

## National Park Service VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS (VIP) UPDATE

August 2017

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area 111 E. Kellogg Blvd. Suite 105, Saint Paul, MN 55101

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is coming out a few days early because there are already opportunities to volunteer starting the first day of August! Don't miss these chances to log your hours before the end of our fiscal year. All volunteers with 5 hours or more are invited to join us on a riverboat cruise in October to celebrate our national park!

Our coyote howling surveys are continuing. Help ranger Sam study the packs of wild carnivores that live in our forest and savanna corridor. Look at some new aquatic creatures with ranger Allie on a dragonfly collection day. Our Coldwater and Mill Ruins crew continue to cultivate a functioning native ecosystem by removing invasive species and planting pollinator friendly plants.

Do you love fishing? Pass on your experience to a new generation of anglers. Camp Propel and Nature Fest both need volunteers to assist rangers at fishing programs with kids. If you missed our last RAVE (River Action Volunteer Event) there is another chance on August 19th to get in a voyageur canoe and restore some harder to access habitat in the river floodplain.

As always, please contact us with any questions about volunteering or recreating in the park. Enjoy the rest of summer!

Cheers,

Karen ([karen\\_katz@nps.gov](mailto:karen_katz@nps.gov))

### OPPORTUNITIES by date (details follow)

Ongoing:

Coyote Howling Surveys

Coldwater Crews

August:

1st and 2nd: YMCA Junior Ranger Camp

1st and 17th: Bruce Vento Ecostewards

8th and 9th: Camp Propel

8th: Dragonfly Larvae Collection

19th: Mill Ruins Crew

19th: Canoe RAVE

8/24 - 9/4: NPS Booth at the Minnesota State Fair

September:

19th: Nature Fest

15th, 16th, 29th and 30th: Illuminate the Lock

27th: Children's Water Festival

30th: National Public Lands Day

Save the Date!

October 12: Volunteer Recognition Event

Stay tuned for our education programs to return this fall: Big River Journey, Journey to the Falls, and Take Me to the River.

## **CITIZEN SCIENCE & WILDLIFE**

### **Wildlife Wednesdays: Coyote Howling Surveys**

Wednesday evenings

Approximately 8:00pm-10:00pm (but varies each week)

Multiple locations

These evening surveys will involve sampling at 3 different locations within the northern, central, or southern sections of our corridor. Following the Howling Survey Protocol, the researchers will play a prerecorded coyote howl in hopes of receiving elicited responses from nearby coyotes. The nature of this survey requires little to no noise during the sampling, which means there is a maximum of three adult volunteers allowed to participate on a given night. Please contact Sam House to receive the dates and locations of each survey night.

**Contact:** Samantha House; [samantha\\_house@nps.gov](mailto:samantha_house@nps.gov); (651) 293-8456

### **Dragonfly Larvae Sample Collection**

August 8

12:00pm - 2:30pm

Jaycee Park, Hastings (Lake Rebecca)

Help park biologists sample for dragonfly larvae in Lake Rebecca for dragonfly larvae, as part a nation-wide study on mercury contamination in National Parks. Volunteers will work from shore or wade in shallow water, use dip nets to find dragonfly larvae and will help identify samples. Up to 16 volunteers needed; volunteer work is best suited for ages 10 and up.

**Contact:** Allison Holdhusen, [Allison\\_Holdhusen@nps.gov](mailto:Allison_Holdhusen@nps.gov), 651-293-8466

## **RESTORATION**

### **Coldwater Crews**

August 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29, 31

Drop in; Tuesday evenings, 5:30pm-8:00 pm or Thursday mornings, 9:00am-12:00pm

Coldwater Spring

Get to know your park! Ongoing volunteer habitat restoration crews meet every week throughout the summer and do light habitat restoration. Crews are drop in and there is no minimum or maximum number of times to volunteer. The crews help with ongoing restoration of Coldwater Spring, which is near Minnehaha Falls. They are run by our super Crew Leader volunteers. Activities include invasive species removal, site exploration, and other outdoor restoration tasks. If you like to be outdoors and hands on, this opportunity is for you!

