A Trail Mix of Volunteering at Great Parks

Joe Von Allmen, Volunteer Engagement Specialist

National Trails Day is celebrated every year on the first Saturday in June as a call to action to the hiking community to give back. This holiday was established by the American Hiking Society in 1993 and was hugely successful with hundreds of organizations participating nationwide. Great Parks celebrates this holiday by inviting community members to join us for a day of volunteering focused on improving, extending, or maintaining our trails. This year we had a small but mighty group of volunteers join our staff for a hot day of hard work out at Woodland Mound’s Hedgeapple Trail extension. With the help of volunteers, we were able to remove multiple truckloads of debris they were along the trail extension making it more pleasant to hike. A big thanks to Dan Hart, Trails Specialist, for helping organize this project!

Luckily volunteers have more opportunities to help keep our trails tidy than just one day a year! One of our most popular volunteer opportunities is our Adopt-A-Trail program. For this program, volunteers attend a trail maintenance training and then perform trail checks at a minimum of every two weeks and report major issues to our staff. This is a great role for people who need a volunteer opportunity that is flexible as they can perform their trail checks on their own schedule. We have volunteers at over 25 different sites helping maintain the amazing trail system we have in the big lands!

Dan has also been working on developing a very cool volunteer program that’s specifically focused on trail work! Dan started hosting his Trailblazer events just last year and they’ve already clocked almost 100 volunteer hours. Dan does a tremendous job of using these events to educate volunteers as well as do some amazing work. It’s an excellent alternative for volunteers who are on the waiting list for our Adopt-A-Trail program.
Volunteer Team Update at Sharon Woods
Tue., Sept. 19 | 6 – 7:30 p.m.
Connect with Great Parks Leadership Team as they provide important park updates and an opportunity to ask questions during and after their presentations. No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy! Coffee and tea will be provided. Please join us for networking and refreshments from 6 to 6:15 p.m. There is always time to ask questions and socialize at the end of the update. If you are bringing a snack to share, arrive a few minutes early and be sure to bring serving utensils.
Age Requirements: All those ages 14 and up
Location: Sharon Woods Auditorium (11450 Lebanon Rd, Sharonville, OH 45241)
Registration & Hours: No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy! And please record your hours under Volunteer Meeting–Team Update [Volunteer Engagement].
And don’t forget – you can always reach out to your Volunteer Engagement Team directly at volunteer@greatparks.org!

Stew Crew, Trailblazers, Clean Sweep, & NPLD Volunteer Opportunities

Winter Creeper & Porcelain Berry Vine Removal at Werk Road
Sat., Sept. 2 | 9 – 11 a.m.
Come check out Great Parks’ newest westside park and better the area in the process! Winter creeper and porcelain berry are highly invasive, choking vines that are taking over in areas of the park. Help us clear the area to create space for native species to grow!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: 2918 Werk Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45211
  o There are no parking spaces available in the park. Park on McKinley Avenue and walk to the old barn.
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Werk Road [C&P/West].
For additional information, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or (513) 296-7465!

Japanese Stiltgrass Removal at Woodland Mound
Mon., Sept. 4 | 9 – 11 a.m.
Help remove Japanese stiltgrass, a pesky invasive species that can easily be pulled out of the ground, from our parcours trail! Learn what invasive plants could be present in your own backyard and how to properly treat them.
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Weston Shelter Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Woodland Mound [C&P/East].
For additional information, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or (513) 673-1102!

Post-Holiday Litter Cleanup at Sharon Woods
Tue., Sept. 5 | 8 – 10 a.m.
After a busy holiday weekend, there is an influx of litter around the park. Our team would greatly appreciate your help in hitting the “reset” button and making our park beautiful again!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Sharon Centre Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Sharon Woods [C&P/East].

For additional information, contact Jessica Blaha at jblaha@greatparks.org or (937) 309-2902!

Autumn Olive Removal & Hike at Miami Whitewater Forest
Wed., Sept. 6 | 9 a.m. – noon
Join our ongoing fight against non-native species and learn about our local forest along the way. You will use handsaws and loppers to remove Autumn olive along the Shaker Trace Inner Loop and give our native species room to thrive. Stick around after the work day for a short hike to learn a little about our local flora and fauna!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
• Meeting Location: Bike Trail Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater [C&P/West].

For additional information, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or (513) 910-5067!

Invasive Removal at Fernbank Park
Thu., Sept. 7 | 9 – 11 a.m.
Think about your favorite part of a hike – is it the wildlife? The peaceful calm of the woods and the fresh air? Maybe it’s birdwatching or seeing some nice spring wildflowers? Invasive species like honeysuckle, winter creeper, and Japanese stiltgrass threaten all of this by aggressively outcompeting native wildflowers, trees, and other flora. Help us tackle invasive species and keep our trails great for generations to come!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Sycamore Trail Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Fernbank [C&P/West].

