

**ADOPT
A PARK**

CITY OF
SAN JOSE
PARKS, RECREATION &
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



[This page intentionally left blank]



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	1
Purpose	2
How to Apply	3
Volunteer Responsibilities	4
Program Responsibilities	6
Volunteer Awards	8
Safety First!	12
Important Contact Information	13
Tools Use in the City Parks	14
Inventory of Tools and Supplies	15
Age Guideline for Tools	17
Master Volunteer Program	18
Master Volunteer Tool List	19
A Word about Weeds	20
Green Waste	24
Graffiti in Our Parks	25
Instructions for Using Better Impact	26
How to Add Hours	27
Mobile App Instructions	28



Welcome to the City of San José's Adopt-A-Park & Adopt-A-Trail Program!

Parks and open spaces play an important role in a vibrant community. With over 200 city parks and 60 miles of urban trail, Adopt-a-Park volunteers serve as a vital role in protecting and enhancing San José's parks, trails, and open spaces.

As a new Adopt-A-Park volunteer, you have joined the hundreds of passionate and dedicated residents who are devoted to the City's neighborhood parks and natural areas.

Director's Message

Thank you for your commitment to the City of San José Adopt-A-Park Program. Your time and skills dedicated to this program benefit all of San José by protecting, preserving, and promoting our community spaces and natural areas across the City.

We hope the variety of volunteer options available offer something for everyone. Thank you for helping us connect people through Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services for an active San José.

Jon Cicirelli

Jon Cicirelli

Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

“Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, they just have the heart

- Elizabeth Andrew

PURPOSE

Adopt-a-Park program recruits, trains, and supports individuals and groups who would like to take an active role in keeping our parks healthy and clean for the entire community.

Who is Eligible?

Everyone is welcome to become part of this exciting and worthwhile program! Individuals, community groups, service clubs, schools, faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations and youth groups are just some examples of volunteers that can adopt a park or trail. All we ask is for each volunteer to have a dedicated spirit that loves parks and loves building community.

PRNS Volunteer Policy

PRNS reserves the right to accept and/or reject an individual or group's offer to volunteer as well as determine the appropriate assignment. Link to the [complete document](#).



Is there an age requirement?

The Adopt-A-Park volunteer should be at least high school age with an adult sponsor who is a signed member of the group. There is no maximum age limit.

What is the commitment?

The minimum commitment for all volunteers is one year of service to your adopted park or trail. We ask that each park receive at least 8 hours per month of donated volunteer time. To maintain a regular presence in the park, volunteers are encouraged to work at their location a minimum of four times per month.

Group of four or more who adopt a park should donate a minimum of 16 hours of service per month. This is a great way for group members to gather at their park and share the experience of working together.

What type of activities and projects can be performed?

Volunteers can clean playgrounds, rake leaves, trim vegetation, paint benches and tables, spread mulch and chip, remove weeds, control invasive plants, plan and execute special projects and of course, pick up litter.

HOW TO APPLY TO BE AN ADOPT-A-PARK VOLUNTEER



Identify your prospective park

Identify the park you would like to adopt and check that it is available with the interactive Adopt-A-Park map, found at bit.ly/AAP-map.



LINK TO MAP



Fill out an application

Next, fill out an Adoption Application for the park as well as a Volunteer Service Agreement for each member of your team. On the application, be sure to let us know your interests and applicable skills and why this area appeals to you. Return these documents by email (PDF only) to adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov or by mail at:

Adopt-A-Park

San José City Hall
200 E Santa Clara St, 9th Floor Tower
San José, CA 95113



Schedule a Volunteer Orientation

Once the application is received, staff will schedule an in-person orientation at your chosen park. During the orientation, you will be introduced to the Volunteer Handbook and will be given a brief history, a tour of your chosen park and a “Welcome Bag” of supplies and tools to get you started.

You are now ready to volunteer in your park!



Note: These steps and forms can be found online at bit.ly/prns-aap

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

You are an integral part of the park maintenance system. As the “eyes and ears” of your designated park, you have the responsibility to report safety issues, hazards and concerns, as well as suggest maintenance work that you, as a volunteer, cannot address.

You have made a commitment to spend a designated amount of time volunteering on park maintenance tasks. And, although we will be in touch, you will perform your duties based on an honor system and independently of any direct supervision.

