

VOLUNTEER MEETING

Volunteer meetings are a great way to meet new people, hear about upcoming volunteer opportunities and learn something interesting from an exciting lineup of guest speakers. Meetings take place at 7 p.m. in the Winton Centre Auditorium, unless otherwise noted. Coffee and tea are provided. Bring in your favorite baked goods to share. No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy!

May 21 – Melinda Hartong from Hartong Digital Media will be on hand to show us how to compose photos and get the perfect shot using our cell phone cameras. She'll be sharing some quick and easy tips and if the weather cooperates, we may head outside for some hands on learning.

Jul 16 – Stay tuned!

Sep 17 – Stay tuned!

When recording your hours in VIC for volunteer meetings, log them under [Volunteer Meeting \[Training/Volunteer Services\]](#). Training hours may be doubled. Drive time to and from the training may be included but not doubled.

March is Women's History Month



Conservation Update

Jessica Spencer, Director of Natural Resources

Great Parks Conservation and Parks (C&P) teams are making progress in their new roles as natural area stewards, and Stew Crew Volunteers are playing a big role in their success! In every region and park, there is evidence of the work, which can be seen in trees planted, invasive plants removed and trail work.

One example is the work removing honeysuckle at the Sharon Woods Kemper Road bridge. In December, staff and volunteers cut through a wall of honeysuckle to make the lake visible again, allowing room for native plants like spring wildflowers and shrubs to return over time. They even took the time to capture photos before and after the

project to help others visualize the impact being made. Sharing images of success is important for communicating and educating park guests, and getting people excited about natural resources work and native environments.

Also, great headway is being made at Woodland Mound and Withrow Nature Preserve. C&P teams and volunteers work on everything from trail work to invasive vine removal. Twice a month, work days are scheduled for different natural area projects.

Significant progress has also been made at Shawnee Lookout along the river. Likewise, the Winton Woods team was able to treat honeysuckle in multiple areas like Cottonwood Meadow, Spring Beauty Dell, Adventure Outpost, and Kingfisher Trail, to name a few. These are just a few highlights of all the projects being undertaken.

Kudos to everyone who is pitching in and helping us live up to our name, Great Parks!



Sharon Lake before honeysuckle removal





Sharon Lake after honeysuckle removal

THIS MONTH'S BLOG

Swirling Snowflakes
<http://blog.greatparks.org/2019/01/swirling-snowflakes/>

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Volunteer Spotlight



Steve Wagner

What's your favorite outdoor activity? Walking and hiking in parks and wildlife refuges while observing nature, especially birds.

If you could chose anywhere in the world to visit, where would you go? I'd visit our National Parks and Wildlife Refuges, especially Yellowstone – I'd love to see the mountains, canyons, waterfalls, geysers and abundant wildlife. We are blessed to have such awesome areas to visit.

If you could have a super power, what would it be? I'd like to be able to fly.

What is your favorite volunteer moment? Leading a waterfowl watch program at Shawnee Lookout years ago. 115 people showed up! There were several birders from Audubon and the Cincinnati Bird Club so we divided the people into several small groups to enhance everyone's experience.

Can you tell us something about yourself that others don't know? I'm an avid Sudoku player.

Try Something New!

Please review the list of programs below. If you are able to assist with the activity, phone or email the event supervisor to volunteer. **Click on any bolded assignment category and you will be hyperlinked to the VIC login portal.**

FRANCES RECREACRES

Wed 3/6, Noon-2:30 p.m.:

Make Room for Native Species
Cut and spray stumps of invasive trees and shrubs including callery pear, honeysuckle and autumn olive. Your efforts will encourage native plants and wildlife habitat to thrive. Meet at Francis RecreAcres Soccer Complex. To volunteer, contact Wayne Hawkins at whawkins@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Stew Crew \[Frances RecreAcres\C&P East\]](#).

Wed 3/20, Noon-2:30 p.m.:

Hemlock & Teasel, Oh No!
Spray teasel and poison hemlock at Francis RecreAcres. Your efforts will help remove this monoculture while making way for native plants like milkweed. We love milkweed and so do monarch butterflies! Herbicide application training is preferred but not required. Meet at Francis RecreAcres Soccer Complex. To volunteer, contact Wayne Hawkins at whawkins@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Stew Crew \[Frances RecreAcres\C&P East\]](#).

MIAMI WHITEWATER FOREST

Recurring Mon, Wed or Thu, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.:

Program Animal Care
Volunteers are needed to feed, clean and interact with program animals that are used for education programs. Each animal has its own unique feeding and care schedule. Keeping our critters healthy and happy may take some work but providing up close, hands-on animal encounters for our park guests is a great way to foster appreciation for nature and wildlife. Training is provided. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone

513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Animal Care \[Miami Whitewater\Education & Events\]](#).

