

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

13 Tips for Your NPS Career

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Tip #1 – Be Willing to Volunteer

- Volunteer-in-Parks Program

<https://www.nps.gov/getinvolved/volunteer.htm>

- Student Conservation Association (SCA)

<https://www.thesca.org/>

Tip #2: Be Mobile!



Tip #3 – Be Open To Other Disciplines

- Fee collection
- Administration
- Maintenance

- EVERY National Park Service job is equally important to the overall success of our organization.

Tip #4 – Be Open to Different Parks

- Natural vs. historical
- Urban vs. rural
- Large parks vs. small parks

- Go where no one else wants to go!

Tip #5 – Diversify Your Skills

- The broader your skill set, the more competitive you'll be for positions down the road.
- Experience in multiple park divisions/disciplines
- Also beneficial because of.....

Tip #6 – Balancing Work and Family

- The broader your skill set, the more options you have when balancing work and family priorities.

Tip #7 – Go Above and Beyond

- Don't be afraid to work outside your position description
- Do what it takes to distinguish yourself from the crowd
- Keep a positive attitude!

Tip #8 – Going backward to go forward

- Sometimes you need to take a step backward (or sideways) to get where you want to go.
 - It's okay to take a downgrade – it might be the best path in the long run.
- Especially applies to getting your first permanent position.

Tip #9 – Consider a Cover Letter

- Not all hiring officials want them (or read them)
- Make sure it's specific to the park and job you're applying for

Tip #10 – Be Persistent

- Getting permanent can be a short road, or a long road.
- If it's a long road...make the most of it!
- Seasonal jobs are a chance to try new places, new types of parks, and to find whether NPS is the right fit for you.

Tip #11 – Consider Other Agencies

- Get permanent status with another federal agency, and then apply to permanent jobs (merit promotion) with the National Park Service.
- May not need this strategy if you qualify under the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act (LMWFA).
- Be aware of the risks!

Tip #12 – There Are Multiple Paths

- There is no set formula for a National Park Service career
- Choose your own adventure! Find the path that works for you!
- Talk to lots of people, get a variety of perspectives – and feel free to disregard advice!

Tip #13 – Find A Mentor(s)

- Can be a formal or informal mentor
- ANPR has a great mentoring program

Ways to Learn More about the NPS

- www.nationalparkstraveler.org (independent site)
- Association of National Park Rangers (www.anpr.org)
- National Parks and Conservation Association (www.npca.org)
- The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks (<http://protectnps.org>)
- Facebook and Twitter for individual parks
- Facebook – National Park Service Employees (group)
- Visit parks (there are 417 of them!)