

Volunteering Without a Towed Car

How can I Workamp in my RV when I'm too Chicken to Tow a Car?

by J.J. Dippel

RV's that are Class A, B, or C present a situation that can be an issue to RV travel. Once you are parked and hooked up, you have no means to go anywhere a considerable distance unless you tow a car. Towing a car, even for convenience, brings on other challenges and headaches.

I have traveled in a Class C since 2004, and I'm still too chicken to tow a car (called a towed vehicle or "toad"). I carry an electric scooter that can go 25 miles on a charge, but even that presents limitations as to which types of roads I can travel on. But nonetheless, in 2009, I decided I was ready to try Workamping anyway. Adrienne Kristine was my inspiration. If she can do it, I can do it! The only difference between Adrienne and me is that she is a full-timer, and I'm a part-timer (and I travel with a pet).

Workamping encompasses both paid and volunteer positions. For purposes of this article, my Workamping was volunteer. I participated in two wonderful opportunities.

During May of 2009, I served as a camp host at a state park in my home state. The closest laundry facility was three miles away at what was generally a gas station stop. Even worse, the closest good grocery store was 30 miles away, although you could get a few convenience items at the same gas station stop where the laundry facilities were located. The big issues for this opportunity were food and laundry, which required some strategic planning.

During July and August of 2009, I served as an interpretive host at a federal facility in Kentucky. I had a very nice RV site, and it was within walking distance of the work site. Further, free laundry facilities were provided at this location. Best yet, I had a schedule with days off. The challenges to this assignment were food and entertainment.

Following are the ways I addressed the "challenges" to each volunteer assignment.

LAUNDRY: During the May 2009 camp hosting assignment, once a week I went through all the paces of disconnecting the RV, driving three miles (six miles round trip) to the laundry facility, and then the entire process of reconnection. Yes, this was a bit of a pain, but at least the engine gasoline got stirred up. Also, the weather in May was mild enough that I didn't have to worry about my pet cat in the RV while I was doing my laundry.

FOOD:

1. During the May 2009 camp hosting assignment (lasting one month), I packed enough staple food that was easy to prepare. For dinners, I carried a few major meat products, like pork chops, salmon, sirloin steak, and frozen hamburger, as much as would fit in my freezer.

Once a week, I prepared a major meat item. Often this left me with enough for two dinners. The rest of the time my dinners would be spaghetti or linguine dishes, sometimes with canned clams. (I have a wonderful clam linguine recipe for my RV trips!)

For lunch, I carried a lot of apples and oranges which are good fruits to include as these fruits don't spoil very quickly. Other times, I would ride my scooter the three miles to a couple of fast food restaurants near the gas station stop.

For breakfast, I carried a lot of juices in plastic bottles (which can store easily when not opened), and ate mostly oatmeal with raisins. Occasionally, I did have some boiled eggs. Fortunately, I had all the food I needed.

2. During the summer interpretive host assignment, carrying food to last more than a month without shopping can be cumbersome. On this assignment, I was very lucky. Other volunteers (who had cars) would either offer to take my list and shop for me (as long as I reimbursed them promptly!) or offer me rides to the grocery store.

ENTERTAINMENT: As the one and only camp host for a 50-site state park (May 2009), I was on duty 24/7. Therefore, there was no need to travel anywhere. Entertainment came from my DVD's or my computer. On the other hand, as an interpretive host (summer 2009), I had scheduled days off. At this assignment, the following were available within the riding range of my scooter: old fashioned ice cream shop, hiking trails, restaurant in a state park.

Other times, when I had two or more days off in a row, I packed up the RV and drove to other places. On one of my exploration trips, I discovered an RV park in Danville, Kentucky that had a dinner theater attached to it! It's amazing what you find when you aren't looking real hard. Also, I traveled up to other places that caught my interest (such as Mammoth Caves in Kentucky).

The days were pretty warm and humid. In situations such as this, care for pets in the RV is a big priority! When visiting an attraction for the day, I left roof vents open with fans running, ran another fan from a small inverter, and I put an ice bag in kitty's bed. I put plenty of water (with a few ice cubes) in kitty's dish. Kitty stayed very cool and was fine.

I have always been a firm believer of "If you need it, it will be there for you." When traveling solo in the RV, my faith in this has never wavered. When applying for Workamping positions, traveling toadless does require some planning to ensure you can perform the duties, but have your needs met.

I am grateful to Adrienne Kristine for inspiring me to continue to travel toadless. Basically, if you can get there in a car, you can get there in an RV. However, it may just take a little more creativity and planning.

Note: L Adrienne Kristine is a solo RVer and is the author of *Frugal RVing or Pinching Pennies without Getting Bruised* and *I've Got a Convection Oven in My RV - Now What?*