

Your Great Parks: Stewardship of the Parks Through History

Jessica Spencer (she/her/hers),
Director of Natural Resources

Many previous stewards walked this land before we came to claim it. An entire field of study is devoted to this topic, which we will not exhaust here. However, Adam McCosham, Park Manager of Winton Woods, briefly summarized their impact. "The archaeological data suggests Native Americans of the region modified the land for a variety of subsistence and cultural reasons. There is also a growing body of evidence that Native Americans practiced silviculture, which is the art of growing forest crops. One key management tool implemented by Native Americans of this region was fire." Keep in mind that what is "known" about these former stewards continues to change as more is understood over time. The Miami "Fort" at Shawnee Lookout is a good example of this, as it was not actually created for defense as previously thought.

Likewise, our understanding of stewardship and conservation changes over time. Our organization began with the objective of green space preservation, primarily for recreation. Evidence of this is written in the first map of hiking trails at Sharon Woods from the late 1930s, which includes the statement: *The County Parks are maintained for the use and enjoyment of the people that they may find release from the tension of the over-crowded daily existence and that contact with nature will result in a better, healthier and happier life for all.*

Later, during postwar expansion and construction of the highway system, the focus shifted to preserving as much land as possible before it was destroyed. Currently, we recognize the importance of conserving habitats and species for their own sake, although our recreation-based beginning still influences all aspects of our thinking and operations today. Read on for tiny glimpses into how we arrived where we are today.

Parks Beginning

- 1926** – During Murray Seasongood's first term as Cincinnati Mayor in 1926, he visited the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, where he was inspired to propose an equivalent in Cincinnati.
- 1930** – Creation of the Hamilton County Regional Park District
- 1932** – Sharon Woods welcomed its first visitors
- 1934** – First master plan for acquiring land
- 1939** – 900 acres were leased from the federal government; this property is now known as Winton Woods.
- 1945** – The first park rangers joined the team. Following the National Parks model, our first full-time naturalists were park rangers with a knowledge of natural resources. The park district hired its first part-time naturalist in 1949, and the first full-time naturalist in 1952.

The history of stewardship of Great Parks continues – delve deeper into Early & Recent Stewards, Middle Milestones, Current Era Milestones, and our Current Era at this [link](#).



SEPTEMBER BLOG

Royalty in the Prairie: Royal Catchfly
<https://blog.greatparks.org/2022/07/royalty-in-the-prairie-royal-catchfly/>

HOURS REMINDER

The end of the year will be here before you know it! Please remember to record all of your volunteer hours on MIP by the end of the year.

September 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 (where you can find meeting locations)—<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

Special Events—dark blue

Education & Events—blue

Community Projects—teal

Invasive Removal at Fernbank

Fri 9/2, 9 a.m. – noon

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 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Carnivore Play Day at Woodland Mound

Sat 9/3, 1:30 – 5 p.m.

Help our guests have a fun day while learning about the carnivores we have 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. Meet at the Woodland Mound 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—Woodland Mound \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Microprairie Seed Collection and Landscaping at Miami Whitewater

Sun 9/4, noon – 2 p.m.

Enjoy learning about our native prairie plants and spend some time beautifying our dog park facility. Volunteers will be collecting seed for our seed nursery at a small micro prairie, then spend the remaining time pruning and maintaining trees. Expect to work near dogs both large and small. Meet at the Simmonds Family Dog Park. 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 Plant Removal at Woodland Mound

Mon 9/5, 9 – 11 a.m.

Come out to Woodland Mound Park and assist in the removal of invasive shrub species here in Ohio. Also learn about what invasive plants could be present in your backyards and how to properly remove them.

2022 Volunteer Celebration

Can you believe that volunteers have contributed over 12,000 hours in 2022? Let's come together and celebrate all of the amazing things that have been accomplished and recognize those who have earned years of service awards!

Thu 9/22, 4 – 7 p.m. (open house style)
Parky's Farm- 10073 Daly Rd.
Join us for music, food, and fun!