Below is a list of common tasks for a volunteer:

- Litter pick-up
- Weeding
- Mulching
- Removing suckers
- Tree basin weeding
- Raking leaves
- Removing tape/staples
- Cleaning cobwebs off benches, tables
- Washing and repainting picnic tables
- Removing/reporting graffiti
- Cleaning playgrounds
- Fluffing the fiber in playground
- Repainting park fixtures, walls, or buildings
- Adding decorative chip to bare areas
- Cleaning/painting backboards/dugouts
- Raking/leveling the decomposed granite
- Cleaning drinking fountains
- Trimming bushes
- Pruning flowers/roses
- Sweeping paths, courts, gutters
- Cleaning exercise equipment
- Cleaning park signs
- Caring for natural plant restorations
- Repainting fencing
- Sweeping walkways
- Painting trash cans
- Reporting hazardous concerns

If you are interested in hosting a larger workday event at your park or trail, please contact the Adopt-A-Park staff 4 weeks prior to your anticipated work date. We will be happy to help you plan a successful event!

At times, park staff might need your help with advanced tasks. You may be contacted and given an opportunity to assist in the project. If you are available to help, we would appreciate your support.

Reporting Hours

Volunteers are required to report their hours through Better Impact, an application used by the City of San José to collect volunteer hours. Service hours can be logged at any time, but it is suggested to log in at least once a week. Instructions on how to set up/access your Better Impact account and how to add hours can be found on page 26, "Instructions for Using Better Impact."

Remember each hour that you work counts. If there are two of you and you both work 1 hour, that's 2 hours of volunteer time! If you need help or need an alternative way of reporting, please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Manager for assistance.

Volunteer reporting is extremely important to our program. Not only does it provide data on volunteer participation, but it is how this program is funded. The more support the program receives, the better the program can support the volunteers.

Retirement/Termination

We would greatly appreciate a written notice (by either email or postal service) that you or your group is retiring from the program. All tools and supplies in your possession should be turned in at this time.

Although it is very unusual for a volunteer to be terminated from the program, it can happen.

Some causes for termination can be:

- Discriminatory or violent acts towards fellow volunteers, city employees or park visitors.
- Misrepresentation of the volunteer's role such as impersonating a City worker.
- Harmful acts of vandalism or destruction of city property.
- Breaking city policy on power tool use after 3 consecutive warnings.
- Failure to regularly report hours or communicate with staff in a timely manner.



PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Support for the Volunteer

The program will do its best to supply you with the tools and supplies you need to keep your park clean.

To get you started, we will supply the following items for new adopters:

- Volunteer vests and work gloves
- Litter sticks and garbage bags
- Basic cleaning supplies that include a nontoxic cleaning solution, rags, scrub brush, etc.
- Basic gardening tools such as rakes, brooms, hand weeders, tarps, hand pruners

A detailed listing of tools that are available to borrow can be found on page 14 "Tool Use in the City Parks."

Communication and yearly check-in

We are often the first people to contact if you need anything for your adopted park. If you have a question, need a certain tool, would like to plant trees, talk to us first. If we don't know the answer, we will either pass along the request or find out for you. We are here to support your efforts!

Every quarter or so, we will contact you to see how things are going. We keep an eye on the parks and speak to park staff regularly but with over 200 parks and 60 miles of trail, we may not get to everyone on a regular basis. Please help by reaching out to us!

Each year, we ask that you renew your commitment to the program. If your application is current and your leadership and membership are the same, there is no need to do anything other than communicate that fact. But if you have added members, changed contact information, and/or dropped volunteers, we would like to have you update the required documents.

This process will start at the beginning of each calendar year. We will contact you either by email or phone. We appreciate your patience during this process.

And remember, if you need any support, feel free to contact us!



WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

PHONE: 408-793-4190

CELL: 408-569-9439

EMAIL: adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov



VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Adopt-A-Park program and the City of San José appreciate the hard work and dedication from each volunteer in our program. To show our gratitude, we offer these acknowledgments for your community service.

Adopt-A-Park Plaques

Volunteers that have reached 60 hours or more of volunteer work will receive a plaque with their chosen designation installed on an Adopt-A-Park sign. A maximum of two signs will be placed in a prominent location at their park. This is a great way to let park goers know that this park is being cared for by community members.



Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Award Ceremony

Every year, volunteers are invited to a Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Award Ceremony where they can meet other volunteers, enjoy a catered dinner, and participate in an awards ceremony honoring volunteers throughout the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.



THE PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

The President's Volunteer Service Award is an annual award given to outstanding volunteers who have shown exemplary service volunteering with the City of San José's Adopt-A-Park program. This prestigious award, administered by the Points of Light Foundation and AmeriCorps, strives to recognize the impact that volunteers have on their communities.

The Adopt-A-Park program is a certifying organization that can award individual volunteers who have achieved a qualified amount of hours during the calendar year, January through December. The award includes a signed certificate and your choice of a medal, pin or coin that represents the level the volunteer has achieved.

How to Apply

Volunteers with the Adopt-A-Park program must complete a simple application stating their intention to earn these awards. Please request a PDF of the application. Applicants must also keep track of their hours through a separate Better Impact account and communicate their hours to the Adopt-A-Park office before the deadline of February 1. For instructions on how to set up an account, please email adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov.

