



**MARCH 20 - APRIL 12, 2020**

**Volunteer Handbook**

2020 National Cherry Blossom Festival

Updated: 02/06/2020

# National Cherry Blossom Festival 2020

Welcome Volunteers!

Thank you for volunteering with the 2020 National Cherry Blossom Festival, the nation's greatest springtime celebration! This is an exciting time of the year for our nation's capital, and we are happy to know you will take pride in being a part of such a wonderful tradition! As a NCBF volunteer you'll be doing hands-on work to make the Festival happen, interacting with locals and tourists; networking, learning, having fun, and establishing yourself as part of this wonderful community we are fortunate to call home. For those coming from outside the DC area to volunteer, we would like to thank you for helping the Nation Cherry Blossom Festival have an impact on even more communities.

This handbook was created to be used as a resource for you and help you become a better National Cherry Blossom Festival Volunteer. Inside we provide an overview of the Festival, important dates, what you can expect as a volunteer, and what we expect of you. We hope this handbook will allow you to feel comfortable volunteering with us and we believe you will have a wonderful experience with your fellow volunteers. Please read this handbook carefully, and refer to these pages if you have any questions. The more comfortable you are with your duties, the better the Festival will be. We invite you to our annual Volunteer Orientation to answer all of your questions in person.

We hope you keep in mind that the Festival could not be accomplished without your support and we cannot thank you enough. Your success is our success!

The festival runs from March 20th to April 12th. These event packed weeks include plenty of volunteer opportunities for you to get involved in! To sign up for shifts, change/view your shifts, or cancel a shift, please visit the volunteer website at:

<http://ncbf.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=43735>

Additional information may be found on our blog at:

<https://cherryblossomvolunteers.wordpress.com/>

And please join us for our monthly special events for volunteers! This is a time for you to meet the Festival team and fellow volunteers, ask questions or just make some new friends! Updates will be posted in the [National Cherry Blossom Festival Volunteer Facebook Group](#).

We truly appreciate your efforts that contribute to the success of the entire team! Thank you again, and enjoy the 2020 National Cherry Blossom Festival!

Thinking Pink,  
Tasha Stiger  
Volunteer Manager  
202-661-7595  
[tstiger@ncbfdc.org](mailto:tstiger@ncbfdc.org)

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## History of the Festival:

In 1912, the gift of more than 3,000 trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo arrived in Washington. On March 27, 1912, First Lady Helen Herron Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first two trees from Japan in a simple ceremony on the north bank of the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park. In 1915, the US government was able to reciprocate with a gift of flowering dogwood trees to the people of Japan.

Each year, the National Cherry Blossom Festival welcomes spring across the country and celebrates the gift of cherry blossom trees and the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and Japan. The Festival features three weeks of daily events and four anchoring weekends full of diverse and creative programming, promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. Events are primarily free and open to the public (thanks to the help of our **AMAZING** volunteers!).

Today, the festival has grown from modest beginnings into the nation's greatest springtime celebration. According to a haiku by Basho the original tree planting was attended by only five people. Now more than 1.5 million people visit Washington, DC each year to admire the blossoming cherry trees and participate in diverse programming that heralds spring in the nation's capital. This year we plan to continue a tradition built over 100 years ago. **We hope that you, as part of our amazing core of volunteers, can continue to spread this amazing story of international friendship by summarizing it in your own words, and sharing with the guests you encounter during the Festival!**



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\*\*\*Signature Events are the events you will be volunteering at!\*\*\*

**3/12: Volunteer Orientation**

Sign up [here](#)

This event is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged for all NEW volunteers

**Time and Location:** 5:30 PM – 8 PM at MIPC (901 K St NW, 11<sup>th</sup> floor)

**3/20: Signature Event: Pink Tie Party\***

This gala and silent auction is our last fundraiser before the start of the Festival; proceeds benefit the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the beauty of nature and international friendship through year-round programs, events, and educational initiatives that enhance our environment, showcase arts and culture, and build community spirit. **Time and Location:** 7 – 11 PM at Ronald Reagan Building & Trade Center **Cost:** General Admission – \$225/person

