

Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Stan Espelage

Years of Service—4

What is your favorite volunteer activity? Working at the Mitchell Memorial mountain bike trail

When you're not at Great Parks, where might we find you? At home watching grandchildren

What's your favorite outdoor activity? I would have to say mountain biking since it is a year round sport, but snow skiing is up there as well.

What might we be surprised to know about you? I'm 72 years old. I'm able to be very active, so most people think I'm younger.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be? Scuba diving in the Bahamas, or horseback riding in the Smokies.

What did you want to be growing up? A cowboy.

Meet our New Volunteer Engagement Specialist!

Hello everyone! My name is Joe Von Allmen and I'm very excited to be the new volunteer engagement specialist at Great Parks! I have a long history of working for parks departments and service work that has led me to this role.

In the past, I had the pleasure of working for organizations such as The Cincinnati Nature Center, Cincinnati Parks, and even Great Parks of Hamilton County. Where I really fell in love with working volunteers came from my time spent working and traveling all over the west coast with Americorps National Civilian Community Corps.

Besides my time with Americorps, I have lived in Cincinnati all my life and am a graduate of Northern Kentucky University. I currently live on the westside of town with my wife, Taylor, and our two cats, Wesley and Kronk. I'm very excited that our family will be growing soon and I will be a dad for the first time at the end of June!

When I'm trying to relax I enjoy hiking, playing board games, and listening to music. I also love to cook and bake, trying new recipes and sharing them with other people who also enjoy cooking. I think it's a fun and tasty way to connect with others. The thing I'm most looking forward to in my new role is meeting and connecting with people and getting to spend more time out in nature.




I cannot express how excited I am to meet all of our wonderful volunteers and do meaningful work for Great Parks once again!



MAY BLOG

The Coopers Hawk: A Stealthy Hunter
<https://blog.greatparks.org/2022/03/the-coopers-hawk-a-stealthy-hunter/>

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Volunteer Meetings

We are back in person! 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. May's meetings will take place at 6 p.m. in the Orchard Shelter at Winton Woods. No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy!

May 17 – We will be joined by our partners from Groundwork Ohio River Valley to talk about the amazing work they do to connect youth to careers in the environmental field. Their mission is to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Last year we launched an innovative new youth employment program at Great Parks, in partnership with Groundwork, called the Green Team. We are excited to welcome our second group this June so this is a great time to come and learn about this program.

Jun 19- Stay tuned!

When recording your hours in MIP 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.

May Volunteer Opportunities

Interpreter programs are back! Check out what's coming up and join in on the fun.

For all Stew Crew projects - participants should bring work gloves, hand sanitizer, insect repellent, water, snacks and wear long pants, boots or sturdy shoes. Always dress for the weather! Tools will be provided.

Link to parks and park maps—<https://www.greatparks.org/parks>
Link to record your service hours—<https://app.betterimpact.com/Login/Login>

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

Conservation & Parks—green

Education & Events—blue

City Nature Challenge 2022

Fri 4/29 – Mon 5/2

Mark your calendars, the City Nature Challenge is back for 2022! Do you like to snap photos of your nature discoveries? Explore anywhere in Hamilton County at your leisure between 4/29–5/2 and contribute to the City Nature Challenge 2022 BioBlitz. Hundreds of cities around the world will be calling on their citizen scientists to bioblitz their community's biodiversity. Everyone, no matter what your nature knowledge, is encouraged to participate. Simply download the free iNaturalist app to log photos of plants and animals you see anywhere in Hamilton County. For more information visit the City Nature Challenge [website](#). [Interpreter Programs–Offsite \[Edu & Events\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 5/4, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail. Learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Lakeside Lodge parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Sat 5/7, 8:30 –10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail. Learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Lakeside Lodge parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)

Litter Pickup at Otto Armleder

Tue 5/10, 9 – 11 a.m.

With flood season over we start the yearly process of cleaning up Armleder for another wonderful summer. Come out and help us clean up the litter

washed in from the spring floods and help keep it out of our natural areas. Meet at the Otto Armleder Shelter parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact John Walker at jwalker@greatparks.org or phone 513-272-4131. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Armleder \[C&P/East\]](#)

Litter Pickup at Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary

Tue 5/10, 9 a.m. – noon

Help us keep Newberry clean! Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary is a state-dedicated natural area. These 100 acres are home to a variety of plant and animal species that live among waterfalls and wooded hillsides. We will be picking up trash along the creek that runs through the Sanctuary. Your feet may get wet so wear proper shoes. Meet at Newberry (5300 Sheits Road), parking at the bend in the road on Sheits Rd. close to 275. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Paul Steuer at psteuer@greatparks.org or phone 513-260-1124. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Newberry \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Tree Tube Round-Up at the Shaker Trace Nursery

Thu 5/10, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Miami Whitewater Forest is looking for help in cleaning up tree tubes from a previous tree planting on New Haven Rd. Meet at the Shaker Trace Nursery, volunteers will then be shuttled to the cleanup site. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater \[C&P/West\]](#)

Painting Harbor Pavilions at Sharon Woods

Wed 5/11, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help spruce up and beautify our shelter at the Harbor to improve our visitors' experience. beautify our shelters at the Harbor! Meet inside the Sharon Woods Harbor at the shelter located between the restrooms and playground. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Fernbank

