

January 23, 2025

Dear Volunteer Groups:

We hope to find you well in 2025. Thank you for your past and future service to Yosemite National Park. Just as in previous years, I intend to use this first page to introduce a few changes to our program in the coming year.

You will find the 2025 Group Volunteer Project Guide and Catalog in the pages that follow, including important information regarding signing up for a project, a description of available projects, and our calendar.

Please note this year the Volunteer Program has seen significant changes in staffing, and so there are new names and faces to get to know on the other side of your messages! We welcome your patience and understanding as new staff get to know and improve existing procedures in planning.

The due date for entering the placement lottery is February 17, 2025. Requests made any time before 11:59 pm on February 17th will be placed in a lottery to determine order of assignment. Requests received February 18th or later will be assigned a queue number in the order received. Please read the “Volunteer Program Guidelines for Groups” section carefully for more information.

Thank you for your spirit of service and willingness to volunteer your time and energy at Yosemite and other naturally and culturally significant places. We wish you the best of luck and a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Sally Martinez
Volunteer Program Manager
yose_volunteers@nps.gov

2025 PROJECT REQUEST PROCESS:

THE 2025 LOTTERY ENTRY DUE DATE IS February 17, 2025 (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.

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 February 17th** will be assigned their number in the queue at random by lottery. Requests received after February 18th 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 a packet to your group leader with required forms and information about your project. 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:**

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

BASIC VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:

- Your group is between the sizes 6-20 people 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

Perk Up Yellow Pine Project

DESCRIPTION:

Yellow Pine Volunteer Campground Hosts hundreds of park volunteers every year. This work project will include improvements and updates to the campground facility as well as preparing the campground for opening for the 2025 season. Tasks to include raising and leveling bear boxes throughout the campground facility, updating picnic tables (scraping, sanding, moving, etc.), general cleaning, firewood splitting, other tasks as needed.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 18
- Group Size: Max 10
- Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous
- Ability to use hand tools and basic power tools
- Ability to lift heavy objects

PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine

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, dependent on park needs. Volunteers may be asked to assist in cleaning out campground and picnic area fire pits and grills, as well as perform other general campground cleanup work. They will be shoveling ash and debris, which may be hot, and carrying the ash and other litter by bucket to a collection point for disposal. 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: 5
- Group Size: Max 12 or 25
- 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 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

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 13
- Group Size: Max 12
- Difficulty: Easy to strenuous depending on orchard and task
- Have form of transportation and willing to drive around Yosemite National Park as needed.

PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine

Weed Warriors

DESCRIPTION:

Bull thistle is a non-native invasive plant that is most commonly found in open, recently disturbed areas in thickets. Volunteers are needed year after year to stop the spread of these thickets after construction, fire, tree fall, or other disturbance. When infestations are kept in check native vegetation will thrive and push out the invasives. Volunteers will need to hike 2-5 miles a day surveying meadow for bull thistle and then shear their roots with a shovel or loppers before removing them from the ground. Projects take place in full sun in the some of the hottest times of the year, so they are classified as strenuous. Due to increasing intensity and frequency of heat waves in the park, we ask you to stay flexible as we may move the work time up an hour to start during a cooler time of day, we may end early to avoid afternoon heat, and we may need to take more frequent breaks in order to stay safe and complete work.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 16, and Seniors cautioned.
- Work schedule might start as early as 8am in hotter conditions.
- Group Size: Max 18 *unless otherwise indicated.*

- 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

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 of 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.

Seed Collection

DESCRIPTION:

Seed collection is a detail-oriented job that requires you to learn how to identify multiple native plants when their seeds have matured (past their flowering stage). This work can be tedious and will require stooping for long periods of time, walking over uneven meadow terrain, and exposure to full sun for long periods of time. We collect a diversity of seeds including grasses, sedges, flowering plants, shrubs, and trees. These seeds form the foundation for our many and ongoing restoration projects throughout the park at varying elevations.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 12
- Group Size: Max 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

- Tuolumne Meadows / Tuolumne Meadows

Yosemite Zero Heroes

DESCRIPTION:

This multi-day project is targeted to our youngest 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

- Yosemite Valley / Yellow Pine

Mounting Bear Lockers

DESCRIPTION:

Yosemite National Park is home to hundreds of American black bears; these bears have a voracious appetite. They also are incredibly curious and have an amazing sense of smell. This combination tempts them to seek our high-calorie food. Sometimes bears that routinely get our food become aggressive and sometimes have to be killed as a result. By storing your food properly, you can prevent a bear's unnecessary death. Fortunately, Yosemite utilizes bearproof food lockers throughout the park to allow visitors to store their food and keep bears away from unnatural food sources. Volunteers will assist the wildlife team by positioning and tightening bolts onto 20 300lb bear lockers. Volunteers will be using work gloves, and 4-6 people will use lifting straps to lift and position a bear locker onto pressure-treated wood footings. Volunteers will then have the option of either using battery drill or hand wrench to tighten 4 large bolts to connect the locker to the footings.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum Age: 18
- Group Size: Max 10
- Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous
- Have form of transportation and willing to drive around Yosemite National Park as needed.

PROJECT / CAMPSITE LOCATION

- Tuolumne Meadows / Tuolumne Meadows

VOLUNTEER GROUP PROJECT CATALOG

STANDARD PATHWAY GROUP PROJECT REQUESTS

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

May

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
1	Campground Cleanup	Upper Pines	5/2/25	5/4/25	Saturday 5/3, 9am-3pm	18	
2	Perk Up Yellow Pine Project	Yellow Pine	5/11/25	5/17/25	Monday 5/12-Thursday 5/15, 9am-3pm	10	
3	Wawona History Center Cleanup	Wawona	5/12/25	5/14/25	Tuesday 5/13, 9am-3pm	12	For groups 16 years and older.
4	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	5/16/25	5/18/25	Saturday 5/17, 9am-3pm	18	
5	Weed Warriors	Yellow Pine	5/19/25	5/23/25	Wednesday 5/21 and Thursday 5/22, 9am-3pm	15	
6	Weed Warriors	Yellow Pine	5/28/25	5/30/25	Thursday 5/29, 9am-3pm	15	

June

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
7	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	5/30/25	6/1/25	Saturday 5/31, 9am-3pm	25	
8	Weed Warriors	Yellow Pine	6/9/25	6/11/25	Wednesday 6/10, 9am-3pm	15	
9	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	6/16/25	6/18/25	Tuesday 6/17, 9am-12pm	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
10	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	6/20/25	6/22/25	Saturday 6/21, 9am-3pm	12	

July

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
11	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	7/4/25	7/6/25	Saturday 7/5, 9am-3pm	25	
12	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/8/25	7/12/25	Thursday, 9am-3pm	15	
13	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	7/11/25	7/13/25	Saturday, 9am-12pm	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
14	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	7/11/25	7/13/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	12	
15	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	7/25/25	7/27/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	25	
16	Fruit Harvesting	Yellow Pine	7/26/25	7/28/25	Sunday, 9am-3pm	15	

August

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
17	Seed Collection	Tuolumne Meadows	8/1/25	8/3/25	Saturday, 8am-2pm	15	Strenuous
18	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	8/4/25	8/6/25	Thursday, 9am-12pm	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
19	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	8/15/25	8/17/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	25	
20	Seed Collection (Tuolumne Meadows)	Tuolumne Meadows	8/26/25	8/30/25	Wednesday and Thursday, 9am-3pm	15	Strenuous
21	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	8/29/25	8/31/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	12	

September

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
22	Yosemite Zero Heroes	Yellow Pine	9/3/25	9/5/25	Thursday, 9am-12pm	18	Moderate, only for groups serving children younger than 10 years old.
23	Mounting Bear Lockers	Tuolumne Meadows	9/26/25	9/28/92	Saturday, 9am-12pm	10	Ideal for people willing to lift heavy objects as a team. Ideal group size is 8-10 people.

October

Project Number	Project Name	Campground	Check-In	Check-Out	Project Schedule	Max Number of Volunteers	Special Notes
24	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	10/3/25	10/5/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	25	
25	Campground Cleanup	Yellow Pine	10/24/25	10/26/25	Saturday, 9am-3pm	12	

OTHER OPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

If you missed the deadline for the lottery projects of 2024, 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