**Contact:** Erin Steinhibel, [erin\\_steinhibel@nps.gov](mailto:erin_steinhibel@nps.gov) or 651-293-8474.

### **Mill Ruins Crew**

August 19

Drop in; Saturday mornings, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Mill Ruins Park, Minneapolis

Looking for a great way to get to know a unique part of your park? Ongoing volunteer habitat restoration crews meet on Saturdays throughout the summer and do light habitat restoration. Crews are drop in and there is no minimum or maximum number of times to volunteer. The crews help with ongoing restoration of Mill Ruins, which is near downtown Minneapolis, along the Mississippi. They are run by our super Crew Leader volunteers. Activities include invasive species removal, site exploration, and other outdoor restoration tasks. We will also be doing some planting for our opening day! If you like to be outdoors in the heart of the city, this opportunity is for you!

**Contact:** Erin Steinhibel, [erin.steinhibel@nps.gov](mailto:erin.steinhibel@nps.gov) or [651-293-8474](tel:651-293-8474).

### **Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary EcoStewards**

August 1 & 17

September 5

5:30pm - 7:00pm

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, St. Paul

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is home to a diverse native prairie plant community. Gravel trails wind through fields of big bluestem, little bluestem, side-oats grama and Indian grass. Visitors can continue along the paths around small ponds lined with joe-pye weed, boneset, vervain and marsh marigold. Volunteers are needed to help remove invasive species such as crown vetch, bird's foot trefoil, and musk thistle to preserve the integrity of Bruce Vento's native plant community! No experience necessary...Just a desire to be outdoors learning how YOU can restore this local prairie.

**Sign up at this link:** <https://goo.gl/4ff5FH>

**Contact:** Tricia Wehrle [651-632-2411](tel:651-632-2411) or [Tricia.wehrle@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Tricia.wehrle@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

### **Canoe RAVE (River Action Volunteer Event)!**

Saturday, August 19th

12:00pm - 4:00 pm

Lion's Levee Park (on the river!)

Explore your river - on the water! For this RAVE, we will explore the southern end of our park aboard our awesome partner Wilderness Inquiry's 24-foot voyageur canoes, and along the way hear river stories from national park rangers. We'll land on Island 112 to do a service project, and then paddle back to Lion's Levee. This fun recreation and volunteer restoration project is great for adults and kids over 10 years old. No canoeing experience needed. RAVEs are free events for volunteers - your only ticket is your service to the river! **Register [here](#) for this event.**

**Contact:** [volunteer@parkconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@parkconnection.org)

### **Seed Collecting**

September 14

6:00pm - 8:00pm

Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area

Help with seed collection while enjoying the prairie grasses and wildflowers of this rare dry sand prairie with wonderful views of the Mississippi River! Come lend a hand to help improve the habitat of this unique place. This event is led by Mississippi Park Connection and the National Park Service who will provide materials and instructions. Great for new volunteers.

**Contact:** [volunteer@parkconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@parkconnection.org)

### **National Public Lands Day**

September 30th

9:00am - 12:00pm, registration starts at 8:30am

Coldwater Spring

Lend a hand restoring our national park! The National Park Service is restoring the land surrounding Coldwater Spring to create oak savanna, prairie, and wetland habitats. This park is located between Minnehaha Falls Regional Park and Historic Fort Snelling. The historic Coldwater spring house sits at its heart. We will provide gloves and all necessary tools and equipment. Come out and help us plant for the future! Registered volunteers will receive a free REI volunteer T-shirt and a light breakfast. Volunteers must be age 8 or older. This is a rain or shine event.

**Please register [here](#) for this event!**

**Contact:** [volunteer@parkconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@parkconnection.org)

## **EDUCATION AND RECREATION**

### **YMCA Junior Ranger Camp**

August 1: 12:00-3:00pm, Mound, MN

August 2: 8:45-11:45, Lakeville, MN

Join rangers Abby and Karen as we learn about prairies, rivers, and make seed pods to help restore these valuable ecosystems. Volunteers are needed to help engage YMCA day camp youth ages 6 to 11 for a half-day program. Be ready to get your hands dirty setting up, assisting with and taking down the seed pod program. This includes lifting heavy buckets and moving them short distances. Volunteers may need to drive to the location in their own vehicle. Perfect for those new to volunteering.

**Contact:** Abby Olson, [Abigail\\_Olson@nps.gov](mailto:Abigail_Olson@nps.gov) or [651-293-8422](tel:651-293-8422)

### **Camp Propel: Fishing field trip**

August 8 & 9

8:00am - 2:00pm  
Fort Snelling State Park (Picnic Island)

Assist ranger Brian with a field trip for 3rd grade students learning all about fish! Camp Propel is a summer program for students in Independent School District 196. These students are studying fish. We will meet at shelter A on Picnic Island at 8:00 each morning. Volunteer for either or both days. We will be outside. Bring a lunch!

