

Davis Mountains State Park Host Basic Duties and Supplemental Work Opportunities

(Composed by a veteran park host with approval from park staff, Summer 2018)

OVERVIEW

- Park hosts are the eyes and ears of the park. Whether on or off duty they need to be alert to camper needs and questions, park rules violations, and repair/maintenance needs of park property (particularly bathrooms).
- Hosts may advise park guests of rules violations verbally or by issuing them a notice, but they should never threaten enforcement action (as such action may only be taken by park rangers and then at their discretion).
- Hosts should not assist in repair or maintenance of guest vehicles, RVs or camping equipment without the approval of a park ranger (as the park could be held liable for inadvertent damage).
- Host campsites should be kept tidy and well organized (to serve as a good example).
- Park hosts should remain consistently respectful, courteous and helpful in their interactions with park guests.
- Hosts bring fresh eyes and a wealth of experience to our park. While following established park policies and procedures hosts are encouraged to continuously look for process improvement and to elevate ideas to their supervisor.
- Hosts should never risk their health, safety, or general feeling of well-being while doing park volunteer work. There are usually multiple hosts on site with maintenance and management staff backing them up. Together we form a team aligned to a common goal – the preservation of the park and the well-being of park guests. Hosts are thus encouraged to work together for the common good of the park and to openly share any difficulties they encounter in the execution of their duties.
- When you are off duty display your OFF DUTY sign if you don't wish to be disturbed by park guests. Some guests won't pay attention to your signage and will approach you anyway. You still need to be courteous to them, and at your discretion you can provide assistance or refer them to the on duty host.

HOST JOB PERKS

- Free water, sewer, electric and cable TV hookups at the host sites.
- 10% off meals at the Black Bear Restaurant.
- 10% off merchandise at the Indian Lodge Gift Shop.
- Indian Lodge room discounts for you and your visiting guests.
- Free access to the Indian Lodge swimming pool (just go up and jump in!)
- Free use of the washer and dryer located in the maintenance yard office (use the sign-up sheet to avoid conflicts)
- Mail delivery and pick-up at the park headquarters.
- Free ice (no records are kept, just take ice as needed)
- Access to maintenance hand and power tools (with permission from the maintenance ranger)

CAMPSITE RESERVATION OVERVIEW

- Online registration campers staying just one night will often ask why they are being told to go up to HQ and complete their registration. This is why:
- *Online reservations only collect the first night's camping fee. Day use fees and fees for additional nights of camping are collected after the camper(s) arrive. Evaluation of guest eligibility for ADA sites, discounted rates and park pass sales are only done by HQ staff.*

TOP TWELVE CAMPING RULES VIOLATIONS AND APPROPRIATE HOST ACTION

1. Vehicle parked improperly
 - *Advise owner or leave notice*
 - *Get vehicle info, give to HQ staff*
2. Dog off leash
 - *Advise owner or call ranger*
 - *Use judgment if owner not present*
3. Hammock hung improperly
 - *Advise camper or leave notice*
4. Bird feeders hanging in a campsite
 - *Advise camper or leave notice*
5. Trash or food left out, site unoccupied
 - *Advise camper or leave notice*
 - *Advise HQ staff*
 - *If animals are scavenging call ranger*
6. Excessive noise
 - *Advise camper if situation warrants*
 - *Otherwise leave and call ranger*
7. Vehicle speeding on park road
 - *Get vehicle license & description*
 - *Call ranger*
8. Campfire violation
 - *Advise camper of rule*
 - *Advise ranger of incident*
9. Public display of alcohol or drugs
 - *Advise camper or leave notice*
 - *Advise ranger of incident*
10. Guest safety concern / moving violations
 - *Advise guest if situation allows*
 - *Advise ranger of incident*
11. Guest observed in unauthorized area
 - *If suspicious activity call ranger*
 - *Otherwise advise guest then HQ staff*
12. Guest observed taking park flora or fauna
 - *Advise guest if situation allows*
 - *Advise ranger of incident*

MORNING BASIC DUTIES

7:50 AM – Assist in opening headquarters (HQ)

- Take down unclaimed reservations from the previous night and turn in to the office.
- Replace the Office Closed signs with Office Open signs (on both HQ doors).
- Unlock the bathrooms and make sure they are stocked and clean.
- Open the office window blinds.
- Turn on the coffee maker.
- Position the portable display board outside the door; make sure the notices on it are current.
- Check the office floor and mats, sweep as needed.
- Check the office closet for adequate supplies (toilet paper, paper towels, latex gloves).
- Raise the flags (in dry weather).
 - US flag on top, Texas flag in the middle (red stripe on bottom), Burn Ban flag on the bottom.
- Inspect the area around HQ for trash on the ground. Sweep the sidewalks if needed.
- If it rained in the previous 24 hours take a measurement from the HQ rain gauge and give it to HQ staff. Empty the rain gauge for the next rain event.
- Check the office wastebaskets and empty as needed.
- Check the outside trash receptacles and empty as needed.

