Mountain Bike Day: Work Hard, Play Hard!

Niki Marengo, Volunteer Coordinator

Great Parks’ staff teamed up with the Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance (CORA) and about 30 community and park volunteers to accomplish some serious bike trail work on the Mitchell Memorial Forest Mountain Bike Trail on National Trails Day. Some volunteers came equipped with their own trail tools and Camelbak water bladders, some showed up because they use the trail often and want to play a part in keeping it maintained, and some just like being a part of the Great Parks’ volunteer team – but they all have a love for trails in some way.

Crews worked to create channels that divert water off-trail and to “de-berm” the built up sections that can hold water. The end goal is to make pathways for the water to flow off the trail rather than to follow it and cause further damage. Mitchell Memorial Park Manager Ben Braeutigam notes that although your average trail user may not notice an obvious difference, the work that was done makes a big impact in not only making the trail smoother, but also in creating long-term sustainability and minimizing the impact of erosion to the plants and streams in the woods that we explore. It’s that behind-the-scenes type of work that our volunteers and staff do that make our trails so loved, while ensuring that we are responsible stewards of our surrounding environment. Be sure to check it out – either by bike or by foot - it’s a beautiful trail either way.

After the work, volunteers and staff were able to test some pretty rad mountain bikes, courtesy of TEAM Cycling & Fitness, available to take home for about $3,000-$5,000 (they were really nice bikes)! Everyone was able to relax and enjoy a grilled lunch, courtesy of CORA. It was an all-around awesome team effort and day of getting work done through partnerships at the park!

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.
What is your favorite Great Park?
Sharon Woods holds the fondest memories. When I was younger, my family would go on walks and pack a picnic to eat under the trees. My dad and I love going to the Sharon Woods Golf Course for a weekend practice round. When I’m not golfing or volunteering, my friends and I go on walks by the creek or just on the trails.

What hobbies are you passionate about?
I love to draw, paint, read and play my guitar or oboe. I’ve been able to grow my musical passion for everything from Shostakovich to Taylor Swift by learning to play different instruments and listening to new genres.

What are you looking forward to?
The end of college application season, because I am ready for some free time and I’m excited to see where I’ll end up next year. Also, I’d like to know if High School Musicals was an accurate representation of college life!

What problem do you wish you could solve?
If there was one problem that I could solve, it would be the issue of climate change. I believe that if everyone became a little more aware of the crisis our planet is facing, we would have enough collective motivation to make a real difference!

Little Tykes
Wed 9/4, 11 a.m.
Volunteers will help 3–6 year olds and their parents make sense of their senses as they explore the gifts of touch, taste, feel, smell and sight. They’ll learn how critters use these same senses in very special ways. The program will take place in the Winton Centre. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Interpreter Programs [Winton Woods|Education & Events].

Special Riders Program at Winton Woods
Mon, Wed & Sat, 9/4-11/16
Mon 6:15–7:15 p.m.,
Wed 6:15–7:15 p.m.,
Sat 10:15–11:15 a.m.
Volunteers are needed to lead or walk beside horses ridden by Special Rider students during this therapeutic riding class. Lots of help is needed to alleviate the long waiting list of potential riders. Volunteer today for this very rewarding program. No experience necessary. Training is provided. To volunteer, contact Margie Rennie at mrennie1@icloud.com or phone 513-931-3057. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Miami Whitewater|C&P West].

Gorge Trail Invasive Plant Removal
Wed 9/11, 8–11 a.m.
Come out to Sharon Woods and help control invasive shrub species located in the Sharon Woods state nature preserve. You’ll also learn what invasive plants could be present in your own backyards and how to properly remove them. Trained herbicide applicators a plus! Meet at the Gorge Trail parking lot. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at jbarkley@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Sharon Woods|C&P East].
Small Equipment Training  
Sun 9/15, 9 a.m.–noon  
If you need to learn how to operate weed-eaters, power pruners or even basic hand tools for volunteer tasks, here is your opportunity to get some training. Perfect for first-timers or those that have already received training but need a refresher. Meet us at the Shawnee Lookout Maintenance Building. To register, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Stew Crew [Training] C&P West].

Enchanted Luminary Night Hike  
Sat 9/21, 5:15–10 p.m.  
Save the date! This year’s luminary hike has moved from October to September. Family-friendly (ages 2 and up), 1-mile interpretive hikes will reveal glimpses into the lives of local flora and fauna. Hikes depart every 10 minutes and last roughly 1 hour. Guests can toast marshmallows over the fire before they depart. Many volunteers are needed to lead hike groups, assist with campfires or help with guest check-in. Meet at the Glenwood Gardens Gatehouse. To volunteer, contact Randi Greathouse at rgreathouse@greatparks.org or phone 513-771-8733. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs [Glenwood Gardens] Education & Events].

