That’s a Wrap!

Kris Roselle, Volunteer Resources Manager

We’re wrapping up 2019 in a great big package, complete with shiny holiday paper and a sparkly red bow! It’s hard to believe we are already saying goodbye to 2019, but here we are. It was a fun year, full of exciting projects and new beginnings. Great Parks couldn’t have done it without you. Where and how do we begin to thank you?

• You helped introduce lots of new volunteers to Great Parks. Thank you!
• You removed many acres of invasive species, planting new trees and native plants to take their place. Thank you!
• You took very special care of our natural resources – improving local habitat and monitoring the wellbeing of wildlife, streams and other native resources. Thank you!
• You helped Great Parks implement hundreds of interpreter programs and special events. Thank you!
• You helped build confidence and instill a love of the outdoors through special programs like SRP, in-reach golf, Special Olympics programs and all kinds of day camps. Thank you!
• You taught guests about who we are and what we do so they, in turn, would want to get involved or spread the Great Parks word. Thank you!
• You made park guests feel welcome by teaching, guiding and answering questions, always with great patience and a smile. Thank you!

We’re sorry to see the year come to a close, but we are also looking forward to 2020 and tackling new challenges and enjoying new experiences with you. Thanks for spending your time with us, whether you’re behind the scenes making the gears turn, or are working with guests to help them create new memories at the parks.

On behalf of the entire Great Parks family, happy holidays and best wishes for a spectacular new year!

Your Volunteer Resources team — Kris, Niki and Lauren

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!

2020 Meeting Schedule

Tue, January 21       Tue, July 21
Tue, March 17         Tue, September 15
Tue, May 19           Tue, November 17

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.

December is Human Rights Month, and December 10 is Human Rights Day. “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”—Eleanor Roosevelt

Volunteer Spotlight

Tommy and Franca Burton

What is your favorite volunteer activity? (Tommy) Helping with festivals and special events.

What is your favorite outdoor activity? (Tommy) Basketball. (Franca) I enjoy walking in the woods.

What might we be surprised to learn about you? (Tommy) I play the saxophone.

What are the top three things on your bucket list? (Tommy) See the Northern Lights, Mt. Everest and go to Paris. (Franca) Visit Alaska, ride a motorcycle on country roads and visit Europe.

What is your favorite Great Parks memory? (Tommy) Time spent helping with the Special Riders Program at Parky’s Farm. (Franca) How the sheep and goats at Parky’s Farm gather around me when I’m feeding them.

What are you most excited about right now? (Franca) Being a side-walker for a young friend of mine taking SRP classes.

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.

Santaland
Fridays & Saturdays 5:30–10:30 p.m.
Sundays–Thursdays 5:30–9:30 p.m.
After Holiday in Lights, guests will head inside Sharon Centre for family-friendly entertainment, a train display, holiday shopping, sweet treats and SANTA! Lots of volunteers are needed to pass out event information, queue the Santa line and help in the indoor play area. To volunteer, contact Liz Keer at lkeer@greatparks.org or phone 513-728-3551, ext. 285. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Special Events [Sharon Woods\Education & Events].

Golf Ball Party
Sun 12/1, 2–4 p.m.
With the Shawnee Lookout golf course officially closed and the vegetation dying off, we are on the lookout for golf balls. This is a fun way to explore the old golf course, while at the same time giving it a more natural feel. Who knows, you might even find that wicked slice from a few years ago. Meet at the Shawnee Lookout Lodge (old clubhouse). To volunteer, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Shawnee Lookout\C&P West].

Gorge Trail Invasive Plant Removal
Wed 12/4, 8–11 a.m.
Come out to Sharon Woods to help control invasive shrub species. We’ll be working in the state nature preserve along the Gorge Trail. Learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. You’ll also be creating better habitat for our native plants and wildlife. Meet at the Buckeye Falls parking lot, located right off of Kemper Rd. 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].

Trout Lily Trail Improvements
Fri 12/6, 12–3 p.m.
We’ll be teaming up to improve the trail user experience at Withrow Nature Preserve. Volunteers will remove failing steps, water bars and berms, regrade a portion of the trail and install rolling grade dips. This is also a great opportunity to learn about trail design and water control techniques. Meet in the Withrow Nature Preserve parking lot. To volunteer, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or phone 513-250-0925. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Withrow\C&P East].