8:10 AM – Conduct initial AM Blue Run / Campsite inspection / Open the Interpretive Center

- Wait for HQ staff to inspect overnight payment box contents and update the Campsite Availability sheet for the host. Common annotations are:
 - Blank site number = unoccupied site per HQ reservation system
 - Line draw thru site number = occupied site per HQ reservation system
 - Blue highlighted site number = out today with no payment issues
 - Yellow highlighted site number = late arrivals from the previous night
- Drive the campground and take notes on the Campsite Availability sheet:
 - Note the “blue” site early AM departures.

- Advise the “yellow” campsite owners that they need to visit HQ before 10am to complete their registration (verbally or issue notice).
 - Check for unregistered, unpaid, occupied sites:
 - Note the vehicle license number.
 - If someone is up encourage them to register at HQ ASAP, otherwise leave them a registration notice (on windshield, RV steps, or somewhere they will see it).
 - Do not accept any money – only designated HQ staff can do this.
 - Do not make any promises regarding unregistered campers’ ability to keep their campsite a second day. Only HQ staff can determine this.
 - Check all vehicles for a DMSP-issued vehicle tag. If there is no tag advise the owner to visit HQ to obtain a tag (or leave a notice on the windshield).
 - Check for camping in non-designated areas (such as in the playground space). If observed take vehicle license number(s) and notify HQ staff (it may be legitimate).
 - Visually inspect each campsite for camper rules violations:
 - Major rules violations should be relayed to a ranger ASAP. If a ranger is not available take notes and/or photos to document the violation. These include:
 - Campfire violations
 - Egregious littering/dumping
 - Food violations involving park wildlife (active or imminent)
 - Destruction of park property (structures, flora and fauna)
 - Vehicle moving violations (speeding, other unsafe and illegal activity)
 - Unsafe RV setup; unsafe guest activity, vicious pets.
 - Minor rules violations can be discussed with the park guest and/or by formal notice. These include:
 - Parking in non-designated areas
 - Hanging bird feeders or hammocks in non-designated areas
 - Food or trash violations that could lead to problems
 - The use of wading pools
 - The use of drones
 - Excessive noise
 - Pets off leash.
 - Hiking off trail.
- Repeated minor violations after a courtesy warning should be elevated to a park ranger.
- Return the annotated Campsite Availability sheet to HQ staff around 9am (normally).

8:15 AM – Open the Interpretive Center (IC) (while doing the initial AM Blue Run)

- Unlock the main door, switch off the outside light, switch on the inside lights (including the ceiling fan during warm weather).
- Check the bathrooms for cleanliness and paper supplies, remove the door stops.
- Open the Interpretive Center office, select a DVD to play, take out the DVD and TV remote controls (note IC cleaning supplies are stored in the office, use them as needed).
- Select an appropriate informative DVD to play, turn on TV and DVD player, adjust DVD setting to “Title” to activate continuous play function (as noted on the DVD remote control).
- Store the remote controls in the IC office so they don’t walk off during the day.
- Check the bathroom, hall and office waste receptacles and empty them if full or foul smelling.
- Check the windows for fingerprints, clean windows as needed.
- Check floor and floor mats for dirt, sweep as needed.

- If the hummingbird feeders were taken inside overnight move them outside ahead of the bird feeding activity.
- Fill the dog water dish with fresh water.
- Inspect the Interpretive Center grounds for litter, loose border rocks and dirty sidewalks, and clean up as needed (a clean walkway makes for a cleaner interior).
- If it rained in the previous 24 hours take a measurement from the Interpretive Center rain gauge (just off the road at the end of the IC grounds) and make an entry on the Rain Report (found hanging on the inside IC office door). Empty the rain gauge for the next rain event.

