

## **IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

Hello volunteers,

May is a busy month! The park plans to engage over 4,000 elementary school students on **Big River Journey** and **Journey to the Falls** field trips. With 200-240 kids aboard the Anson Northrup per day, staff and park partners depend on volunteers to help facilitate a positive and quality learning environment for students, teachers and chaperones. Simultaneously, the park is launching a new educational program called Learning Journeys. **Learning Journeys** will take kids on the Jonathon Padelford Riverboat; students will learn about the ecology of the river. Learning Journeys also explores the history of Mill Ruins Park through digital technology.



*Volunteers on Big River Journey help out at the geology station: The Mystery of the Disappearing Waterfall. You can help facilitate small groups of students as they use clues in the landscape and rocks to learn about the Mississippi River's geologic past.*

The late season snow has delayed the sprouting of invasive species (and native species) but not for long. The regular **Coldwater Crews** will begin this month. Coldwater Crews help restore plant communities at Coldwater Spring and they are always looking for new volunteers to join.

## **How-To Guide**

The park has recently switched to a new system for volunteer sign-ups. If you are unfamiliar with the new calendar, here's a quick how-to:

1. **Head to the calendar on the Mississippi Park Connection website here:**  
<http://parkconnection.org/volunteer/volunteer-registration/>
  - a. Click the text that says "*online scheduling tool*"
2. **Click the station on the day you would like to volunteer**
  - a. For example: "*Ecosystem Ottersystem Assistant*" on May 9<sup>th</sup>
3. Now you will see a description of the volunteer opportunity and all of the available dates for this opportunity. **Click on the link called "sign up"** next to the desired date.
4. In the pop-up box that appears, please enter your **First Name, Last Name, and Email**. Please be consistent - use the same email each time.
5. Check the box that says "*I commit to attending this shift*" and then **click "Sign Up"**.
6. You should receive a confirmation email that includes the date and time of your volunteer shift.
7. If you have trouble, you can contact us to sign-up to volunteer.

For a visual How-To Guide with screenshots and instructions, [click here](#).

**Mark Your Calendar - Upcoming Opportunities:**

Big River Journey: 4/30 - 5/21  
Journey to the Falls: 5/22 - 6/1  
The Living River Paddleboat Learning Journey: 5/17 - 5/25  
Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam Learning Journey: 5/7 - 5/15  
The Big Watch: 5/19  
Tuesday Coldwater Crew: 5/15, 5/22, 5/29  
Thursday Coldwater Crew: 5/10, 5/17, 5/24, 5/31  
Bruce Vento Ecostewards: 4/28, 5/1, 5/12, 5/17  
Monarch Butterfly Monitoring: Ongoing  
Program Prep: 6/6  
Get Outdoors Day: 6/8  
Take A Kid Fishing: 6/10  
Paddle Share Volunteers: Varies

---

**Big River Journey**

Weekdays in May  
Daytime hours

Once again, Big River Journey will bring thousands of students, grades 3-5, onto the Mississippi River! Would you join us as a volunteer? On a riverboat? River Birds, Ecosystem Ottersystem, Crime Lab and Mystery of the Disappearing Waterfall are great activities because volunteers care!

**Sign up on the volunteer calendar:** <http://parkconnection.org/volunteer/volunteer-registration/>  
**Questions? Contact:** Brian Goodspeed 651-293-8414, [brian\\_goodspeed@nps.gov](mailto:brian_goodspeed@nps.gov) or Karen Katz, [karen\\_katz@nps.gov](mailto:karen_katz@nps.gov), 651-293-8458

**Journey to the Falls – Archaeology Mock Dig Assistant**

Weekdays, May 22 – June 1  
Daytime Hours  
Mill Ruins Park

Help elementary school students uncover the story of Minneapolis' historic relationship with the river. If you enjoy history and working with children, this is a great opportunity for you!

Volunteers must be able to dig a 1 meter x 1 meter x 25 cm pit in the sand and be willing to work with a small group (5) of children under guidance of a park ranger. This is a very hands-on project and great for a volunteer that wants direct involvement with students. No experience necessary; volunteers will be asked to read a short amount of background information prior to volunteering.

