



greatparks.org/volunteer

GRAPEVINE

Volunteer Information, News & Events



Volunteer Spotlight



Dave Beitz

Years of Service – 7

What is your favorite volunteer activity? Photography.

When you're not at Great Parks, where might we find you?
Cincinnati Astronomical Society.

What's your favorite outdoor activity? Hiking.

What might we be surprised to know about you? I'm a concert violinist.

What is your favorite Great Park and why? It's a toss-up between Shawnee and Mitchell Memorial. Fantastic trails!

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be? Alaska

What is your life motto? "Don't stop when you're tired. Stop when you're done."

What hobbies are you passionate about? Photography, astronomy, and music.

What cause are you passionate about? Children with special needs.



Bat Conservation at Great Parks

You may have noticed bats flying around your neighborhood at dusk. Have you ever wondered where these creatures hang out during the day when they aren't on the wing?

Bats are nocturnal creatures and are only seen in Ohio during the warmer months of the year, arriving in March or April and departing for their winter hangouts in the late fall as the weather turns cold. Their summer homes, called maternity roosts, are where these animals give birth and raise their young. Roosts vary with each species of bat depending on their habitat needs.

Ohio is home to 10 species of bats, all of which are experiencing stressors on, and declines in their populations. Indiana bats were the first bat species protected under the 1966 Endangered Species Act due to loss of habitat, mainly from human disturbance of the caves they rely on for winter hibernation. Unfortunately, due to steep population declines, more species have joined the Indiana bat on the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act in the last few years, with habitat loss being a major factor. Bats have been hit very hard by a relatively recent disease called White Nose Syndrome (WNS). This disease increases mortality in bats by disrupting them during their winter hibernation. All bats in Ohio are in trouble and need our help.

Great Parks has focused on bat conservation when identifying priorities for research in recent years. Bat surveys, for example, are a way for us to document the number of species present at a park as well as their population size. Bat surveys at Great Parks first occurred in the early 1990s, when now rare northern long-eared bats and little brown bats were considered common. We enlisted the help of researchers in 2022 and 2023 to conduct bat surveys at Winton Woods, Glenwood Gardens, and Shawnee Lookout.

What we found was exciting and encouraging, starting with the discovery that all four federally and state-listed bat species were documented at Great Parks. These surveys have helped us understand the "who" and "where" of bats on park property. Importantly, we have more information on which trees and critical areas are used by these animals to rear their young in the summer months. To protect species under threat, we do not share locations. These discoveries will help us conserve bat populations by protecting their habitat and ensuring that our activities are compatible with their needs.

To learn more and read this entire blog post, visit <https://blog.greatparks.org/2023/10/bat-conservation-at-great-parks/>.

December Volunteer Opportunities

Celebrate the last month of 2023 by volunteering at your favorite parks (or explore a new one!).

If you cannot find a volunteer opportunity in your MIP calendar or list, please check your filter settings at the top of the page. It is most likely full if you still cannot find the opportunity, so we encourage you to sign up for another one!

My Impact Page (MIP) Login: <https://app.betterimpact.com/Login>

Park Information, Maps, & More: <https://www.greatparks.org/parks>

Stew Crew Volunteer Opportunities

For all trail, litter cleanups, invasive removal projects, and other similar work, you please wear your uniform t-shirt, long pants, boots or sturdy closed-toe shoes, and additional weather-appropriate clothing as well as bring work gloves, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat, water bottles, and snacks. Tools will be provided!

Invasive Species Removal at Winton Woods

Fri., Dec. 1 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Honeysuckle takes up a lot of space in our wild places where native species are meant to thrive! Remove invasive species near the Kingfisher Trail to benefit the ecosystem and humans and continue the necessary maintenance to hinder its growth. You will also learn how to identify a variety of invasive plants and how to safely and properly remove them. This is an ongoing project only possible with your help and support!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Kingfisher Trail Parking Lot
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Winton Woods \[C&P/Central\]](#).

