

2021 MODIFIED PROJECT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS: COVID-19 GUIDELINES

**1st edition
November 15, 2020**



**WILDERNESS
VOLUNTEERS**
Giving Something Back

DEFINITIONS

- **WV-** Wilderness Volunteers
- **PPE-** Personal Protective Equipment
- **CDC-** Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- **Appropriate physical distance-** 6+ feet between individuals from different households
- **Same-household volunteers-** volunteers coming from the same physical household before a project

RESOURCES

- [CDC: Coronavirus Situation Summary](#)
- [CDC: State Health Department Link Directory](#)
- [WHO: Rolling updates on the Coronavirus](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Travel Advisory](#)
- [John Hopkins University: COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

Per current WV policy leaders will turn away anyone who shows up to a service project with any cold or flu-like symptoms. (This includes leaders and agency personnel.) If anyone on a service project begins to feel any cold or flu-like symptoms they will be quarantined and removed from the project as quickly as possible.

BEFORE THE PROJECT

Monitoring your health

- Everyone involved in the project is expected to be responsible and honest about their health before, during, and after the project.
- WV will require participants to monitor their health 14-days prior to the meeting date of a project for COVID-19 symptoms.
- WV will request that participants self-quarantine (avoid contact with people outside your household) for 14-days prior to the initial meeting date of the project if possible.

- COVID-19 symptoms to look for include:
 - Fever (A reading of 100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater)
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - New cough
 - Chills
 - Shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain/aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion
 - Runny nose
 - Nausea
 - Diarrhea

- We request that project participants let the office know if they have any medical conditions or unrelated physical symptoms that could be confused with the symptoms of COVID-19. (Examples would be a chronic cough, seasonal allergies, etc.) If you have suffered from allergies in an outdoor setting in the past, we ask that you begin preparing for them in advance and start taking your preferred allergy medications at least a week before the project begins. This will prevent you (and the project leaders) from having a scare on the project should your allergies kick into high gear once you get to camp.

- We cannot stress enough that if you are not feeling well when you're preparing for or travelling to a project, please either **STAY HOME or RETURN HOME**. A service project in a remote area is not the place to be if you aren't feeling well, whether it is a sprained ankle, a cold, the flu, or coronavirus. Your safety and well-being depends on your being honest about your health with both yourself and your project leaders.

Pre-project health screening

- All project participants will be asked to complete a pre-project screening questionnaire 72-48 hours preceding the meeting date of their project and submit it to the WV office.
 - The pre-project WV screening questionnaire can be:
 - completed digitally and submitted via email (a photo or a scan).
 - completed through a Google Form.
 - called in over the phone via an appointment.
 - As a last resort, it may be completed by hand and mailed to the office. If you must mail it in, **please provide enough time for the office to receive it and review it.**

- The WV screening questionnaire can be found on our website.

- Project participants may also be asked to complete some form of agency (Forest Service/Park Service/etc.) pre-project COVID-19 screening questionnaire or health assessment prior to the beginning of the project or at the meeting location.

Traveling to and from a project

- WV strongly encourages participants for plan travel that:
 - 1) avoids crowded places
 - 2) avoids traveling in enclosed spaces with people they don't live with
 - 3) allows you to wear proper PPE and maintain appropriate physical distances
- Some agencies may impose geographic restrictions for all volunteers (i.e. only allowing Oregon residents or people who have quarantined in Oregon for a certain period of time to volunteer on an Oregon project). We will inform all volunteers of any such requirements as soon as we hear about them. If you are unable to attend a project due to new agency COVID-19 restrictions such as these you will be entitled to a full refund.
- Regardless of mode of travel, all participants should:
 - Wash your hands often
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - Keep at least six feet of distance from people outside your household whenever possible
 - Wear a mask when in public
 - Carry and use sanitizing wipes to clean your hands and/or high use surfaces you contact
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Avoid dine-in restaurants
- For the health and safety of our volunteer crews, carpooling to or from projects with other volunteers (from outside your household) should be avoided.

Securing travel accommodations

- Going forward WV will tentatively decide if a project is a go or no-go at the 60-day mark (or the 70-day mark for all projects outside of the contiguous U.S.) based on the information we have at that time. You will be notified of the decision from either the WV office or your project leaders.
- Project participants should understand that even if a project is cleared to proceed at the 60/70-day mark, it is still possible that it will be canceled at the last minute if we receive new information or there are new developments that impact the area or the project. Our first priority is the health and safety of our volunteer crew and we will always err on the side of caution.
- WV highly recommends that all participants thoroughly read and understand the cancellation policies involved with any travel arrangements they plan to make. Make sure you can live with the refund and credit/transfer policies so that there are no surprises.
- WV highly recommends not finalizing any travel reservations until after the 30-day mark before a project is set to start. Waiting to plan your travel may help you avoid potential

cancellation/change fees and other hassles in the event we are forced to cancel a project.

