

PLUMAS-EUREKA STATE PARK ASSOCIATION (PESPA)

PESPA.ORG

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES 2024

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What's a PESPA volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who gives freely of their time and talents. A PESPA volunteer donates their time and talent to supporting Plumas-Eureka State Park and its interpretive and education programs. Our goal is to offer every volunteer something they'll enjoy and find worthwhile during these times in return for their commitment to be a reliable and enthusiastic source of support of PESPA's mission and efforts.

What do PESPA volunteers do?

As a volunteer, you can donate your time in a number of ways. Depending on your interests, you can:

- help staff the museum store, our primary source of revenue;
- join and/or help organize seasonal events;
- help groom and maintain the Park's winter cross-country trails;
- assist efforts to maintain and preserve Park grounds and buildings;
- help keep our website updated and accurate;
- become involved with historical research, documentation, and cataloging;
- edit or contribute to our Ore Cart newsletter;
- photo document PESPA-sponsored activities and organized tour groups;
- assist with publicity efforts;
- find and initiate new ways to support PESPA efforts.

What's expected of me as a PESPA volunteer?

The State of California relies on PESPA's volunteer community to help preserve and protect the beauty and historical artifacts of the Park and to donate their time to enhance the visitor experience. Scheduling and training volunteers to accomplish this goal is one of PESPA's important missions. All volunteers are expected to spend time becoming familiar with the Park's history and regulations, attend volunteer training sessions, and become involved with an activity that supports PESPA's work for the State.

During your first season as an active volunteer, we ask that you:

1. Familiarize yourself with the Plumas-Eureka, Jamison, and Eureka Mills mining complexes and their histories. To help, we'll provide you with a copy of the PESPA publication, *California's Plumas Eureka State Park GOLD*, when you join and we highly recommend Bruce MacGregor's book, *Plumas Eureka On Glass*, which you can purchase

at the museum store at a 10% discount. You'll also find detailed historical and educational material on our website: www.pespa.org;

2. Complete required State volunteer application documents prior to your first day as an active volunteer and demonstrate a clear and accurate knowledge of State Park rules and regulations by the season's end;
3. Attend our Volunteer Kickoff Day in the spring and at least one of the training workshops offered by PESPA each summer season;
4. Shadow one or more of our PESPA docents as they interact with visitors;
5. Take a walk through Johnsville and the Johnsville cemetery to get a sense of their importance and relationship to the Park;
6. Volunteer to work at the museum store or offer your time as a substitute;
7. Assist with our Gold Discovery Days and/or Dinner in the Park events;
8. Choose a volunteer activity or activities that suit your interest or skills and discuss time and scheduling with our volunteer coordinator.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECORDING YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME

An important volunteer responsibility is to record hours worked on the State Parks' Better Impact system. It's easy and we'll provide you with detailed instructions. Once you're entered into the system, computer access to the site using your password will be available at the museum store or you can log in from home. Not only does this ensure those qualifying will receive State Park benefits at the end of the year, but it's an important way to demonstrate to the State that Plumas-Eureka State Park is a vital and active State Park with significant volunteer interest that merits attention when it comes to funding and support.

You can accrue hours by working onsite at the Park, promoting the Park or Park activities offsite, or while working from home on Park-related projects. For example, qualifying hours include:

- working at the Park's museum store, providing tours of the Park and buildings, or helping with Park maintenance;
- promoting the Park at local events, such as local craft fairs or 4th of July celebrations;
- attending training sessions and team building events;
- volunteering at to help with Gold Discovery Days or Dinner in the Park;
- managing or updating our website from home;
- time spend doing publicity outreach;
- researching or cataloging historical documents or assisting with administrative support;
- serving on the PESPA Board of Directors.

What's the difference between a PESPA volunteer and a PESPA docent?

A PESPA docent is a volunteer who has spent time building a body of knowledge about a specific aspect of Plumas-Eureka State Park that they are then able to interpret for visitors to enrich their understanding of the Park and its history. A PESPA docent is a knowledgeable story-teller, part entertainer and part teacher, that brings Plumas-Eureka State Park and the California gold rush to life.

