

A Great Animal Find in Great Parks!

Jeremy Barkley, Woodland Mound Park Manager

This past year, while performing some maintenance at one of our parks, Jessica Stephen and I made an awesome discovery! In the grass we found a Kirtland's snake! So now I probably either have you A) freaking out, or B) asking what is a Kirtland's snake?

Kirtland's snakes are a state threatened species in Ohio. This was not always the case. Over the course of time, their preferred habitat, wet meadows, have been drained and turned into farm fields all across the state. Historically, there are records for the species in 32 of Ohio's 88 counties. However, there are only 10 of these counties with current records.



This is a drastic drop from being found in 36% percent of the counties in the state to only now being found in 11%. Kirtland's snakes can also be found in Illinois, Indiana, northern Kentucky, southern Michigan and western Pennsylvania. It is a state threatened species in Illinois and Ohio. Kirtland's snakes are a state endangered species in Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky. Lastly, it is presumed extirpated (no longer found) in Pennsylvania.

These snakes mainly utilize crayfish burrows for cover. They are easily identified by their bright red belly with a row of black spots on each side. The Kirtland's snake is one of Ohio's smaller snake species with an average adult length of 12 to 15 inches. They mainly prey on worms, small insects and an occasional small crayfish. Their first defense is to bluff by flattening the body to make themselves look larger than they actually are. Musking is the second line of defense. Musking is basically pooping themselves with a smelly substance, which does a good job of keeping people and predators at bay. While all snakes can bite to defend themselves, these critters are so small that it is hard for them to spread their jaws wide enough to even latch on.

Thanks to local herpetologist Jeff Davis, the Sharon Woods team were able to put out 36 coverboards to survey for these cryptic snakes. Coverboards are 2 1/2 x 5 foot sheets of corrugated sheet metal under which the snakes love to hide. Time permitting, we tried to flip the coverboards once per week. While checking our coverboards we had nine encounters with Kirtland's snakes across the nine times we checked the coverboards. We even encountered one on December 2! This is unusual since snakes overwinter in hibernacula underground. They stay there until we get warmer temperatures in the spring.




Along with the Kirtland's snakes we also encountered a garter snake, meadow voles and short-tailed shrews. So next time when you're out working or exploring our parks, keep your eyes open. You never know what could be out there hiding in our parks!

Now that we know the Kirtland's snake is hanging out at our parks, we are launching a monitoring program in 2022 to understand their relative distribution and density across the property. The Conservation & Parks teams in Natural Resources and Sharon Woods will be working together on this project and future management actions that come out of our findings. Stay tuned!

JULY BLOG

A Bird In The Hand: The Science Of Studying Birds
<https://blog.greatparks.org/2022/05/a-bird-in-the-hand-the-science-of-studying-birds/>

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Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Inke Sexton

Years of Service– 2 years

What is your favorite volunteer activity? My favorite volunteer activity is being a barn aide at the riding center. I get to work alongside awesome barn staff and other volunteers. I am in the fresh air, I get my exercise, I meet new people and I get to learn new things, all while hanging out with horses. Really, the staff at the riding center are making my volunteering so enjoyable.

What's your favorite outdoor activity? Horseback riding and going on hikes with my dogs.

What are three things on your bucket list? I want to ride the ponies in Iceland, see the Snow Monkeys in Yudanaka Onsen (Japan) and see the northern lights in Norway or Finland

What did you want to be growing up? I wanted to be a veterinarian.

What's the last picture you took on your phone? The last picture is of my dog – Sherman (the German Shepard)

July Volunteer Opportunities

For all Stew Crew projects—participants should bring work gloves, hand sanitizer, insect repellent, water, snacks and wear long pants, boots or sturdy shoes. 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

Special Events—dark blue

Nature Art & Play Week at Farbach-Werner

Fri 7/1 & Sat 7/2, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Help guests play nature-inspired games and make nature inspired art during this week designed to help nurture creativity and connection to nature and the community. Some crafts will require a small fee. Meet in the Ellenwood Nature Barn. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Julie Stubbs at jstubbs@greatparks.org or Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 14 and up.

[Interpreter Programs—Farbach-Werner \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#)

Litter Pickup at Winton Woods

Tue 7/5, 9 – 11 a.m.

