

HAUNTED TRAILS SCREAM TEAM VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Thank you for joining Oscar Scherer State Park, Osprey Nokomis Chamber of Commerce the Nokomis Volunteer Fire Department and Publix for our 6th Annual Haunted Trails Scream Team! This guide will outline important information regarding this frightfully fun and spooky event, and your role as a Scream Team Volunteer.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS:

While a volunteer is not considered to be an employee of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) or the Florida Park Service (FPS), a volunteer is a non-paid staff member. Consequently, volunteers are subject to the policies and minimum standards established for park personnel; each volunteer is held accountable for his/her actions and will be treated as any other park employee --- this encompasses all types of employee disciplinary actions, including termination. The impression that a park staff member makes is a lasting one and may be the only opportunity you will have at making it a positive one, so it is important for any volunteer to keep in mind and understand the expectations and policies of the Florida Park Service, as well as any additional policies and standards that a specific park has established.

In order to participate in the Florida Park Service's Volunteer Program and event each individual must read the agreement upon signing in. By signing in that you have read and agree to the volunteer agreement, also covers you under Worker's Compensation, in the case that an injury on-site and on-duty occurs.

NOTE: If a near-injury or injury (regardless of how minor) does occur, it is imperative that the injured party notifies the Volunteer Coordinator or other park employee immediately. All incident reports must be filed within 24 hours of a sustained injury.

*****In case of an emergency, please follow the following procedures*****

- In case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911. Follow-up by notifying park management (or any park employee) immediately.
- In case of a non-life-threatening emergency, notify a park employee immediately.
- The Ranger Station is open daily from 8:00am – Sunset: 941-483-5956.

HAUNTED TRAILS VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS:

All volunteers are required to read and sign the volunteer agreement at the sign in booth, and check in each day at the sign in booth. **** Any volunteer under that age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign giving permission to volunteer.

All volunteers are expected to be in the park by 5:30 pm or sooner the day of the event.

The safety of our visitors, volunteers and staff is of the utmost importance. Please refer to the following tips in order to ensure that you are providing the highest-quality level of entertainment in a safe and enjoyable manner:

- Please arrive to your assigned post(s) well-prepared and on-time. A designated volunteer parking area will be established; to which you will be directed upon arrival.
- Volunteers are permitted to wear all-black clothing and weather-appropriate clothing is recommended. Costumes, makeup, etc. will not be provided by the park. However, volunteers are encouraged to wear family-friendly (non-sexually suggestive) costumes.
- We are open rain or shine; however, the trails will be closed until further notice if lightning is present.
- Volunteers receive community service hours for the number of hours that they contribute. If you need your hours signed off for community service, please have them signed at the registration booth at check in (For ease during this busy event, hours will be credited from sign in time through midnight).
- Acting in a haunted scene should be an enjoyable experience for all. People may scream, run, or become genuinely frightened. Enjoy your time with us during the Haunted Trails event, while remembering your safety as well as our visitors' safety, respectively.
- No smoking, consumption of drugs, or drinking alcohol is permitted at any time. Violators will be escorted off park property immediately and volunteer status will be terminated indefinitely.
- If using burst of air, silly sting, etc. must keep waist or lower (do not point higher as we do not want anyone to get anything in their eyes.)
- No foul or inappropriate language is permitted prior or during the operation of the event. Remember, you are representing the Florida Park Service and its family-friendly values.
- Please listen to all instructions provided by park personnel and Scream Team Coordinators; they are here to provide support and guidance, as well as ensure the overall safety and success of the event.
- Restrict your scary movements to the scary Haunted Trail. Some of the younger audience members may not be old enough to appreciate your scariness.
- Be careful when moving about trail areas, over railings, or hiding in dark areas. Plan your scary locations in daylight hours. Report any trail safety concerns (tripping hazards, low branches, pot-holes, etc.) to park personnel immediately.
- Beware the trail during night hours! By participating in the required briefing/orientation sessions, you will become familiar with the trail layout, which will reduce safety and logistical issues later.
- Be cognizant of visitors and your surroundings. Report any misconduct or inappropriate behaviors to park personnel, including your Scream Team Coordinator.
- Calmly but immediately notify park personnel and/or your Scream Team Coordinator of any injury or incident (to yourself or others). An incident report must be filed within 24 hours of an incident.
- Remain, at minimum, an arm's-length away from patrons at all times. As a Volunteer at the Haunted Trails event, you are not permitted to touch or come into any physical contact with any visitor at any time. If you should accidentally make contact with a visitor, apologize and step back. Should a visitor attempt to touch or accost you in an aggressive manner, please get a good description of that individual and immediately report the incident to a park employee. Avoid all confrontation.
- Do not follow or chase park visitors, as it may be interpreted as harassment.
- Do not carry sharp sticks or objects that could cause injury to your self or others.