**Signature Event: Opening Ceremony\***

**3/21:** Kick-off the 2020 National Cherry Blossom Festival with world-renowned entertainment as we welcome springtime to Washington, DC and celebrate the anniversary of the gift of trees from Japan to the United States. **Time and Location:** 5 – 6:30 PM at The Warner Theatre (513 13th Street, NW) **Cost:** FREE; *Advance ticketing required*

**3/21: Pink Carpet Reception\*** – Private Event immediately following the Opening Ceremony

\*These events are limited to Lead Volunteers. Lead Volunteers have demonstrated leadership skills and event knowledge at previous events and undergo an interview process. Additional shift requirements may apply per event (i.e. minimum of three additional event shifts required to participate in the Pink Tie Party). Email [Tasha](#) if you would like to begin the interview process for 2019 Lead Volunteers.

**3/21: Premier Event: SAAM Cherry Blossom Celebration**

**Time and Location:** 11:30 AM – 3 PM at Smithsonian American Art Museum – 8<sup>th</sup> and G Streets NW

**3/21–4/12 Signature Event: Tidal Basin Welcome Area and the ANA Performance Stage**

The Tidal Basin is the hub for the entire National Cherry Blossom Festival. Visitors will actively be stopping by, asking questions, and participating in hands-on provided activities.

**Time and Location:** 7 days a week from 10 AM – 6 PM at Tidal Basin Paddle Boat Area (1501 Maine Ave SW, Washington, DC 20024)

**3/28: Signature Event: Blossom Kite Festival**

The Blossom Kite Festival showcases the creativity of kite makers and skill of kite fliers from across the US and other countries through a variety of competitions and demonstrations including the popular Hot Tricks Showdown and the Rokkaku Battle. Guests are invited to bring their own kites or children can make a kite at activity stations (while supplies last) to fly on the Public Field.

The Blossom Kite Festival includes five areas to enjoy: the Competition & Demonstration Field, Family Field, Kite Club Display Area, Activity Tents, and Public Field. Detailed event information and a full schedule will be posted online.

**Time and Location:** 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM at Washington Monument grounds – Constitution Avenue & 15th Street, NW



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## 3/9 – 4/17 **Signature Event: Union Station Pop-Up Shop**

Our Union Station Pop-Up Shop is located in this prime spot in the Main Hall at Union Station! Share Information about the Festival (think about how many locals and tourists alike pass through these halls daily!) and assist with merchandise sales. All proceeds benefit the Festival and allow most of our programs to remain free and open to the public.

**Time:** Mon-Sat @ 10AM – 7:30 PM Sun @ 10 AM – 5:30 PM

## 4/4: **Signature Event: National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade® presented by Events DC**

One of DC's largest spectator events, the energy-filled National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade® presented by Events DC runs for 10 blocks along iconic Constitution Avenue. Giant colorful helium balloons, elaborate floats, marching bands from across the country, celebrity entertainers, and performers burst down the Parade route in a grand spectacle of music and showmanship seen only once a year during the Festival. From the National Archives to the Washington Monument, spectators are wow-ed by the pageantry and excitement that is the nation's premier springtime parade.

**Time and Location:** 10:00 AM – Noon at Constitution Avenue – From 7th to 17th Streets, NW (map)

**Cost:** Starting at \$20 for Grandstand Seating. Standing along the Parade route from Constitution Avenue between 9th and 15th streets, NW is FREE and open to the public. Arrive early for the best views. **Tickets:** Purchase Grandstand seats [here](#).

## 4/4: **Premier Event: Sakura Matsuri - Japanese Street Festival 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Enjoy the family-friendly atmosphere of the largest Japanese cultural festival in the United States. Presented by The Japan-American Society of Washington DC, this event features food, arts and culture, merchandise, and over 80 cultural groups during more than 30 cumulative hours of programming.