Annual Winter Bird Count
Sat, Dec 7, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
Calling all birders, and we’re including those who just like to look at pretty birds! The Great Parks Annual
Winter Bird Count is upon us! We are looking for volunteers to wander the parks with a group of like-minded folks counting all the birds you see. The Annual Winter Bird Count helps us keep tabs on bird population fluctuations from year to year, for all the winter bird species who call Great Parks home. The day will conclude at 4 p.m. with an all-park bird tally at the Winton Centre. To volunteer and pick your region or favorite park, sign up here. For questions, contact Doug Stevenson at dstevenson@greatparks.org or Paul Seevers at pseevers@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Interpreter Programs [Winton Woods] Education & Events.

Hedgeapple Trail Invasive Removal
Sat 12/14, 12–3 p.m.
Help the Woodland Mound Conservation & Parks Team remove bush honeysuckle and multiflora rose along the trail. We’ll also talk about the impact your work has in our natural areas and how you can help in the future. Meet at the Weston Shelter parking lot. To volunteer, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or phone 513-250-0925. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Woodland Mound\C&P East].

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 12/4, 8 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Thu 12/12, 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, Niki or Lauren.

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.

Holiday Lights Recycling
Kimberly Whitton, Public Engagement Coordinator
Free Holiday Lights Recycling returns to Great Parks thanks to a partnership with Cohen, the leading recycler of metal and electronics in the midwest. Broken or unwanted lights can be dropped off in bins located at six Great Parks between November 1, 2019, and February 2, 2020. Bins will be located at:

**Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve:** Ellenwood Nature Barn, 3455 Poole Road, Cincinnati, OH 45239

**Glenwood Gardens:** Cotswold Visitor Center, 10397 Springfield Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45215

**Miami Whitewater Forest:** Ranger Station, 9001 Mt. Hope Road, Harrison, OH 45030

**Sharon Woods:** Sharon Centre, 11450 Lebanon Road, Sharonville, OH 45241

**Winton Woods:** Winton Centre, 10245 Winton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231

**Woodland Mound:** Seasongood Nature Center, 8250 Old Kellogg Road, Cincinnati, OH 45255

We ask that only lights be placed in bins. No bags, boxes or containers of any kind. Thank you!

This initiative keeps tons of lights out of landfills and gives them new life by refining their precious metals and materials to produce new products. It also gives back to ongoing Great Parks conservation efforts thanks to a generous donation from Cohen.

Annual year-end volunteer mailings, which include your 2020 motor vehicle permit (MVP) and 2020 recreation card(s), are coming soon. To ensure you receive these items in a timely manner, and admittedly, to make our jobs a bit easier, please make sure your mailing address is current and begin updating your hours today. Any 2019 hours entered after we generate the Great Parks Annual Report the first week of January will be accepted, but cannot be used for grant writing and fund raising purposes. Therefore, it is extremely important to enter your hours and keep them updated through the end of the year. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to Kris, Niki or Lauren at volunteer@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275.

**Year-end Mailing Schedule:**

- **Today:** Get caught up recording your volunteer service hours and make sure your mailing address in VIC is up-to-date.
- **Friday, November 1:** Volunteer Resources will run a service hour report.
- **Friday, November 8:** Reminder letters will be mailed to volunteers whose hours are not up to date based on the November 1 service report.
- **Friday, December 6:** Volunteer Resources will run a second service hour report.
- **Friday, December 13:** Packets with 2020 MVPs will be mailed to volunteers whose hours are up to date based on the December 6 service report.
- **Friday, December 13:** A second reminder letter will be mailed to volunteers whose hours are not up to date based on the December 6 service report.
- **Friday, January 3:** Volunteer Resources will run a third service hour report.
- **Friday, January 10:** 2020 recreation cards will be mailed to volunteers who earned them based on the January 3 service report.
- **Friday, January 17:** We will begin mailing packets with 2020 MVPs to volunteers whose hours were turned in late, after the December 6 service report.
- **Friday, January 17:** Inactive letters will be mailed to volunteers who did not enter or update their hours and did not respond to previous communications about their hours mailed on November 8 and December 13.
- **Friday, January 17:** Volunteers may request second MVPs if they drive two different vehicles for volunteering. Second MVPs are for volunteer use only and should not be shared with friends or family members.

**2020 packets will contain:**

- 1-2020 motor vehicle permit
- 1-2020 paper time sheet
- Other fun stuff!

**Recreation cards will not be included in 2020 packets. They will be mailed separately according to the schedule above. You will receive:**

- 1-2020 recreation card if you contributed 100 hours of service in 2019.
- 2-2020 recreation cards if you contributed 250 hours or more in 2019.

Great Parks of Hamilton County is one of the premier park systems in the state of Ohio because of your awesome talent and outstanding support. Thank you for a wonderful 2019!