

Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Dawn Johnson

Years of Service—5 years

1) Favorite volunteer activity – Taking good care of the horses and equipment at the Riding Center. Horses are incredible animals and great buddies, and helping at the Riding Center gives me a big horse fix that I could never afford if I had to own or lease a horse. They're like grandkids - Love 'em, (don't) spoil 'em, and give 'em back to their Parky's parents!

2) Favorite outdoor activity – Horseback riding, of course! Also hiking, kayaking, and cycling.

3) What might we be surprised to know about you – I spent almost 20 years living in central Haiti, helping Haitians run a large health & community development division at Hospital Albert Schweitzer. I was the Integrated Services Director, but the department heads made the real magic happen.

4) Favorite Great Park – Winton Woods, near my house. Horses, hiking, dog-friendly spaces, lots of programs.

Your Great Parks: The Tiniest Friends!

Connor Holt, Central Region
Interpreter, Glenwood Gardens

Great Parks manages 21 parks and nature preserves, spanning 17,000+ acres across Hamilton County. With that information, imagine how many different species of plants and animals call it home. The critter that I want to spotlight is none other than the Cricket Frog!



If you haven't heard of them before now, cricket frogs are some of the smallest frogs that we have in Ohio. On average, cricket frogs are 5/8 to 1-3/8 inches in length. These itty-bitty frogs can be identified by their moist, warty skin, the dark triangular shape between their eyes, and a Y-shaped figure on their back. The coloration of the Y-shape may be bright green (seen pictured above) or different shades of brown or gray. Because the cricket frog's surroundings influence its color and pattern, there is often a bit of variation. It tends to be lighter in color in bright lights and high temperatures.

Other frogs, like the American Bullfrog, Northern Green Frog, and Gray Treefrog, are found throughout almost all of Ohio. The cricket frog tends to be more restricted to the western two-thirds of the state. These frogs prefer sparsely vegetated edges of permanent bodies of water, like ponds and wetlands, with high exposure to sunlight. Feeding primarily on insects, these habitats are essential to cricket frogs since their prey is attracted to the standing water. The females will lay roughly 200–400 eggs in small clusters and attach them to the stems of the aquatic plant life in the ponds and wetlands they call their home.


Cricket frogs become more active in the early spring but do not begin their singing until late spring to early summer. Over the past couple weeks, you may have heard their songs in our parks like Glenwood Gardens, Miami Whitewater Forest and Winton Woods, to name a few. The cricket frog's call consists of a series of sharp clicking notes almost like the sound of two marbles quickly being tapped together. The size of the frog and the sound of their call are where they get the name cricket frog.

These frogs may not be as big and popular as some of the others, but they are just as important to the ecosystem as any other animal you'd find in the Great Parks. So, the next chance you get – whether it be while completing your daily tasks, going for a walk or simply sitting by an open window – keep an eye and ear out for these amazing little frogs and their singing.

AUGUST BLOG

Think Outside the Trash: Recycle Old Cellphones at Great Parks
<https://blog.greatparks.org/2022/06/think-outside-the-trash-recycle-old-cellphones-at-great-parks/>

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August 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

Golf—orange

Education & Events—blue

Rangers—dark green

Natural Resources—purple

Teasel/Seed Head Removal at Francis RecreAcres

Wed 8/3, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Francis Homestead to help remove seed heads from an invasive species here in Ohio. Also learn about what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Miami Fort Japanese Stiltgrass Pull at Shawnee Lookout

Wed 8/3, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Japanese stiltgrass is an annual invasive species that is easily transported along trails and natural areas unknowingly on clothing, equipment, and animal fur. We are able to treat this aggressive invasive with herbicide, but in more sensitive areas the best means of control is to manually pull or cut the weak-rooted grass before it goes to seed. We are looking for help controlling this pesky weed around one of our popular picnic areas used by school groups and Great Parks Interpretive staff for historical education. Meet at the Cabin View picnic 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 at Fernbank

Fri 8/5, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Think about your favorite part of a hike – Is it the wildlife, the peaceful calm of the woods, the fresh air? Maybe it's birdwatching or seeing some nice spring wildflowers? Invasive species threaten all of this! Invasives like honeysuckle, winter creeper, and garlic mustard aggressively outcompete native wildflowers, trees, and other

native plants. Come help us tackle invasives at Fernbank and keep our trails great for generations to come! 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Later Summer Scares Program at Sharon Woods

Fri 8/5, 7 – 9 p.m.

