

Kayak Leader 2023 Summary

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Number of Volunteers: 2

Number of Hours: 4

Calvert County is uniquely situated between the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay—two great places to paddle! Each season the naturalists lead kayak trips for different groups and programs which are always (weather permitting) a fun way to explore the local aquatic ecosystems up close. Kayak volunteers will work with the naturalist in charge to ensure a safe and enjoyable paddle is had by all. Trips typically launch from and return to Kings Landing Park. Other locations include Lower Marlboro and Nan's Cove.

SKILLS NEEDED

- Be flexible – there may be unexpected factors or changes to a program; be ready to fill-in or help out where needed
- Fit and able-bodied to handle walking distances while carrying boats, towing a boat with yours, lifting them over your head, boating in adverse conditions, etc.
- Be able to lift and carry kayaks
- Strong canoe/kayak skills
- Strong interpersonal skills to interact positively with the public
- Ability to follow direction

Optional, but Preferred, Skills

- Be able to answer questions about Calvert County plants, animals, and ecosystems
- Personal kayak not required, but very helpful
- First aid and CPR certified
- Ability to properly tie knots to hold canoes/kayaks or willing to learn
- Completion of our kayak leader training and/or a course by the American Canoe Assoc., the American Red Cross or similar organization
- At least 5 years of prior canoe/kayak experience

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

- Help naturalist(s) unload and load boat trailer
- Regulate foot traffic and parking at the launch site as needed
- Pass out equipment to participants (e.g. PFD's, boats, paddles, glow sticks)
- Help participants carry and launch their boats
- In a positive and polite fashion, volunteer should assist participants with learning strokes and techniques
- Discuss or answer questions about local animals, ecosystems, and program topics
- Be alert to the weather, struggling participants, and other issues
- Communicate any problems or potential problems to the naturalist
- Be flexible to the needs of the group and naturalist
- Help participants with fitting their lifejackets

REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

- Prior kayak experience
- Successful completion of our kayak leader training every 3rd year
- Strong paddling and swimming skills
- Knowledge of paddling and water safety
- Ability to lead and speak to a small group
- Ability to gauge safety of situations and communicate instructions clearly
- Canoe/Kayak Volunteers are asked to commit to specific trip dates as they become available

TRAININGS

- Initial orientation in-person or virtual
- Scheduled trainings will be provided at Kings Landing Park. Training must be completed with the concurrence of naturalists before volunteer can assume a leadership role. Aspiring volunteers may shadow existing volunteers until training is complete
- Attend additional trainings and enrichment events as available
- Volunteers will receive specific training on our trip logistics and equipment

PROJECT DATES

Kayak trips are held in the fall (August-October) and spring (April-June). Frequency and topics of trips subject to change based on weather and availability of naturalists

SUMMARY OF 2023 ACTIVITIES

We had very few public kayak trips this year due to staff turnover and lack of staff training. Trips we did have either used 2 staff or a staff and an intern vs relying on volunteers. Due to lack of need, no kayak volunteer training was offered in 2023. I had 2 volunteers attend one trip in June 2023.

FUTURE PLANS

This volunteer opportunity is not currently needed. We are not offering as many kayak trips as we used to and those we have rely on paid staff/interns to cover the safety of the group. If we get to a point where the hourly naturalists are once again trained and confident enough to lead trips, we may get back to more offering more trips, but until that happens this opportunity is on hiatus.

Supporting Calvert County's nature parks and natural spaces



CALVERT STEWARDS

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A partnership between Calvert Nature Society and Calvert County Natural Resources Division

2023 Annual Report

Date of Issue March 2024

CALVERT STEWARDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
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Volunteer Portal: <https://calvertstewards.galaxydigital.com/>

Calvert Nature Society: www.calvertparks.org

Calvert County Natural Resources Division:
www.calvertcountymd.gov/NaturalResources