How to Track and Report Individual Hours

If the applicant is part of an Adopt-A-Park group, the individual needs to establish their own Better Impact account. This account will be used to separately track the applicant's hours.

Please be sure to write in the Park Adoption information section the name of your adopted park and the words "PVSA applicant."

If the applicant is the sole volunteer for their adopted park, they can continue to use their original Better Impact account to report hours. A separate application for the award is still required.

What are the eligibility requirements for volunteers?

1. The applicant must be a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States (i.e., green card holder).
2. The minimum age for an award is five years old.
3. The applicant must complete eligible service* within a 12-month period (for annual Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards) or over a lifetime (for Lifetime Achievement Awards)
4. As a certifying organization, the Adopt-A-Park program may accept outside volunteer hours from other programs. Please contact the Adopt-A-Park program for more information.

*Eligible service is unpaid acts of volunteer service benefiting others with the following exceptions:

- Service through national service programs that provide a stipend.
 - e.g. Peace Corps, AmeriCorps may count towards the Lifetime Achievement Award, but not for the annual Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards
- Travel stipends, transit/parking passes, membership passes, expense reimbursements, and other nominal volunteer support do not impact service eligibility.

How age level is determined

The age category is determined by the age the person was for at least 7 months within the 12-month calendar year. For example, if the person was 16 for 7 months within the year in question, that person would qualify within the 16-25 age group.

	HOURS FOR AWARD			
AGE GROUPS	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	LIFETIME
KIDS (5 - 10)	26 - 49	50 - 74	75+	4,000
TEENS (11 - 15)	50 - 74	75 - 99	100+	4,000
YOUNG ADULTS (16 - 25)	100 - 174	175 - 249	250+	4,000
ADULTS (26+)	100 - 249	250 - 499	500+	4,000
FAMILIES & GROUPS	Award level earned is based on the number of hours earned by the oldest member of the family or group. i.e., adult member earned 250 hours; the award level earned by the family or group is Silver.			4,000

For more information about the PVSA, please visit:
presidentalserviceawards.gov/for-volunteers

SAFETY FIRST!

Safety is our highest priority! Here are some basic park safety rules and guidelines:

- If you notice a safety hazard, contact the Park Concerns hotline by calling (408) 793-5510 or Park.Concerns@sanjoseca.gov.
- For all concerns/hazards needing immediate attention, please call City of San José's emergency number at SJ311 408-277-8911. Tell them you are a park volunteer and that there is an operations emergency.
- Personal safety is paramount. If you feel unsafe, leave the park immediately!
- Avoid injuries! Lift all objects with your legs, not your back.
- Dress appropriately! Don't forget to wear your volunteer vest and closed-toe shoes.
- Use sunblock or wear a hat to avoid sunburn.
- Always wear gloves and wash your hands after volunteering.
- Use the correct tools for the type of work being performed. (See "Tool Use in City Parks" page 14 for more information.)
- Volunteers are NOT allowed to use any power tools on city property without certified training.
- Work only during park hours (8:00 a.m. to sunset) and work with a partner if possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings:
 - Be alert for stinging insects and snakes.
 - Be cautious of poisonous plants, such as poison oak.
 - Be sure to take breaks, drink liquids, and dress appropriately for the weather.
- Closely supervise small children or pets.
- Have at least one adult supervisor for every five minors.
- Handle sharp objects with care – children should NOT pick up broken glass.
- Tie bags tightly before placing in trash receptacles.
- Don't stomp on bags. Injuries may occur from broken glass or sharp objects.
- Don't pick up materials you suspect might be hazardous, such as needles or drug paraphernalia.
 - Call Park Concerns at 408-793-5510 or email park.concerns@sanjoseca.gov.
 - Call the San José police non-emergency number at 408-277-8900.
- Don't pick up dead animals. Report it to Park Concerns by calling 408-793-5510 or email park.concerns@sanjoseca.gov.
- Never enter a water environment, including creek banks and creek beds.
- Never confront anyone acting in a belligerent manner, harming park grounds and structures, or camping illegally in the park. Call the San José Police Department
 - For Emergencies: 9-1-1
 - Non-Emergencies: 408-277-8900
- Make sure that all volunteers are familiar with these safety precautions.



