

Park Naturalists

Information & Application Package



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What is the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program?

The Volunteers in Parks Program (VIP) is a public participation program designed to bring the ideas and efforts of volunteers together with the City of Nanaimo, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture in order to create, develop and improve our parks and open spaces. This program utilizes the talents, skills and energy of volunteers to develop, maintain and beautify Nanaimo's many new and old open spaces, parks and trails.



Keighley Park Playground development completed in the summer of 2005 through the Volunteers in Parks Program.

Who Can Volunteer?

Anyone can volunteer his or her ideas, hands, time or supplies. A single individual, a group of neighbours, a club and even small businesses are encouraged to participate in this program.

What are the Different Ways to Volunteer?

There are many examples of VIP activities around town. Volunteers can serve as Park Wardens, Park Gatekeepers and Park Naturalists. Volunteers can also work on projects, such as developing neighbourhood playgrounds, planting boulevard trees, beautification, invasive plant removal and hosting a block party.

For more information on all the VIP Programs, refer to the Volunteers in Parks Program Overview Package.

What is a Park Naturalist?

Park Naturalists assist the Nanaimo Parks Operations Department in building awareness, understanding and appreciation of the cultural and natural environment in our park and trail system. Interpretive signage, nature walks and educational brochures, kiosks and centres are important tools in providing park visitors with access to the natural and cultural history of the City of Nanaimo. Park Naturalists use their unique talents to aid the Parks Operations Department in providing a quality park experience and help those who simply may want directions or information about Nanaimo and/or local parks, trails and facilities.

Volunteer Naturalist Duties

- Assist in the drafting of interpretive signage and/or brochure and display materials.
- Assist in the leading or accompanying of guided walks throughout parks on various topics.
- Share enthusiasm and knowledge of the environment while visiting Nanaimo's parks and trails.
- Record select statistics (such as bird and plant counts) in parks.
- Perform some daily housekeeping tasks, such as restocking brochure racks, floor sweeping and checking that there is an adequate supply of toilet paper in the washrooms.
- Assist at City of Nanaimo parks special events and community events.



Preparation of interpretive sign content can be a task for volunteers. The Parks Department will then take the content and create a sign from it. This sign is in Neck Point Park.

Desired Skills, Attitude & Knowledge

- Basic natural history knowledge for the Eastern Vancouver Island area (for example, some birds, major trees, native plants, cultural history, etc.).
- Resourceful and reliable with an ability to work alone with a willingness to learn.
- Comfortable relaying information to others, including children.
- Reliable transportation to and from the park in all seasons and weather.
- Willingness to wear City of Nanaimo VIP identification while at an event.
- Show initiative by working with current programs and developing new interpretive walks, signs, brochures, etc. as needs and information gaps are identified.
- Ability to provide two personal references and pass a criminal record check.

*Observing
nature as a
Park Naturalist.*



Commitment

- Able to make to commit to programs as they arise.
- Provide adequate notice of intention of leaving or not being able to continue volunteer duties.
- Support the mission statement and management of Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture.

Benefits of Being a Volunteer

- Opportunities to develop communication skills and expand knowledge of parks and trails.
- Formal and informal recognition for efforts.
- 2 for 1 recreation passes available
- Relevant training and supplies provided.
- City of Nanaimo clothing.
- Insurance coverage while in the parks.
- Receive VIP newsletters.



Having fun with others through the Park Naturalist Program.

Training & Supervision

- Park naturalists are directly supervised by City of Nanaimo, Parks Recreation and Culture staff.
- VIP program is managed by City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.
- Attend an orientation session and shadow another volunteer for a shift.



Volunteers planting riparian vegetation to enhance habitat.

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Know what is expected of you.
- Be introduced to the relevant staff.
- Know how you fit into the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.
- Be properly supervised (someone to refer to for proper instructions and information).
- Expect recognition for work well done.
- Be informed of changes in conditions surrounding your assignment.
- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Be given feedback if you are not performing your assignment as expected.
- Be covered under the City of Nanaimo's VIP Insurance while in the park doing park work or enjoying the park.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- Be reliable.
- Wear your name badge/hat/vest while volunteering in the parks.
- Show interest in the assignment and in City of Nanaimo parks.
- Respect the confidentiality of information.
- Provide the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department with adequate notice of your intentions to leave or not being able to complete or continue your volunteer duties.
- Respect the formal channels established by the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.
- Carry out to the best of your ability what is expected of you.
- Be honest.
- Call for help if you need it.



Volunteers in Parks.

What's OK & Not OK When Working as a Parks Volunteer?

