

Hello volunteers, welcome back to fall! September is one of our busiest months of the year as school is back in session and restoration projects continue full force. There are many opportunities to help support public lands in habitat restoration, education, and at special events this month.

Illuminate the Lock is a special evening event we will be hosting at the Saint Anthony Falls visitor center. Two different artist exhibitions will be installed on the lock wall. We will need many hands to help ensure the safety of the public by directing people and answering questions.

September 30th is **National Public Lands Day**, and we will return to Coldwater Spring to continue transforming the landscape into a thriving habitat for plants and animals – and humans. Join us and be a part of the biggest, single-day volunteer event in the nation.

Big River Journey field trips begin at the end of the month. This is an excellent opportunity for new volunteers as you will work closely with a park ranger and probably learn something new about the natural history of the river (What is the connection between river otters and floods?). In fact, all of our education programs are great ways for you to learn about and serve the park simultaneously.

Be sure to complete five volunteer hours by September 30th so you can join us aboard the Anson Northrup paddleboat for the volunteer appreciation cruise on October 12th!

Cheers,
Karen (karen_katz@nps.gov)

OPPORTUNITIES by date (details follow)

Ongoing:
Coldwater Crews
Wildlife Wednesdays: Coyote Howling Surveys

September:

9th and 23rd: Mill Ruins Crew
10th: St. Paul Classic Bike Tour
14th: Seed Collection at Grey Clout Dunes
15th, 16th, 29th and 30th: Illuminate the Lock
16th: Great River Race
19th: Nature Fest
19th, 21st, 26th, 28th: Dakota Outdoor Days
20th: Spring Lake Park Seedsters
25th, 26th, 28th, 29th: Big River Journey
27th: Children's Water Festival
30th: National Public Lands Day

October:

10,11,12,13: Big River Journey
October 12: Volunteer Recognition Event

Multiple dates: Take Me to the River & Journey to the Falls

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; (651) 293-8456

RESTORATION

Seed Collection at Grey Cloud Dunes
September 14
6:00pm-8:00pm
Grey Cloud Dunes SNA, Cottage Grove

Help with seed collection while enjoying the prairie grasses and wildflowers of this dry sand prairie with wonderful views of the Mississippi River! Come lend a hand to help improve the habitat of this unique place. Please wear long pants and close-toed shoes for this outdoor project. Visit parkconnection.org/events for more information or to sign up!
Contact: Mary Hammes, mhammes@parkconnection.org, 651-291-9119

Native Prairie Planting at Spring Lake Park Reserve
September 19
9:00am- 12:00pm
Spring Lake Park Reserve, Hastings

Come help care for this beautiful prairie! We will be installing native plants in this remnant prairie. Please wear long pants and close-toed shoes. All tools will be provided by the National Park Service. Visit parkconnection.org/events for more information or to sign up!
Contact: Mary Hammes, mhammes@parkconnection.org, 651-291-9119

Spring Lake Park Seedsters
September 20, 5:30-7:30 PM
Spring Lake Park Reserve, Hastings

Feeling like expanding on your green thumb in preparation for those upcoming dreary winter days? Come join us for some Seedster seed collection! Volunteers will collect seeds in SLP's remnant prairies to kick off this year's Seedster program. Those same volunteers will be invited to come back in January to learn how to grow those seeds at home and help retain local seed sources! We will bring all seedlings back out to the same prairie in spring 2018. We are looking for volunteers interested in seed collection and/or Seedsters participation, and also for a crew leader or two to help run the event. Those interested in seed collection/Seedsters can sign up via this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/seedsters-seed-collection-spring-lake-park-reserve-tickets-36279105782>

Those interested in being a crew leader, please sign up on the HRE calendar or contact Erin or Mary.

Contact: Erin Steinhibel, erin_steinhibel@nps.gov, Mary Hammes, mhammes@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

Coldwater Crews

September 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28

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 or [651-293-8474](tel:651-293-8474).

Mill Ruins Crew

September 9, 23

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 Steinhilbel, erin_steinhilbel@nps.gov or [651-293-8474](tel:651-293-8474).

Seed Squad Drop-In Events

Thursday, September 7th, 5:30-7:00pm, Lilydale Regional Park
Saturday, October 7th, 9:30-11:30am, Lilydale Regional Park

Harvest native seed from some of our highest quality natural areas. The collected seed will later be sown and/or propagated and planted to increase diversity for wildlife and pollinators. These volunteer events are drop-in style, so you are not obligated to stay the entire time. Come to as many or as few events as you would like. No experience necessary. Individuals or small groups. All ages are welcome, but may be best suited for ages 10 and up. Must be able to navigate uneven terrain. Registration: Pre-registration is appreciated. Register [here](#).
Contact: Tricia Wehrle at tricia.wehrle@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary EcoStewards
September 5 & 21
October 3
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

EDUCATION AND RECREATION

Saint Paul Bike Classic rest stop volunteers
September 10
6:30am-10:30am

Crosby Farm Regional Park entrance, Saint Paul

The NPS hosted rest stop on the Saint Paul Classic Bike Tour is full, but this fun event still has openings at other stations! This is a great opportunity to grab a friend or organize a small group and get out early to cheer on bicyclists using our urban greenway!

Sign up for this event at <http://www.bikeclassic.org/volunteer> . Choose from one of the available roles. Then click "Sign Up." Fill in your information.

Contact: All registration is done through the bike classic website listed above.

Great River Race

September 16th

8:30am - 1:00pm

Hidden Falls, Saint Paul

Canoe for a cause on the great river race! Each year, Mississippi Park Connection sponsors a voyageur canoe in the Great River Race to support the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program, which helps more than 13,000 people experience the Mississippi River by canoe each year. Help out this year by participating as a paddler in the Mississippi Park Connection canoe. Volunteers will need to have a good attitude and strong shoulders! We need nine total paddlers to participate. We need two more paddlers, and it will be first come first served, so reply early!

Contact: Anna Waugh, awaugh@parkconnection.org

Dakota County Outdoor Days

September 19, 21, 26, 28

8:00am-4:00pm(ish)

Dakota County Fairgrounds, 4008 220th St W, Farmington, MN 55024

Come work with 5th graders on the prairie! We will be conducting several short learning sessions (20 min segments) on Tuesdays and Thursdays in September at a prairie station in the middle of the Dakota County Fairgrounds restored prairie with a variety of local students. These sessions usually run from about 8:30-3:30, rain or shine. Lunch (usually from Subway) is provided. Specific schedules for each day are pending, but we usually do 5 or 6 rotations with about 20 students, and each rotation consists of an education component and a game. This is a great way to boost your volunteer hours!

Contact: Erin Steinhibel, erin_steinhibel@nps.gov or [651-293-8474](tel:651-293-8474)

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 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, [651-293-8410](tel:651-293-8410).

Children's Water Festival
September 27
9:00-2:30 (approx.)
State Fairgrounds, St. Paul

Help present the "Mystery of the Disappearing Waterfall" to classes of 4th graders from the Twin Cities metro area. Do you know your sandstone from your limestone, which one erodes faster, and what happened to a great waterfall that used to be in St. Paul? Help kids work with rocks and other information to discover the answers. The Children's Water Festival (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. Volunteer positions are available with us and partner organizations.
Contact: Lyndon Torstenson, lyndon_torstenson@nps.gov, [651-293-8426](tel:651-293-8426)

Big River Journey school field trips
Sept 25, 26, 28, 29
Oct 10,11,12,13
8:30am-2:00am, except 9:00-2:30 on Sept 29
Harriet Island, Padelford Landing