for the coming year.

Beginning in 2026, Yosemite's volunteer operations will be transitioning to Volunteer.gov. The lottery process for group volunteer projects will remain the same; however, once groups are placed with a project, participant registration will take place online rather than through the paper packets used in past seasons.

It is important that all participants complete their registration in advance via the website. Volunteers under the age of 18 will still be required to submit a signed physical copy of the 301a Youth Agreement form. Additional details, instructions, and timelines for completing Volunteer.gov registration will be sent one month prior to each project date.

**The deadline to enter the placement lottery is March 2nd.** All requests submitted by 11:59 p.m. on March 2nd will be entered into the lottery to determine the order of project assignments. Requests received on March 3rd or later will be assigned a queue number based on the order in which they are received.

For additional details, please review the "Volunteer Program Guidelines for Groups" section carefully.

Thank you again for your spirit of service and your dedication to supporting Yosemite and other naturally and culturally significant places. We wish you the best of luck in the lottery and a rewarding, memorable summer season.

Warm regards,  
Lydia James  
Volunteer Coordinator  
yose\_volunteers@nps.gov

# 2026 PROJECT REQUEST PROCESS:

**THE 2026 LOTTERY ENTRY DUE DATE IS March 2nd (by 11:59pm)**

## How to Submit a Request

1. *Look through the catalog to pick projects that appeal to you.* Be sure to note required skills, physical ability, group size and age limits for each project listed.
2. *Choose your top 6 projects.* We have created “Standard” projects that can be placed quickly. Choosing one of these means you agree to all listed details, and your project will be confirmed quickly. “Non-Standard” requests, meaning you are requesting something outside the catalog calendar, will be very limited.
3. **IMPORTANT UPDATE:** *Open document titled “IMPORTANT – Project Request Form Instructions.”* This form will guide you through the new project request form. Have this document and the project request form open side by side.
4. *Fill in all sections on the Project Request Form.* Read the instructions document thoroughly to correctly fill out the request form. Space is limited; please be respectful and only submit **one** entry. If hand-writing the form, please print neatly.
5. *Make sure you have completed all requested information in the form.* Once you have completed your form, please submit your request(s) via e-mail. Our email address is [yose\\_volunteers@nps.gov](mailto:yose_volunteers@nps.gov).

## What Happens Next?

1. When we receive your request form, we will respond with an email acknowledging the request (check your Spam folder!!). If you don't receive this email within a week, please let us know.
2. Requests received before **11:59pm on March 2nd** will be assigned to their number in the queue at random by lottery. Requests received after the deadline will be assigned in the order received.
3. We will work our way through the queue and match projects according to lottery numbers.
4. When we successfully match your group with a project, we will send an offer to the group leader listed on the request form. This email will also include a deadline for confirmation.
5. **Please be patient.** We receive about two hundred requests each year and we try our best to schedule in a timely manner. The reality is that there is a higher demand than we can accommodate.
6. If your group leader confirms a project, you have been offered, we will email your group leader additional details, instructions, and timelines for completing Volunteer.gov registration. We send these in calendar order of the projects, and you will receive your confirmation at least one month before your project.

# CAMPING:

The Yosemite Volunteer Program can provide free campsites (when available) during your project. Most campsites are at Yellow Pine, the administrative campground in Yosemite Valley. Campsites outside of the Valley may be available for projects in or near those locations.

## Camping Requirements:

**\*The minimum number of volunteer hours required depends on the following requirements:**

<b>Nights At Campsite</b>	<b>Work requirements – Minimum days of work, AND minimum hours (At least one of the nights must be contiguous with the volunteer day)</b>
<b>Zero</b>	(if the NPS does not provide campsites) Half Day /2.5 hours minimum.
<b>One or Two</b>	Half-day project (2.5 to 4 hours)
<b>Two</b>	One day (5 hours+)
<b>Three</b>	One and a half days
<b>Four</b>	Two days
<b>Five</b>	Two and a half days
<b>Six</b>	Three days
<b>Seven</b>	Four days

## Campground and Group Rules:

- a) If the park provides free campsites, all members of your group will be required to participate in the work. Exceptions for family members under the age of 5 must be approved in advance.
- b) **Be respectful of other visitors and camp hosts during your stay.** Clean up after your group, respect the directions of the camp hosts, other NPS staff, and follow quiet hours and other guidelines.
- c) Each group is responsible for providing their own camping equipment, food and transportation to the park. Yellow Pine Campground and other group sites are generally tent-only – no RVs or sleeping trailers. Gear trailers are limited to 25 feet.
- d) Pets are not permitted in group campsites (including Yellow Pine) and may not be permitted at the volunteer work site.
- e) If you would like to use your RV, bring pets, or have group members who will not volunteer, you must reserve and pay for your own accommodation elsewhere.