9:00 AM – Feed the birds at the two park bird feeding stations

- Next door to the Emory Oak Wildlife Viewing building is the locked bird feed room. This room may be kept unlocked while you are making your bird feeding rounds.
- In that room are two baskets holding bird seed containers (finch seed, mixed seed, sunflower seed), a small container of suet with spatula, and a water bottle holding sugar water for the hummingbird feeders.
- Suet and hummingbird food batching instructions are posted on the wall.
- Large cans on the floor contain bird seed – keep these closed!
- Large plastic tubs contain suet making ingredients. Keep these tubs closed!
- In the spring we cut oranges into small slices and hang them on bird-accessible branches.
 - It helps to make a hole in the skin of each orange slice with a knife.

Notes pertaining to the Emory Oak bird blind:

- Periodically check the holding tank water level (unscrew the cap, use the wooden dipstick). Do this daily in summer months. To add water open the valve located below a ground cover 5 paces from the outside yard water spigots.
- Take the net to the water spillway sump area and scoop out the leaf litter. Listen to the pump motor as you do this to confirm it is working well. Dump the leaves outside the fence so they won't blow back in, then rinse the net at the water spigots in the yard outside the fence.

10:00 AM – Conduct the mid-morning Blue Run

- Go to HQ and have staff work up the latest Campsite Availability sheet.
 - They will note any campers who have not yet come up to HQ to complete the registration process.
 - They will also update with blue highlighter those campsites that are scheduled to be vacated by 2pm.
- Note the “blue” site mid-morning departures and report these back to HQ staff ASAP so they can keep the reservation system up to date for incoming campers.
- Remove obsolete Reserved and Occupied placards from vacated campsite posts.
- While driving the campground watch for camping violations, issues to elevate, trash and any items left behind. Vacated campsites should be clean and tidy for the next occupant.
- If a reserved site appears to be vacant check with HQ staff for early departure. If no early departure, leave an Occupied placard on the campsite post to avoid any confusion.

Between 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM – Fill the two campground ice chests with bagged ice.

- The ice maker is located in the maintenance yard office.
- Ice can only be bagged by designated volunteers with food handling credentials.
- Bagged ice is stored in two deep freezers (one in the office across from the ice maker, the other in the room adjoining the office) awaiting distribution.

- There is an ice chest behind each of the two main bathrooms. Each chest holds approximately 27 bags of ice. You want to keep these two chests as full as possible and leave the two deep freezers as empty as possible to keep campers happy and volunteer ice baggers with work to do when they come in!
- Each Gator should have a storage bin containing a tarp or sheet to lay out in the vehicle bed for more sanitary ice delivery. Use it!
- The suggested donation for a 10# bag of ice is \$2. Some campers pay, some do not, and we don't judge them (but if you observe something egregious report it to a park ranger).
- Campers are not allowed to use our ice chests for their own purposes and this rule is for sanitary reasons. Only our ice should be in these chests!

AFTERNOON BASIC DUTIES

2:00 PM – Conduct the final Blue Run of the day.

- Go to HQ and have staff work up the final Campsite Availability sheet
 - All departing campers are required to vacate their site by 2pm unless they have special permission from HQ to stay longer (these rare exceptions should be noted by staff).
- Confirm that all remaining “blue” sites are now vacant, and check to see that vacated sites are clean and tidy for the next occupant.
- Convey “blue” site vacancies ASAP to HQ and advise of any “blue” site still occupied (vehicle and/or camper gear still in the site) after 2pm. HQ staff will typically first try to phone the camper to determine what is going on. If a camper abandoned any significant gear, HQ staff will contact a park ranger to have the gear removed and impounded. Due to potential liability issues hosts are not allowed to touch or move camper gear unless there is imminent danger of some sort.

3:00 PM – Replenish all bird feeders at both bird viewing stations

- Leave the bird seed and feed containers full and ready for the next day.
- If orange slices were hung in the AM leave them alone until the next morning.
- Note any shortage of seed, sugar or suet ingredients and report shortage to HQ staff.
 - First check around to make certain the item isn't stored elsewhere in the room.
 - If less than a 1-day supply of prepared suet remains, follow the instructions on the room wall and make a new batch, or contact the elected “suet host”.
 - You may find it better to prepare suet at your host campsite, as there you can warm Crisco (summer) or lard (winter) in a microwave for much easier mixing.
- In hot weather check the hummingbird feeders again and replenish as needed.

4:00 PM – Check and replenish both ice chests

- If there is no bagged ice, notify the maintenance ranger and redistribute remaining bagged ice equally.