Attendees can buy tickets online at [www.sakuramatsuri.org](http://www.sakuramatsuri.org), or pay cash at any of the entrances on the day of the festival.

**Time and Location:** 10:30 AM – 6 PM at Pennsylvania Avenue from 3rd to 7th street NW, M Archives Navy Memorial Penn Quarter

## 4/5: **Premier Event: Anacostia River Festival**

Produced by the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park, this family-friendly festival celebrates the Anacostia River with opportunities to take a canoe out to explore the river, ride in the bike parade, play lawn games, and experience Southeast D.C.'s local arts scene at this special free event. This year we will be celebrating biking with District trail rides, safety classes, bike tune ups and other bike activities for all ages.

**Time and Location:** 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM at Anacostia Park, Good Hope Drive SE and Anacostia Drive SE

## 4/11: **Signature Event: Petalpalooza**

Our signature event formerly known as the Southwest Waterfront Fireworks Display. This exciting full-day event includes interactive art, live music, play and more at The Wharf. This is an event you won't want to miss! Fireworks begin at 8:30 PM

**Time and Location:** 1PM- 9PM at The Yards Park – 355 Water St SE, Washington, DC

## **Volunteer Appreciation Event at the Microsoft Innovation & Policy Center**

All 2020 volunteers that have completed at least one shift are invited to be celebrated with food, drinks and many giveaways! (Please note, if you signed up for a shift and were a no-show, you will not be allowed to attend) Lead Volunteers will have their own exclusive reception.

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## Other Programs to Look for

### City in Bloom

**March 20 – April 12, 2020**

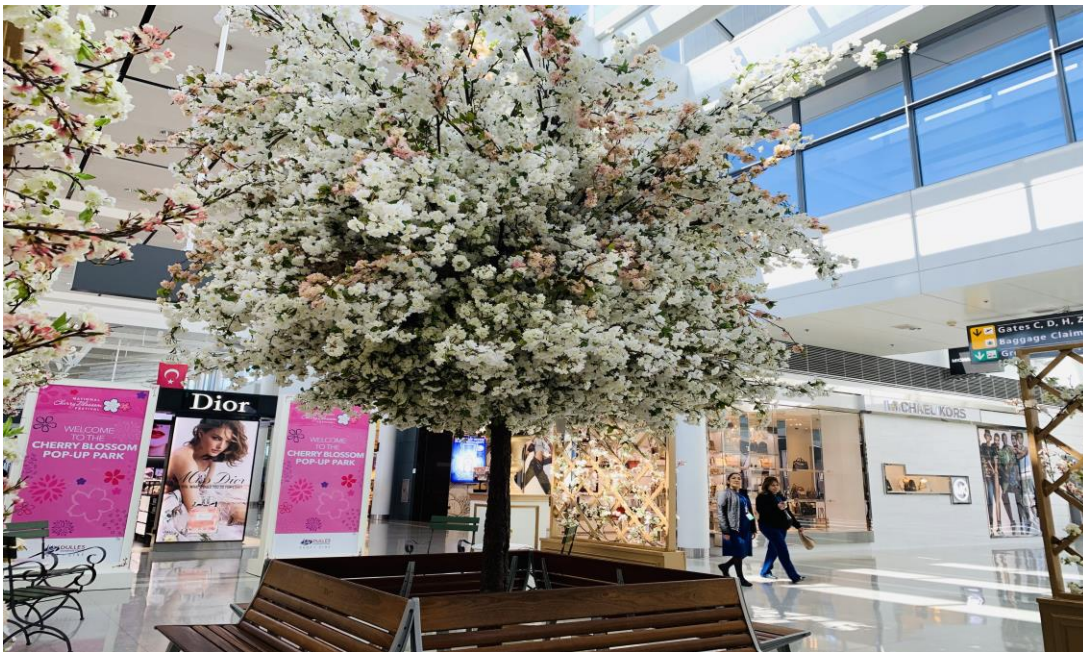
City in Bloom encourages all businesses and organizations to visually unite, promote and participate in the 2019 Festival by displaying pink lighting and decals.