For additional information, contact Emma Abrahamson at eabrahamson@greatparks.org or (513) 641-7710!

Walkabout & Invasive Removal at Miami Whitewater Forest

Sun., Dec. 3 | Noon – 3 p.m.

Join our ongoing efforts to eradicate non-native, invasive species and learn about a unique natural area along the way! The Smith Tract and adjoining Kilby Property are located along the Whitewater River and represent our riparian corridor around the river. After cutting down invasive species, we will finish with a short walk to experience the river during the winter and hopefully see a variety of birds!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
- Meeting Location: Smith Barn Parking Lot (6400 Kilby Rd, Harrison, OH 45002)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater Forest \[C&P/West\]](#).

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

Invasive Removal at Withrow Nature Preserve

Mon., Dec. 4 | 10 a.m. – noon

Invasive species are threats to the ecosystem because they diminish biodiversity and outcompete our native species. Learn how to identify and properly treat invasive plants that could be present in your backyard while removing invasive species along the Trout Lilly Trail!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Withrow Nature Preserve Parking Lot
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Withrow \[C&P/East\]](#).

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

Tool Sharpening at Sharon Woods

Wed., Dec. 6 | 9 – 11 a.m.

New year, new tools (kind of)! Learn how we properly maintain our equipment and how we prepare for tackling invasive removal. We will be tightening and sharpening our loppers and hand pruners for easier effective cutting. Closed-toe shoes are required and the tools to sharpen the tools will be provided!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Sharon Woods 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!

Wintercreeper Walk at Fernbank Park

Sat., Dec. 9 | 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Join us for a brisk winter hike around Fernbank Park! We will be finding our winter wild and removing invasive vines along the way. Wintercreeper is a common groundcover that is still sold in stores today despite being on the invasive species list in many parts of the country. It is a creeping, woody vine that can quickly take over everything in its way, smothering and outcompeting native species. Learn to identify and manage wintercreeper and enjoy the quiet beauty of winter in the park with us.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Riverview Shelter
- 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!

Painting at Woodland Mound

Mon., Dec. 11 | 10 a.m. – noon

Help refresh Seasongood Nature Center by prepping the walls and giving them a fresh coat of paint!

- 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!

Honeysuckle Removal at Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary

Tue., Dec. 12 | 9 a.m. – noon

Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary is a state-dedicated, 100-acre natural area home to a variety of plant and animal species that live among waterfalls and wooded hillsides! Help us tackle invasive honeysuckle along the creek at this conservation area.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: 5300 Sheits Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45252
- Meet at the bend in the road on Sheits Road adjacent to 275.
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Newberry \[C&P/Central\]](#).

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



Volunteer Mary removing invasive species at Winton Woods!
Photo taken by Volunteer Dave Beitz.

Honeysuckle Removal at Winton Woods

Tue., Dec. 12 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Honeysuckle takes up a lot of space in our wild places where native species are meant to thrive! Remove invasive species near the Kingfisher Trail to benefit the ecosystem and humans and continue the necessary maintenance to hinder its growth. You will also learn how to identify a variety of invasive plants and how to safely and properly remove them. This is an ongoing project only possible with your help and support!

- 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 [Stew Crew–Winton Woods \[C&P/Central\]](#).

For additional information, contact Emma Abrahamson at eabrahamson@greatparks.org or (513) 641-7710!

Dog Park Maintenance at Miami Whitewater Forest

Thu., Dec. 14 | 9 a.m. – Noon

Join us as we continue the work done to keep our dog park fencing clean, neat, and free of weeds. Volunteers will be scooping gravel, tamping, laying down weed blocks, and assisting with other general maintenance. We hopefully will run into some furry friends at the dog park as well!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
- Meeting Location: Simmonds Family Dog Park (8715 Hamilton Cleves Pike Rd, Cleves, OH 45002)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Miami Whitewater Forest \[C&P/West\]](#).