Please register on your My Impact Page

If you need help with registration, contact Lauren McClure at lmclure@greatparks.org or phone 513-728-4522

Volunteer Spotlight



Name: Dave Witte

Years of Service—2 years

What are you looking forward to right now? I look forward to my life in retirement. An opportunity to do something different, learn new things and skills and do all the little things I never had time to do before.

What is your favorite Great Park and why? Fernbank Park is my favorite. It is well managed and cared for, and its unique well landscaped layout along the river makes it a popular escape for all ages.

What might we be surprised to know about you? I spent my entire career for the past 35 years at Children's Hospital. The last 20 years I was the director of the Division of Pathology before retiring. Now I am enjoying my second career as a retiree.

What's your favorite outdoor activity? My wife Barbara and I have a boat we keep at Mariners Landing right next to Fernbank Park. We enjoy a nice relaxing cruise down the river especially in the fall.

Meet at the Seasongood Nature Center parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or phone 513-673-1102. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew—Woodland Mound \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Kroger Hills

Wed 9/7, 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Autumn Olive Removal at Shawnee Lookout

Wed 9/7, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Autumn olive is a woody invasive somewhat resistant to foliar herbicides, which makes it a prime target for cutting and treating along our trails. Come help us tackle this pesky plant and restore our native habitats! 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Birds, Bees, Butterflies—Oh My! at Winton Woods

Fri 9/9, 9 – 11 a.m.

Come enjoy the last of the blooms this season in one of our rain gardens! We will be removing woody plants, vines, invasive species, and other weeds. Rain gardens play an important role in reducing storm water runoff while also creating a space for birds, bees, and butterflies. You can help make next year's garden look beautiful and maintain important habitat for wildlife. 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 \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Litter Pickup around Steamboat Bend at Woodland Mound

Mon 9/12, 9 – 11 a.m.

Help keep our parks free of litter. Come out to Steamboat Bend and assist us in picking up trash that washes up from the Ohio River. Meet at Steamboat Bend parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or phone 513-673-1102. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew—Woodland Mound \[C&P/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary

Tue 9/13, 9 a.m. – noon

Help us keep Newberry free of invasive plants! 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 clearing out honeysuckle. Meet at Newberry (5300 Sheits Road),

we will be 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 \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Honeysuckle Hunt at Glenwood Gardens

Thu 9/15, 9 a.m. – noon

Come and help us keep Glenwood Gardens free of invasive plants! Volunteers will help cut and stump treat honeysuckle. 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 \[C&P/Central\]](#)

Inner Loop Invasive Clearing at Miami Whitewater

Thu 9/15, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Continue the efforts of previous volunteers in removing honeysuckle and Autumn olive along the Inner Loop. Previous events have been successful in clearing non-natives in a high visibility area near 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 Fernbank

Fri 9/16, 9 a.m. – noon

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 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Invasive Plant Removal at Mitchell Memorial Forest

Fri 9/16, 9 – 11 a.m.

Volunteers and staff will be removing invasive plant species from Mitchell Memorial Forest. The main focus will be working 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Storybook Weekend: The Very Hungry Caterpillar at Glenwood Gardens

Fri & Sat 9/16 – 9/17, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sun 9/18, noon – 4 p.m.

Join us in a variety of activities based on our storybook friend! Learn about the different life stages, what foods a caterpillar might eat in nature & what happens once a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. 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 Sharon Woods

Sat 9/17, 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 backyard 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

Landscaping at Withrow Nature Preserve

Sun 9/18, noon – 2 p.m.

Come out to Withrow Nature Preserve and assist us in making our Highwood Lodge look beautiful. Help us weed the landscape beds and prune low hanging branches. Meet at the Withrow parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or phone 513-673-1102. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Stew Crew–Withrow \[C&P/East\]](#)

Hispanic Heritage Festival at Sharon Woods

Sun 9/18, 3 – 7 p.m.

Join Great Parks in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month at our 2nd annual Hispanic Heritage Festival! Enjoy dancing, performances, live music, crafts, food trucks and more. Local organizations will also be in attendance sharing the programs they provide our community. Volunteers will help with set-up/teardown, supervise craft tables, run the welcome booth, and supervise inflatables

like bounce houses and soccer darts. Bilingual volunteers would be a bonus but not a requirement! Meet at the mobile concert stage in the field below Cardinal Meadows. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jamie Piccola at jp Piccola@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7478. For volunteers ages 14 and up.

