

Q. What is a docent?

A docent is someone who interacts with the public at the Forest Service heritage sites in the Sedona area. The goal is to provide interpretation of the site for a greater visitor experience, education on site etiquette for these sites and any other sites that the visitor may encounter on their own, and protect the site by monitoring for inappropriate behavior by visitors.

Q. Where do docents volunteer?

Volunteers have a choice of working at the three Heritage sites in the Red Rock district of the Coconino National Forest: Palatki, V-Bar-V, or Honanki. You can elect to volunteer at any or all of these sites. Website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/coconino/recreation/?cid=stelprdb5299994&width=full>

Q. Why are docents needed?

We receive 25,000 visitors at each site each year. Due to past (and recent) issues with graffiti and ongoing threat of abuse, these sites are only open to the public on fixed days and hours. Specific areas are viewable only if there is a docent present to monitor, interpret, and educate.

Q. What are the working hours?

Palatki and V-Bar-V are open from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm. Honanki is open from 9:30 am until 4:00 pm.

It is usually recommended that a volunteer spend an entire day at Palatki. V-Bar-V is conducive to full day or half day shifts.

Q. What days can I volunteer?

Palatki is open 363 days a year (Closed for Thanksgiving and Christmas)

V-Bar-V is open Friday through Monday.

Honanki is open year-round.

Sites may be closed for specific weather and/or road conditions.

Q. Do I need to work a fixed schedule?

Scheduling is quite flexible and varies by individual. Some choose a specific day every week, others a specific day one or two times a month, while some work varying days and frequency as their schedules permit. Many docents are part time residents who volunteer during the two to six months a year that they are in town.

Q. Is there a minimum volunteer commitment?

Due to the cost of training, we ask for a minimum commitment of 60 hours a year. That's about 6 days a year (including travel time) at the sites and 1.5 days of annual training.

Q. I have transportation issues. How do I get to Palatki / Honanki?

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There are several options: 1) Car pool with another volunteer; 2) Arrange for a ride from the Forest Service person driving to the site that day; 3) Obtain a government driver's license (Defensive Driving classes are available twice a year or online) and pick up a government vehicle at the Red Rock Ranger District office in the Village of Oak Creek.

Q. What type of people become docents?

Our docents come from many walks of life. We have educators, accountants, physicians, computer programmers, dentists, geologists, medical technicians, nurses, retired military, chemists, ranchers, and more. The common factor is an interest/fascination with archaeology, a desire to protect the archaeological treasures in our area, and a joy in interacting with and educating visitors on the significance of these sites and how/why these sites (and the 100's of other sites in the area) should be respected and treated.

Q. But, I don't have any background in archeology!

Don't be concerned! Very few docents enter the program with prior knowledge about the Verde Valley. We provide full day on-site training at Palatki / Honanki and a half day at V-Bar-V. We also provide a large 3-ring binder with supporting information about each site and the Verde Valley in general. The Forest Service provides biannual full day "refresher" training. The essential information is contained in two 16-page pamphlets that cover Palatki/Honanki and V-Bar-V.

Q. How do I become a docent?

To be a docent, you need to be a member of Friends of the Forest, Sedona or the Verde Valley Chapter of the Arizona Archaeology Society. The next step is to contact the chairperson of the Cultural Resources Committee (Jerry Walters) via email (docents@fosedona.org) or phone: (928) 284-1339