**Lighting Display:** March 30<sup>th</sup>-April 4<sup>th</sup>.

How to can you join the city wide celebration?

- Display **decals** on storefront windows, hotels, and restaurants
- Set-up **pink string lights** on patios, trees, Shrubbery
- Shine **blossom projections** on iconic buildings

You can purchase these items [here](#)



### Student Art Contest March 24 – April 10, 2020

The National Cherry Blossom Festival and DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative invite students from DC public and public charter schools in grades K through 12 to participate in the Student Art Contest. Entries are judged by a panel, and winners are selected in age-specific categories.

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How can you join the contest?

- Students in DC Public and Public Charter Schools grades K-12 may **submit** one piece of artwork
- **View** the Art Submissions at the Pepco Art Gallery
- **Volunteer** for Load In and Load Out

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**The truth is that we're counting on you. Reliable volunteers are crucial to everyone's success!** Please do not sign up unless you can truly commit to your shift times and can guarantee your attendance. **If you need to cancel, please contact us immediately.** If you do not show up, the role you have been assigned will not be completed and you will be uninvited to our Volunteer Appreciation Celebration. **We take this very seriously, and hope you do as well.**

## As a volunteer, you have already agreed to adhere to our code of conduct:

- I will only sign up for shifts I am able to commit to and am therefore confirmed.
- I will notify the Volunteer Manager no later than 48 hours in advance if I am unable to make my shift.
- I understand that I am responsible for my own transportation and time management.
- I will arrive 15 minutes prior to my event call time and in the assigned uniform.
- I will behave and appear in a professional manner at all times as I am a representative of the National Cherry Blossom Festival.
- I will not smoke or consume alcohol while in uniform.
- I will remain on-site until I have checked out with the on-site volunteer manager at the end of my event shift.

## Onsite Logistics:

- Appear neat, tidy, welcoming and happy to be at the event.
- Encourage attendees to ask questions.
- Answer questions you know the answer to, and seek assistance for those you do not.
- Positive attitude prevails: do not complain about the event, weather or shift assignment as this reflects negatively on the Festival; send your feedback to the Volunteer Manager after the event.
- Be prepared to be on your feet, and ready to stand for extended periods of time.
- No smoking or drinking in your volunteer uniform.
- Breaks will be coordinated with your on-site Volunteer Manager.
- Water will be provided to volunteers at each event. Make sure to stay hydrated during your event shift.
- Feel free to bring snacks, but make sure to clean up after yourself.
- Acceptable phone use designated to staffing areas, and breaks; no phones on the floor.
- Appropriate uses of social media outlets, i.e., do not complain about the event you are volunteering at via Facebook or Twitter.
- Avoid turning the volunteer experience into a social time with friends; remember, you signed up to work and we are counting on your full attention during your shift.

## Pre-Event Email:

- You will receive an email 3-5 days prior to your event shift reiterating your event details and sharing new ones - **keep an eye out for time changes!**
- Details will include call times, uniform, brief description of the task, and specific details about where to check in will be included.
- If meals are included, you will be notified in this email.

## Check-in (and out!) is **REQUIRED** at each event:

- A volunteer manager will greet you when you check in and assign you to your tasks for the shift.
- Allow ample time for transportation, parking and finding your check in location!
- Volunteers are required to check out at the end of each shift; paperwork will be signed at this time for certificate programs.
- If you are extremely late, you should still report to your shift, **but may be sent home if a replacement was found.**



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## Uniforms:

- The Festival uniform is your volunteer t-shirt (**as your outermost layer of clothing**), appropriate long pants and close-toed shoes.
- Specific events have different uniforms - Parade: black pants, black shoes; Pink Tie Party: all black suit; Opening Ceremony: white shirt, black pants/shoes
- T-shirts will be given to you at the first event you attend; do not forget it for your shift(s) thereafter. **No additional t-shirts will be given out.**
- No articles of clothing should be worn that would be considered profane or suggestive, or that advertise alcohol, drugs and/or illegal information. We are a family festival.
- Bring only the bare necessities; limit personal items to what you can keep on your body – secure storage **is not** available!
- Items to remember: T-shirt, rain gear, sunglasses.