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** Brian Goodspeed, 651-293-8414 or [brian\\_goodspeed@nps.gov](mailto:brian_goodspeed@nps.gov)

### **Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam Learning Journey**

May 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Mill Ruins Park

This learning journey will emphasize geography, history, and engineering aspects of the milling district using original photographic and painting artifacts. Students will be using photography tools to help re-imagine historic photos and paintings from the area, as well as receive interpretive information about the area. Overall, students will understand how places change over time. Volunteers will not be asked to lead any educational activities, but will help students with their cameras and photographs, and aid in keeping students engaged. This learning journey will take students across the Stone Arch Bridge and into Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and involves a fair amount of walking.

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** David Kappelhoff, [dkappelhoff@parkconnection.org](mailto:dkappelhoff@parkconnection.org)

### **The Living River Paddleboat Learning Journey**

May 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Padelford Packet Boat Company, Harriet Island

This learning journey will emphasize the river's ecosystem and will include a three-station rotation on the Jonathan Padelford Riverboat! The stations will feature a 'Fish Lifecycle' station, an eco-scavenger hunt using binoculars, and a freshwater mussel station. Overall, students will understand how people are connected to the river and its ecosystem. Volunteers will not be asked to lead any educational activities, but will be expected to help set up and take down stations, aid in keeping students engaged, and help the program lead with various tasks (very similar to volunteer role in Big River Journey)

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** Jim Ford, [jim\\_ford@nps.gov](mailto:jim_ford@nps.gov)

### **The Big Watch**

Saturday, May 19

Shifts vary between 6am-9pm (see below)

Grey Cloud Dunes SNA, 113th Street South, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

We are seeking volunteers for the Big Watch. Volunteers can take part in the count circle to help tally all the birds we see and hear or if there's space, help go out on field trips to document birds around the SNA. If you do not have strong birding skills and would like to learn more about bird identification by sight and sound--this is an excellent way to enhance your birding skills! Birds possible include northern harrier, whip-poor-will, Henslow's sparrow, indigo buntings and so many warblers!

#### **Volunteer Shifts:**

\*If you can't do an entire shift still feel free to sign up.\*

6am - 11am - *This will include helping to set up, taking turns at the greeting table and documenting birds. This is the best shift for warblers and Henslow's sparrow.*

11am - 4pm - *This will include taking turns at the greeting table and documenting birds. This is the best shift for indigo buntings, grasshopper sparrow and birds of prey.*

4pm - 9pm - *This will include taking turns at the greeting table, documenting birds and aiding with tear down at the end of the day. This is the best shift for possible woodcocks, whip-poor-will and owls.*

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Contact:** Sharon Stiteler, [sharon\\_stiteler@nps.gov](mailto:sharon_stiteler@nps.gov)

### **Coldwater Crew: Tuesday Nights**

May 15, 22, 29

Drop in; Tuesday evenings, 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Coldwater Spring, 5601 Minnehaha Park Dr S, Saint Paul, MN 55111

Ongoing volunteer habitat restoration crews meet every week throughout the growing season and do light habitat restoration. Crews are drop in and there is no minimum or maximum number of times to volunteer. 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!

Volunteers must be comfortable walking on uneven ground, standing, crouching and/or kneeling. Safety equipment (gloves and safety glasses) is provided.

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** Mary Hammes, [volunteer@parkconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@parkconnection.org) or 651-291-9119

### **Coldwater Crew: Thursday Mornings**

May 10, 17, 24, 31

Drop in; Thursday Mornings, 9:00am - 12:00pm

Coldwater Spring, 5601 Minnehaha Park Dr S, Saint Paul, MN 55111

Ongoing volunteer habitat restoration crews meet every week throughout the growing season and do light habitat restoration. Crews are drop in and there is no minimum or maximum number of times to volunteer. 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! Volunteers must be comfortable walking on uneven ground, standing, crouching and/or kneeling. Safety equipment (gloves and safety glasses) is provided.

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** Mary Hammes, [volunteer@parkconnection.org](mailto:volunteer@parkconnection.org) or 651-291-9119

### **Monarch Butterfly Monitoring**

Weekly June – August

Location TBD

Time TBD

Are you interested in volunteering with wildlife in the park this summer? The monarch monitoring program is a citizen science project that tracks monarch populations from caterpillars to butterflies within the park. Please note that this program is a weekly commitment beginning

with a mandatory training in early June. Watch the June volunteer newsletter for more information on this training.