Are you brave enough to visit the park at night? Help our guests come out and visit us for our spooky activities. Walk the haunted trail, see how animals scare each other, then make your own monsters... and eat them. Volunteers will help run our S'mores station as well as help our guests along a short walk on the School Trail. Meet in the Council Bluff Shelter. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Joe Platt at jplatt@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs—Sharon Woods \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Bow Hunting Qualifications

Sat 8/6 & Sun 8/7, 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
and 11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Did you know Great Parks has a bow-hunting program? It is part of our deer management efforts which ultimately protect our natural resources, reduce deer/car collisions, and other unwanted deer encounters. Bow hunters must undergo a stringent qualification process at which time they also learn the rules of the program. We are looking for volunteers to sign hunters in and direct them to their start location. There will be approximately 400 individuals taking part in the qualifications over the two-day event! Meet at the Glenwood Garden Maintenance Building (377 Sheffield Rd). To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jack Stenger at jstenger@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7453. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Bow Hunting Qualifications—Glenwood Gardens \[Natural Resources/Central\]](#)

Four Person Scramble at The Vineyard

Sun 8/7, 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. or noon – 4:30 p.m.

Join us for this annual event that has taken place since The Vineyard opened in 1986! A Four Person Scramble is a golf format where four players form a team and all contribute to the score of the whole rather than the score of each individual. Volunteers will help monitor play during the tournament and will help to verify scores made by the teams. Meet at the Vineyard Pro Shop. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Mike Thomas at mstthomas@greatparks.org or phone 513-474-3007. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Golf Tournaments & Clinics–The Vineyard \[Golf/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Richardson Forest Preserve

Tue 8/9, 9 a.m. – noon

Come out and help us protect our 413 acre nature preserve! Richardson is the home of some rare native plant species such as skunk cabbage, marsh marigold, and five-angled dodder. Clearing out invasives in the area will help our native plants flourish! Meet at the end of Lick Rd. 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 \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Inner Loop Invasive Clearing at Miami Whitewater

Tue 8/9, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Volunteers will continue to make headway on clearing the high visibility areas around the inner loop of Miami Whitewater forest of non-native shrubs and trees. Come help us push forward as we make our way around the bike trail. Meet at the Bike Trail parking lot area, near the Mt. Hope Rd crossing. 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 8/10, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help remove invasive shrub species behind the Buckeye Shelter. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Buckeye Shelter 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 Woodland Mound

Fri 8/12, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Come out to Woodland Mound Park and help remove invasive plant species from woodland edges near the Disc Golf Course. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Seasongood Nature Center parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on you 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 Shawnee Lookout

Wed 8/17, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Help control woody invasive plants along Shawnee Lookout's scenic Blue Jacket Trail. Species we'll be on the lookout for include: Japanese honeysuckle, bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, winter creeper, and Asiatic bittersweet. Meet at the Blue Jacket 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 16 and up. [Stew Crew–Shawnee Lookout \[C&P/West\]](#)

Litter Pickup at Glenwood Gardens

Thu 8/18, 9 a.m. – noon

The hardworking crew at Glenwood Gardens need help making the park litter free! Work will take place along Sheffield Road. Safety vests and litter grabbers will be provided. Meet at the Glenwood Garden 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 \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Kroger Hills

Thu 8/18, 9 – noon

Come If you've never had the chance to explore Kroger Hills, here it is! Come out and help remove invasive shrubs along the wooded hillside while getting a close up look at this beautiful piece of preserved park land. 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

National Night Out

Thursday 8/18, 5 – 8pm

Join us for our first National Night Out event! This great event gives the community an up close look at who were are here at Great Parks and also what other cool and important resources are available throughout Hamilton County. Come prepared to have fun! In addition to Great Parks Rangers, other local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, air care, the SWAT Team and a Metro bus, there will be live music, a dunk tank, and ice cream! Volunteers will assist with parking, traffic, greeting guests, escorting Parky, and running the dunk tank. Meet at Winton Harbor, in front of the snack bar. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Katie Lake at klake@greatparks.org or phone 513-266-5945. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Ranger Support–Winton Woods \[Rangers/Central\]](#)

Rain Garden Maintenance at Winton Woods

Fri 8/19, 8 – 11 a.m.

A rain garden is an area designed to increase the reabsorption of rainwater runoff from parking lots and other hard surfaces. We have many plant species in our rain gardens that are good for very important pollinators. Come help us weed and remove invasive species in our rain gardens around Winton Woods. Meet at the Winton Woods Campground parking lot. 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 Fernbank

Fri 8/19, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Think about your favorite part of a hike – Is it the wildlife, the peaceful calm of the woods, the fresh air? Maybe it's birdwatching or seeing some nice spring wildflowers? Invasive species threaten all of this! Invasives like honeysuckle, winter creeper, and garlic mustard aggressively outcompete wildflowers, trees, and other native plants. Come help us tackle invasives at Fernbank and keep our trails great for generations to come! 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Seed Collecting and Invasive Control at Miami Whitewater

Fri 8/19, 9 – 11 a.m.

Part of Great Parks' contribution to the conservation of native plants is the collecting and propagating of native

prairie flowers. By collecting more of our native seed from the prairie we can produce more seed stock for future planting. Since the very nature of this work is seasonal and not always predictable, we will also be prepared to do some clearing of honeysuckle and other non-natives around our prairies, depending on the volume of work required for collecting. Meet at Baughman Rd. 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 Plant Removal at Mitchell Memorial Forest

Fri 8/19, 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 Francis RecreAcres

Sat 8/20, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Francis Homestead to help remove invasive shrub species here in Ohio. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them. 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Withrow Nature Preserve

Fri 8/26, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Come out to Withrow Nature Preserve and help remove invasive plant species here in Ohio 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Litter Pickup at Winton Woods

Sat 8/27, 8 – 11 a.m.