Recurring Mon-Fri, 6:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Simmonds Family Dog Park Maintenance

Volunteers are needed to string trim fencing around the dog park. String trimming will reduce the use of herbicide around the cute pups that call the dog park their play space! Good communication skills are a must as you will be interacting with lots of dog parents! Training, string trimmer and safety equipment is provided. To volunteer, contact Graig Hoffman at ghoffman@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Construction & Maintenance \[Miami Whitewater\C&P West\]](#).

Thu, 3/14, 9 a.m.-noon:

Eradicate Invasive Plants & Litter

Join forces to improve native wildlife habitat! We'll be cutting invasive woodies, honeysuckle and autumn olive and picking up trash as we work our way around the inner loop hike/bike trail. Removing invasive plants will help make way for native species in this 4,438-acre park. Meet at the Shaker Trace Trail parking area just inside the main park entrance off of Mt. Hope Rd. To volunteer, contact Kate McConnell at kmccconnell@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers 14 years of age and up. [Stew Crew \[Miami Whitewater\C&P West\]](#).

Tue 3/26, 9 a.m.-noon:

Tree RX

Help us remove old tree tubes and fencing from trees planted in Dry Fork Meadow. Your efforts will help these young trees thrive! Meet at Dry Fork Meadow picnic area on Timberlakes Dr. To volunteer, contact Kate McConnell

at kmccconnell@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers 14 years of age and up. [Stew Crew \[Miami Whitewater\C&P West\]](#).

MITCHELL MEMORIAL FOREST

Recurring first Thursday of the Month:

Tree Care and Invasive Species Removal

Over the last few years, Great Parks has planted lots of native trees at Mitchell Memorial Forest. We are looking for help caring for these trees as they grow into forests. Volunteers will work with staff to remove vines, invasive species and straighten tree cages and tubes. Meet at the Tall Pines parking area. To volunteer, contact Zach Marcum at zmarcum@greatparks.org or phone 513-503-1326. For volunteers 18 years of age and up. [Stew Crew \[Mitchell Memorial\C&P West\]](#).

SHARON WOODS

Recurring Tue or Sat, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.:

Program Animal Care

Volunteers are needed to feed, clean and interact with program animals that are used for education programs. Each animal has its own unique feeding and care schedule. Keeping our critters healthy and happy may take some work but providing up close, hands-on animal encounters for our park guests is a great way to foster appreciation for nature and wildlife. Training is provided. To volunteer, contact Angela Marczi at amarczi@greatparks.org or phone 513-563-4513. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Animal Care \[Sharon Woods\ Education & Events\]](#).

SHAWNEE LOOKOUT

Sat 3/16, 9-noon.:

Landscape Maintenance

We need your help getting landscape beds ready for the 2019 season. We'll be pulling weeds, cutting back perennials and pruning shrubs. Help us make the park shine! Meet at the golf course clubhouse. To volunteer, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone

513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Gardening & Landscaping \[Shawnee Lookout\C&P West\]](#).

WINTON WOODS

March, week days:

1803 Farm Sampler

Second grade students and teachers will take a step back into Ohio's early statehood while they compare life today to the life of yesteryear. Volunteers are needed to help with farm chores and fun activities. To volunteer, contact Eric King at eking@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-3276 ext. 107. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Parky's Farm\ Education & Events\]](#).

Mon 3/4–Sat 5/25,

Mon 6:15–7:15 p.m.,

Wed 6:15–7:15 p.m.,

Sat 10:15–11:15 a.m.:

Special Riders Program

Volunteers are needed to lead or walk beside horses ridden by Special Rider students during this therapeutic riding class. Training is provided at the Riding Center. To volunteer, contact Margie Rennie at mrennie1@icloud.com or phone 513-931-3057. For volunteers

ages 14 and up. [SRP \[Riding Center\ Guest Exp Central\]](#).

Wed 3/6, 11 a.m.:

Little Tykes

It's that time of year when animals are on the move. Spring is signaling all types of critters to get going. Volunteers will assist youngsters, ages 3-6 years, and their families with unique migration activities. Meet in the Winton Centre Auditorium. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Winton Woods\ Education & Events\]](#).

Tue 3/12, 9 a.m.-noon:

Garlic Mustard Pull

Help us pull and bag invasive garlic mustard and cut amur honeysuckle. These plants are non-native and pose a risk to our native forests. We'll be focusing our efforts along Kingfisher Trail. Meet at the Kingfisher Trail parking area on Lakeview Drive. To volunteer, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew \[Winton Woods\ C&P Central\]](#).