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

Wintercreeper Walk at Fernbank Park

Thu., Dec. 14 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Join us for a brisk winter hike around Fernbank Park! We will be finding our winter wild and removing invasive vines along the way. Wintercreeper is a common groundcover that is still sold in stores today despite being on the invasive species list in many parts of the country. It is a creeping, woody vine that can quickly take over everything in its way, smothering and out-competing native species. Learn to identify and manage wintercreeper and enjoy the quiet beauty of winter in the park with us.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Riverview Shelter
- 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!

Invasive Removal at Mitchell Memorial Forest

Fri., Dec. 15 | 9 – 11 a.m.

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 Parking Lot
- 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!

Honeysuckle Removal for Eastern Leatherwood at Kroger Hills

Wed., Dec. 20 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Join us as we work to restore a portion of the Kroger Hill woodland! By removing invasive honeysuckle, we will be protecting Eastern Leatherwood, which is uncommon throughout our park district, and creating a more accessible entrance for future maintenance.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Kroger Hill North (39.150141, -84.328355)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Stew Crew–Kroger Hills \[C&P/East\]](#).

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

Invasive Removal at Sharon Woods

Thu., Dec. 21 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Learn how to properly remove invasive shrub species and which invasive plants could be present in your backyard!

- 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!

Litter Cleanup at Glenwood Gardens

Thu., Dec. 21 | 9 a.m. – noon

Pick up litter around Sheffield Road to beautify the park! Please sign up for this opportunity prior to December 19.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Glenwood Gardens 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!

Continue on for volunteer opportunities at programs and events! >>>



Volunteers Gabrielle and Erik cleaning up litter at Lake Isabella!
Photo taken by Volunteer Dave Beitz.

Interpreter Programs & Special Events

Guide guests through a winter wonderland, support the Annual Winter Hike Series, and more! These opportunities include dates in December, January, and February.

For all special events, programs, and other similar work, volunteers are asked to wear their volunteer uniform polo or t-shirt, sturdy closed-toe shoes, and other weather-appropriate clothing as well as bring a refillable water bottle and snacks.

Winter Woodland: Bringing the Outside In at Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve

Thu., Dec. 21 | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 22 | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Thu., Dec. 28 | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 29 | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 31 | 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Step out of the cold and into a cozy winter woodland scene right in Ellenwood Nature Barn! Make a craft, enjoy an indoor scavenger hunt, and warm up from the winter weather by a log fire. At this program, you will greet guests and assist with crafts and activities.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Ellenwood Nature Barn (3455 Poole Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45251)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Interpreter Program-Farbach Werner \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#).

For additional information, contact Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org!

Holidays on the Farm at Parky's Farm

Fridays, Saturdays, & Sundays from Fri., Nov. 24 – Sun., Dec. 17 | 4:30/4:45 – 9 p.m.

Thu., Dec. 21 – Sat., Dec. 23 | 4:30/4:45 – 9 p.m.

Tue., Dec. 26 – Sat., Dec. 31 | 4:30/4:45 – 9 p.m.

Interpreter Program Support

Help spread the holiday cheer at Holidays on the Farm! There are a variety of stations and tasks where we would love your support throughout the holiday season!

In this role, you will assist interpreter staff with educational programming, animal encounters, and winter-themed activities. You will be outside for the majority of the evening, so please dress warm!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 14 and up
- Meeting Location: Hayloft Barn (10073 Daly Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45231)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Holidays on the Farm-Interpreter Support \[Edu & Events/Parky's Farm\]](#).

For additional information, contact Chloe Terzakis at cterzakis@greatparks.org!

General Event Support

Help spread the holiday cheer at Holidays on the Farm! It's the 2nd year of Holiday on the Farm and we are looking to make it bigger and better with our updated layout, new light features, and fun activities. Specifically, they need support with the Hot Cocoa Hut, Winter Wonder Zone, holiday character meet & greet, fire pits, and hay wagon rides! You will be assigned a station or tasks closer to the event.