Tree & Shrub Pick-Up  
Sat 9/21.  
Sharon Woods Sharon Centre 10 a.m.–2 p.m.,  
Woodland Mound Seasongood Nature Center 11 a.m.–2 p.m.,  
Miami Whitewater Forest Visitor Centre 11 a.m.–2 p.m.  


Pollinator Area Woody Removal  
Wed 9/25, 8–11 a.m.  
Come out to Lake Isabella to help remove woody vegetation from an important pollinator area. You’ll learn about native pollinator plants and the important role they play in the lives of birds, bats, bees and other insects. Trained herbicide applicators a plus! Meet at the harbor. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at j barkley@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew [Lake Isabella] C&P East].

National Public Lands Day  
Sat 9/28, 9 a.m.–noon  
Join us as we work to improve Parky’s Farm for the animals that call it home. From planting wildflowers and trees, to removing invasive vines and cleaning up the Woodlot Trail, we’ll have a fun day of work that will positively impact the land while enhancing the farm for years to come. To volunteer for this community event, register on-line at greatparks.org/volunteer or contact Niki Marengo at nmarengo@greatparks.org or at 513-245-7471. For volunteers of all ages. [Gardening & Landscaping [Parky’s Farm] Guest Exp Central].

Herbicide Training  
Sun 9/29 9 a.m.–2 p.m.  
For many natural resources projects, herbicide application is the most efficient and cost-effective way to control invasive plants. This training will provide the necessary requirements to be able to use herbicide for park district volunteer projects. Meet at the Shawnee Lookout Maintenance Building and bring a lunch. To register, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Stew Crew [Training] C&P West].

Landscaping: Maintain Flower Beds & Pots  
Ongoing flexible scheduling, now – 10/31.  
Your help is needed at Glenwood Gardens with watering, fertilizing and deadheading flowers in containers and in annual planting beds. These areas, which are frequently viewed and photographed by guests, will shine thanks to you. To volunteer, contact Kurt Goldick at kgoldick@greatparks.org or phone 513-301-6534. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Gardening & Landscaping [Glenwood Gardens] C&P Central].

MYPOP Gardening  
Ongoing flexible scheduling  
Volunteers can “adopt” an area within Highfield Discovery Garden. Special one-time group projects occur as well. For less experienced gardeners, we offer three hour supervised gardening sessions to get you going. To volunteer, contact Kathy Charvat at kcharvat@greatparks.org or phone 513-771-8733. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [MYPOP [Glenwood Gardens] Guest Exp Central].

Visitor Center and Gift Shop Help  
Tue, Fri & Sat, ongoing, call for shift times  
Volunteers are needed to help provide park guests with truly memorable experiences. If you enjoy making someone’s day better, volunteer at Cotswold Visitor Center. Volunteers answer phones, assist guests with purchases, run the cash register, answer questions and do some light housekeeping which will make the facility shine. Training provided. To volunteer, contact Doug Stevenson at dstevenson@greatparks.org or phone 513-771-8733, ext. 110. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Visitor Center/Niche [Glenwood Gardens] Guest Exp Central].

greatparks.org/volunteer
Thank You Great Parks Team!

Todd Palmeter, Chief Executive Officer

I want to celebrate the success of the 2019 Kids Outdoor Adventure Expo which we hosted for the fourth straight year on Friday, July 12. A huge thank you to the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to organize and setup the event. Also to the staff and volunteers from across the park district who showed up and worked the event! I spent my day moving around from station to station and could not stop smiling from the overwhelming sense of pride from seeing our team in action. Everyone involved made an immediate impact on the lives of the kids, camp counselors, chaperones and families who were having the best day of their summer.

I am very grateful to be part of such an amazing team who is so dedicated and passionate. Thank you!

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. Trainings are held at the Sharon Woods Employee Training Center, adjacent to the Sharon Centre. Certification cards will be mailed to you approximately 6 weeks after completion of training. Upcoming training dates are:

- Thu 9/19, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Tue 10/8, 8 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Wed 10/16, 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. (your user name is your 6 digit volunteer ID number found on your photo ID card. Example: 000987 or 009876)

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.

**save the date**

**volunteer recognition event**

thursday, october 10  cincinnati museum center

GRAPEVINE