## In addition, we ask you to:

- **Come ready!** You are coming to work but you are also coming to have fun!
- **Be reliable!** Show up on time and contact the office immediately if you are not able to follow through with your scheduled and confirmed event shift.
- **Be committed!** Work your scheduled shifts as designated by your Coordinator during the Festival and carry out the specified duties of your position.
- **Be accountable!** Attend all crew meetings – if you miss a meeting, arrange to obtain all information that was distributed.
- **Be a team player!** Everyone is volunteering and everyone gets tired; focus on the tasks at hand and on achieving your crew's goals.
- **Be courteous!** Treat other volunteers, performers, staff and audience with respect.
- **Respect confidentiality!** You are behind the scenes and not everything is meant to be made public. Ask your coordinator before sharing private information.
- **Ask for support when you need it!** You are on a team and we are all here to help.
- **Be respectful!** Do not degrade the Festival or its staff to tourists, staff or other volunteers.
- **Talk to us!** Specifically, your volunteer manager about any concerns, needs or issues that arise. It never hurts to ask and we want to know!

## EVENT TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers will be responsible for their own transposition. Addresses and meeting locations will be emailed to you before your shift.

The metro-area has many options for traveling throughout the city without ever needing to step into a car.

- **Avoid driving**, as parking may be at a premium and limited, and traffic may be heavy, due to road closures and volume.
- The Festival **will not reimburse** volunteers for their parking or parking tickets. ☐ Bike lock ups **will be available** in designated areas only.

Still need more help getting there? Here are some useful sites for you to use and share with guests you encounter throughout the Festival.

- [goDCgo.com](http://goDCgo.com) has an interactive map for a quick overview of all the modes of transportation available for you to get around the city with ease.
- Visit [dccirculator.com](http://dccirculator.com) for more information on using the Circulator
- Visit the [WMATA](http://WMATA) website for more information about specific routes and fares.

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## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS**

As a volunteer you have the right:

- To work in a healthy and safe environment
- To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- To be given accurate and truthful information about the organization for which you are volunteering
- To be given a copy of the organization's volunteer policy and any other policy/procedures that affect your role
- Not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- To have a role description and agreed hours of contribution
- To have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988
- To be provided with appropriate training and support to carry out your role

## **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

### **1. Standards of Volunteer Conduct**

To ensure orderly operations and to provide the best possible work environment, the Festival expects everyone in the office to follow standards of conduct that will protect the rights, interest and safety of all employees and the organization. It is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. However, the following are examples of infractions that may result in disciplinary action:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
- Performing volunteer role under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating Festival-owned or rented vehicles or equipment
- Sexual, unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Excessive absenteeism or any absences without notice
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

### **2. Drug and Alcohol Use**

It is the Festival's desire to provide a drug-free, healthy and safe workplace. To promote this goal, volunteers are required to perform their volunteer role in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. While on the Festival's premises and while conducting business-related activities off of the Festival's premises, no volunteer may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

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The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted while performing volunteer role, if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform the essential functions of the role effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals.

Questions related to drug and alcohol use should be raised with the President without fear of reprisal.

### 3. Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

The Festival is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. For example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) that is demeaning to another person or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, undermines the integrity of the individual or the organization. Such behavior is strictly prohibited.

Festival staff and volunteers should promptly report incidents of sexual or other unlawful harassment to the Festival President.

**To ensure a pleasant, safe and successful experience for everyone involved with the National Cherry Blossom Festival, it is essential for you to be informed of your rights as a volunteer, in addition to the information in the code of conduct and the "Volunteer Need to Know Information". If you have any related questions or concerns that are not answered by our Volunteer Handbook, please don't hesitate to inform a NCBF Volunteer Department staff member.**

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## Additional Volunteer Roles:

**Lead Volunteers:** These dedicated, specially trained individuals will be overseeing groups of volunteers and taking on big responsibilities during the Festival! This select group has proven their dedication through an interview process and can be found at check-in, running specific areas of an event and troubleshooting if any problems arise. At the Volunteer Appreciation Event, Lead Volunteers are invited to an exclusive pre-reception to honor their hard work!