- For the health and safety of our volunteer crews, shared accommodations (rental cars, hotels, etc) should only be shared with volunteers from within the same household.

Agency information

- WV will share any relevant agency (Forest Service, Park Service, etc.) COVID-19 materials, questionnaires, etc. that we receive with the volunteers for the related project(s).

PARTICIPANT GEAR ADDITIONS

- Participants need to bring at least **two** reusable masks for the project. One will be used during camp time and the other will be used throughout our workday when appropriate physical distancing isn't possible.
- At a minimum, the masks need to be dual-layer. A 2 layer mask with an area for an additional filter layer insert is recommended. Here's an article on [how to evaluate a good face mask with 45 places you can buy one from.](#)
- Neck gaiters or buffs are **not an acceptable type of face mask.**
- We **highly** suggest participants bring a personal thermometer into the field to assist in self-monitoring their health throughout the project. Checking your own temperature in the mornings/evenings can be a helpful tool when self evaluating your health.
- Participants need to bring:
 - their own handwashing soap/hand sanitizer for personal use throughout the project (hike in/out, remote bathroom situations, etc). Biodegradable soap is preferred. Your project leaders will bring hand soap for the group but in these days of extra handwashing bringing some of your own will make sure the group doesn't run out.
 - A personal bathroom kit. This should include a roll of toilet paper in a watertight ziplock bag and a small hand shovel/trowel (if needed for the specific project- your leaders will let you know if this is required ahead of time).
 - 2 small hand drying towels for personal use throughout the project. Everyone will dry their own hands on their own towel(s).
 - 1 small net dish drying bag (laundry delicates washing bags work well) to dry your washed dishes separately from others after meals. We will likely hang these on a clothesline to dry.

- Please consider bringing an umbrella or a small tarp with some rope to make your own rain protection during meals. Historically we have put up one big tarp for people to gather under to eat when it is raining but this doesn't allow for appropriate physical distancing. Folks should plan on their own personal rain protection for meal or leisure times.

INITIAL PROJECT MEETING

- When meeting the leaders/group at the arranged meeting location be sure to wear your mask and practice appropriate physical distancing.
- Your leaders will greet everyone, discuss procedures, conduct a brief private health screen, and collect signed medical releases/waivers from everyone.
- Health screens will consist of your temperature being taken by a leader and/or an agency representative and a few screening questions from our questionnaire. Volunteers may also have to complete an additional health screen from our partnering agency.
- Health screens will be done as privately as possible and one volunteer at a time.
- Any person with a fever (a reading of 100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater) **will not be allowed to participate on a service project.**
- Please be prepared at the initial meeting to show the project leaders the additional required equipment listed above (masks, handsoap, bathroom kit, mesh dish bag, etc.)
- Please come with your WV medical release and waiver completed and ready to go.

BACKPACKING PROJECTS

Hiking in/hiking out

- Wearing a mask during strenuous physical activity can be difficult. We don't expect volunteers to mask up while backpacking as long as they are able to maintain reasonable physical distancing parameters.
- We recommend backpackers maintain a 10 foot+ distance between themselves when backpacking unless a specific circumstance dictates otherwise (an example might be a stream crossing when backpackers need to cross together using a line).
- For safety we also don't want folks spaced out too far when backpacking- you should still be able to see/call out to the person in front of or behind you. Your leaders will make sure everyone knows what to expect for your specific hike in/out.
- All participants should stop during the hike in/out as needed (water, snack, bathroom, pack adjustment, hot spots, etc). Please let folks around you know if you are stopping for a break so they can maintain appropriate physical distance or mask up as needed.

- If you come across hikers, please ask the approaching hikers to hold up for a moment to give our volunteer crew time to position themselves 6ft away and/or ensure their masks are on.