OK:

- Trim trail 'touchers' with hand pruners (using the appropriate technique).
- Dismantle old fire rings you discover in parks.
- Remove garbage, broken glass, needles, etc., with proper techniques.
- Talk to your friends and family about your role.
- Call the after-hours pager at 758-5222.
- Move small fallen trees to prevent new trails from being created.
- Safely clean branches and debris off designated park trails.
- Record license plates of suspicious vehicles and their direction of travel.
- Call the Parks Operations Supervisor with any questions at 755-7505.
- Approach visitors about parks bylaws and appropriate conduct.
- Record details of bylaw incidents and park problems.
- Hand out maps and program brochures.

NOT OK:

- Use any power tool or saw to clear trails (pruners only, please).
- Dismantle any hot/warm fire rings (please extinguish as best you can, then call staff).
- Tell any fibs – visitors will always find out the truth (e.g. I can give you a ticket...).
- Confiscate alcohol.
- Follow a visitor out of the park to record license plate.
- Phone park users on behalf of City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.
- Enter into any situation where you feel your safety is at risk.
- Be less than diplomatic when representing the City of Nanaimo.
- Allow your dog to go off trail, to approach other visitors or their animals, to chase wildlife or fail to pick up after your dog.
- To physically block or dissuade a park visitor on a path even if visitor is breaking a bylaw.

Mission Statement of Parks, Recreation & Culture

The Nanaimo Parks, Recreation and Culture Department strives to “enhance the quality of life and leisure in Nanaimo.” In order to achieve this mission, the following goals have been established:

- To be aware of the developing leisure requirements of our community.
- To be innovative and responsive in leading or facilitating the delivery of services that meets the needs of our community.
- To establish and maintain a system of facilities, parks and open spaces that meets the needs of our community.
- To be safe, accessible and fun.
- To be active in fostering Nanaimo as a healthy community.
- To market our services, facilities, parks and open spaces to Nanaimo residents and then visitors.
- To seek efficiencies that maximize taxpayer benefit and to maintain a net operating cost that meets the City’s 5-Year Financial Plan.



Family at Neck Point Park.

Nanaimo Park and Trail System

Some of Nanaimo's greatest assets are its parks and trails. With over 600 hectares of parkland and 127 kilometres of trails, residents have many wonderful opportunities to enjoy the magnificence of nature.

The City of Nanaimo acquires parkland by various methods; however, purchase of land, donations of land and 5 percent subdivision acquisitions are the most common.

The City of Nanaimo's "Explore our Parks and Trails Brochure" is an excellent resource for the entire park system. The municipal website is also a good source of current information (www.nanaimo.ca).



*P*arks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and Park Bylaw

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department works to strive to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan. This plan was updated in 2004 with considerable public involvement. The plan outlines priorities for the department, such as acquiring public access to the water and increasing our trail system.



The City of Nanaimo also has a park regulation bylaw (No. 3297). This bylaw outlines the hours that parks are open and conduct that is acceptable and unacceptable in parks like cutting down trees, camping overnight, having a dog off-leash, etc. Trees are managed and protected through Bylaw No. 4695.