*Interested in becoming a lead volunteer?* View our Website for Lead Volunteer Opportunities, and contact Volunteer Manager, [Tasha Stiger](#), to schedule a phone interview. \*Lead Volunteer Spots filled on a rolling basis

**Event Execution Committee (EEC):** Passionate volunteers are found in the EEC! Our EEC meets well in advance of the Festival to ensure a positive volunteer experience for our volunteers. Their work helps create the exciting atmosphere that makes the Festival a springtime staple in DC! The EEC is composed of four subcommittees: *Volunteer Engagement, Hospitality, Operations, and Information*. Sub-Committee Co-Chairs and Members combined with NCBF staff work tirelessly to plan volunteer social events, help with orientation, engage volunteers through social media efforts, learn specific event logistics and much more, to help you be the best volunteer you can be! You can learn more about this year's EEC on our [Volunteer Blog](#).





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**Find the Restroom First!** It will be the number one question you are asked.

**First Aid** will be provided at each event; know where it is.

**Lost children** should report to the Operations Tent. Parents should be instructed to alert the Visitor's Tent. Please escort any found children and frantic parents to this area.

**Safety and Evacuation Plans** will be different for each Event. Know what your emergency plans are before a situation happens.

## **When will the cherry blossom trees bloom?**

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is planned to coincide as close as possible with the blooming of the trees. Peak bloom is defined as the day on which 70 percent of the blossoms of the Yoshino cherry trees are open. The date when the Yoshino cherry blossoms reach peak bloom varies from year to year, depending on weather conditions. The mean date of blooming is April 4, but nature is not always cooperative and the National Park Service horticulturists cannot make an accurate prediction much more than 10 days prior. The blooming period starts several days before the peak bloom date and can last as long as 14 days; however, frost or high temperatures combined with wind and/or rain can shorten this period.

## **When is the best time of day to see the cherry blossoms?**

Anytime is a good time to see the blossoms. However, visitors should be prepared for heavier crowds on weekends and when the trees reach their peak blooming period. There is no guarantee, but there are often fewer people during the week, early in the morning, and in late afternoon/early evening.

## **Where are the cherry blossom trees located?**

The cherry blossom trees currently grow in three National Park Service locations: around the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park, in East Potomac Park (Hains Point), and on the Washington Monument grounds. For information on which varieties of cherry blossom trees are located in which park and maps, see the [National Park Service](#) cherry blossom page.

## **How do I get to the Tidal Basin?**

Visit our [Visitor Information](#) page to download helpful documents that advise you on how to drive, bike, and walk to the Tidal Basin.

## **Are there any tours (led or self-guided) to see the cherry blossom trees?**

For led tours, there are several options. [Here's](#) a complete list of cherry blossom-specific tours.

The National Park Service and the National Cherry Blossom Festival publish a pamphlet for visitors to use on a self-guided tour. This map can be picked up at the Information Stations located on the north side of the Tidal Basin (grounds of the Washington Monument) and the south side of the Tidal Basin (adjacent to the Jefferson Memorial), which are in place throughout the Festival.

## **Are there wheelchairs available for rent at the tidal Basin?**

The National Park Service has a limited supply of wheelchairs available for rent at no charge. Wheelchairs may be checked out from either the World War II Memorial or the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial. Visitors can sign out an available wheelchair on a first-come first-served basis by leaving a form of ID (i.e., driver's license) but wheelchairs must remain at that memorial site. They are not permitted around the mall. Upon return of the wheelchair, the ID will be returned.

**Have questions that weren't answered in this Handbook or at Orientation? Email me at [tstiger@ncbfdc.org](mailto:tstiger@ncbfdc.org). See you on site!**