**Contact:** Brian Goodspeed; [\(651\)293-8414](tel:(651)293-8414); [brian\\_goodspeed@nps.gov](mailto:brian_goodspeed@nps.gov)

### **NPS Booth at the MN State Fair**

August 25 - September 5  
10:00am-2:00pm or 5:00-9:00pm  
State Fairgrounds, Education Building

Join us at the great Minnesota get together! Help us connect state fair goers to the National Park Service and the Mississippi River. Help us inspire new park enthusiasts, volunteers, and supporters. Volunteers will work alongside a park ranger at the NPS booth in the Education Building. Volunteers will get free admission to the Fair. This is an intensive volunteer position requiring substantial knowledge of the park; preference will be given to experienced volunteers.

**Contact:** Karen Katz, [karen\\_katz@nps.gov](mailto:karen_katz@nps.gov) or [\(651\)293-8458](tel:(651)293-8458)

### **Illuminate the Lock**

September 15, 16, 29, 30  
6:00pm - 10:00pm  
Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam

Illuminate the Lock is a two-weekend series of artist projections inside the lock chamber at the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. We will need volunteers to answer questions and have conversations with the public at the NPS welcome table, orient visitors to the exhibition, assist park rangers escorting people on the lock wall and monitor visitor safety. Learn more about the art installations here: <http://parkconnection.org/event/1571/> and <http://parkconnection.org/event/illuminate-lock-uncompromising-hand/>

**Contact:** Karen Katz at [karen\\_katz@nps.gov](mailto:karen_katz@nps.gov) or [651-293-8458](tel:651-293-8458)

### **NatureFest**

September 19 - 21  
Shift times TBD between 8:30am - 2:00pm  
Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (West)

This is a three day collaborative program with a number of other agencies. We will staff the fishing station on the fishing decks at the southwest end of the dam. Our audience includes area school children ages 8-12. They are well-chaperoned. Volunteers are needed to help children fish including baiting hooks, untangling lines, offering encouragement, and taking fish off the hooks and releasing them. The pace is fast and fun and the kids have a great time. Volunteers do not need fishing licenses

and training is provided. Great for new volunteers.

**Contact:** Gordon Dietzman, [gordon\\_dietzman@nps.gov](mailto:gordon_dietzman@nps.gov), [651-293-8410](tel:651-293-8410).

### **Children's Water Festival**

September 27

Various shifts

State Fairgrounds, St. Paul

The Children's Water Festival ([www.metrocwf.org](http://www.metrocwf.org)) is an annual celebration of water's central role in our lives. We are looking for volunteers to help us and our partners engage over 1300 students in hands-on activities about water including water quality indicators, wetlands, and where our water goes when it is flushed down the toilet. Many volunteer positions are available with the NPS and partner organizations.

**Contact:** Karen Katz, [karen\\_katz@nps.gov](mailto:karen_katz@nps.gov) or [\(651\)293-8458](tel:651-293-8458)

### **VIP Event in October**

Save the date! The annual volunteer recognition event will take place on board the Anson Northrup riverboat the evening of October 12. This event is open to volunteers with 5 hours of service between Oct. 1-2016 and Sept. 30, 2017. Please don't RSVP at this point. Just mark your calendar, get those volunteer hours recorded and consider taking a couple hours off of work to make this 5:30-7:30pm event.

### **Mississippi Park Connection**

Mississippi Park Connection is the charitable partner of Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Mississippi Park Connection is committed to preserving, protecting, and enjoying the Mississippi River, the national park that runs through the Twin Cities. Among many things, we work closely together (we even share office space) to operate our joint volunteer program. Learn more at <http://parkconnection.org/>

Karen Katz, Park Ranger, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area  
111 Kellogg Blvd. East, Suite 105, St. Paul, MN 55101-1256, [651-293-8424](tel:651-293-8424)

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**This is the volunteer newsletter** for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a national park unit located in the Twin Cities. The monthly newsletter details volunteer opportunities for the given month. If you are interested in an opportunity or have questions, contact the person listed. If nothing fits your interest or availability, don't worry, next month brings new opportunities! To volunteer, unsubscribe, or for more information contact [miss\\_volunteer@nps.gov](mailto:miss_volunteer@nps.gov) or [\(651\) 293-8424](tel:651-293-8424). Please circulate freely to interested parties.