For additional information, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or (513) 250-0925!

Invasive Removal at Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve
Tue., Sept. 12 | 9 – 11 a.m.
Join us and remove aggressive invasive honeysuckle and winter creeper to help our native plants thrive!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Farbach-Werner Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Farbach Werner [C&P/Central].

For additional information, contact Paul Steuer at psteuer@greatparks.org or (513) 260-1124!

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods
Wed., Sept. 13 | 8 – 10 a.m.
Help us remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail! Volunteers will also learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them.
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Lakeside Lodge Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew–Sharon Woods [C&P/East].

For additional information, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or (937) 309-2902!

Trailblazers at Winton Woods
Sat., Sept. 9 | 9 a.m. – noon
Trailheads are the beginning of a journey for guests to experience nature and provide information about the land, the mileage, and sometimes a bit of history. Help us regrade and armor the tread, remove a small catch basin and drainpipe, remove rotted timbers, and refresh the gravel around the sign to refresh and repair the Great Oaks Trailhead!
• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Great Oaks Trail Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Trailblazers–Winton Woods [Natural Resources/Central].

For additional information, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or (513) 250-0925!
For additional information, contact John Walker at jwalker@greatparks.org or (513) 272-4131!

**Autumn Olive & Honeysuckle Removal at Shawnee Lookout**

Wed., Sept. 13 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Invasive Autumn olive and honeysuckle crowd out native plants like pawpaw and spicebush that are vital to wildlife. Throughout the morning, you will learn management practices to combat the spread of woody invasive species and how native plants help in biodiversity within the ecosystem!

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Cedar Bend Shelter Parking Lot
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Stew Crew–Shawnee Lookout [C&P/West]**.

For additional information, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or (513) 646-4217!

**Invasive Removal at Mitchell Memorial Forest**

Fri., Sept. 15 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Help us remove invasive plant species in higher-quality natural areas near the Mountain Bike Trail to preserve the beauty of this deep-woods trail and habitat!

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Maintenance Building
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Stew Crew–Mitchell Memorial [C&P/West]**.

For additional information, contact Gregor Bundy at gbundy@greatparks.org or (513) 658-2577!

**Invasive Removal at Embshoff Woods**

Sat., Sept. 16 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Did you know there are more than 300 acres of green space tucked away in Delhi? Embshoff Woods opened in 1982 and was formerly a horse farm. Today, it is home to picnic shelters, a disc golf course, and a parcours trail. Come visit us and help clean up the area while you’re here! We will be clearing invasive species like Japanese stiltgrass, multiflora rose, and honeysuckle along the Fit-ness Trail. Please bring thick gloves if you have them!

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Trailhead across from the Rivermount Shelter
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Stew Crew–Embshoff [C&P/West]**.

For additional information, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or (513) 296-7465!

**Clean Sweep of the Great Miami at Shawnee Lookout**

Sat., Sept. 16 | 9 a.m. – noon

The Clean Sweep is an annual event focused on removing litter, restoring the health of the Great Miami River, and connecting with your community!

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Shawnee Lookout Canoe/Kayak Launch across from the park entrance (2008 Lawrenceburg Rd, North Bend, OH 45252)
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Community Projects–Clean Sweep of the Great Miami**.

For additional information, contact Joe Von Allmen at vonallmen@greatparks.org or (513) 245-7471!

**Invasive Removal at Woodland Mound**

Mon., Sept. 18 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Help us remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail! Throughout the morning, you will learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them.

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Lakeside Lodge Parking Lot
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Stew Crew–Woodland Mound [C&P/East]**.

For additional information, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or (513) 673-1102!

**Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods**

Wed., Sept. 20 | 8 – 10 a.m.

Help us remove invasive shrub species along the Hike-Bike Trail! Throughout the morning, you will learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them.

- **Age Requirements**: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- **Meeting Location**: Lakeside Lodge Parking Lot
- **Registration & Hours**: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under **Stew Crew–Sharon Woods [C&P/East]**.

For additional information, contact Jessica Blaha at jblaha@greatparks.org or (937) 309-2902!

**Invasive Removal at Fernbank Park**

Thu., Sept. 21 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Think about your favorite part of a hike – is it the wildlife? The peaceful calm of the woods and the fresh air? Maybe it’s birdwatching or seeing some nice spring wildflowers?
Invasive species like honeysuckle, winter creeper, and Japanese stiltgrass threaten all of this by aggressively outcompeting native wildflowers, trees, and other flora. Help us tackle invasive species and keep our trails great for generations to come!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Sycamore Trail Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew—Fernbank [C&P/West].