- Do not stop visitors on the trail. Never step in front of a group or slow their progression through the Haunted Trail. Impeding the flow of the guided trail tours will increase the waiting time for those in line and may have a negative impact on the visitor's overall experience.
- Remain in character. All eyes are on you by your audience, even if they can't actually see you. Make sure that you perform for each and every group, no matter how small or large the group may be. Be sure that you remain in character and target your scariness towards the center of the group for maximum scare efficacy. Project yourself, including your movements and your voice. If you see one of your friends walking through the attraction, this is not the opportunity say hello or make small-talk. Scare the yell out of them all!
- You may not be able to scare every visitor walking through the Haunted Trail but do not get discouraged; you are, at the very least, entertaining them and providing them with a positive and unique experience.
- We have a zero tolerance policy in effect for any violation for the aforementioned rules. These rules have been developed to protect our volunteers, visitors and park personnel.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EVENING:

- When you arrive and after you park, you should head directly to sign in and then to your assigned area to set-up. Be sure to arrive on-time and check-in with your area's Scream Team Coordinator. If any changes or alterations to the night's events have been made, your area's Scream Team Coordinator will inform you when you check-in.
- Remember to bring drinking water and a snack, if necessary, for breaks between groups (there should be no more than 5 minutes between each Haunted Trail group).
- Water will be available to volunteers. Be sure to take some with you to your station.
- Have fun but remember that safety always comes first!

DURING THE NIGHT:

- If a guest should fall down or become injured, you can yell "**BATS IN A CAVE**" down the trail. All volunteers will repeat "**BATS IN A CAVE**" until it reaches personnel with a radio. This way we can get help to the person without causing alarm
- Personnel may come down the trail calling "**BUCKETS OF BLOOD**" – This is an invitation for water or a break. If you need either, please indicate to the personnel that you need blood, and they will either take your spot or bring you water.

AT THE END OF THE EVENING:

- The event closes at 10:00pm, though often we have crowds in the park for up to an hour past this. Please remain in your assigned area until you get the all clear to leave as we will try to clear the line quickly.
- Please report any concerns or suggestions from the first night to the coordinators so they can take this into consideration for the next night.
- Please remember to take any personal items with you when you leave. Even though the trails and event areas will be secured at the end of the night, the park is not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

- Please dispose of any water bottles and/or snack wrappers that you might have brought with you to your area; help us reduce the amount of cleaning-up that may need to be done after the trails close. We also have recycling receptacles at the event area!
- Drive safely and thank you for your participation! We hope to see you next year!

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q – What time does the event begin and end?

A – The Trick-or-Treat Trail will be open from 7:30pm to 9:30pm. The Haunted Trail and the Haunted Pavilion are open from 8:00pm to 10:00pm. At 10:00pm, no additional visitors will be permitted to enter the park. The park will close at 11:00pm to the public, at which point the event equipment and sets will be secured for the night. Volunteers will know ahead of time what hours they will be working; not all volunteers will need to remain until 11:00pm or later (this is determined on what a volunteer signs up to do).

Q – Can I take breaks or take a time-out from my duties?

A – Our recommendation is that you bring a snack and drinking water with you to your assigned area(s). Should you have any issues through-out the evening, let us know and we will assist you to the best of our ability. We will do our best to try to have people swap out to get you breaks and an opportunity to check out the rest of the event. However, remember that extra manpower during the event will be limited, as everyone will already be assigned to a specific area or task. For roving or activity booth volunteers, it is recommended that breaks be taken only if there is coverage for your area or booth. No activity booth should be left unattended at any time.

Q – Is your Haunted Trail family-friendly?

A – The Haunted Trail is not designed to be appropriate for children under the age of 13, although the discretion will be left up to the parent (any child under the age of 13 must be accompanied by a legal parent or guardian in order to enter the Haunted Trail). The effects and content of the trail are disturbing in nature and there is not a fast way to exit the trail (although fire and emergency exits will be established for visitors and volunteers). Our volunteers are not prepared to structure their performances for younger and vulnerable audiences if they become genuinely frightened. For children under the age of 13 and for parents who do not wish for their children to participate in the Haunted Trail, there will be a non-scary Trick-or-Treat Trail featuring hands-on activities, including games and candy.

Q – Is the Haunted Trail accessible?

A – Although we do our best to be accessible for all park areas, the Haunted Trail may not be entirely accessible. However, we will do our best to accommodate your needs. In addition, Oscar Scherer State Park does have one beach-accessible wheelchair available upon request (is on a first-come, first-served basis). Reservations for the wheelchair can be made by calling the park's main line at 941-483-5956. Additionally, the Trick-or-Treat Trail will be made accessible for the event.

Q – Can I bring my pet on the Haunted Trails?

A – We discourage pets to be brought on the Haunted Trail for the safety of the scream team, the safety of the pet, and the safety of visitors.

During normal business hours and operations, leashed and well-behaved pets are welcome to accompany our park guests in designated public use areas allowing pets. The entire pet policy standards for the FPS can be viewed by visiting: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/thingstoknow/petpolicy.cfm>