

Sod House Ranch Interpretive Guide

I. Purpose

Interpretive/Tour Guide Volunteers often do a wide range of diverse jobs. This includes staffing the historic Sod House Ranch, providing information to the public, and working on special projects.

The qualifications and responsibilities listed below should give you an idea of the different aspects of interpretive/tour guide services, but do not represent one person's job description.

II. Qualifications

A. Willingness to obtain knowledge and understanding of the history of the refuge and the ranching heritage of the Harney Basin, nature, ecology, habitats, adaptations, wildlife, plants, and birds with the ability to quickly learn local ecosystems, common flora and fauna, and local and migratory birds which use the Refuge. Birding skills and knowledge of wildlife are a plus.

B. Ability to clearly understand the purpose of the Refuge and its wildlife management programs, as well as the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the ability to learn the layout of the Refuge and the auto-tour loop.

C. Enjoyment in working with diverse groups of people.

D. Good interpersonal communications and public speaking skills are a necessity required. The ability to present a positive image to the public using interpretive techniques is desired.

E. Ability to handle stressful situations involving visitors. This person should be confident, but must know when to seek assistance with questions or problems that arise.

F. Willingness and flexibility to accept responsibility of assisting staff and visitors when needed. Ability to work on a team with other volunteers and staff.

G. A valid driver's license.

H. Physical ability to sit and stand for long periods and to move around the ranch. May hike Refuge trails, work outdoors in adverse weather, stoop and bend, and to do occasional lifting.

I. Ability to learn how to operate a hand held radio and to communicate with refuge headquarters using this radio.

J. Ability to work alone at this ranch located three miles from refuge headquarters or with others.

III. Responsibilities

A. Sod House Ranch Interpretive/Tour Guide Volunteer

1. Open and close historic Sod House Ranch including: locking/unlocking entrance gate; removing litter; and maintaining supplies in public outhouse.
2. Greet visitors and provide helpful and accurate information materials.
3. Provide orientations, hands-on and guided ranch tours to visitors and scheduled groups. Explain the history of the ranch and refuge, refuge purposes, management and include information on animals and birds.
4. Report any problems and/or potential problems to the cultural resource or public use staff.
5. Help conduct visitor surveys when needed.
6. Watch for unusual situations and report them to headquarters. Document illegal visits or trespass into closed areas.
7. Set up scopes for visitor observation and explain the proper use of scopes and binoculars.
8. May perform a variety of other duties as assigned.

B. Special Projects

1. Assist with preparations for the annual Ranching Heritage Event.
2. Respond to requests by sending out information and guides.
3. Visit schools or groups upon request to describe the ranching history of the refuge and to present history slide show.
4. Assist with compiling packets for children and adults for ranching heritage events.
5. Assist with numerous jobs prior to and during a variety of events.
6. Assist with service projects with groups such as the Boys Scouts, etc.
7. May be asked to assist with other duties as assigned.

IV. Time Commitment

A minimum of one month (30 days) and a minimum of 24 hours per week for RV community volunteers or a minimum of 32 hours per week for government housed volunteers. Work days will most likely include weekends.

V. Supervisor

The Refuge Archaeologist will supervise the Sod House Ranch Interpretive/Tour Guide Volunteer assistants and will delegate this responsibility to another staff member in his/her absence.