

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

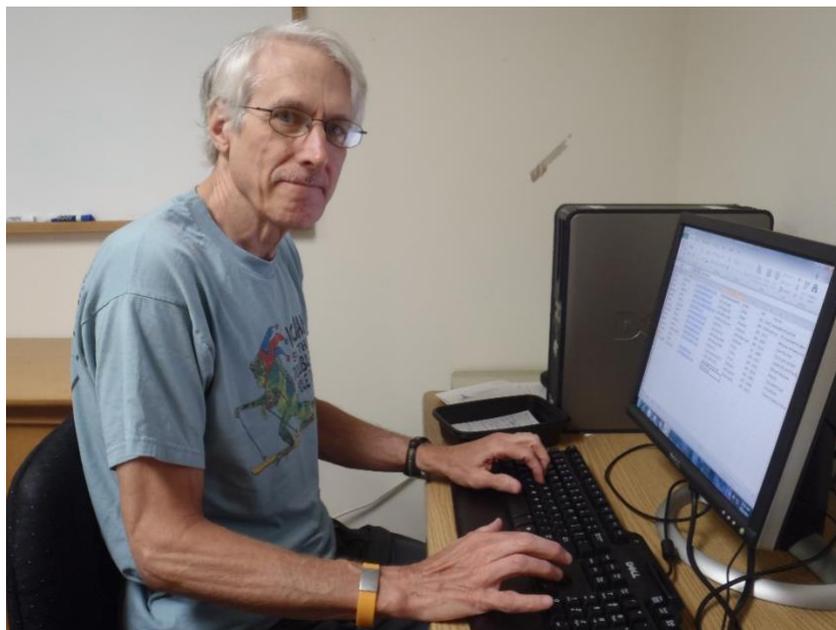
Hello volunteers!

If you are interested in birding or fishing with youth, consider volunteering for Get Outdoors Day, Take a Kid Fishing, or birding with the Young Scholars Field Trip. The heat of summer is underway and there is plenty of garlic mustard to pull from the floodplain forest. If that interest you, join the park as a habitat restoration volunteer with a Coldwater Crew or Mill Ruins Crew. This month there is a unique opportunity for all plant, bird, and insect identification experts to help with a Bioblitz at Fish Creek Natural Area.

Marnie Sciamanda, Community Volunteer Ambassador, has been sitting down to chat with several dedicated volunteers about their experience in the Volunteers-In-Parks program. You can look forward to hearing new stories each month in the volunteer newsletter!

Meet Bill, a volunteer at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. For the past few years, Bill has been our volunteer data-entry expert who helps the park enter volunteer data into the online system. When asked what he likes about this unique volunteer position, Bill said, "I feel like it really helps the Park Service, and if I wasn't doing it, a staff person would have to be doing it, so it feels rewarding." Bill enjoys being a part of the National Park Service and recommends that anyone should try volunteering at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area because of the wide variety of volunteer opportunities available. Bill describes his volunteer service as "rewarding," "worthwhile," and he feels that his position makes a difference.

Read more about Bill at parkconnection.org/vip-bill/



If you have more than 250 volunteer service hours with the park and would like to share your volunteer story, please reach out to Marnie at marnie_sciamanda@partner.nps.gov.

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/> (Click the text that says "online scheduling tool").
2. **Click the station on the day you would like to volunteer** (For example: "Ecosystem Ottersystem Assistant" on May 9th)
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 your 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 always call us to sign up to volunteer.

Mark your calendars for these upcoming opportunities:

Seedsters Planting: May 30
Journey to the Falls: 6/1
Young Scholars Field Trip Program (ISD 196): 6/19
Monarch Monitoring Program: weekly, 6/7 – 8/23
Get Outdoors Day: 6/8
Take a Kid Fishing: 6/10
Public Habitat Restoration Event: 6/21
River Raft RAVE: 6/30
Coldwater Crew (Tuesday nights): 6/5, 6/12, 6/19, 6/26
Coldwater Crew (Thursday mornings): 6/7, 6/14, 6/21, 6/28
Mill Ruins Crew: 6/2 and 6/23
Bioblitz at Fish Creek Natural Area: 6/22
Bruce Vento Ecostewards: 6/5, 6/16, 6/21

Save the date! More information in the July newsletter:
Junior Ranger Camp: 7/20 and 7/27

Seedsters Planting at Spring Lake Park Reserve

Wednesday, May 30
6:00pm – 8:00pm

Join us to plant seedlings grown by volunteers over the winter and spring in their forever home in the ground! These native prairie plants make a big difference for habitat and water quality.

Please sign up at the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hre-spring-lake-park-reserve-tickets-45702582655>

Questions? Contact volunteer@parkconnection.org

Journey to the Falls – Archaeology Mock Dig Assistant

Friday, June 1
9:30am – 2:30pm

Mill Ruins Park, [102 Portland Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55401](#)

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, brian_goodspeed@nps.gov or 651-293-8414

Get Outdoors Day

Friday, June 8
4:00pm – 8:15pm (program runs from 5:00pm to 8:00pm)

Powderhorn Park, [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](#).

Questions? Contact Gordon Dietzman, gordon_dietzman@nps.gov or 651-293-8410 (please leave a message)

Take a Kid Fishing - Dakota County

Sunday, June 10

11:00am – 3:15pm (program runs from 12:00pm to 3:00pm)
Thompson County Park, [360 Butler Ave East, West St. 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).