Currently, we have docents interpreting the assay office, wood shop, blacksmith shop, and Moriarty family home. Others have followed their interests into areas of candle making, spinning, and naturalist hikes. There is room for new docents to expand into all these areas, but there are also many other aspects of the Park that deserve to be brought to life for visitors through thoughtful interpretation as well. Many are just waiting for the right interested volunteer. For example, you might want to consider:

- leading an interpretive hike to the upper mining town site of Eureka Mills;
- developing an interpretive tour of the Jamison mine complex;
- greeting arriving visitors with a quick introduction to the mining complex and Park history and pointing out venues open to tour;
- painting a picture for visitors of the lives of the native Maidus or Cornish, Italian, Mexican, and Chinese immigrants living in the area during the 1800s;
- providing an insight into the thinking of the British company that directed the mining operations at the Park from 1872-1910.
- giving a quilting demonstration and explaining the art and importance of quilts in a rural mountain community;
- demonstrating the art of creating a tramp art frame or other activity that kept miners and their families occupied during the long winters on Eureka Peak.

If you are interested in becoming a docent, let your knowledge of the period and the Park's historical details be your guide.

What's does it take to become a PESPA docent?

Once you're on your feet as a volunteer, you'll have become sufficiently familiar with the Park to be able to answer basic questions from the public, but to be a docent you need to be more than a generalist. It takes time and initiative to develop the background knowledge necessary to effectively and correctly interpret a specific aspect of the Park.

Some of our volunteers start working toward becoming a docent their first season at the Park. Others wait until they're comfortable interacting with the public and have found a special interest. Still others find their involvement as a volunteer rewarding on its own. There is no requirement on the level of involvement you choose. Whether you donate your time at the Park as a volunteer or a trained docent, you will have our eternal gratitude for your contribution.

To become an interpretive PESPA docent, you will need to:

- be an active volunteer in good standing;
- have recorded at least 40 volunteer hours, including 4 hours at the museum store;

- have spent at least three mornings or afternoons shadowing docents as they lead interpretive tours or give demonstrations in an area you are interested in;
- attend PESPA training workshops on Park history and interpretive methods, including how to interact comfortably, effectively and sensitively with the public and your fellow docents.
- choose an area of interest and be matched with a mentor for training;
- with help from your mentor, develop and fine-tune your own interpretive story related your specialty and give a least 3 presentations to the public under guidance from your mentor or another qualified PESPA docent;
- demonstrate the ability to independently and accurately interpret your specialty to adults and children, including the ability to field possible questions that fall outside your chosen interest.

Once trained, your mentor or other qualified docent will present your name to the PESPA board for approval as a Plumas-Eureka State Park docent historian.

Are there any benefits to being a PESPA volunteer I should be aware of?

Definitely!

After your first season and annually thereafter, you'll be presented with a State Park pin acknowledging the cumulative number of hours you've donated to the Park as a way to publically say "thank you!"

Volunteers recording over 50 hours of volunteer work per calendar year are awarded a Volunteers in the Parks Program (VIPP) parking pass for all California State Parks within the Sierra District for the following year.

Volunteers recording 200 hours of volunteer work per calendar year will receive a VIPP parking pass for California State Parks statewide for the following year.

All volunteers will receive a 10% discount at the museum store on the purchase of Bruce MacGregor's book, *Plumas Eureka Under Glass*, an important historical resource book for everyone interested in the story of the Park.

Qualified volunteers will have the opportunity to reserve one of four reserved Plumas-Eureka State Park campsites for overnight stays in conjunction with volunteer work associated with PESPA-sponsored activities.

But More Importantly ...

as a member of PESPA's volunteer community, you'll meet new friends, spend time in a thought-provoking and energizing environment guaranteed to lift your spirits, and enjoy the satisfaction that comes from a selfless act that helps preserve a special spot in the beautiful high Sierras and a unique period in California's gold rush history.