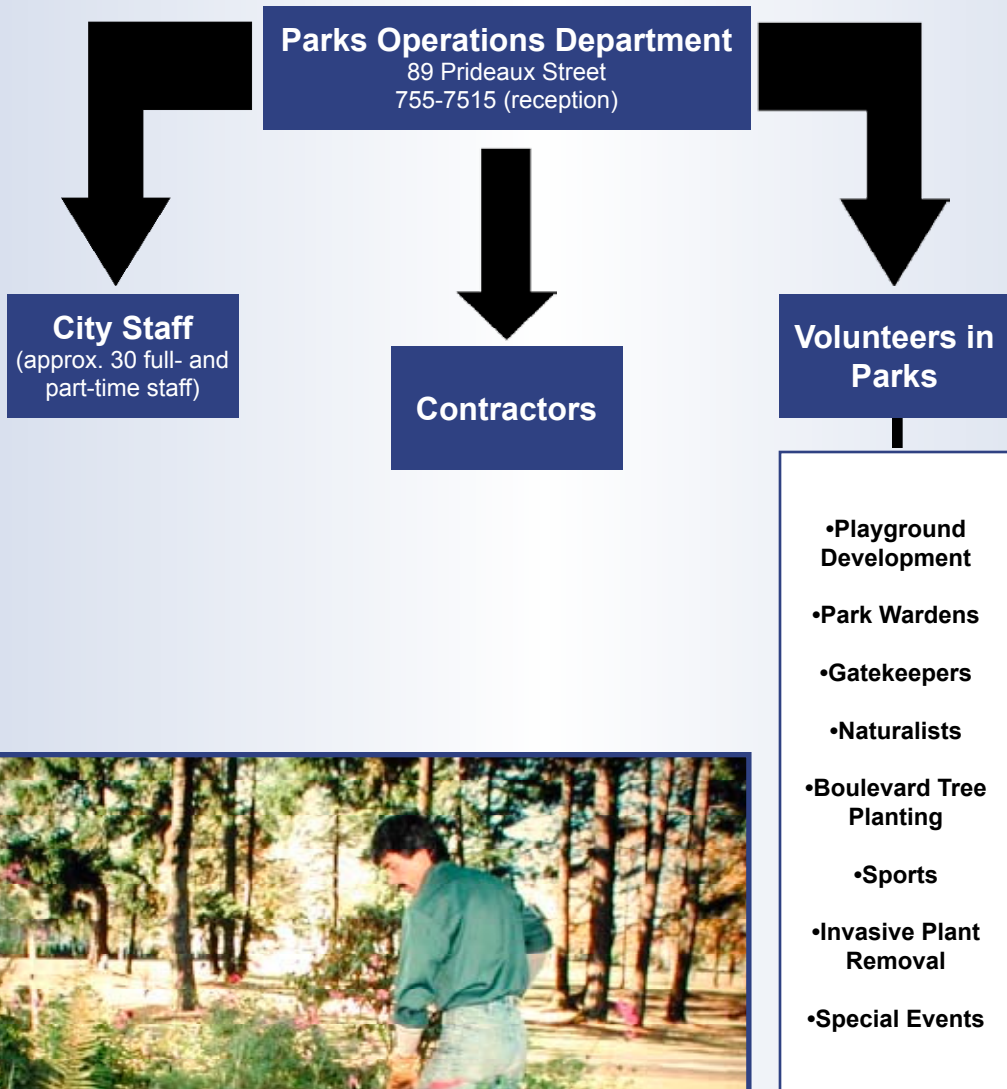
*P*ark and Trail Classification System

Nanaimo's public open space system has 5 key areas. These include City parks (destination parks like Westwood Lake Park and Neck Point Park), Neighbourhood parks (like Keighley Drive Park and Brookwood Park), sports fields (like the fields at Serauxmen Park and Elaine Hamilton Park), trails (like the E & N Trail and Walley Creek Trail) and boulevards (like the plantings along Uplands Drive and in Chase River and the Old City Quarter).

*O*ther Types of Parks

In addition to the 600 hectares of City parkland, Nanaimo has about 600 hectares of other publicly accessible open spaces. This includes Newcastle Island, Petroglyph Park, Morrell Nature Sanctuary and other nature reserves. These areas may be named "parks", but they are owned and/or managed by the Province, Nature's Trust or other societies. If the park is outside of the City boundaries, it may be managed by the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Who Works in Nanaimo's Parks & Trails?



Location of Park Naturalist Activities

Park Naturalists can work in most parks. Interpretive signage is needed in many parks including Brookwood, Saxer and Chase River Estuary Park. Bowen, Colliery Dam, Neck Point, Buttertubs Marsh and Linley Valley (Cottle Lake). These parks are all excellent locations for year-round nature walks. Ideas to further expand nature appreciation in our parks and trails are appreciated.



Hikers investigating a large tree in Linley Valley (Cottle Lake) Park.



Aspengrove students on an interpretive walk in Linley Valley (Cottle Lake) Park.

PARK NATURALIST APPLICATION FORM



Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (Home) _____ Telephone (Work) _____ Fax _____

E-mail Address _____

Age Group 19-20 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

Occupation (past or present) _____

Volunteer Experience _____

Skills or experience relevant to volunteering at City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department (please attach resume if possible) _____

Names and phone numbers of two references (from work or volunteer experience)

1. _____

2. _____

Completed criminal record check form? YES NO

Organizations of which you are now a member _____

Do you have your own transportation? YES NO

City of Nanaimo park where you would like to volunteer _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Why do you want to volunteer for City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department? _____

This application is for the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program. I understand my services must be in conformance with the tasks described in the volunteer position description which I have read and understand. I will perform these tasks on a volunteer basis for a minimum of one year, renewable upon mutual agreement. I understand that I am identified with the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department at all times while wearing VIP identification and that it is my responsibility to be courteous in all contacts with the public and to follow the guidance and decisions of the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.

Date of Application

Volunteer's Signature

1. Call to acknowledge application:

3. Call to accept volunteer:

2. Interview:

4. Orientation:

PARK NATURALIST REFERENCE #1



- Obtain a criminal record check (forms can be obtained from the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Offices at 89 Prideaux Street, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. Check will be paid for by the City of Nanaimo).
- Obtain two personal references (name and number) and submit them on the reference forms.

REFERENCE #1

Applicant's Name _____

Reference Name _____

Reference Address _____

Reference Phone _____

1. Can you tell me how long you've known _____ and in what capacity? _____

2. Our Volunteers in Parks are identified with a name tag, and we hope the public will approach them with questions. How approachable do you feel _____ would be? Can you give me examples? _____

3. If _____ felt it was safe to approach a visitor who was breaking a bylaw and the visitor became rude and angry, how do you think he/she would react? Any examples? _____

4. We ask Volunteers in Parks to submit a short written report four times a year. Do you think he/she would keep up with this? _____

5. Other questions? _____

Thank you for your time.