Fri 5/13, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Help us tackle invasives at Fernbank Park! We are looking to clear out honeysuckle and multiflora rose on the Sycamore Nature Trail. Learn to identify and treat these invasive species to improve the area. Meet at the Sycamore Trail head. We will provide some tools and gloves, but please feel free to bring some heavy-weight gloves if you have them! To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or phone 513-296-7465. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Fernbank \[C&P/West\]](#)

Bridge Painting at Fernbank

Wed 5/18, 9 a.m. – noon

Come help us restore our bridge and make it look good as new! We need some detail oriented folks to help us with the cleaning and painting of the bridge that leads from Tecumseh Shelter to the Riverview Shelter. Be sure to wear clothing you don't mind getting paint on! Meet at the Tecumseh Shelter. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or phone 513-296-7465. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Fernbank \[C&P/West\]](#)

Nature Origami at Sharon Woods

Thu 5/19, 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Help our guests explore the fascinating history of origami, the Japanese art of folding paper. The Japan America Society of Greater Cincinnati and a nature interpreter will bring together the cultural significance of this skilled art form and share information about local wildlife. Participants will meet live animals then try their hand at creating each animal as origami. Volunteers will help teach guests how to fold origami. No prior knowledge is necessary, staff will provide instructions and training before the event begins. Meet at the Sharon Center. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Courtney Carmack at ccarmack@greatparks.org or phone 937-216-2246. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs–Sharon Woods \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Invasive Plant Removal at Mitchell Memorial Forest

Fri 5/20, 9 – 11 a.m.

Volunteers and staff will be removing invasive plant species from Mitchell Memorial Forest. The main focus will be working on invasive plants in higher-quality natural areas near the Mountain Bike Trail to help preserve the beauty of these forested hills. Meet at the Mitchell Memorial Forest Maintenance Building. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Ben Braeutigam at bbraeutigam@greatparks.org or phone 937-405-6212. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Mitchell Memorial \[C&P/West\]](#)

Be a Bug Hunter Program at Woodland Mound

Sat 5/21, 1:30 – 4 p.m.

Help guests discover some of our native bugs and learn the important role they play in our ecosystem! Volunteers will pass around nets as well as assist guests in identifying insects. We recommend closed-toed shoes, long pants and bug spray as we will head slightly off trail when we search for local species. Meet at the Seasongood Nature Center. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact James Harris at jharris@greatparks.org or phone 216-702-1766. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs–Woodland Mound \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Tree Cage Removal at Lake Isabella

Wed 5/25, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Lake Isabella to help remove tree cages from the mowed trail that goes along the ridge of the lake. Learn what purpose tree cages serve and when to remove them. Meet at the Quarry Bluff parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 937-309-2902. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Lake Isabella \[C&P/East\]](#)

Garlic Mustard Pull at the Miami Whitewater

Thu 5/26, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Miami Whitewater Forest is looking for volunteers to pull invasive garlic mustard from Timberlakes, Oak Leaf, and Badlands trails. Learn about summer invasive plant species and how to control them, while enjoying hiking on our most popular wooded trails. Meet at the Timberlakes Trail parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater \[C&P/West\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Fernbank

Fri 5/27, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Help us tackle invasives at Fernbank Park! We are looking to clear out honeysuckle and multiflora rose on the Sycamore Nature Trail. Learn to identify and treat these invasive species to improve the area. Meet at the Sycamore Trail head. We will provide some tools and gloves, but feel free to bring heavy-weight gloves if you have them! To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or phone 513-296-7465. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Fernbank \[C&P/West\]](#)

Spring Night Hike at Sharon Woods

Sun 5/29, 8:30 – 11 p.m.

Spring is in the air, but have you ever experienced this season at night? Join the nature interpreter on the Gorge Trail to help guests discover animal adaptations and try to spot some of the nocturnal animals that enjoy the park at night! Flashlights and sturdy shoes are recommended on the uneven trail. Meet at the Sharon Center. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact James Harris at jharris@greatparks.org or phone 216-702-1766. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs–Woodland Mound \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Shout Outs

On Tuesday, March 29th we hosted our annual Range Ball Popping Party at Meadow Links. This year 17 hearty souls braved the frigid morning temperatures armed with dandelion poppers fighting the frozen ground to recover range balls before they are lost below the surface. We recovered approximately 12,000 golf balls from the ground. This recovery is very important to our overall operation helping to right size the available supply of range balls for our programs and guests. A special thank you to Great Parks Volunteers Harriet Schierenbeck, Craig Montgomery, Glenna Stricklett, Dale & Marianne Hoffman, Jim Demoss, Roger Loosen, Daniel Busemeyer, Gary Bourgraf, Dave Witte, Bill Hart, Kay Serio for all of their efforts today.

– Matt Starr, Head Golf Professional at Meadow Links

Miami Whitewater Forest held our yearly spring ball popping on Thursday March, 24. Six volunteers donated 2+ hours digging balls out of the ground and from the weeds surrounding the range, gathering an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 golf balls. The Whitewater team appreciates all the volunteers' efforts, especially since it was a cold morning. A special thanks goes to Mike Draper, Bill Hart, Daren Seipel, Craig Montgomery, Dale Hoffmann and our own General Manager Mike Uffmann for spending their morning recovering embedded golf balls.

– Jennifer Ridle, Clubhouse Manager at Miami Whitewater

