

Volunteer Spotlight



Emma Abrahamson

Years of Service- 1.5 years

What is your favorite volunteer activity?

Doing animal care at Sharon Woods. I find it fun taking the two box turtles out for walks. It's definitely something you don't get to do every day, so it makes it very fun. My other favorite activity was Trunk or Treat and seeing all the cute Halloween costumes.

What are three things on your bucket list?

To travel cross country and visit every national park in the US, visit my favorite cryptid Mothman in Point Pleasant, and building a droid at Galaxy's Edge at Disney. Just from these things on my bucket list alone you can tell I like to travel.

What hobbies are you passionate about?

I'm very passionate about fencing. I've been a fencer for about 10 years now. I started in high school and fell in love with the sport and have been doing it ever since. I was lucky enough to be able to continue in college.

Willow Lane (Curnett Property) Restoration Day!

Daniel Kovar,
Conservation Biologist

Come and join us for this very exciting (and very big) project at the Curnett Property!

This property, which is located near Campbell Lakes, was acquired in 2017 through Clean Ohio funds, in part to protect the riparian zone adjacent to the Whitewater River.



Most of the property is undeveloped, however, there were two houses that stood on the property that have since been demolished and removed. After the structures were removed, the disturbed areas were seeded in a mix that included Common Milkweed and Swamp Milkweed to support monarch butterflies and other pollinators. As part of acquiring the property, Great Parks committed to restoring riparian vegetation to the footprints of the former houses and the surrounding lawns, approximately 2 acres.

To meet this restoration commitment, we plan to plant approximately **1,000** trees and shrubs at the site! Because this area is in a floodplain and tree protection (cages, fencing, stakes) are likely to be washed away, we will plant a large number of bare root trees (trees that are dug and stored without any soil around their roots). To give the trees some protection, we will place systemic deer repellent tablets in the planting holes.

This is where you come in! We will be hosting a big volunteer day at this property on **Friday, March 18 from 9 a.m. until noon**. We will be planting seedling bare root trees and shrubs to restore the riparian habitat on the site of the two former houses and lawns along the Whitewater River.

The trees themselves will likely be from 1-4 feet tall. Final species list is still to be determined but it will include native floodplain species like sycamore, swamp white oak, bitternut hickory, buttonbush, and ninebark. There are also abundant seed sources of several species of riparian trees nearby (American sycamore, eastern cottonwood, black willow, and silver maple) that will contribute additional trees through natural regeneration.

It will be a great chance to get out and explore one of our lesser known properties, as well as help plant hundreds of trees that will protect our watersheds for years to come. To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-646-4217. You can also sign up for this project on your MIP Opportunities Calendar or MIP Opportunities List. We will be meeting at Willow Park (350 Willow Lane, Harrison, Ohio 45030, off of Campbell Rd). Please try and arrive a little before 9 as we will have to walk down to the site. There will be about a half mile walk to the site.

We hope to see you there!

March Volunteer Opportunities

Interpreter programs are back! Check out what's coming up and join the fun. Please wear appropriate volunteer uniform. Face coverings are required inside all Great Parks facilities and outdoors if 6' physical distance cannot be maintained.

For all Stew Crew projects - participants should bring work gloves, a face mask (to be worn if 6-foot physical distance cannot be maintained), hand sanitizer, insect repellent, water, snacks and wear long pants, boots or sturdy shoes. It's cold outside so make sure you dress for the weather! Tools will be provided.

In order to make different volunteer opportunities more noticeable, we are color coding projects and programs based on their department. Please refer to the key below:

[Conservation & Parks—green](#) [Education & Events - blue](#) [Golf—orange](#) [Parky's Farm—red](#)

Link to parks and park maps—<https://www.greatparks.org/parks>

Link to record your service hours—<https://app.betterimpact.com/Login/Login>

Volunteer Meeting

Join us from the comfort of your cozy couch and learn something interesting from an exciting lineup of guest speakers.

Meetings start at 6 p.m. and will remain virtual until further notice.