AROUND CAMP

Front country & backpacking

- Everyone is expected to wear masks when hanging out in or around basecamp and to maintain appropriate physical distance (6+ feet) whenever possible.
- **Regular hand washing is more important than ever.** Leaders will set up handwashing stations and go over hand washing protocol, how often you should be washing, the procedures for refilling our handwashing bags, etc. to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- The project leader(s) will select a site for the group kitchen and the bear hang (if one is used) and then help participants find appropriate tent sites.
- Each volunteer group (those outside of the same household) should spread their tents out at least 10 feet apart if possible. Tent sites should still be selected avoiding snags and other hazards and using LNT principles (durable surfaces). Tent spacing will likely also depend on space available.
- Leaders will ask for your assistance setting up basecamp (hanging a tarp in the kitchen, digging a sump, digging a latrine, etc.) if needed. Please remember to maintain appropriate distances and wear a mask if more than one volunteer helps with a particular task.
- Camp chairs should be spaced out 6 ft+ between volunteers who are not in the same household. Be sure to mark your camp chair so they don't get mixed up if more than one person ends up having the same chair.
- Leaders will still make sure there is treated/potable water available in camp for folks to fill their personal bottles with as needed. Please be sure to bring **wide-mouth bottles** to allow you to fill your bottle without touching the nozzle of the water container.

MENU PLANNING & FOOD CONSIDERATIONS

- We will be transitioning from our typical daily buffet style lunch setup to a “snack bag” model for project lunches. Each volunteer will get a “snack bag” at the beginning of the project that will contain a week’s worth of lunch/break snacks. Volunteers will shop in their own bag each day and select which snacks they’d like to take along for that day.

Please do not trade snacks with other volunteers.

- We will also be transitioning away from the communal offering of project beverages (other than coffee) at meals. Instead we will provide “beverage packs” containing beverages (teas, hot chocolates, sugar, creamer, etc) for each volunteer at the beginning of the project. These will be created using the beverage selections you provided on your application so make sure that information is correct/up to date. If you run out of something you can always ask the leaders to replenish your supply.

*Please note coffee and hot water will still be available at meals
(coffee at breakfast only) and leaders will go over serving procedures*

- Your project leaders will handle all the food and will be preparing and serving all meals (helping in the kitchen will no longer be on the chore list). Participants will be asked to stay out of the kitchen area. Your leaders will go over mealtime serving procedures with everyone on the first day.
- Please make sure your ziplocks, bottles, cups, bowls, utensils, etc. are clearly marked with your name or another identifying feature (colored duct tape for example) to prevent any confusion or accidental handling by others. (Like marking your luggage at the airport- try to use something you can see without having to pick up the item to identify it.)

MONITORING YOUR OWN HEALTH

- Everyone involved in the project is expected to be responsible and honest about their health before and during the project. We are all in this together and have to be up front and actively communicating to make sure we all stay healthy and happy.
- Please be sure you are aware of common COVID-19 symptoms (see Before the project: Monitoring your health) and consciously monitor how you are feeling during the project.
- If you have any symptoms or issues that you are concerned about please speak with a leader as soon as possible and let them know what’s going on. From hot spots to a headache to not being able to sleep- if your leaders don’t know about it they can’t help you with it.
- We recommend that you bring a personal thermometer so you can monitor your own temperature whenever you’d like. Your leaders will have a thermometer available also.

WORKING IN THE FIELD

- You should bring two pairs of work gloves with you on each service project.
- Please bring at least one mask into the field for the workday and wear it whenever the group assembles for instructions/demos and whenever you are working in proximity (unable to maintain social distance) to other volunteers.

- If you're passing someone and are unable to physically distance while doing so, both parties should put their masks on.
- We will defer to our partnering agency regarding tool usage, swap, and sanitization.
- Volunteers should only handle tools with gloved hands and your work gloves should be treated as "dirty". (Basically pretend your gloves and the tools could be covered in poison ivy!) Do not touch your face with your gloves, and be sure to remove them before handling other personal items, etc.
- Following up from the above point be sure to wash your hands and/or apply hand sanitizer after removing your gloves and before handling personal items or eating/drinking.
- If the group comes across hikers, please ask the hikers to hold up and give our volunteer crew a moment to either position themselves 6ft away or ensure their masks are on.

POST PROJECT

- The Program Manager will follow up with each volunteer via email after the project.
- If you develop any symptoms within 14 days after a project that you feel could be COVID-19 (or if you test positive for COVID-19) please let the WV office know immediately:

aidalicia@wildernessvolunteers.org

ashely@wildernessvolunteers.org

info@wildernessvolunteers.org

or call **928-255-1128**.

- If anyone on a project develops symptoms or tests positive within the 14-day post-project window, the office will inform all project participants and related agency contacts as soon as possible.