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov
408-793-4190

TO REPORT ENCAMPMENT TRASH ON CITY PROPERTY

BeautifySJ@sanjoseca.gov
408-975-7233
311.sanjoseca.gov

ADOPT-A-PARK/ADOPT-A-TRAIL STAFF

Leticia Espino, Program Manager
leticia.espino@sanjoseca.gov
408-595-3483

TO REPORT GRAFFITI ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

Hotline: 866-249-0543
311.sanjoseca.gov

TO REPORT PROBLEMS WITHIN SAN JOSÉ PARKS

park.concerns@sanjoseca.gov
408-793-5510

TO REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING

408-535-3500
311.sanjoseca.gov

TO REPORT ENCAMPMENT CONCERNS ON CITY PROPERTY

homelessconcerns@sanjoseca.gov
408-975-1440



TOOL USE IN THE CITY PARKS

Any tool, no matter how small or innocent looking, can be a safety hazard if not used properly. Each volunteer is given a set of basic gardening tools when they start, but if you do not know how to use a tool or a product, PLEASE ASK!

We are happy to demonstrate the proper use of any tool and the safest way to complete any task.

Power Tools

Use of power tools of any kind is strictly regulated! Volunteers who are not trained and certified may not use power blowers, line trimmers, power hedge trimmers, drills, saws, or any tool that requires power whether gas or electric.

Consequences of breaking this rule

- First offense: Retraining and verbal counseling session
- Second offense: Documented probation - from one month to a year depending on the circumstances
- Third offense: Suspension from the program-term to be determined by the severity of transgression and on an individual basis

Please be safe! Unless you are trained and certified in the proper use of power tools, do not use them in City parks!



INVENTORY OF TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

NAME OF TOOL/SUPPLY <small>AVAILABLE FOR VOLUNTEER USE</small>	PURPOSE/GENERAL USE
CATEGORY: DIGGING	
Shovels: Round	Digging holes, removing dirt
Shovels: Flat	Scraping, scooping materials
Trench Shovels	Digging long narrow channels/sides
Dig Bars	Heavy bar to break hard soil
Post Hole Digger	Dig round holes
Combo Cultivator/Hoe	Short weeding hoe and dirt cultivator
Garden Hoe	Lightweight weed remover
Rogue Hoe	Short rounded hoe blade for forestry work
Scuffle Hoe	Removes flat weeds in hard dirt
5lb. Pick Mattock	Dig out roots, clay soil
Hand Trowel	Planting tool
Fork Weeder: Hand	Handheld weed remover
CATEGORY: CUTTING	
Hand Pruner	Rose pruning, small branch removal
Lopper	Large branch removal
Hedge Shear	Shape hedges and bushes
Pruning Saw: Folding	Remove small branches
Pruning Saw: Curved	Remove larger branches
Bow Saw	Remove/cut up larger tree debris
Pole Saw	Remove branches from up high

INVENTORY OF TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

NAME OF TOOL/SUPPLY AVAILABLE FOR VOLUNTEER USE	PURPOSE/GENERAL USE
CATEGORY: LANDSCAPE CLEANING	
Rake: Leaf	Gentle raking (leaves, light mulch)
Rake: Bow	Heavy-duty raking (playground bark, chips)
Scoop Shovel	Pick up chip, mulch, leaf piles
Kitchen Broom	Small area sweeping
Push Broom	Large area sweeping
Litter Stick	Pick up litter
Wire Brush	Clean rust, BBQs, paint flakes
Bristle Brush	Clean tables, signs, garbage cans, etc.
CATEGORY: SUPPLIES	
Simple Green™ Cleaning Solution	Concentrate-cleaning surface
Cleaning Rags	Wiping and drying surfaces
TSW	CAUTION! Corrosive graffiti remover
Spray Paint - BBQ	Caution!-use in well-ventilated area
Spray Paint - Garbage Can	Caution!-use in well-ventilated area
Basic City Paint	City Brown, Green, and Beige
CATEGORY: MISCELLANEOUS	
Wheelbarrows	Moving debris piles, chip
Pitchforks	Lifting chip, mulch, vegetation debris
5 gal. Bucket	Great for Litter Pickup
Painting Tools	Trays, brushes, rollers, tarps
Disposable gloves	Use when painting or sanitizing
Work Gloves - Nitrile Coated	Use when gardening and tool use
Stake Pounder	CAUTION! Very heavy! For tree stakes

AGE GUIDELINE FOR TOOLS

General Requirements:

- No volunteer under the age of 18 can use power tools.
- All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes, gloves, eye protection and earplugs when appropriate.
- Volunteers who wish to operate tools listed in the Master Volunteer section must be certified by a 1-hour training and demonstration of proficiency.
- Volunteer leaders must give proper demonstration of safe use for all tools.

