

Volunteer

Naturalist

Position Description



Volunteer Naturalists connect visitors to Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' parks and open spaces by sharing their enthusiasm for nature through fun and engaging educational programs.

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources
1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland CO 80537
(970) 619-4552 | larimer.org/nrvolunteer



Volunteer Position Description

Naturalist

Our mission is to establish, protect and manage significant regional parks and open lands providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resources values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.

Position Summary:

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) offers a variety of programming designed to educate and engage people of all ages and backgrounds. Naturalists lead educational programs for all ages on behalf of LCDNR, including guided hikes, school field trips, campground programs, & outreach stations. Naturalists may design their own programs or sign up to lead established programs. Through education, Naturalists inspire curiosity of the natural world and foster stewardship of our natural resources.

Benefits:

- Be an integral part of promoting LCDNR's mission, enhancing the visitor experience, and fostering stewardship values
- Learn from experienced staff and volunteers
- Have access to natural & cultural history resources including a comprehensive library and educational materials (furs, skulls, games, craft supplies and more)
- Gain experience in interpretive program design & facilitation
- Opportunities to expand your knowledge
- Participate in fun volunteer appreciation and social events
- Complete 20+ volunteer hours in a calendar year & receive a LCDNR parking pass



Requirements:

- Interested in natural & cultural history and making a connection with nature
- Good communication skills both written and verbal
- Passionate about learning and enthusiastic about sharing your knowledge with others
- Experience and comfort with speaking to and leading groups of people of all ages and backgrounds
- Prior teaching experience or knowledge is helpful but not required
- Friendly, courteous, respectful, flexible, and a team-player
- Provide your own reliable transportation
- Must take initiative for designing programs or learning established programs
- Willingness to work outside in variable temperatures and weather conditions. Some programs require 2-3 miles of hiking
- Attend all four (4) days of Naturalist training
- Complete a criminal background check
- Understanding and acceptance of potential risk for this volunteer position such as inclement weather, dangerous wildlife encounters, and unpleasant interactions with members of the public

Volunteer Position Description

Naturalist

Duties:

- Required to lead or co-lead four (4) programs of their choice per year
- Represent Larimer County in a friendly, professional manner & deliver an introduction about LCDNR at the start of every program
- Research and study information relevant to the education program including lessons plans
- Use LCDNR stewardship messaging
- Communicate with the Education staff including program feedback, ideas, or concerns
- Know LCDNR Emergency Response Procedures and be prepared to contact help if there is an urgent incident during your program (participant injury, unruly visitor, weather emergency, etc.)
- Abide by all rules, regulations, and safety guidelines while on Larimer County property
- If the primary leader of a program, notify Education staff as soon as possible if a program is canceled due to weather or other factors. Staff will notify registered participants, volunteers & the public
- Naturalists are not required to lead all program types; for example, if a Naturalist prefers to work with children there is no expectation that they will lead an adult-oriented program

Program Specific Duties & Schedule:

School Field Trips

Lead students using established curriculum

- Review and learn lesson plans
- Work with staff and other volunteers in a rotational station or guided hike style program
- Weekday mornings in the spring and fall



Outreach

Engage with visitors at trailheads & reservoirs using established lesson plans & LCDNR stewardship messages

- Topics include rattlesnake safety, trail etiquette, heat safety, bear awareness, etc.
- Weekend mornings spring, summer, & fall

Campground Programs

Engage campers during their stay at LCDNR campgrounds on Saturday evenings

- Design your own program or adapt one of our established programs



Guided Hikes:

Lead a guided hike for the public with the date, time, and location of your choice (occurs year-round)

- Hike topics focus on natural or culture history such as wildflowers, birds, geology, moonlight, etc.
- Adapt an established program or independently purpose, design, & implement programs; responsible for program design all the way to completion. Program topics must meet prior approval

We are always considering new program offerings for our community and are open to our Naturalists' ideas and suggestions.

Training:

- New Volunteer Orientation (1 hour)
- Naturalist training takes place each spring; new Naturalists are required to attend all days of training
 - 3 weekday evenings (4 hours each)
 - 1 Saturday (8 hours)
- Optional to shadow staff or other volunteers prior to leading a program
- Current Naturalists are welcome to join any portion(s) of training as a refresher

Next Steps....

1. Submit a general Volunteer Application
2. Schedule an interview with Volunteer Engagement Staff
3. Submit a Volunteer Naturalist Application
4. Complete a background check
5. Attend Training
 - a. New Volunteer Orientation
 - b. Naturalist Training (see above)
6. Start volunteering!

Questions?

Contact Julie Enderby
Education & Volunteer Specialist
970-619-4552, jenderby@larimer.org

The Larimer County Natural Resources Volunteer Program is not obligated to provide a placement, nor are you obligated to accept the position offered. Opportunities for volunteers are provided without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex or age. Larimer County is committed to equality of opportunity.