Come help beautify our park! We will spend our time picking up ground litter on Valleyview Dr. and West Park Rd. The areas around our shelters are often busy so it is easy for litter to collect. Meet at the Beech Grove Picnic area. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Hayley Miner at hminer@greatparks.org or phone 513-340-8033. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **[Stew Crew—Winton Woods \[C&P/Central\]](#)**

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 7/6, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail. Also 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 513-646-4217. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **[Stew Crew—Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)**

Purple Loosestrife Cut & Spray at Shawnee Lookout

Wed 7/6, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Purple loosestrife is an invasive plant species that prefers wet riparian areas and flood plains. While beautiful, it can often out-compete native plants along our river systems. We are looking for volunteers to help us in manage it by cutting and spraying plants in the Ulmansiek Wildlife Sanctuary and Jackson Tract areas. Meet at the Boat Ramp parking area.

To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Shawnee Lookout \[C&P/West\]](#).

Invasive Removal Fernbank

Fri 7/8, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Help us clear out honeysuckle and multiflora rose on the Sycamore nature trail. Also learn how to identify and treat these invasive species and better the area in the process. Meet at Sycamore Trailhead. 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Trail Maintenance at Miami Whitewater

Fri 7/8, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

The trails at Miami Whitewater Forest see a lot of traffic and are always in need of upkeep. Join Conservation and Parks employees at clearing water bars and grade dips, trimming branches, and other tasks as we aim to maintain our wonderful nature trails. Meet at Timberlakes parking lot area. 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 Woodland Mound

Fri 7/8, 9 a.m. – noon

Come out to Woodland Mound Park to help remove and treat invasive plant species from woodland edges near the prairie. Learn about what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Monarch Meadow parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Patrick Brown at pbrown@greatparks.org or phone 513-655-0724. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Woodland Mound \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Farbach-Werner

Tue 7/12, 9 a.m. – noon

Help us clear out invasive plant species like honeysuckle and burning bush. Meet at the Farbach-Werner parking lot. 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–Richardson \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 7/13, 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 513-646-4217. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Sharon Woods \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Kroger Hills

Wed 7/13, 9 – noon

Come out to Kroger Hills and help staff remove invasive shrubs from the woods on the hill. We will be cutting and spraying the stumps so herbicide applicators are a plus but not a requirement. The site will require some hiking in a wonderful old growth forest. Meet at the entrance to the northern portion of the property. 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–Kroger Hills \[C&P/East\]](#)

Kids Expo at Winton Woods

Fri 7/15, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for Activities Shift, 12:30 – 4:45 p.m. for Afternoon Break and Cleanup Shift.

Kids Expo is back! Over 4,000 (yes, you read that right) excited children and adults will be experiencing the Kid's Outdoor Adventure Expo at the Winton Woods Harbor. The expo is a free event that gives kids the opportunity to explore outdoor activities they may not otherwise have a chance to – activities like catching their first fish, hitting a golf ball, paddling a raft, getting up close and personal with a farm animal, climbing a rock wall and so much more! Volunteers will help run various activities stations (Activities Shift), or help clean up the event and fill in for afternoon breaks as needed (Afternoon Break and Cleanup Shift) Lunch will be provided to those who sign up for the Activities Shift. Roles will be assigned day of event. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact volunteer@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7471. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Special Events–Winton Woods \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#)

Trail Maintenance at Glenwood Gardens

Thu 7/21, 9 a.m. – noon

Help the crew at Glenwood Gardens clean up our trails. Volunteers will help with clearance pruning for the trail and mower. Meet at the Glenwood Gardens Maintenance Building (377 Sheffield Rd). To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Shaun McClary

at smcclary@greatparks.org or phone 513-869-9525. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Glenwood Gardens \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Trail Maintenance at Winton Woods

Thu 7/21, 9 – 11 a.m.

