

VOLUNTEERS OF THE NEWBERRY NATIONAL VOLCANIC MONUMENT

In Celebration of Newberry National Volcanic Monument



Group of Interpretive Volunteer Rangers - John Hope Pictured on the Right

Volunteering on the Monument

A Conversation Between Discover Your Forest's Community Engagement Director, Stacey Cochran, and Beloved Volunteer, John Hope

For years, Newberry National Volcanic Monument has been a hub of Central Oregon treasures and an introduction to the volcanic landscape found within. The Monument is visited by thousands of people from all over the world and our welcoming Volunteer Rangers are there to spark the flame of excitement and wonder! In a typical season, volunteers donate over 20,000 hours of service in various locations around the Monument. Whether you hear a patio talk at Lava Lands Visitor Center or are guided along the path during a school field trip, our Volunteer Rangers have the knowledge and experience to lead you on a journey through time. As one of our Lead Volunteer Rangers, John Hope has been an appreciated member of our volunteer community year after year. We connected with John to ask him about how he has served on the Monument and he shared details with us about what it's like:

DYF: John, can you share with us what it's like volunteering at the Monument?

John: Volunteers are essential to Newberry National Volcanic Monument and even more essential to a positive and meaningful experience for our visitors. There are a variety of functions filled by volunteers, which are tailored to the backgrounds and preferences of individual volunteers.

DYF: Can you dive in deeper about the positions you've held and what those positions entail? This would be great information for anyone out there who is interested in volunteering with us.

John: I have served in several positions during my years as a volunteer. Let me start by describing the functions I have performed; I've helped with Student Tours where each year the monument receives dozens of visits of students from schools throughout the state



Jr. Ranger Being Sworn In with Ranger

and even from neighboring states. These groups range in sizes and grades, from grammar school to university students, a dozen in size to as large as one hundred. Coordinated by the Discover Your Forest staff, we usually have a team of up to 5 Volunteer Rangers for each visit. As the Volunteer Ranger, we orient the students and then lead them on guided hikes and outdoor activities. A typical activity would be a guided hike on the Trail of the Molten Land, in which the volunteer will point out and explain the features of the volcanic landscape, the animals, plants and the connection to the surrounding area. Other guided hikes for students have included trips up Lava Butte and the short hikes along the edge of the lava flow. Another popular activity is a visit to the Lava River Cave. Volunteers assist in informing students about the procedures and precautions needed in visiting the cave and teach them about the importance of helping to stop the spread of White-nose syndrome.

DYF: That sounds awesome, John. Where else have you served?

John: I've also helped with the visitors to the Lava Lands. From opening day until

closing day, the Lava Lands Visitor Center receives a constant stream of visitors from all over the world. There are several areas for volunteers to help these visitors. Volunteers conduct patio talks for visitors that describe the history, geology and features of Lava Lands and the entire monument. After the talk, the Volunteer Ranger will also offer a guided hike on the Trail of the Molten Lands. The volunteers are also



Volunteer Ranger Jim Elliott Reading to a Classroom

greeters as people come to the Visitor Center and provide information about the monument and the surrounding area. Others in our volunteer team are stationed at the top of Lava Butte, greeting visitors there and answering questions while experiencing the landscape from above. Sometimes lightning may show

up due to inclement weather and as the Lava Butte Volunteer Ranger, we also protect the safety of our visitors by ensuring that everyone is safe and off the butte.

DYF: What is one of the most common questions you receive from visitors?

John: Will Newberry Volcano erupt again?

DYF: Oh, that's a good one, and the answer is - yes, though we don't know when. For folks interested in hearing a more detailed answer to that question, check out the recent article we put out titled, "Could Newberry Erupt Again?" Thank you so much for volunteering with us at the Monument, John. Do you have any other volunteer opportunities to share?

John: I haven't done it, but sometimes Volunteer Rangers have lead guided bicycle tours to Benham Falls. Occasionally, there are Volunteer Rangers at Lava Cast Forest, an interesting area near Lava Lands where lava flowed through a forest and where the trunks of the trees left an imprint in the lava. It is an easy hike through the flow on a

paved path, which also has a variety of wildflowers in season. Volunteers also rove the trails up in the Newberry Caldera, in one of our Find-A-Ranger programs and assist with answering questions from visitors, along the trail. There are volunteer campground hosts at Newberry Caldera and also volunteers service in Paulina Visitor Center.

DYF: All of these programs sound like a lot of fun! Have you ever volunteered on the Forest outside of the Monument?

John: Yes! I've also volunteered up at Mt. Bachelor, where DYF manages patio talks at Mt. Bachelor's Pine Marten Lodge. The volunteer rangers at Mt. Bachelor lead talks about the Cascade Mountain Range's amazing landscape. The opportunities are not limited to the summer. Winter snowshoe guided hikes and ski/snowboard tours are offered as well.

DYF: We really appreciate your time with us today, John. Thank you so much for all that you do and your time serving at Newberry National Volcanic Monument. We really couldn't offer all of the amazing programs with you and our other volunteer rangers. Do you have any last words for us?

John: There are so many opportunities for volunteers to serve at Newberry National Volcanic Monument and in the Deschutes National Forest. Check with Discover Your Forest or the Forest Service for more information on how you can become a Forest volunteer.

DYF: I couldn't have said it better myself, John. Thank you again! If you are interested in volunteering, you can contact Stacey Cochran at Stacey.cochran@discovernw.org or via cell phone at 541-508-9899.

Visit discoveryourforest.org for more information, or follow us on social media!