AGE GUIDELINE
AGE 10 AND OVER
Shovel: Round, Flat, Scoop
Hoes, Scuffle Hoes, Rogue Hoes, Hand Weeders
Brooms and Rakes
Litter Sticks and Buckets
Hoses for watering plants
Wheelbarrows
Basic hand tools (Wrenches, Hammers, Screwdrivers)
AGE 14 AND OVER
Loppers
Hand Pruners
Hedge Shears
Pitchforks
Pruning Saws
McLeod – also known as Fire Rake
Hori Hori – sharp planting and digging tool
18 AND OVER
Post Hole Digger
Breaker bars (Dig Bar) – used in digging holes through hard soil
Weed Whip – golf like stick, used to cut down overgrown weeds
Pole Saw
Stake Pounder
Pick / Mattock









MASTER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Master Volunteer Program is a long-term (1-year or more) commitment that provides skilled Adopt-A-Park volunteers an opportunity to use their leadership and vocational skills to further enhance work in the City parks.

A Master Volunteer is trained and certified to use specialized tools in their volunteer work and make informed decisions regarding the care of park features with park supervisor consent. They may provide maintenance support alongside park staff or independently.

A Master Volunteer demonstrates a superior knowledge of landscaping tools and procedures and a clear understanding of City Policies and OSHA standards of workplace safety. Master Volunteers are park experts, using their leadership skills for project leadership opportunities, or their vocational skills for enhanced park maintenance assistance.

To become a Master Volunteer, a volunteer must:

-  **Complete an application with the City of San José Adopt-A-Park program**
This application is separate from the Adoption Application and Volunteer Service Agreement. Contact staff for details.
-  **Complete a background and fingerprint check**
All expenses are covered by the City.
-  **Complete at least two years* of service in the Adopt-A-Park program**
*Verifiable hours reported through the Better Impact account.
-  **Demonstrate knowledge of the city policy regarding work safety and park maintenance methods as well as OSHA safety standards**
-  **Complete a 1-hour training with the selected tools with a certified park staff member**
All leadership and vocational skills must be certified by City staff for volunteers to become Master Volunteers.
-  **Complete a signed and dated power tool certification**

Designations within the Program

Master Volunteer Craftsman

Craftsmen are those volunteers who want to help in the park with physical maintenance. These volunteers are certified to use power tools to enhance staff needs. Master Craftsmen should be knowledgeable about tool use and park operations.

Master Volunteer Leaders

Leaders are those volunteers who want to help in the park by managing small groups of volunteers. Volunteer leaders meet volunteer groups at the park, provide tools, gloves, and other needed supplies, welcome, train, and motivate the volunteers. Leaders must attend 2 hours of Leadership Training.

For more information, contact:
adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov

MASTER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

List of approved tools

TOOL	TRAINING REQUIRED*
Leaf blower-backpack or electric	Completion of 1 hour training
Cold water pressure washer	Completion of 1 hour training
Pond Vacuum	Completion of 1 hour training
Line trimmer (weed whacker)	Completion of 1 hour training
Walk behind mower	Completion of 1 hour training
Power hedge trimmer	Completion of 1 hour training
Power sanders	Completion of 30-minute training
Billy Goat (push blower)	Completion of 1 hour training
Power Edger	Completion of 30-minute training
Power drills	Completion of 30-minute training

*Training must be obtained from a certified park staff member.

Upon completion a Certificate of Training will be placed in the Volunteer's file.

Prohibited Equipment

- Tractors
- Backhoes
- Skid steer loaders
- Riding mowers
- Chainsaws
- Handheld or truck mounted pesticide application sprayers or spreaders
- Woodchippers
- Boom & scissor lifts
- Backpack sprayers
- Forklifts



IMPORTANT!

The City does not provide power tools for volunteer use; volunteers must use their own tools at their own risk. Each tool, before use, must be inspected for modifications and safety hazards. The City is not responsible for tool maintenance and/or breakage.

A WORD ABOUT WEEDS

One of the important duties of the Adopt-A-Park volunteer is to properly remove and dispose of weeds from the park. If you are not sure a plant should be pulled, please ask. Simply take a photo and send it in for confirmation. This may seem like a lot of work but it's better to be safe than sorry. Many native and drought tolerant plants may look like weeds when dormant. After all, weeds are often just plants found in the wrong place. Check with staff for advice when working in large weedy areas. These areas will need special care to avoid the spread of seeds.

WEED ABATEMENT - DOS AND DON'TS

- Before removing weeds, check with the appropriate staff for approval.
- Contact the Adopt-A-Park office to coordinate pick-up of green waste/clippings.
- Wear appropriate gear: volunteer vests, long pants and long sleeves, sturdy work shoes and work gloves.
- Do not use power equipment. It is against City policy.
- Do not work under potentially dangerous weather conditions, such as rain or heavy winds.
- Do not spray or use any chemicals. It is against City policy.
- When weeding, don't overexert yourself. Be sure to take breaks and drink plenty of fluids.
- Children should be closely supervised when weeding.
- Be cautious around thorny or poisonous bushes, such as poison oak or stinging nettle.
- Do not bag weed clippings unless specified by park.
- Do not block pathways and trails with green debris piles.
- Be cautious and respectful of pedestrians, cyclists, and other park/trail users.