Get Certified in First Aid CPR

Sign up for National Safety Council First Aid CPR classes. First Aid CPR is an optional training, free and open to all Great Parks volunteers and employees. Certification cards will be mailed to you approximately 6 weeks after completion of training. All programs will be held in the Employee Training Center at Sharon Woods. Upcoming training dates are:

Wed 3/6, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Tue 4/9, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Thu 3/14, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Wed 5/15, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.



Registration closes one-week prior to training so don't delay. Sign up on line at: <https://volunteers-greatparks.bridgeapp.com/login>.

If you register for this training and can no longer attend, please cancel or reschedule by logging into your Bridge account using the link above.

Not able to log into Bridge? Contact the Volunteer Services Department at volunteer@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275 and ask for Kris or Niki.

Please record these training hours under [First Aid CPR \[Training\Risk Management\]](#). Training hours may be doubled. Drive time to and from the training may be included but not doubled.

Tue 3/19, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.:

Exploring the Science of Migration

Is it survival, instinct or just seasonal cycles? Animal, bird and insect migration is a baffling mystery. Volunteers are needed to help home-schooled students, ages 5-12, and parents with unique migration activities. Meet in the Winton Centre Auditorium. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Winton Woods\Education & Events\]](#).

Tue 3/26, 8-10 a.m.:

Golf Ball Popping Party

We need your help unplugging golf balls that have been driven into the soft turf. You'll be given a tool to do the work, which will minimize the amount of bending over you'll need to do. Removing golf balls will save the park district hundreds of dollars in park assets. Wear old clothing and waterproof boots or shoes. Meet at the Meadow Links Pro Shop. To volunteer, contact Matt Starr at mstarr@greatparks.org or phone 513-825-3701. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Golf Maintenance \[Meadow Links\Golf\]](#).

Thu 3/28, 1-4 p.m.:

Let's Beat Garlic Mustard & Lesser Celandine

Help us pull garlic mustard and cut other invasive species around Winton Lake and the paved hike/bike trail. Invasive species are detrimental to our spring wildflowers. Many volunteers focused on a small area will create a positive impact in a short amount of time. Meet at the Kestrel Picnic Shelter adjacent to the Winton Centre. To volunteer, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew \[Winton Woods\C&P Central\]](#).

2019 Motor Vehicle Permits

Bill Mowery, Chief of Guest Experiences.

By now all of you should have received your 2019 Motor Vehicle Permits (MVP), so it's a great time to share 2019 MVP updates with you. It's important for all Great Parks staff and volunteers to understand and communicate the same MVP information to guests. Please take a few minutes to read through the changes for 2019. Remember that MVP's are an important part of Great Parks' operating income. Normal inflationary pressures mean that price increases are necessary from time to time.



Fun fact... the first Motor Vehicle Permit was sold in 1961. The \$2 fee charged then is equivalent to \$16.75 today. Through fiscally responsible management, the MVP is less expensive in real dollars than it was 57 years ago.

The annual resident permit remains \$10 and annual non-resident permits increase modestly to \$15. Most importantly, the Resident Rewards program has been discontinued in 2019. For those who don't know, Resident Rewards allowed Hamilton County residents purchasing an annual

MVP to apply for five, \$1 discount coupons redeemable for any park purchase.

Why discontinue Resident Rewards? The program was created in 2010 when MVP's cost the same for everyone. It provided a benefit for Hamilton County residents to recognize their levy investment in the parks. Since then, a new price structure was introduced with separate rates for residents and non-residents. Resident Rewards also had high fulfillment costs compared to a low redemption rate. In fact, only 5.6% of coupons were redeemed... that equates to only 1 out of 18 Hamilton County residents. By discontinuing Resident Rewards, we're able to maintain the price for an annual resident MVP at \$10, benefiting all residents. In fact, we're proud that the price for an annual resident MVP hasn't changed in nine years. We'll continue to honor Resident Reward coupons through December, 2019.

2019 daily MVP's have increased to \$5 for residents and \$8 for non-residents. We hope to encourage more annual permit sales and more park visits by adjusting the daily MVP price.

If you have questions, feel free to contact the Volunteer Services Department at volunteer@greatparks.org or me at bmowery@greatparks.org. Guest concerns and feedback should be directed to your park supervisor, who will then forward the information to Guest Relations at the Winton Centre. Thanks!



At the January Volunteer Meeting, volunteers brought in their favorite healthy snack foods. This Black Bean Brownie mix was super interesting and very tasty. Thanks to Pam Shank for sharing this allrecipes sweet treat! <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/237100/brownie-mix-black-bean-brownies/>