

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Hello volunteers,

July is shaping up to be a great month to learn more about the flora and fauna of the park. Volunteers are needed to help Ranger Allie collect dragonfly samples, Ranger Sam needs assistance listening to coyote howls, and Ranger Gordon needs several people to take fish off hooks at Fish with a Ranger. Green Corps member Angela LaCroix is hosting a summer session of the popular tree identification training. Read on for details on all of these (and more!) volunteer opportunities.

Here's the next installment of volunteer stories from Marnie Sciamanda, Community Volunteer Ambassador:



Meet Sue. Sue is a weekly volunteer at the Mississippi River Visitor Center in Saint Paul and a periodic volunteer at the Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis. What keeps Sue coming back every week to the visitor center, she says, are the people she meets. "I learn something new every day, whether it's from the rangers, or the visitors, it doesn't really matter, but being here is just so much fun." If you are considering volunteering at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Sue says, "Just do it! Whatever your interests are, and whatever your capabilities are, there is something that you can do here." She emphasizes the variety of opportunities and the fact that there is a good fit for everyone to volunteer at the park.

Read more about Sue [here](#).

If you are a volunteer with more than 250 service hours with the park and you would like to share your volunteer story, please contact Marnie at marianne_sciamanda@partner.nps.gov

Mark your calendars for these upcoming opportunities:

YMCA Junior Ranger Activity Days: 7/20, 7/27, 8/3
Fish with a Ranger: 7/24
Coyote Howling Surveys: Ongoing
Dragonfly Mercury Project: 7/22 and 7/27
Bat Monitor Deployment and Retrieval: Ongoing
Share the River Gorge: 7/25
Tree Identification: 7/25
Coldwater Crew (Tuesday nights): 7/10, 7/17, 7/24, 7/31
Coldwater Crew (Thursday mornings): 7/5, 7/12, 7/19, 7/26
Mill Ruins Crew: 7/14 and 7/28
Bruce Vento Ecostewards: 7/10 and 7/21

Save the date! More information in the August newsletter:

Minnesota State Fair Volunteers: 8/23 – 9/3

YMCA Junior Ranger Activity Days

July 20, July 27, and August 3

9:00am – 2:30pm

Crosby Farm, Saint Paul

YMCA day campers are learning about the national park and earning their junior ranger badges through service learning. Volunteers will facilitate learning as kids rotate through informal stations learning to use binoculars, observing and identifying plants in the park, and playing a game to learn about the fur trade. Volunteers will also support a brief restoration effort. No experience in these programs is necessary, any training will be the day of the event. The event is outdoors and will include lots of walking, with possible light lifting and carrying.

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

Questions? Contact: Abby Olson, abigail_olson@nps.gov

Fish with a Ranger

July 24

9:00am – 12:00pm

Lake Rebecca Park, [415 Lock and Dam Road, Hastings, MN 55033](#)

This fishing event is held in partnership with the Hastings Parks and Recreation. About 50-100 participants are involved, depending on weather, many of which will be children in the 4-12 age range. This family-friendly fishing event is staffed by Ranger Gordon Dietzman, 1-2 Hastings employees, and volunteers. Volunteers will help participants with tackle, poles, baiting hooks, taking fish off hooks, watching for safety issues, offering encouragement, etc. and may have to kneel down and carry up to 25 lbs. when we are setting up or taking down the event. Volunteers do not need fishing experience or a fishing license to assist participants; training happens prior to the event. This event can be fast-paced and is one of Ranger Gordon's favorite annual

programs as many participants will catch their first fish and will want to tell others about their experience. Volunteers should be good listeners!

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

Questions? Contact Gordon, gordon_dietzman@nps.gov

Dragonfly Mercury Project

Sunday, July 22 - Jaycee Park, Lake Rebecca

Friday, July 27 - Lilydale Regional Park, Pickerel Lake

12:00pm – 2:30pm

Join park rangers as we search for juvenile dragonflies for the National Dragonfly Mercury Project, a nationwide project that monitors mercury in national parks. Volunteers will use dip nets to sample juvenile dragonflies along shorelines of lakes and wetlands, participate in sample collection and learn about identifying juvenile dragonfly nymphs. Up to 12 volunteers for each site; ideal for ages 8+ though all ages are welcome. Contact Ranger Allie with interest in participation or with any questions.

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

Contact: Allie Holdhusen, allison_holdhusen@nps.gov

Coyote Howling Surveys

Thursday evenings, approximately 9:00pm – 11:00pm (but can vary)

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, 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 four 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 or (651) 293-8404

Bat Monitor Deployment and Retrieval

Varies weekdays

Multiple locations

Assist with bat monitor deployments and retrievals. Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, along with several other Great Lakes region parks, has been utilizing acoustic monitoring devices for the past 3 summer field seasons to analyze bat species presence and population counts. The National Park Service is using the information gained from these surveys to establish proper management guidelines in order to better understand the impact of white-nose syndrome and preserve future bat populations. Deployment and recovery dates are dependent upon weather, site conditions, and volunteer availability. Volunteers will be expected to walk

over uneven ground to set up or take down monitoring equipment. Volunteers will help carry equipment weighing no more than 15-20lbs. Please contact research assistant Allison Boettcher if you are interested in volunteering on this project.

Contact: Allison Boettcher, allison_boettcher@partner.nps.gov

Share the River Gorge

Wednesday, July 25,

4:30pm – 8:30pm (event is 6:00pm – 8:00pm)

West River Parkway & 34th-35th Street, Minneapolis (with canoe rides operating from sand flats area near 34th Street)

Share the River Gorge is an annual community celebration in Longfellow neighborhood to connect area residents to the river gorge, its natural values and stewardship. Volunteers will work alongside NPS and Wilderness Inquiry staff, and neighborhood volunteers to assist with free family canoe rides (in large voyageur canoes) and other aspects of the event. Volunteers will help sign up participants, direct them to canoes, fit them with life jackets and paddles, promote river and park resources, help to interpret river mussels, wildlife and water quality, take photos, and help with set-up and take-down of tables and signs. 3-4 volunteers will help paddle canoes to and back from the event, starting at the Minneapolis Rowing Club about half a mile away. Volunteer with a friend—a total of 6-8 volunteers are needed.

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

Contact: Lyndon Torstenson, 651-293-8426 or lyndon_torstenson@nps.gov

Tree Identification: Summer Edition

Wednesday, July 25th

1:00pm – 3:00pm

Crosby Farm Regional Park

Come learn summer identification skills! We will be learning how to identify different tree species based on their leaves and how to differentiate between common species. We will also touch on growth habit and some forest ecology. Please dress accordingly for the weather and bugs. If you have a great ID resource, feel free to bring it!

Please sign up on the volunteer [calendar](#) no later than July 23rd.

Questions? Contact Angela LaCroix, alacroix@parkconnection.org

Mill Ruins Crew

July 14 and 28

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

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!

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

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

Coldwater Crew: Tuesday Nights

July 10, 17, 24, 31 (No crew on 7/3)

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

July 5, 12, 19, 26

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

Bruce Vento EcoStewards

Tuesday, July 10; 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Saturday, July 21; 9:00am – 11:00am

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