COMMON WEEDS



Invasive Annual Grasses

Unless you are a trained naturalist, it's almost impossible to tell which grasses are native and which are invasive. Luckily very few places in our City parks grow a native grass, so just about anything "out of place" can be deemed invasive. Some common annual grasses are wild oats and smilo grass. Both grow tall and are widespread throughout the open areas of our parks. Other grasses include the Bermuda grass and other small grasses that grow in between vegetation. The taller grasses can be removed with shovels, but the smaller grass needs to be pulled by hand to avoid harming the nearby plants.



Foxtails

Another kind of annual grass that appears in the parks is Spear grass or Foxtails. They are found in clusters, short at times with sticky seed units that are dangerous to dogs and humans alike. These grasses tend to have shallow roots and can be easily removed with a simple weeding tool.



Mallow

A perennial that often grows in lawns and chipped areas, but spreads by seed and can be found in any area of the park. It grows from a long tap root which needs to be pulled in order to remove the plant.



Purslane

Purslane is an edible plant that grows flat to the ground, creating a mat-like appearance. A single tap root exists for each plant and needs to be removed to stop growth.



Thistles

Thistles are found everywhere. Distinctive in their spiky leaves and disk-like flowers which can be various shades of purple, white or yellow; it is better to get them early as their roots are tough and long. Shovels work best in the spring on the young sprouts.



Black Mustard

Black mustard is found in fields and open areas that are closed to grazing. It outcompetes other native vegetation and is adaptable to occasional fires and burned sites. Most plants can be hand pulled before seeds set although it might take years to fully remove the plants.



Plantain

A common lawn weed. Plantain can be slightly controlled by mowing but for better control, the plant should be pulled by hand. Plantain can be slightly toxic to both livestock and native plants.



Stinging Nettle

An innocent-looking, soft leaved plant that leaves a sting if you happen to touch it without gloves. Found usually in open fields and must be handled with care.



Crabgrass

An annual weed, crabgrass spreads itself by releasing millions of seeds. It can take root anywhere. To control crabgrass, you'll need to pull it in the spring when the plant is at its most vulnerable. The best way to control crabgrass is to remove the plants by hand-roots, and all.

COMMON WEEDS



Stinkwort

Stinkwort is a highly invasive plant. It can be identified by its strong odor and narrow, grey-green leaves. It is poisonous to livestock and cause contact allergic dermatitis in humans. In California, this weed is found primarily along roadsides, bare pastures, and disturbed open areas. The best way to remove it is with shovels as it has a long tough root. Removal should be accomplished before seeds appear and bagged for separate disposal.

Other common plants to be aware of:



Poison Oak

Found in the hills and near the creeks of Santa Clara County, poison oak is a highly contagious plant, causing skin rashes and breathing problems in the most vulnerable. Easily identified by its “leaves of three,” it’s best to leave these plants to the professionals.



Tree of Heaven and Privets

Both are highly invasive trees can reach 30 to 60 feet high if left alone. They spread through seeds and dense root thickets which can crowd out most other vegetation. Dig them out while young. Older plants may require more extensive methods such as cutting or mechanical digging to control the population.



Date and Fan Palms

A common Southern California plant, the palm can take over any area left unattended. The large seeds are easily spread by birds and other wildlife and can grow up to 100 feet tall, shading out any natural vegetation. Palms can be dug out with a shovel when young and mature trees can be cut and removed with chain saws by experienced personnel.

GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL

For disposal of green waste, a designated area will be provided during your orientation. If another site is needed, please use these tips in choosing a location.

- Pick an area away from walkways yet accessible by the park staff trucks.
- Leave one pile rather than many piles, if possible.
- When using the street or parking area, make sure the pile is at least 1 foot to 18 inches from the curb and no larger than 5 foot x 5 foot x 5 foot high.

Please provide a photo to the Adopt-A-Park staff for easy location identification.



RESOURCES

For more information on invasive and non-native plants in California, please visit:

- The California Invasive Plant Council at www.cal-ipc.org

For useful information on weed management visit:

- The University of California Weed Research and Information Center at ucanr.edu/sites/wric3/

For more information on grasses:

- The California Native Grasslands Association at www.cnga.org

GRAFFITI IN OUR PARKS

A common task for the Adopt-A-Park volunteer is the reporting and/or removal of graffiti. With these few tips, you should be able to determine whether you can remove it or report it. Graffiti can be found everywhere, walls, on picnic tables, benches, playground equipment, and park signs. Determining the removal process is the first step.