Be a part of maintaining our Kingfisher Trail. Learn how to maintain nature trails by building water bars. This work will involve a lot of bending over and shoveling sediment. Lighter work involving pruning back trees, shrubs, and groundcover from the trails, and cleaning off bridges is also needed. This is a great opportunity to hike our trails and keep them accessible to all. Meet at the Kingfisher Shelter. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Reagan Farmer at rfarmer@greatparks.org or phone 513-267-5263. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Winton Woods \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Fernbank

Fri 7/22, 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. Also learn how to identify and treat these invasive species and better the area in the process. Meet at Sycamore Trailhead. 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Invasive Plant Removal at Mitchell

Memorial Forest

Fri 7/22, 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Withrow Nature Preserve

Fri 7/22, 9 a.m. – noon

Come out to Withrow Nature Preserve and help remove invasive plant species from natural areas and trails. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them.

Meet at the Withrow parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Patrick Brown at pbrown@greatparks.org or phone 513-655-0724. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Withrow \[C&P/East\]](#)

Storybook Weekend: Peter Pan at Glenwood Gardens

Fri 7/22 & Sat 7/23, 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. or 1 – 5 p.m.

Sun 7/24, 11:30 – 5 p.m.

Join us in Neverland! Guests are invited to bring natural items or their science knowledge to trade at our Trading Post. Follow the treasure map, play with shadows, hunt for fairies, and more during this fun, immersive weekend! Volunteers will assist with programs, crafts, games, and other garden activities. Meet in the Garden Workshop building in the Highfield Discovery Garden. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-771-8733. For volunteers ages 14 and up.

[Interpreter Programs–Glenwood Gardens \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Francis RecreAcres

Sat 7/23, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Francis Homestead to help remove invasive shrub species from the Francis Homestead wooded edge. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. This event will include walking a considerable distance to get to the work site. Meet at the Francis RecreAcres parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jessica Stephen at jstephen@greatparks.org or phone 513-646-4217. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Francis RecreAcres \[C&P/East\]](#)

Outer Loop Invasive Clearing at Miami Whitewater

Sun 7/24, noon – 2 p.m.

The inner loop and forested portions of the outer loop are looking much better as our volunteers continue the fight against the honeysuckle and autumn olive. Join us for the third event where we will tackle these invasives in a forward-facing section of the park. Meet at Bike Trail parking lot area. 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 18 and up. [Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater \[C&P/West\]](#)

Volunteer Meeting

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. No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy! Meetings will take place from 6 - 7 p.m.

Jul 19 – Come and join us at the Great Parks Nature Center at the Summit! The Center is located within the New Prospect Baptist Church. This location, which opened in the summer of 2019, is located in the urban core and allows us to provide nature education and outdoor recreational services to the Roselawn Community. Our guest speaker, Sarah Kent, Great Parks Outreach Manager, will talk about the history of the Nature Center, the programs they provide, and how you can get involved!

The Nature Center at the Summit, is located at 1580 Summit Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45237 at the back of the building. Park and enter in the back.

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.

Invasive Removal at Lake Isabella

Wed 7/27, 8:30 –10:30 a.m.

Come out to Lake Isabella to help remove invasive shrub species from a mowed trail that runs parallel with the Little Miami River. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly 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 513-646-4217. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Lake Isabella \[C&P/East\]](#)

Miami Fort Japanese Stiltgrass Pull at Shawnee Lookout

Wed 7/27, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Japanese stiltgrass is an annual invasive species that is easily transported along trails and natural areas unknowingly by people on clothing, animal fur, and equipment. We are able to treat this aggressive invasive with herbicide but, in other more sensitive areas the best means of control is to manually pull or cut the weak-rooted grass before it goes to seed. Miami Fort Trail is home to Ohio's second largest population of Running Buffalo Clover, a state-listed threatened species, so manual control is our best option to maintain the biodiversity of this scenic trail. Meet at the Miami Fort Trail parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-910-5067. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Shawnee Lookout \[C&P West\]](#)

Dogs, Cats and Kids Play Day at Sharon Woods

Sat 7/30, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. or 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Help our guests have a fun day while learning about the carnivores living in Ohio! Volunteers will help lead guests to the program location, keep tally of the number of guests, and help guests participate in the various activities. Staff will lead a one hour training for volunteers before the program date. Meet at the Sharon Center Auditorium. 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–Sharon Woods \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Shout Outs

Well we have another volunteer project in the books. Thanks for coming to Glenwood Gardens and volunteering for three hours. We covered about a mile of trail clearance issues.

– Shaun McClary, C&P Technician at Glenwood Gardens