Holidays on the Farm is a rain, shine, or snow event! Please check the weather before the event and dress in warm clothing.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
- Meeting Location: Hayloft Barn (10073 Daly Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45231)
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under [Holidays on the Farm-General Event Support \[Edu & Events/Parky's Farm\]](#).

For additional information, contact Jamie Piccola at jpiccola@greatparks.org!

Winter Hike Series

Sat., Jan. 6 | Winton Woods

Sat., Jan. 13 | Sharon Woods

Sat., Jan. 20 | Woodland Mound

Sat., Jan. 27 | Shawnee Lookout

Sat., Feb. 3 | Miami Whitewater Forest

This is one of our most popular programs of the year and we'd love to have your help for one, several, or the whole series. We are looking for volunteers to help with being a follower and supporting the hike leaders or help serve hot drinks and soup after the hikes! This is an entirely outdoor event, and hikes range between 4 to 5 miles over uneven terrain. Some hikes are more challenging than others and are almost never canceled due to the weather, so be prepared for cold, snow, and rain.

Follower

Sat., Jan. 6 | 9:15 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Winton Woods

Sat., Jan. 13 | 9:15 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Sharon Woods

Sat., Jan. 20 | 9:15 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Woodland Mound

Sat., Jan. 27 | 9:15 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Shawnee Lookout

Sat., Feb. 3 | 9:15 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Miami Whitewater Forest

Bring up the end of the group on a nature-based hike winter hike for adults! Hikes will be about 2 to 2 1/2 hours long and cover 4 to 5 miles in all kinds of weather. Followers are responsible for helping keep track of group members, assisting hikers, reporting the number of hikers in the group, and returning early with any struggling hikers. After the hike hot soup and drinks will be available!

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
- Additional Requirements: Must be able to hike 4 to 5 miles in inclement weather on unpaved trails.
- Meeting Locations:
 - **Winton Woods** | Winton Woods Harbor (Shelter by snack bar)
 - **Sharon Woods** | Sharon Centre Auditorium
 - **Woodland Mound** | Seasongood Nature Center
 - **Shawnee Lookout** | Eagle's Landing
 - **Miami Whitewater Forest** | Visitor Center Auditorium
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under the applicable location!
 - [Winter Hikes – Follower – Miami Whitewater \[Edu & Events/West\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Follower – Sharon Woods \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Follower – Shawnee Lookout \[Edu & Events/West\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Follower – Winton Woods \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Follower – Woodland Mound \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

Cook

Sat., Jan. 6 | 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Winton Woods

Sat., Jan. 13 | 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Sharon Woods

Sat., Jan. 20 | 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Woodland Mound

Sat., Jan. 27 | 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Shawnee Lookout

Sat., Feb. 3 | 10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Miami Whitewater Forest

Help prepare set up the meals for winter hikers upon their return! Tasks will involve heating soup and water over a fire grill, serving drinks, soup, and cookies as well as clean up after the program.

- Age Requirements: For volunteers ages 18 and up
- Meeting Locations:
 - **Winton Woods** | Winton Woods Harbor (Shelter by snack bar)
 - **Sharon Woods** | *Location dependent on playground construction*
 - **Woodland Mound** | Breezy Point Pavilion (Shelter by snack bar)
 - **Shawnee Lookout** | Eagle's Landing
 - **Miami Whitewater Forest** | Shelter by snack bar
- Registration & Hours: To volunteer, sign up on your MIP calendar/list and record your hours under the applicable location!
 - [Winter Hikes – Cook – Miami Whitewater \[Edu & Events/West\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Cook – Sharon Woods \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Cook – Shawnee Lookout \[Edu & Events/West\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Cook – Winton Woods \[Edu & Events/Central\]](#)
 - [Winter Hikes – Cook – Woodland Mound \[Edu & Events/East\]](#)

For additional information about the Winter Hike Series, contact Ellen Meehan at emeehan@greatparks.org!