- **LOCATION:** Is it on plastic playground equipment, a concrete table, brick wall or, wooden bench? Tables and wooden benches can be repainted or re-stained easily with City provided paint. Playground equipment and brick walls may require a special graffiti remover.
- **SURFACE MATERIAL:** plastic, metal and concrete react differently to different methods. Wood and painted surface may be easily cleaned up with Simple Green™ and a bit of elbow grease.
- **TOOLS USED:** Different mediums such as markers, spray paint, grease pens, or chalk determine specific removal methods.
- **AREA SIZE OF GRAFFITI:** Larger vandalism should be reported to the Graffiti Removal program. They have the means to take care of it. Smaller tags can be removed with the provided cleaners and removers. Tables and benches can be easily repainted.
- **SUBJECT MATTER:** If the subject matter is racist, pornographic or otherwise hateful in nature, it should be reported to the Graffiti Removal program through the SanJose311 app or call 408-975-7233. Graffiti of this type will be removed within 24 hours of reporting.

Best way to remove graffiti

No matter what the surface, start with the cleaning liquid provided, usually Simple Green Concentrate.™

1. Spray the surface liberally and let it soak in.
2. Take a scour pad and gently scrub the surface. Using a circular motion works best.
3. Remove as much as possible. If necessary, spray the area with the provided graffiti remover, usually TSW™ brand of remover. Be conservative! TSW™ is toxic and very expensive.
4. Let the remover sit for a minute or two then use the scour pad to work it in.
5. Once removed, clean the area with water or Simple Green™ to stop the reaction. Dry if necessary.



Remember, for large areas, paint over the graffiti or contact Graffiti Removal Program through the San José 311 app.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT

TO BEGIN, visit app.betterimpact.com/login/volunteer.

*Note that mobile and tablet apps may be slightly different.

See the following pages for examples.



1. In the search box, type in "San Jose"
2. When results pop up, click "Adopt-A-Park" (it is the first option)
3. Now you should be at the Adopt-A-Park homepage. Find the red box on the top-right to "Fill in an Application".
4. A new page will open where you create your account. Please remember your username and password.
5. Please add the park name in ALL CAPS on the line where it says "first name". On the last name line, please put your last name, (comma), first name. This is to help both you and the administrator easily access your account by park name.
 - a. Don't forget to add the park name on the line that is farther down the list.

If you have any questions, contact us at adopt-a-park@sanjoseca.gov or 408-793-4190.

Tips

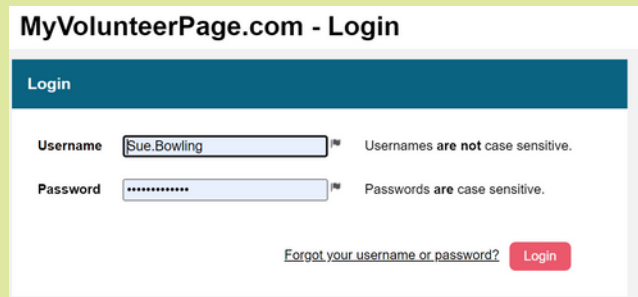
- Choose one person in your group to keep track of hours and have only one account if possible.
- Add hours at least once a month so we can have an accurate view of your volunteer efforts.
- Most activity is either administrative (filling in your hours) or park cleanup. If you care to fill in the feedback activities and don't see your category, just ask! We are happy to help!

HOW TO LOG YOUR HOURS IN 4 EASY STEPS

STEP 1

Open your login page.

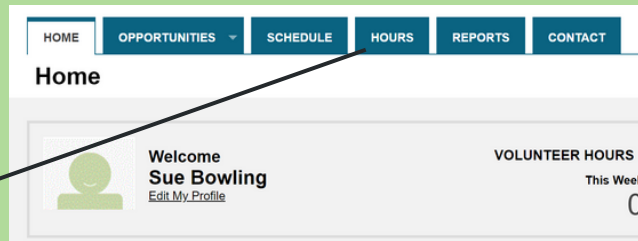
If you have set up an account, type in your username and password, click the red “login” button.



STEP 2

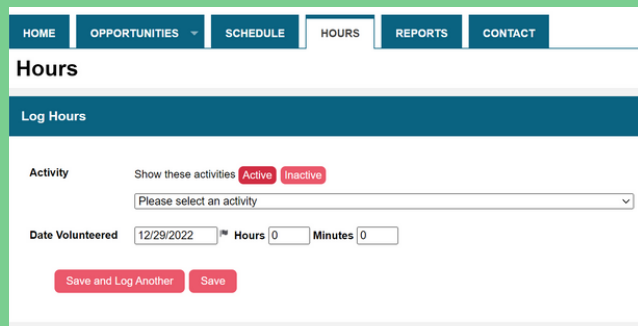
Find the “Hours” button in the upper banner and click on it.