[Special Events–Sharon Woods \[Guest Exp/East\]](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 9/21, 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 backyard 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 \[C&P/East\]](#)

National Public Lands Day at Francis RecreAcres

Sat 9/24, 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 what invasive plants could be present in your backyard 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. [Community Projects–National Public Lands Day](#)

National Public Lands Day at Woodland Mound

Sat 9/24, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Come out to Woodland Mound Park and help remove invasive plant species here in Ohio from natural areas and trails. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your own backyard and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Weston Shelter parking lot. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Jeremy Barkley at jbarkley@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Community Projects–National Public Lands Day](#)

National Public Lands Day at Miami Whitewater Sat

9/24, 9 a.m. – noon

Please join us at the Simmonds Family Dog Park applying mulch to the trees that encompass the highly visited area. Mulch can beautify and benefit the trees in many ways and we look forward to seeing you there. Meet at

the Dog Park entrance. 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 of all ages. [Community Projects–National Public Lands Day](#)

National Public Lands Day at Winton Woods

Sat 9/24, 9 a.m. – noon

In an effort to restore some of our more imperiled habitats, we are making a push to restore a prairie! The goal is to have the beginnings of a lush, eye-pleasing, and animal-friendly habitat restored near Winton Rd. With your help we will prepare and place plant plugs along the hillside corridor of the harbor trail for all to see and pollinators to enjoy! Meet at the Winton Harbor parking lot near the Pavilion. To volunteer, sign up on your MIP Calendar/List. For questions, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers of all ages. [Community Projects–National Public Lands Day](#)

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Wed 9/28, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Come out to Sharon Woods to help remove invasive species from the Future Forest along Rte 42. Also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them. Meet at the Stone Bridge 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 Fernbank

Fri 9/30, 9 a.m. – noon

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 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 \[C&P/West\]](#)

Focus on Outdoor Play Bret Henninger, Chief Operating Officer

Hello Great Parks Team. Great Parks has started the process to plan and build a new destination playground near Sharon Centre in Sharon Woods, which will be designed for fun and accessibility for a wide range of ages and ability levels. Public engagement activities are now under way and will be an important part of the planning process for this new amazing experience. The new playground will be several thousand square feet larger than the current playground, while offering an inclusive play experience for children.

Outdoor play is central to our mission, and integral to transitioning kids to exploration outdoors. As an intentional shift of staff and capital resources toward this goal, we will not reopen the indoor play areas at Sharon Woods and Parky's Farm at Winton Woods. Both areas have been closed since the pandemic. Significant capital investments were required for both areas for replacement to meet current standards. Given the priorities and the direction we received from the public from the Master Plan, it was important to divert our resources to outdoor play.



Shout Outs

Kids Expo has been put away for 2022! Wow what a day, the guests had so much fun.

I just wanted to send a quick note to express my appreciation for the wonderful job that you all did prior to, during and after the Kids Expo event. Around 3,000 kids and adults from the local community, schools and camps came out to see us.

You all demonstrated your ability to add value to the event with your dedication, creativity and resourcefulness. Your contributions to the Great Parks Team are a reflection of your priorities and commitment to all the activities and pro-gramming that we do to create guest memories that happen every day within the organization.

I am truly grateful for everything that you did to make this day so special for everyone, the Special Events team would not have been able to do the event without you all.

–Rachel Dearing, Director of Guest Experiences (Central Region)

I would like to extend a huge thanks to all of the volunteers that helped out at the Shaker Trace Nursery on a hot Saturday with the native plant sale! From preparing the site, setting up tables, plants and supplies that were needed, organizing and getting the office ready for sales, to greeting customers, making sure their questions were answered and helping them with transporting the plants, everyone did a super job! I was really impressed with the efficiency, dedication and hard work everyone put forth on a Saturday morning/afternoon! Special thanks goes out for staying afterwards to clean up and put everything away! Smiling customers and doubled sales were the results of a successful native plant sale due largely in part to our awesome volunteers! All of you rock!

–Jennifer McCollough, Shaker Trace Nursery Coordinator