



## Want to be a VIP?



*Do you enjoy travel, exploring, learning, and connecting with special places? Do you have hobbies you'd like to pursue in a new setting, such as photography, hiking, or stargazing? Do you enjoy meeting new people from around the world and sharing the wonders of our national parks with them? If your answer is "yes" to any of these, you could make a great VIP—Volunteers In Parks!*

For the past five years, my partner and I have served as volunteers in national parks and other nature-related sites from Alaska to the Texas gulf coast. Although we like the nomadic lifestyle, to live in an RV, and generally volunteer for 3-month periods, that sort of commitment isn't required to become a volunteer in U.S. National Parks. You don't even need to have an RV; many parks provide housing for volunteers. If you would rather stay close to home and volunteer for a short term, your time and contributions would be valued, too. There are a variety of opportunities for VIPs!

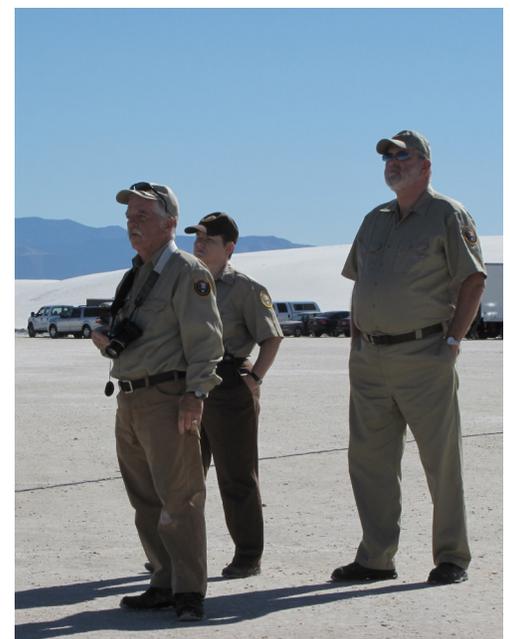
Here at White Sands, for instance, RV and resident volunteers are scheduled to work about 32 hours per week, which includes time for planning and projects. Some of us join rangers and local volunteers at the front desk, greeting visitors, sharing information about the park, and working with kids that

want to become "Junior Rangers." Others work on construction or maintenance projects, such as maintaining the historic facilities for visitors to enjoy and even doing trail maintenance with out in the dunes. Some volunteers even collect fees at entrance stations! It all depends on what you would like to do and work with.

Personally, I enjoy learning about the animals, plants, and geologic features that make White Sands unique in comparison to other places. This knowledge allows me, as well as other volunteers, to lead guided-tours, such as the Sunset Strolls and deliver other ranger programs to visitors. How great is that? It is my "job" to explore all corners of the park and learn as much as I can about this unique place. Then, I get to share its special features with visitors from all over the world. Plus, I can build on my hobbies, such as photography and writing, to work

with rangers on publications and programs. Best of all, I have time to explore the many nuances of White Sands and this fascinating part of the Southwest. Want VIP status? Ask for more information at the visitor center.

—Sandra Noll, Volunteer Ranger



*Volunteers at White Sands*