HOURS



STEP 3

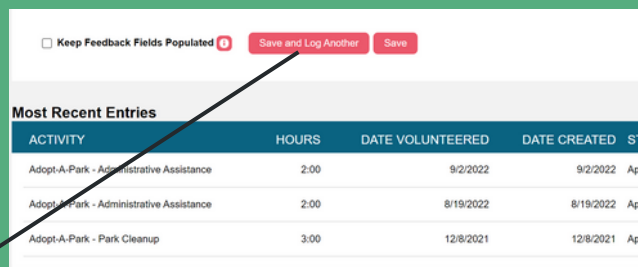
Now you can Add Hours. Under the Activity button, the most common choice is Park Cleanup. Adding hours to the Feedback area is optional.



STEP 4

Click on either “Save” or “Save and Log Another”
The “Most Recent Entries” will reflect your saved hours once you hit save.

Save and Log Another



Don't forget to log off after your final entry!

Please try to log your hours at least once a month!



Download the app My Impact from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play store

You need to have an account already set up to use the mobile app. Either use the laptop/desktop version or contact us for help. We can set it up with a temporary password that you change later.

The Start Clock feature

- Use that if you like to keep accurate track of time spent “on the clock.”

Pull-Down Menu

- Three lines marked in a red circle on the upper left.
- Use this button to explore the pull-down menu.

My Profile

- Here you can change your password and add any information you deem necessary. This is also where you find the tab for Hours.

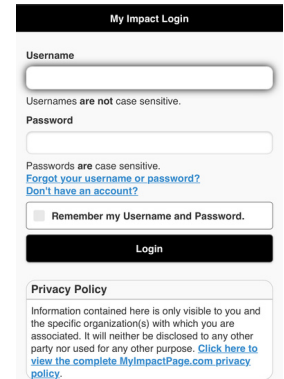
Log Hours

The activities button is the activity you most recently accomplished, or you can search all activities until you find the one you want.

Scroll down the page and hit either **Log Hours** or **Save and Log Another**.

Last page - notice the Delete button if you make a mistake!

Don't forget to log out!



My Impact Login

Username

Usernames are not case sensitive.

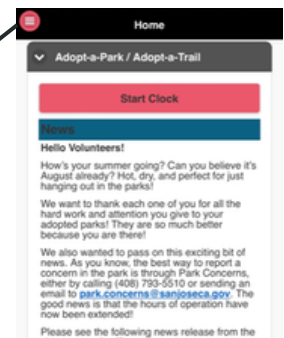
Password

Passwords are case sensitive.
[Forgot your username or password?](#)
[Don't have an account?](#)

☐ Remember my Username and Password.

Login

Privacy Policy
 Information contained here is only visible to you and the specific organization(s) with which you are associated. It will neither be disclosed to any other party nor used for any other purpose. [Click here to view the complete MyImpactPage.com privacy policy.](#)

Home

Adopt-a-Park / Adopt-a-Trail

Start Clock

News

Hello Volunteers!

How's your summer going? Can you believe it's August already? Hot, dry, and perfect for just hanging out in the parks!

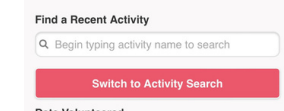
We want to thank each one of you for all the hard work and attention you give to your adopted parks! They are so much better because you are there!

We also wanted to pass on this exciting bit of news. As you know, the best way to report a concern in the park is through Park Concerns, either by calling (408) 793-5510 or sending an email to park.concerns@sanjoseca.gov. The good news is that the hours of operation have now been extended!

Please see the following news release from the

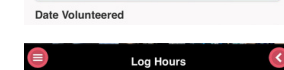


Log Hours

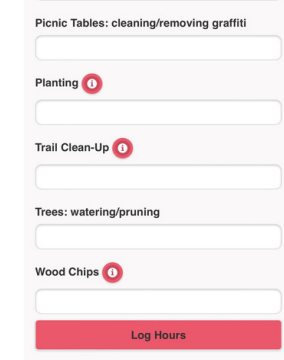


Find a Recent Activity

Switch to Activity Search



Log Hours



Log Hours

Picnic Tables: cleaning/removing graffiti

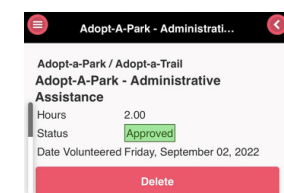
Planting 0

Trail Clean-Up 0

Trees: watering/pruning

Wood Chips 0

Log Hours



Adopt-A-Park - Administrative

Adopt-A-Park / Adopt-a-Trail

Adopt-A-Park - Administrative Assistance

Hours 2.00

Status **Approved**

Date Volunteered Friday, September 02, 2022

Delete

**Thank you for joining
the Adopt-A-Park Program!**

ADOPT  PARK

Building Community Through Fun

SAN JOSE
PARKS, RECREATION &
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