4:40 PM – Help close Headquarters; distribute campsite Reserved placards

- Take in the (heavy) portable notice board.
- Check the after hours payment station for sufficient supplies (park maps, payment envelopes, pen) and replenish as needed from HQ supplies.
- Empty office trash receptacles as needed.
- Close the blinds, display the Office Closed sign on both exterior doors.
- The HQ bathroom toilet flush mechanisms do not work well and so there is often waste left standing in the toilets. Play with the levers and get the toilets to flush clean at the end of each day.

- Replenish toilet paper dispensers as needed.
- Check if there are any overnight primitive campers and if so leave the HQ bathrooms open, otherwise turn off the lights (timer knobs), depress the inside lock buttons and close/lock the doors.
- Respectfully take down and fold the American and Texas flags and leave them on the office table.
- Straighten items in the HQ customer service area to make it fully presentable the next morning.
- Get an overnight Campsite Availability sheet from HQ staff (with assigned late reservation campsites highlighted yellow) along with a supply of Reserved placards and the prepared late arrival reservation sheets.
- Unlock the Big Board outside HQ and arrange the campground map to display open campsites and hide occupied or reserved campsites.
- Using magnetic clips, display the late arrival reservation sheets along the bottom of the Big Board in easy view and reach of late arriving campers.
- You may observe guests arriving after HQ has closed. Welcome them, orient them to the park, advise them of the basic rules (especially regarding campfires), answer their questions, and tell them to visit HQ the following morning between 8am and 9am to complete their registration.
 - Point out the highlights of the park – Skyline Drive, park trails, bird blinds, Interpretive Center, Indian Lodge, Black Bear Restaurant.
- Using the Campsite Availability sheet, drive around and post the Reserved placards on the assigned campsite posts.

EVENING BASIC DUTIES

6:00 PM – Close the Interpretive Center (first check to see if an evening program is scheduled)

If there is an evening program the Interpretive Host will close the IC building.

If guests are still using the IC building, advise them you will return to close the building in ½ hour.

In closing the IC:

- Retrieve the remote controls from the IC office and turn off the DVD and TV players.
- Straighten the chairs and tables, pick up trash, lightly sweep the floor as needed.
- Make sure toilets are flushed, then block the bathroom doors open for ventilation.
- Turn off all the indoor lights and turn on the outside light (over the bulletin board).
- If the hummingbirds are still actively feeding you can leave the feeders up longer into the evening, otherwise take hummingbird feeders down, rinse them out and store them in the IC.
- Close and lock the IC office and entrance doors.

7:00 PM – Take down the hummingbird feeders; take a final drive around the campgrounds

- We take hummingbird feeders down nightly to prevent other animals from damaging them.
- Dump, rinse and store these feeders in a locked room (IC, bird food storage room).
- Take a final drive around the campground, checking especially for campfire violations, potential problem campers (noise, alcohol, trespassing), and unattended food or trash left out.
- If you are going off duty the next day and there are “complications” regarding campers and reservations, pay the incoming hosts a visit to give them a brief status update. Do note that unless you have made a special arrangement you are still the on duty host through the night!

NIGHT TIME HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

- Double booked campsite issues are very rare but they do occur. Apologize and assign the late arriving camper the most appropriate open campsite (feel free to sell vacant blocked/ADA sites after 6pm). Advise HQ staff of the campsite assignment changes in the morning.
- Park quiet hours are between 10PM and 6AM. If you hear excessive noise or receive a complaint, determine if the noise issue can be resolved without ranger involvement and if necessary, radio the ranger on duty. If drugs or alcohol are involved just call the ranger on duty.
- Guests may approach you with questions or concerns at night even when you are off duty. Be courteous and attentive to their needs.
- If someone reports a plugged toilet, see if you can resolve it with a plunger. If it is a serious overflow and a potential health issue, ??? (close/lock the bathroom; call the ranger on duty).
- Issues involving animals (wild or tame) should be elevated to the ranger on duty.
- For serious issues like domestic violence or medical emergencies, call 911 first, then call the ranger on duty.