For additional information, contact Hannah Riess at hriess@greatparks.org or (513) 296-7465!

Wildflower Seed Sowing at Glenwood Gardens Thu., Sept. 21 | 9 a.m. – noon
Plant a wide variety of wildflower seeds in our restoration areas!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Technical Center (377 Sheffield Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45240)
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew—Glenwood Gardens [C&P/Central].

For additional information, contact Shaun McClary at smcclary@greatparks.org or (513) 593-3845!

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) at Miami Whitewater Forest Sat., Sept. 23 | 9 a.m. – noon
Celebrate the 30th year of National Public Lands Day with Great Parks! Join us for a litter pickup along the Great Miami and help keep our public lands clean for all creatures to enjoy.

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: The Welch Property Barn (8291 E Miami River Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45247)
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Community Projects—National Public Lands Day—Miami Whitewater.

For additional information, contact Joe Von Allmen at jvonallmen@greatparks.org or (513) 245-7471!

Native Seed Collection at Miami Whitewater Forest Sun., Sept. 24 | Noon – 2 p.m.
Collect native seeds from our prairies for Shaker Trace Nursery! Volunteers will learn about the surrounding prairies and wetlands and how we cultivate seeds to grow more native plants to be used across the county.

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
• Meeting Location: Baughman Road Parking Lot (9384 Baughman Rd, Harrison, OH 45030)

• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew—Miami Whitewater [C&P/West].

For additional information, contact AJ Norton at anorton@greatparks.org or (513) 910-5067!

Disc Golf Course Maintenance at Woodland Mound Mon., Sept. 25 | 9–11 a.m.
Check out our new disc golf course and help us maintain this newly renovated amenity by planting grass seeds around the concrete pads!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Seasongood Nature Center Parking Lot
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew—Woodland Mound [C&P/East].

For additional information, contact Elissa Oliveira at eoliveira@greatparks.org or (513) 673-1102!

Native Seed Potting at Sharon Woods Sat., Sept. 30 | 8 – 10 a.m.
Help us pot native plant seeds collected in our parks to plant around Sharon Woods next summer!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Maintenance Shop (11555 Swing Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45241)
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Stew Crew—Sharon Woods [C&P/East].

For additional information, contact Jessica Blaha at jblaha@greatparks.org or (937) 309-2902!

Interpreter Programs, Special Events, & Golf Tournament Volunteer Opportunities

2023 LMGC Middle School Open at Little Miami Golf Center Sat., Sept. 9 | 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. & 2 – 7 p.m.
The Little Miami Golf Center (LMGC) Middle School Open is one of the biggest junior golf tournaments in the city that hosts over 200 junior golfers! For this event, volunteers help pick up baskets on the driving range, act as ball spotters on the golf course, and clean up trash throughout the golf center.

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Clubhouse
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Golf Tournaments & Clinics—Little Miami [Golf/East].

For additional information, contact Jennifer Ridle at jridle@greatparks.org or (513) 272-4133!
Growing Snacks at Glenwood Gardens
Fri., Sept. 15 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., Sept. 16 | 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
The veggie garden has been growing all summer and lots of tasty foods are ready to be turned into delicious snacks. Volunteers will assist guests with preparing their own garden produce snacks to try. General cooking knowledge is appreciated!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Cotswold Visitor Center
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Interpreter Programs–Glenwood Gardens [Edu & Events/Central].

For additional information, contact Ellen Meehan at emeehan@greatparks.org or (513) 728-3638!

Urban Thrive Festival at Nature Center at The Summit
Sat., Sept. 30 | Noon – 2 p.m., 1:30 – 7:15 p.m., & 6:45 – 8 p.m.
Join Great Parks for our 3rd annual Urban Thrive Festival, formerly known as Urban Farming Festival. We've revamped the event and are focusing on promoting all the ways you can "thrive" in whatever environment you live in! We'll have local organizations with a focus on food sovereignty, mental and physical health, the arts, educational hands-on booths, animal interactions, inflatables and crafts for the kids, and live music! There will be a variety of volunteer roles, including setup, teardown, craft tables, supervising inflatables, and other miscellaneous activities!

• Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
• Meeting Location: Nature Center at The Summit (1580 Summit Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45237)
• Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under Special Events– Urban Thrive Festival [Edu & Events/East].

For additional information, contact Jamie Piccola at jpiccola@greatparks.org or (631) 560-1220!