**\*ALL participants must understand the campground rules and regulations before arriving to the park.\***

**\*Groups who violate campground rules and participation policies will not be permitted to return\***

(Additional Campground rules will be provided upon selection)

## BASIC VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:

- Your group may not exceed the permitted group size, and all participants are ages 5 and up.
- If you have individuals in your group with a disability, please let the park know in your application so that we can arrange accommodation including ASL interpreters.
- The Group will provide their own transportation to and from the park/to the project location.
- As of 2023, group members must reside in California, Arizona, Nevada, or Oregon.

### What the Park will provide:

A National Park Service work leader and all project supplies, safety equipment, and instruction needed. We will send a gate pass for free entry into the park and arrange campsites (but not camping gear) if needed and available. There is no charge to participate in NPS projects.

### Want to bring a School Group?

School groups follow under our *Special Request* groups and have a slightly different set of rules and requirements for volunteering than our standard Group Volunteer Requests. If you have a curricular component to your project and are requesting weekday assignments, please submit a lottery request form and indicate clearly that you are applying as a school group.

### Tips for getting placed in the lottery.

We have a random lottery process to ensure fairness in placement. Advice for getting a placement includes:

- *Be flexible.* Indicate multiple choices on your submission form.
- *Being willing to work weekdays.* Our midweek projects are not usually top choices. and please follow all the submission instructions outlined here.
- *Choose to stay and work outside of Yosemite Valley.* These projects have less competition.

If you are not placed, remember that there are many ways to serve. “Think global, act local” is a great way to approach service.

# VOLUNTEER GROUP PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

## Campground Cleanup

### DESCRIPTION:

With over 1,400 campsites in Yosemite in use nearly every night from April through October, a lot of ash gets produced in all those fire rings, trash gets left behind, picnic tables and signs get worn out, bear boxes get dirty, and much more! Work for this project will be determined on a day-to-day basis. Volunteers may be asked to assist in cleaning out campground and picnic area fire pits and grills, as well as other general campground cleanup work. Depending on park needs, a volunteer group may be asked to drive to different parks of Yosemite which may or may not be near your assigned campsite.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 12
- Group Size: Max 12 *or* 20
- Difficulty: Easy to moderate
- Ability to practice safe use of hand tools, such as litter sticks, and follow safety instructions.
- Have form of transportation and are willing to drive around Yosemite National Park as needed.

### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine (Unless otherwise noted)

## Yosemite Valley Restoration

### DESCRIPTION:

Ecological Restoration aims to heal degraded lands and restore natural processes. In Yosemite Valley we are tasked with completing restoration projects outlined in the Merced River Plan. Volunteers typically assist on social trail removal, planting, seed collection and dispersal, conifer removal, duff collection and dispersal, beaver dam analog creation, and watering projects. Most projects happen in the spring or fall during variable weather conditions so be prepared for cold and/or wet weather. Tasks can involve stooping for long periods of time, working in low flowing streams, working on hands and knees, digging, or walking long distances.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 18
- Group Size: 15
- Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous
- Ability to hike in uneven terrain carrying tools.
- Long pants and sturdy close-toed shoes are required.
- Work in adverse weather conditions (typically hot, open areas)
- Ability to use hand tools (shovels, rakes, small handsaw, loppers, etc.), if needed.

### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine

## Fruit Harvesting

### DESCRIPTION:

Beginning in the 1850s, early Euro-American homesteaders in Yosemite planted orchards to grow produce for the people and livestock that were surging in this part of the Sierra. Today, those orchards are recognized not just for their rare heirloom fruits, but also as links to the park's past. The orchards in Yosemite Valley are the largest orchards from the 1850s to 1860s in California and the oldest intact examples of orchards from this era in the U.S. National Park System.

In many orchards, the fruit from these trees lures black bears and creates avoidable visitor-wildlife conflicts, especially in high visitation areas like the Curry Village Orchard parking lot. This conflict threatens the lives of black bears in the park while creating a safety hazard for humans as well. To reduce the prevalence of wildlife-visitor conflict throughout the park, volunteers will assist in harvesting fruit from orchards and non-orchard trees. While some volunteers will use throw bags and pickers to collect various fruits off the trees with taller branches, others will be able pick apples from trees without any instruments. As these events take place in July and August, fruit will be small and not ripe enough to eat immediately.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 12
- Group Size: Max 25 *unless otherwise indicated*
- Difficulty: Easy to strenuous depending on orchard and task
- Have form of transportation and are willing to drive around Yosemite National Park as needed.

### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine (Unless otherwise noted)

## Forestry Bark Beetle Surveying

### DESCRIPTION:

Volunteers will navigate independently or in teams through assigned areas of Yosemite National Park, including Giant Sequoia Groves and campgrounds, to assist with vegetation and ecological restoration projects. Work may include collecting seeds, duff, and logs; removing invasive plants; cutting and piling small conifers; soil decompaction; landscape contouring; and planting or salvaging native vegetation. Volunteers may carry tools and materials in backpacks weighing 10–30 lbs. Tasks will be performed following maps and project guidance, often off-trail in uneven terrain and in variable weather conditions, including heat, sun, and insects. Training will be provided, and volunteers will follow all safety protocols and Ranger instructions for proper use of tools and materials.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 18
- Group Size: Max 15
- Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous
- Ability to hike and work in uneven terrain while carrying tools or materials.
- Long pants and sturdy, closed-toed shoes are required.
- Willingness to follow detailed instructions, handle tools safely, and participate in hands-on restoration tasks.

- Ability to work in variable and sometimes adverse weather conditions.
- Have form of transportation and are willing to drive around Yosemite National Park as needed.

#### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine

### Wawona Outdoor Cleanup

#### DESCRIPTION:

Because Wawona is largely out of use in the off-season, we see a buildup of leaves and dirt, not to mention storm damage. Work for this project will include cleaning out and repairing the horse corral, raking leaves and other debris from the tops of roofs, raking and conducting minor repairs on the stagecoach road, and conducting other minor repairs as determined by staff. Debris will be taken to the appropriate collection point via provided wheelbarrows.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 16
- Group Size: Max 12
- Difficulty: Easy to Moderate
- Must have experience with outdoor repair and ladder usage.

#### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Wawona / Wawona

### Weed Warriors in Yosemite Valley and Ackerson Restoration Area

#### DESCRIPTION:

Yosemite's invasive plant team invites volunteer groups to help control priority invasive species in Yosemite Valley and the Ackerson Restoration area. Left unmanaged, these disturbed areas can quickly become dominated by invasive plants, preventing native vegetation from thriving.

Volunteers will hike 2–5 miles per day across rough meadow terrain to survey for invasive plants, then hand-pull weeds or shear bull thistle roots using shovels or loppers before removing them from the ground. Work is repetitive and may require time on hands and knees, often in full sun. These projects can be classified as strenuous due to heat, sun exposure, and thorny vegetation.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 12+
- Work schedule might start as early as 8am in hotter conditions.
- Group Size: 15
- Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous
- Ability to hike in uneven terrain carrying tools.
- Work in adverse weather conditions (typically hot, open areas)
- Ability to use hand tools (shovels, rakes, small handsaw, loppers, etc.), if needed.

#### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine
- Ackerson Meadow / Hodgdon Meadow

## Yosemite Zero Heroes

### DESCRIPTION:

*This half-day project is targeted at our youngest groups. Please apply only if most of your group members are under 10 years old, e.g. Cub Scouts or Brownies groups!*

Over five million visitors a year can produce a lot of trash, and unfortunately not all of it makes it into trash cans and recycling bins. Volunteers will use litter sticks and buckets to clean up litter along roadsides and trails, parking lots, campgrounds and in other public areas. Learn about leave no trace strategies and zero landfill initiatives. Does your group have what it takes to become Yosemite Zero Heroes? #YosemiteZeroHero

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 5
- Group Size: Max 18
- Difficulty: Easy to Moderate
- Ability to practice safe use of hand tools such as litter sticks.

### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Throughout park

## Fresh Coats for First Responders

### DESCRIPTION:

Interior painting at the Yosemite Valley Fire Station is a hands-on service project that helps care for an important and well-used facility. Volunteers will assist with applying fresh coats of paint to interior walls, helping refresh a historic structure that supports essential emergency services in the Valley. This work involves standing for extended periods, using rollers and brushes, and climbing ladders. Prior painting experience is helpful but not required. Training and guidance will be provided. Many hands will make quick work of this project, and the results will be immediately visible and impactful.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 18
- Group Size: Max 10
- Difficulty: Easy to Moderate
- Ability to load a roller or brush with paint and apply it to the walls.
- Comfortable climbing or spotting a ladder.
- Long pants and sturdy close-toed shoes are required.
- May have to lift a few things up to 40 pounds.

### PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Upper Pines

# VOLUNTEER GROUP PROJECT CATALOG

## STANDARD PATHWAY GROUP PROJECT REQUESTS

By requesting one of these projects, you agree to all listed details.