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

Questions? Contact Gordon Dietzman, gordon_dietzman@nps.gov or 651-293-8410 (please leave a message)

Young Scholars Field Trip Program (ISD 196)

Tuesday, June 19

8:00am – 2:30pm

Fort Snelling State Park (Picnic Island Shelter A)

Young Scholars students (just finished 2nd grade) are studying birds in summer school. We provide the students with practical field experience bird watching, using binoculars, judging habitat for bluebirds, and experimenting with beak structures. Volunteers lead small groups in educational activities. The field trip is outdoors. You do not have to be a bird expert, but must enjoy working with young people.

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

Questions? Contact Brian Goodspeed, brian_goodspeed@nps.gov or 651-293-8414

Monarch Monitoring Program

Thursday June 7 at 6:00pm – 8:00pm (Mandatory Training), and

Weekly (Thursday, June 14 – August 23 at 6:00pm – 8:00pm at Coldwater Spring)

Coldwater Spring

Are you interested in monitoring monarch populations in the park? We will monitor egg, larva, milkweed and adult monarch butterfly populations weekly at Coldwater Spring and collect data for the University of Minnesota's Monarch Larvae Monitoring Program. The program begins on June 7 with a mandatory training session from 6-8pm, and continues through August 23 weekly (there will not be monitoring on July 5). We are primarily looking for volunteer participants to monitor at Coldwater Spring with the additional possibility of monitoring in other locations throughout the park corridor.

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

Questions? Contact: Marnie Sciamanda. marianne_sciamanda@partner.nps.gov

Public Habitat Restoration at Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area

Thursday, June 21

6:00pm – 8:00pm

Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific Natural Area

Help remove invasive species 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. If you have questions about this volunteer event, please contact volunteer@parkconnection.org. **Sign up here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/public-habitat-restoration-tickets-45448066390>
Questions? Contact: Mary Hammes, mhammes@parkconnection.org

River Raft RAVE at Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

Saturday, June 30th

12:00pm – 4:00pm

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park (west side), [10360 W River Rd, Brooklyn Park, MN 55444](https://www.google.com/maps/place/10360+W+River+Rd,+Brooklyn+Park,+MN+55444)

RAVEs (River Action Volunteer Events) are a fun way to explore the river in a way few others do. All trips couple a restoration service project in a hard to reach area of the river with an adventure tour by National Park Service rangers. Participants will also help remove invasive plant species that threaten the native plant ecosystems. Removing these plants prevents their spread and allows more diverse species to provide wildlife habitat and improve water quality in the river. This fun recreation and volunteer restoration project is great for adults and kids over 12 years old. RAVEs are free events for volunteers – your only ticket is your service to the river! Sign up here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/river-raft-rave-tickets-45453600944>
Questions? Contact: Mary Hammes, mhammes@parkconnection.org

Mill Ruins Crew

June 2 and 23

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

Mill Ruins Park, [102 Portland Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55401](https://www.google.com/maps/place/102+Portland+Ave+S,+Minneapolis,+MN+55401)

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!

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

Questions? Contact Erin Steinhibel, erin.steinhibel@nps.gov or 651-293-8474

Coldwater Crew: Tuesday Nights

June 5, 12, 19, 26

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

Coldwater Spring

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, mhammes@parkconnection.org

Coldwater Crew: Thursday Mornings

June 7, 14, 21, 28

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

Coldwater Spring

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, mhammes@parkconnection.org

Bioblitz at Fish Creek Natural Area

Friday, June 22

7:00am – 10:30pm, shifts vary

Fish Creek Natural Area, [1505 Henry Lane, Maplewood, MN 55119](#)

Are you an expert in field identification of plants, insects or birds? Then park partners Maplewood Nature Center and Great River Greening need you for the first ever Fish Creek Bioblitz. Volunteers are needed to help identify, record and generate a species list. Download the iNaturalist smart phone app or hand-record observations. Bring your favorite field guides, sweep nets, insect jars, and binoculars or use those provided. Surveys will be off trail. Long pants, closed-toe footwear and tall socks are highly recommended. A light refreshment will be provided.

Surveys by taxonomic group will run as follows:

Birds 1: 7:00am – 9:00am (Blufftop)

Prairie Plants 1: 10:00am – 12:00pm (Blufftop)

Prairie Plants 2: 10:00am – 12:00pm (Blufftop)

Woodland Plants: 10:00am – 12:00pm (Creek)*

Insects: 12:30pm – 2:30pm (Blufftop)

Birds 2: 8:30pm – 10:30pm (Blufftop)

All experience levels welcome for Family Day: 3:00pm – 5:00pm

To register, Contact: Carole Gernes, Naturalist, Maplewood Nature Center and Neighborhood Preserves, (651) 249-2170 or carole.gernes@maplewoodmn.gov

Bruce Vento EcoStewards

Tuesday, June 5; 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Saturday, June 16; 9:00am – 11:00am

Thursday, June 21; 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, 4th Street E, Saint Paul 55106
Map of the meeting location (<https://goo.gl/GwPaKs>). Parking available along Commercial St.

Help out NPS & MPC park partner Saint 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>

Questions? Contact Tricia Wehrle, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation,
environment@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-632-2411

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 or (651) 293-8458. Please circulate freely to interested parties.