

Arboretum Naturalist

Reports to: Education Coordinator

Program Description

Hoyt Arboretum is Portland's museum of living trees. Volunteer Arboretum Naturalists introduce students to the wonders of nature found in our 189-acre arboretum through the student field trip program, which engages students in trailside environmental education focusing on local ecology and the importance of trees. Volunteers gain experience working with children and teaching environmental education in an informal outdoor setting.

Responsibilities

- Lead small groups of students on a two-hour field trip along the arboretum's trails
- Share learned knowledge of trees and forest ecology
- Participate with students in hands-on environmental education activities
- Inspire and encourage curiosity and discovery in the natural world

Qualifications

- Experience or interest in teaching students from a variety of backgrounds
- Background or interest in environmental education or natural sciences
- Love of the outdoors and comfortable walking on trails
- High energy and enthusiasm for teaching elementary-aged youth
- Good communication and public speaking skills
- All volunteers must pass a background check

Time Requirements

Arboretum Naturalists should be available to volunteer for a **minimum of 4 field trips per month** during the peak season (September-November and April-June). Field trips last 2 hours and are typically scheduled on Tuesday through Friday mornings. There are also occasional weekend and non-peak season requests (November-March). Arboretum Naturalists are encouraged to be available for a minimum 8-week commitment.

Training

Arboretum Naturalists are required to attend **three introductory training sessions**. During the trainings, volunteers will:

- Learn about Hoyt Arboretum, Hoyt Arboretum Friends (HAF), and its partnership with Portland Parks & Recreation
- Learn the Hoyt Arboretum field trip curriculum and expectations of the field trip program
- Learn best practices for leading field trips, including teaching tips, group management, and engagement activities
- Learn different trail routes that would be appropriate for field trips
- Practice giving a field trip and leading activities with other Arboretum Naturalists

Additional naturalist training opportunities will be available during the field trip season.

Benefits

Hoyt Arboretum volunteers are eligible for an annual Washington Park volunteer parking pass and complimentary membership with HAF after **15 volunteer hours** have been completed. Benefits include a 20% discount in the Visitor Center, discounts on classes, invitations to members-only events, and an annual volunteer appreciation celebration.

To Apply: Please email volunteer@hoystarboretum.org or call (503) 823-1649 for more information.