OCCASIONAL DUTIES

- Sun or Mon when the campground is full: Check for overflowing campground dumpsters.
 - If a dumpster is overflowing with trash, move trash to a less full dumpster (or to the dumpster just outside the maintenance yard).
- Mon or Tue of each week: Post the weekly park activity flyer around the park:
 - On the HQ portable display board.
 - Inside the Emory Oak Wildlife Viewing Center.
 - On bulletin boards outside the 5 bathrooms - full hookup area, group picnic area, across from ranger housing (near site 94), tent camping area (next to maintenance host site), Skyline Drive overlook.
 - At the Interpretive Center (bulletin board outside, display board inside).
 - At the entrance to the amphitheater.
 - On the bulletin board outside the Indian Lodge Gift Shop.
- As needed: Empty the recycling bins
 - Recycle trash must be hand sorted and placed in clear plastic bags.
 - NO GLASS OR FOOD WASTE OR PLASTIC BAGS OR PAPER TOWELS OR TISSUE OR VINYL (such as air mattresses or tents) OR SHREDDED PAPER.
 - Separate corrugated cardboard from other recycled materials. All other recycle items can be bagged together.
 - Optional: Check the dumpsters for loose recycle items (use a grabber!).
 - Bags of recycled waste and flattened corrugated cardboard are stored in the red shed at the back of the bone yard.
- As needed: Empty the red shed of recycled trash and take it to the Fort Davis Recycling Center.
 - Borrow the Interpretive Ranger's park pickup truck for this purpose (you should schedule this activity in advance).
 - Inspect each bag for unacceptable recycled items (glass, food waste etc) as you dump it.
- As needed: make a new batch of suet for the birds.
 - The batching instructions are posted on the bird feeding supply room wall.

HOST SUPPLEMENTAL WORK OPPORTUNITIES (do report these hours!)

- On busy days with long lines at HQ, greet and assist guests waiting in line for service. Ask arriving guests if they're here to camp, here for day use, or going up to the Indian Lodge:
 - If Indian Lodge, have them drive up to the lodge for registration and vehicle tags.
 - If day use, make sure they know their vehicle license plate number and offer them a park map (and suggest trails and park activities if they are new to the park).

- If camping and they have a reservation, give them a park map, show them the highlights, and make sure they know their vehicle license plate number.
- If camping and they don't have a reservation, ascertain whether we have an accommodating campsite for them. If our campground is full suggest other nearby campgrounds – MacMillen RV Park, Prude Ranch, Overland Trail Campground, Madera Canyon Loop Roadside Park.
- Attend and assist with interpretive outings and activities.
- Pick up trash along Skyline Drive (end to end).
- Sweep loose rocks from the Skyline Drive roadway.
- Pick up trash along the park roads.
- Keep sidewalks swept and floor mats clean around the bathrooms.
- Walk the campgrounds and vacant campsites picking up trash.
- Pick up trash in the Group Picnic Area.

INSIDE INFORMATION

- Site 8's cable TV box does not work. We remedy this by running a long 75 ohm cable over from site 9's box. This long cable walks away from time to time and when this occurs apologize to the camper and contact maintenance staff.
- Most camper cable TV issues are resolved by first checking the 75 ohm cable connection, then advising campers to:
 1. turn off their antenna amplifier (if they have one).
 2. select the appropriate input (normally Cable), then run a channel search.
 3. when working correctly the search should return channels 2 to 52 as available.
- Do-gooders should consider:
 - keeping some extra 75 ohm cable extension adaptors and a couple of 75 ohm cables to loan out to the needy.
 - keeping a couple of spare brass water pressure regulators to loan out to the needy. The water pressure in the campground is a very high 90 PSI. Everyone should use a regulator to reduce the chance of breaking an interior water line.
 - keeping a handful of hose washers to hand out to campers with leaky water connections.
 - keeping an extra 50-to-30 amp adaptor and a 30A to 120V adaptor to loan out in the event a campsite power receptacle is not working. (report issue to maintenance staff).
- If you need to enter HQ after hours be sure to turn off the alarm (whose only function is a loud noise). The alarm on/off switch is found on the near wall of the HQ office.
 - Be sure to fully secure the building as you leave.
- Reports of cold showers could be caused by a tripped circuit breaker in the on-demand water heater circuit. Hosts don't have a key to the bathroom electrical/water closet – only maintenance staff have a key.
- If your Gator is acting up make sure the 2D/4D toggle switch is set to 2D.
- Wait for the Gator's glow plug indicator to go out before engaging the starter.
- Keep a bag of kitty litter in your Gator for accidental oil/gas/black water spills. Kitty litter is stocked in the maintenance yard.
- Get familiar with the local service providers:
 - Auto and RV repair: Bencomo's Motorport
 - Hardware stores: Higginbotham Ace Hardware, Fort Davis Outfitters
 - Grocery stores: Porter's Thriftway, Stone Village Market
 - RV repair parts are hard to come by in this remote region of Texas. El Paso is likely their closest location for parts.