Come help us keep our park looking beautiful and free of litter! Volunteers will be picking up litter around the harbor, one of the most popular places for guests at Winton Woods. Meet at the Harbor building next to Parky's Ark. 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 Lake Isabella

Wed 8/31, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Lake Isabella to help remove invasive shrub species here in Ohio 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 Shady Elm 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Save the Date for the 2022 Volunteer Celebration!

Join us for music, food, and fun! This year's celebration will be held at Parky's Farm on Thursday 9/22 from 4 - 7 p.m.

Be on the lookout for an invitation in your mailbox around mid August.

We hope you can join us for this year's celebration!

Our Volunteer Engagement Specialist Joe Von Allmen, and his wife Taylor, welcomed their first child recently! Steven Glenn Von Allmen was born on June 20 at 5:53 p.m. weighing in at 7lbs 9oz and 19.75 inches. Joe says "Taylor and Steven did amazing in delivery and everyone is happy and healthy!"

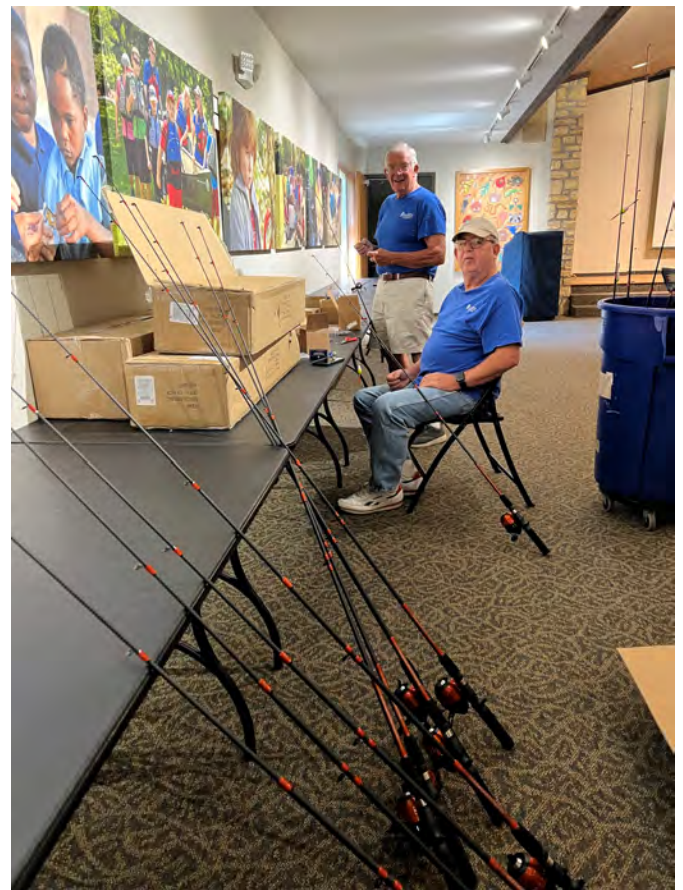
Congratulations to Joe and Taylor on the birth of their beautiful son!



Shout Outs

Big thanks to Bob Bohn and Mike Draper for rigging 100 new fishing poles to be used at Kids Expo (pictured right). What we thought would take a couple days, they powered through and completed in just 1 day. We appreciate their help getting this done and we are sure the kids will put them to good use at Kids Expo! - Jamie Piccola, Assistant Events Manager

I would like to share a special note of thanks regarding our volunteer Dave Knaebe! Dave was a fantastic host today with Dave Bruce, Risk Manager and with me! Dave took the time to walk with us at the new Werk Road property. He was very generous with his time! Dave shared his knowledge of the property which was so helpful! We so enjoyed spending time with Dave today! He did a fantastic job and we appreciate all of his hard work at the Werk Road property! - Molly DeJesus, Chief of Human Resources



Big kudos to John Lusher (pictured left). What started a year and a half ago as a small task to identify energy meters at EnergyCap, turned into an ongoing effort to build the agency database. John and I met weekly on Webex to create commodity dashboards and provide reports that help park managers track utility bills and consumption. John's experience and insights are a real asset for Great Parks and made a significant impact in our sustainability efforts. I'm grateful to have had him as my teammate.

John, thank you for your time, efforts, and insights! I couldn't have done it without you! - Moran Slakmon, Sustainability Coordinator

We had another great volunteer project at Glenwood Gardens. There are now less invasive vines at our Great Parks thanks to you. We learned that even though it's 90 degrees outside, long pants and long sleeve shirts help keep the poison ivy and bugs off your skin. - Shaun McClary, Conservation & Park Tech at Glenwood Gardens