A meeting link will be emailed to you 24 hours prior to the meeting.

No need to RSVP, just log on and enjoy!

Mar 15 – The snow is thawing so let's talk all things water and watersheds! Join us for an evening with Great Parks Watershed Specialist, Amanda Nurre, as we discuss our different water monitoring programs, their purpose, and their results.

May 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. If driving to a training, hours may be included but not doubled. Thanks!

Animal Care at The Summit Center

Weekdays, flexible schedule

When you help with program animal care, you'll be cleaning enclosures and feeding which contributes to a healthy and happy animal. Also, interpreters will have more time to focus on developing dynamic and engaging presentations. Must be able to keep a regular schedule and handle all animal types such as snakes, turtles, frogs, and insects. To volunteer, contact Ashley Moore at asmoores@greatparks.org or phone 513-673-3480. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Animal Care—Summit Center [Edu & Events/East]**

Parky's Farm Volunteer Grape Arbor Restoration

Fri 3/4, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Parky's Farm is hosting a volunteer event that will restore the garden's wooden arbor. The project will consist of replacing worn wooden boards. With your help, it will be better able to support heavy grape vines that climb the structure. All tools and materials will be provided. Meet at the garden. To volunteer, contact Bryan Burke at bburke@greatparks.org or sign up on your MIP calendar or MIP Opportunities List. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Garden & Landscaping—Parky's Farm**

The Purr-fect Seminar at Sharon Woods

Fri 3/4, 7 p.m.

Help our guests learn about their purr-fect pets and their native relatives (both living and extinct)! During this program volunteers will help sign people in, pass out props, and show different taxidermy figures to the attendants. Meet at the Sharon Center. To volunteer, contact James Harris at jharris@greatparks.org or phone 216-702-1766. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Interpreter Programs—Sharon Woods [Edu & Events/East]**

Prescribed Burn Prep at Winton Woods

Sat 3/5, 9 a.m. – noon

Each spring Great Parks staff conducts a number of controlled burns throughout our parks to help maintain the health of our prairies. Fire helps to prevent brush and trees from overtaking prairie habitats and also encourages new growth. We will be preparing burn breaks for

spring by raking dried grasses and clearing dead wood from the area. Meet at 10026 McKelvey Rd (near the gated area). To volunteer, contact Jaimie Martin at jmartin@greatparks.org or phone 631-334-3876. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Winton Woods [C&P/Central]**

Future Forest at Miami Whitewater's Dry Fork Meadow

Mon 3/7, 9 – 11 a.m.

Miami Whitewater forest is looking for helpers to remove tree tubes from previous plantings and assist in invasive removal at Dry Fork Meadow, an in-progress future forest. Meet at the Dry Fork Meadow parking area off of West Rd. To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-646-4217. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater [C&P/West]**

Litter Pickup at Richardson Forest Preserve

Tue 3/8, 9 – 11 a.m.

Come and check out one of our lesser known nature preserves while helping with litter removal. Richardson Forest Preserve is one of four conservation areas managed by Great Parks and serves as a habitat for many rare and unusual plant species including skunk cabbage, marsh marigold and five-angled dodder. Meet at the corner of Lick Rd and Kemper. To volunteer, contact Paul Steuer at psteuer@greatparks.org or phone 513-260-1124. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Richardson [C&P/Central]**

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 3/9, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Help remove invasive shrub species along the very popular Shared-Use Trail. This is also a great chance to learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Lakeside Lodge parking lot off of Kemper Rd. To volunteer, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Sharon Woods [C&P/East]**

Controlling Multiflora Rose at Withrow Nature Preserve

Sat 3/12, noon – 2:30 p.m.