PARK NATURALIST REFERENCE #2



- Obtain a criminal record check (forms can be obtained from the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Offices at 89 Prideaux Street, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. Check will be paid for by the City of Nanaimo).
- Obtain two personal references (name and number) and submit them on the reference forms.

REFERENCE #2

Applicant's Name _____

Reference Name _____

Reference Address _____

Reference Phone _____

1. Can you tell me how long you've known _____ and in what capacity? _____

2. Our Volunteers in Parks are identified with a name tag, and we hope the public will approach them with questions. How approachable do you feel _____ would be? Can you give me examples? _____

3. If _____ felt it was safe to approach a visitor who was breaking a bylaw and the visitor became rude and angry, how do you think he/she would react? Any examples? _____

4. We ask Volunteers in Parks to submit a short written report four times a year. Do you think he/she would keep up with this? _____

5. Other questions? _____

Thank you for your time.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT



I _____ (print name), am applying to the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department for participation in the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program.

I understand that my services must be in general conformance with the tasks described in the volunteer job description and performed by me on a volunteer basis.

I understand that my commitment to the VIP Program is for a minimum of one year renewable upon mutual agreement.

I understand that I am identified with the City of Nanaimo at all times while wearing VIP identification and that it is my responsibility to:

- be courteous in all contacts with the public.
- follow the guidance and decisions of the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Department.
- refer all media contacts to the City of Nanaimo Parks Operations Supervisor.

Date of Application _____

Volunteer's Signature _____

Accepted _____

City of Nanaimo
Parks, Recreation and Culture Department
500 Bowen Road
Nanaimo BC V9R 1Z7
Telephone: (250) 755-7515
Fax: (250) 753-7383
www.nanaimo.ca



*Park Naturalist
Program.*

PARK NATURALIST QUARTERLY REPORT & SUGGESTIONS



Completed March, June, September and December. Inspection checklists can be attached.
 To be completed and submitted to Susan Moretto, Parks Operations Clerk.

Phone: 755-7515

Fax: 753-7383

E-mail: susan.moretto@nanaimo.ca

Date of Report March June September December

Park Naturalist Name _____

Park Naturalist Contact (e-mail and phone) _____

PARK/TRAIL NAME _____

	Date of Event	Hours Spent	Nature of Involvement	Comments
Month One (Jan, Apr, Jul or Sep)				
Month Two (Feb, May, Aug or Nov)				
Month Three (Mar, Jun, Sep or Dec)				

Interest in further training (explain) _____

Interest in further supplies (explain) _____

Date submitted _____

Public Relations & Suggestions for Park Naturalists

APPROACHING VISITORS:

- Ensure that you are wearing your VIP badge or clothing while on duty.
- Be approachable, friendly, diplomatic, polite and respectful of visitors.
- If you're comfortable, you may engage and educate visitors about park features and park protection.
- Always make eye contact and greet visitors. Know your facts about Nanaimo's parks and trails. Refer visitors to the website or department for questions you can't answer.

WHAT TO SAY WHEN EDUCATING VISITORS ABOUT PARK FEATURES AND REGULATIONS:

- Introduce yourself as a Volunteer in Parks Naturalist, provide your first name if you feel comfortable, and tell them what your role is.
- If you are taking notes, sketching or taking photos, it's likely that other park visitors will approach you and ask you about the work that you are doing in the park.
- If you see someone and want to confront a park user about a regulation infringement, tell them what you want to talk about. It's better to have a conversation than just recite a bylaw. Inform the visitor of the regulations and the reason behind them. Always try to explain the reason for our regulations which is to protect park ecosystems and wildlife and to ensure other visitors also have a safe, pleasant experience.
- If the visitor becomes emotional or tries to argue the regulation, just say, "I'm sorry I've upset you by what I've talked about. Thank you for listening" and walk away.
- Record the incident. Make a note in your report (or phone the Parks Operations Department) with as many details as possible (who, what, when, where, etc.) If there is Parks Operations Department staff on site, please report to them also in case they can follow up.

Sample conversation about park protection issue:

"Hi, my name is Ann. I'm a Park Naturalist, and I help to take care of the park. I'd like to talk to you about dogs in parks. One thing that's not okay in this park is having dogs chasing wildlife. It can compromise the life of water birds as they stop to feed on their long migrations. You can't have your dog running free here, but you can in the dog-off leash area."

As a volunteer Park Naturalist, you will encounter a wide variety of situations. Use common sense and a "safety first" attitude. Your personal safety is most important. Happy volunteering!