### April

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
1	Fresh Coats for First Responders	Upper Pines	4/19/26	4/23/26	4/20-4/21	10	

### May

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
2	Campground Cleanup	Upper Pines	5/1/26	5/3/26	5/2	12	
3	Forestry Bark Beetle Surveying	Yellow Pine	5/10/26	5/17/26	5/11-5/14	15	Strenuous
4	Weed Warriors - Early Season	Yellow Pine	5/12/26	5/14/26	5/13	15	

<b>5</b>	Wawona Outdoor Cleanup	Wawona	5/15/26	5/17/26	5/16	12	
<b>6</b>	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	5/15/26	5/17/26	5/16	12	
<b>7</b>	Forestry Bark Beetle Surveying	Yellow Pine	5/17/26	5/24/26	5/18-5/21	15	Strenuous
<b>8</b>	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	5/22/26	5/24/26	5/23	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
<b>9</b>	Forestry Bark Beetle Surveying	Yellow Pine	5/25/26	5/31/26	5/27-5/29	15	Strenuous
<b>10</b>	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	5/29/26	5/31/26	5/30	20	

# June

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
11	Weed Warriors - Bull Thistle	Yellow Pine	6/3/26	6/5/26	6/4	15	
12	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	6/12/26	6/14/26	6/13	20	
13	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	6/16/26	6/18/26	6/17	18	
14	Weed Warriors - Ackerson	Hodgen Meadows	6/24/26	6/26/26	6/25	15	
15	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	6/26/26	6/28/26	6/27	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
16	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	6/26/26	6/28/26	6/27	20	

# July

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
17	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/19/26	7/21/26	7/20	30	
18	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/20/26	7/22/26	7/21	25	
19	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	7/24/26	7/26/25	7/25	20	
20	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/26/26	7/28/26	7/27	30	
21	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/27/26	7/31/26	7/28-7/29	30	
22	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	7/28/26	7/30/26	7/29	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.

# August

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
23	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	8/2/26	8/4/26	8/3	30	
24	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	8/2/26	8/6/26	8/4 and 8/5	30	
25	Fruit Harvesting	Upper Pines	8/5/26	8/7/26	8/6	12	
26	Fruit Harvesting	Upper Pines	8/6/26	8/8/26	8/7	12	
27	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	8/14/26	8/16/26	8/15	20	
28	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	8/14/26	8/16/26	8/15	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
29	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	8/28/26	8/30/26	8/29	20	

## September

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
30	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	8/31/26	9/2/26	9/1	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
31	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	9/11/26	9/13/26	9/12	20	
32	Weed Warriors - Bull Thistle	Yellow Pine	9/30/26	10/2/26	10/1	15	
33	Restoration, Valley	Yellow Pine	9/30/26	10/2/26	10/1	15	

# October

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
34	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	10/2/2026	10/4/26	10/3	20	
35	Yosemite Valley Restoration	Yellow Pine	10/5/26	10/9/26	10/6-10/7	15	
36	Yosemite Valley Restoration	Yellow Pine	10/20/26	10/24/26	10/21-10/22	15	
37	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	10/23/26	10/25/26	10/24	20	

## OTHER OPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

If you missed the deadline for the lottery projects of 2026, please consider alternate options for volunteering!

### Drop-in Programs within Yosemite National Park

For individuals who would like to volunteer while vacationing in Yosemite, we have several “drop-in” opportunities for individuals to participate in throughout the year. To check out a current listing of drop-in events, [click here](#).

#### Additional Drop-in Programs

Additional Drop-in Programs include Earth Day, National Park Week, Junior Ranger Day, Apple Picking Day, and Yosemite Facelift. [Click here](#) for the current list of drop-in events.

### Partner Volunteer Projects

To sign up for one of these projects planned with partners, please visit the websites listed. Unlike other projects in this catalog which are designed for volunteers who come to the park as an organized group, these projects are for individual volunteers who would like to join with other individuals for a group volunteer project. Most of the organizations require that volunteers become members to participate.

#### YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

Yosemite Conservancy offers all kinds of projects and opportunities, mostly week-long or month-long. See the Yosemite Conservancy website for application and details: [Yosemite Conservancy](#)

#### CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM (CVIP)

(In partnership with REI)

See the Conservation Volunteers International Program website to learn more and to sign up: [Conservation VIP](#)

#### SIERRA CLUB

See the Sierra Club Outings website for qualifications and application process: [Sierra Club - National](#)

#### WILDERNESS VOLUNTEERS

See the Wilderness Volunteer website for qualifications and to sign up: [Wilderness Volunteers](#)

#### VOLUNTEER VACATIONS – WITHIN NATIONAL PARKS!

[Click here to read the article and find out more.](#)

### Find Your Park

Use this tool to find a park nearby that might have volunteering opportunities for you: [Find Your Park](#)

**If you have any questions, please contact us at [yose\\_volunteers@nps.gov](mailto:yose_volunteers@nps.gov)**