It's a sticky situation! Multiflora rose is growing along some of our trails and it likes to "grab" innocent hikers. We need your help removing this thorny plant. Bring a pair of heavy leather gloves and wear long sleeves. We will supply the tools. Meet at the Withrow 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]**

Tree Protector Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 3/16, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods and help remove tree protectors from previously planted trees at the base of the sledding hill at Cardinal Crest. Learn about the purpose behind caging trees and how to properly remove them once trees are established. Meet at the Sharon Center parking lot. To volunteer, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Sharon Woods [C&P/East]**

St. Patrick's Day Litter Pickup at Glenwood Gardens

Thu 3/17, 9 a.m. – noon

Let's keep Great Parks green on St. Patrick's Day! Come out and help us pick up litter along Sheffield Road. Meet at the Glenwood Gardens Maintenance Building (377 Sheffield Road). To volunteer, contact Shaun McClary at smcclary@greatparks.org or phone 513-869-9525. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Glenwood Gardens [C&P/Central]**

Curnett Tree Planting Fri 3/18, 9 a.m. – noon

Fri 3/18, 9a.m. - noon

Do you like planting trees? Then do we have the project for you! Help us restore a previously developed property and expand riparian habitat that will protect our watershed for years to come. We will be planting upwards of 1000 small trees and scrubs at this site near the river so come and lend a hand. Meet at Willow Park on the Whitewater (350 Willow Ln, Harrison, Ohio 45030, off of Campbell Rd.) To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-646-4217. You can also sign up for this project on your MIP Opportunities Calendar or MIP Opportunities List. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew- Miami Whitewater [C&P/West]**

Park Pick-Up at Fernbank

Sat 3/19, 9:30 a.m. – noon

A lot of people know that a plastic water bottle can take up to 450 years to decompose, but did you know that a single glass bottle can take 1 million years or more? That's a long time! Fernbank is right along a major road and river, so there tends to be a lot of plastics, glass bottles and other litter that collect at this location. We need your help collecting this debris along the park boundaries, trails and river. Meet at the Sycamore Trailhead. To volunteer, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or phone 513-296-7465. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Stew Crew–Fernbank [C&P/West]**

Controlling Multiflora Rose at Woodland Mound

Tue 3/22, noon – 2:30 p.m.

It's a sticky situation! Multiflora rose is growing along some of our trails and it likes to "grab" innocent hikers. We need your help removing this thorny plant. Bring a pair of heavy leather gloves and wear long sleeves. We will supply the tools. 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 3/23, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Help remove invasive shrub species along the very popular Shared-Use Trail. This is also a great chance to learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Lakeside Lodge parking lot off of Kemper Rd. To volunteer, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)

Range Ball Popping Party at Meadow Links

Tue 3/29, 8 – 10 a.m.

We'll be having fun as we "pop" golf balls out of the rain and snow soaked turf. The ground is too soggy to retrieve the balls by normal methods, so we need your help popping them out of the ground with our long-handled "poppers"! This will ensure that we have enough balls for all our golfing guests to use at our heated range tees. 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 \[Golf/Central\]](#)

Woody Plant Removal at Francis RecreAcres

Wed 3/30, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

If not maintained, prairies can very easily return to a forested state. Come out to the Francis Homestead and learn how to treat and cut undesirable woody plants while removing these unwanted plants from the prairie. Meet at the Francis RecreAcres parking lot. To volunteer, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)



In February's newsletter we mentioned that we were exploring ways to collect continuous feedback from all of you throughout the year. We are excited to say that we have that set up and ready to go! You can find the link to the feedback form on your MIP homepage, right above where we post the GrapeVINE. You can access this anytime you have feedback you would like to give. Thank you for helping us make your volunteer experience and the parks the best they can be!



Shout Out

You guys blew me away! What an amazing day this was; **NINETEEN** bags of trash and that doesn't even count all of the large, unbagged items we collected! In terms of volume, we had *as much* large, unbagged trash as we did bagged trash. It was an absolute joy to see so many people show up for a humble trash pickup event. You by far and away exceeded every metric of success we had laid out for us today, and I couldn't be happier with the results.

On behalf of the Little Miami Crew (myself, Roger, Chloe, Sarah, and Dan): thank you for such a good day and for doing such a good job. It was an honor to host such a productive and high spirited event.

–Thomas Yee, Conservation & Parks Tech at Little Miami