

Volunteer Opportunity vs an Exchange

What is the difference between volunteering and an exchange?

by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

In both a volunteer position and when you do an exchange of services, you work a certain number of hours and, in return, receive an RV site. For volunteer positions you contribute your time and efforts to a government or public agency. National parks and forests, state parks and *Habitat for Humanity* are examples.

An exchange is with a profit-making entity like a campground; you exchange work for your site. Check to see if it is a "fair" exchange. Even though no money is changing hands, you are "paying" for your site with your labor.

At the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, working 15 hours per week for your site would mean you are "paying" \$108.75 per week for your site or about \$435 per month. Is this what a long-term camper would pay? If not, there should be compelling reasons why this exchange works for you.

When you compute what you are "paying" for a site at a nonprofit entity, you may find it is quite a bit. For example, most national parks require 32 hours/week per person for your site. You can figure the difference between what you would normally pay for the site and the extra is a donation to an agency or nonprofit whose cause you believe in. And, if it seems unfair to you, find another place to donate your time.

You can find lots of volunteer opportunities at Volunteer.gov.

Jobs for RVers- some paid, some exchanges and some a mixture - can be found in *Workamper News*. See Workamper.com for subscription information.