**Interested? Contact:** Marianne Sciamanda, [marianne\\_sciamanda@partner.nps.gov](mailto:marianne_sciamanda@partner.nps.gov)

### **Program Prep – Junior Ranger Bookmaking**

June 6

1:00pm-2:30/3pm

Location: National Park Service Headquarters, 111 Kellogg Blvd E, Saint Paul, MN 55101

Volunteers are needed to help prepare materials for Junior Ranger programs this summer. Please join a small group of volunteers and staff making field notebooks. We will be folding, taping and assembling books using a template. If you are in the mood to create, this is a good way to support our education programs behind-the-scenes!

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

**Questions? Contact:** Abby Olson, [abigail\\_olson@nps.gov](mailto:abigail_olson@nps.gov) or 651-293-8422

### **Bruce Vento EcoStewards**

Tuesday, May 1; Thursday, May 17

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Saturday, April 28 & May 12

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, 4th Street E, Saint Paul, MN 55106

Map of the meeting location (<https://goo.gl/GwPaKs>). Parking available along Commercial St.

Help out NPS & MPC park partner St. Paul Parks and Recreation on habitat restoration events throughout the spring season. Projects will vary by date. No experience is necessary—this is a great activity for anyone who wants to get outside, explore Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and learn about restoring our natural areas. All tools will be provided. Volunteers must wear closed-toed shoes and long pants. You will be working outside so please make sure you dress for the weather. Please also bring a water bottle for drinking.

**Register here** (<https://goo.gl/TYLgmk>)

**Contact:** Tricia Wehrle, St. Paul Parks and Recreation, [environment@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:environment@ci.stpaul.mn.us) or 651-632-2411

### **Get Outdoors Day**

June 8

4:00 pm - 8:15 pm (program runs from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm)

Powderhorn Park, [3400 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55407](https://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/3400-15th-Ave-S-Minneapolis-MN-55407)

This is a large, multi-agency event that provides access and training to find and experience many forms of summer recreational opportunities ranging from fishing, canoeing, biking, and,

yes, goat yoga. Our staff (Rangers Kyle and Gordon) will lead the canoeing opportunities. Volunteers will be responsible for assisting participants with finding and wearing PFDs (life vests), paddle selection, and reservations (participants will sign up for particular slots). Volunteers, providing they have proper experience/training, may also provide staffing for our safety canoe and paddle instruction. Volunteers will be assigned responsibilities based on what they are comfortable doing. Some roles will be largely sedentary but other roles will require paddling, lifting canoes, and helping people into and out of boats. Volunteers are an integral part of this effort as your assistance will provide safety, instruction, and organization to the event and assist visitors with exploring new forms of recreation.

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

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

### **Take A Kid Fishing - Dakota County**

June 10

11:00 am - 3:15 pm (program runs  
from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm)

Thompson County Park, [360 Butler Avenue  
East, West Saint Paul, MN 55118](#)

This is a large, multi-agency event with fishing as the primary theme. There will be a number of different activities to acquaint participants with sport fishing. We are responsible for teaching casting using our Backyard Bass game. Volunteers will hand out equipment and provide instruction, assist participants in building one of two types of lures (which participants get to keep), and untangle lines. No fishing experience or license is needed, just a willingness to have fun with lots of enthusiastic youngsters. Physical activity is minimal, but this outdoor program goes on despite the weather, so volunteers should come prepared for the weather conditions (rain, heat, etc.).



*Take A Kid Fishing returns in early June.*

**Sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#).**

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

### **Paddle Share Volunteers**

Occasional weekends throughout the summer

Want to help more people have an on-the-river experience? We are looking for volunteers for our Mississippi River Paddle Share Program to share information about this awesome opportunity to get on the river! Volunteers will be assigned shifts Fridays - Sundays at one of several paddle share stations at various parks along the river. Main responsibilities include

handing out information and addressing questions about the program and the river. You may occasionally need to assist people get their kayaks down to the river.

Please see [www.paddleshare.org](http://www.paddleshare.org) and contact Susan Overson if interested at [susan\\_overson@nps.gov](mailto:susan_overson@nps.gov). There will be trainings in May, exact dates and times are TBD.

**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 E., Suite #105, St. Paul, MN 55101-1256, 651-293-8458*

---

**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) 293-8458. Please circulate freely to interested parties.